Tomás and the Library Lady

Second Grade to Adult
ABOUT THE SHOW

Tomás loves stories. As the young son of migrant farm workers, he spends the summer with his family following the crops north from Texas to Iowa, passing long days in the fields listening to his grandfather tell stories. Before long, Tomás knows all of Papa Grande’s tales by heart....

When a chance encounter brings him to the local Carnegie Library, he meets the “Library Lady” who recognizes his thirst for knowledge and encourages him to read. His delight in books is equaled by his pride in teaching Spanish to the Library Lady, trading knowledge and respect between generations and cultures. By the end of the summer, Tomás has great pride in becoming his family’s new storyteller, the guidance of a colorful mentor, and a lifelong love of reading.

A bilingual musical, based on the beloved book about the true story of the Mexican American author and educator Tomás Rivera, who became the first minority Chancellor in the University of California system. This inspirational production shows how reading and education – and self esteem – can make anything possible.¹

ABOUT CHILDSPLAY THEATRE

Mission: “To create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love, and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, those hallmarks of childhood that are the keys to the future.”

Founded in 1977, Childsplay is a nationally and internationally respected professional theatre company whose chosen audience is children. At Childsplay, we believe that young people deserve to experience challenging, thought-provoking theatre of the highest artistic quality. Our respect for children’s intelligence and creativity drives us to produce new and innovative works by theatre’s finest artists. Equally, our understanding of the challenges facing Arizona’s classroom teachers leads us to offer arts education resources throughout Arizona. In the past 43 years, we have educated and inspired more than six million young people and families. We have grown to serve an average annual audience of 250,000 students, teachers, and families.

Founder David Saar recognized during his MFA studies that children could reap great benefits from experiences with professional theatre. After graduating, Saar gathered classmates in a 1964 Chevy Impala, and equipped with basic sets and costumes, began performing in local classrooms. Today, performing in schools remains a core Childsplay activity with three annual touring productions that visit hundreds of schools throughout Arizona. It is estimated that one in five Arizona K-6 students will see a Childsplay production at their school. More than half of this audience lives at or below the poverty level. Alongside the tour season, Childsplay’s annual programming includes: nine months of in-house productions for school and family audiences at The Herberger Theater Center; an on-site academy of theatre classes throughout the year; and a variety of education outreach programs embedded throughout the greater Phoenix community.2

EXPLORE // Classroom Workshops

**Persuasive Postcards** In this workshop, students will use a Spanish word bank to create a postcard to persuade other students to read their favorite book. Students will use various art materials to create a postcard that will be sent to another class at a different school that will also be attending the performance!

[Click Here for Workshop](#)

**Concrete Poetry** In this workshop, students will work creatively to write poems about their personal relationships to stories and will incorporate Spanish phrases into their work of art. Students will use various materials to create a visual piece of art that showcases their poem.

[Click Here for Workshop](#)
As a result of Mexico’s central American location and history of Spanish rule, Mexico is the culmination of Spanish and Native American cultures. Today, many Mexicans are known as “mestizos”, which means they have a mix of Native American and Spanish ancestry.³

Music
Throughout its history, Mexico has been home to many great artists and musicians. Early Mexican people were known for their murals, sculptures, jewelry, and use of wind and percussion instruments.⁴ Modern Mexican artists include great painters, photographers, sculptors, muralists, as well as Mariachi and Banda musicians.⁵

Listen
Want to create your own Mexican instruments? Listen to one of Mexico’s most beloved Mariachi bands.

³ Mexico,” National Geographic Kids.
Cuisine
Mexican cuisine is created mostly with native ingredients, such as squashes, beans, avocados, cocoa, corn, and vanilla, in combination with foreign ingredients brought over by the Spanish conquistadors. Fun fact: chocolate actually originated in Mexico from the Olmec and Aztec peoples! 6

Want to try out a few easy recipes for yourself?

Language
The Mexican people speak Spanish; however, their dialect is unique to their Central American location, and within that dialect, they have many smaller regional distinctions (Norteño, Bajío, Altiplano, etc.). Mexican Spanish tends to elongate and stress the consonant sounds rather than the vowel sounds, a quality specific to their version of Spanish.7

Want to learn to speak Mexican Spanish like a local? Click here.

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EXPLORE // Bilingual Literature

Read

*Waiting for the Biblioburro* by Monica Brown [Here](#)

*A Library For Juana: The World Of Sor Juana Inés* by Pat Mora [Here](#)

*Diego* by Jonah Winter [Here](#)
Though many countries identify as both “Latino” and “Hispanic,” the two do not necessarily go hand in hand! “Hispanic” refers to countries whose primary language is Spanish, while “Latino” refers to if the country is regionally a part of Latin America (Central and South America as well as parts of the Caribbean). In short, “Latino” refers to the geography, while “Hispanic” refers to the language.⁸

Can you think of a country that may only identify as Hispanic? What about a country that may only identify as Latino?

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Within different Spanish-speaking countries, there are many different words and phrases that are used regionally that have varying meanings depending on your location – even though they all speak the same language! For example, people from Spain say coche to refer to a car. However, in Guatemala, coche is a slang term for the word “pig”, and in Chile, coche can be used to describe a baby stroller! Expanding further, there are many different ways to say “car” across the Spanish-speaking world. For instance, in Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela, people typically say carro, whereas Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Peru prefer to say auto. Along with words and phrases, many Hispanic and Latino countries differ within their cultural practices, especially when it comes to greeting new people. “While common practice in the U.S. is to shake hands when you greet someone, the Latin American way is a lot more personal: you kiss cheeks. In all Spanish speaking Latin American countries, it is common practice for men to kiss women and women to kiss women on the (usually right) cheek as a greeting. In most of these countries, men to men will still use the handshake greeting. However, in Argentina and Uruguay, men will also kiss men on the cheek when saying hello.” This may feel foreign to us, but in most Spanish-speaking countries an impersonal greeting could be taken as rude or standoffish!

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10 Cultural Differences in Spanish-speaking Countries in Latin America,” Translation Excellence, August 7, 2023 https://translationexcellence.com/cultural-differences-spanish-speaking-countries-latin-america/
Just like the United States, many Hispanic and Latino countries commemorate their country’s history and significant historic figures with celebratory holidays, and these also vary between countries. In Mexico, they celebrate Dia de los Muertos or in English, “The Day of the Dead.” This holiday is celebrated in Mexico on November 1 and is kind of “like a family reunion—except dead ancestors are the guests of honor. The Day of the Dead is a joyful time that helps people remember the deceased and celebrate their memory.” Many families celebrate by lighting candles, cooking their relatives’ favorite foods, singing songs in their memory, and honoring their family history by sharing stories of the past. In Puerto Rico, they celebrate the Feast of Saint John the Baptist, the patron saint of Puerto Rico’s capital city, San Juan. “While the festival is, of course, rooted in the Catholic traditions of the island, there are a few folkloric highlights that set it apart. Its most well-known event actually takes place the night before on beaches around the island. As midnight approaches on the 23rd [of June], you’ll find the locals gathering on the beach. At the stroke of midnight, custom dictates that you fall backwards into the water 12 times for luck.” This tradition grants celebrators with good luck for the rest of the year, and also serves as an unofficial kickoff for the festivities to begin!

Want to explore more holidays in Spanish-speaking countries from across the world? Click here.

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13 “San Juan’s Festival of Saint John the Baptist,” Canario Lagoon Hotel.
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