



# A LITTLE BIT of WATER

Formerly *The Audubon Project*

**By Dwayne Hartford**

Directed by **Anthony Runfola**

Scenic Design by **Jeff Lemire**

Costume Design by **D. Daniel Hollingshead**

Sound Design by **Christopher Neumeyer**

Projection Design by **Anthony Runfola**

Stage Manager: **Alexandra Corder**

### The Cast

Marie. . . . .Christiann Cosler

Enrique. . . . . Marcelino Quiñónez

Liz. . . . . Cynthia Callejas

School Tour, January-June, 2008

Tempe Center for the Arts Studio Theatre, June, 2008

Produced in collaboration with:



Production Sponsor:



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Preview Guide for Parents and Teachers  
to Childsplay's Production of

## **A Little Bit of Water**

We hope you find this guide helpful in preparing your children for an enjoyable and educational theatrical experience. Included you'll find things to talk about before and after seeing the performance, classroom activities that deal with curriculum connections and education standards, and resource materials.

### **The Story:**

The world-famous master storyteller, Marie, with the help of her two assistants, Liz and Enrique, tells the story, "A Ribbon of Green." This is the tale of a river in the desert. The three first take the audience far back in time to when the river was created through the friendship of the Land, the Wind and the Water. Using puppets, projections and other theatrical magic, the three characters show how life came to the river – first plants, birds and animals, then early native people, followed by pioneers and farmers. Throughout all this, the storytellers show how the river adapted to suit the needs of those who settled along its banks.

Liz is a young, earnest environmentalist who is passionate about the desert and the river. She believes that the story is ultimately a tragic one, with man destroying this fragile habitat. Enrique hopes to be a master storyteller himself. In his optimistic, if not oblivious view, the story of the river is a happy one. Marie tries to keep her two antagonistic assistants on task, which grows more and more difficult as the story progresses. Eventually she gives up and turns the story over to them, telling them it is theirs to finish. Forced to work together, the two find that the only way the story can continue is if man learns that it is not enough for this river in the desert to adapt to him. He must adapt to life here. And if this is learned, the story of the river need not end at all, but can continue on through countless generations of storytellers.

**\*Appropriate for grades K-8**

Look for an online **expanded version** of this Preview Guide with additional materials and activities! Go to: [www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org) and click on "For Teachers" then "Preview Guides and Student Activity Guides," and then "A Little Bit of Water Preview Guide." \*Available after January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Here are topics for discussion or activities to use before or after seeing the production:**

nature • science • water  
conservation • eco-friendly •  
environment • desert •  
storytelling • southwest history •  
native peoples

**Theater Etiquette:** It's helpful to review the rules of theater etiquette before seeing a show, especially since this may be the first live theater experience for some of your students. Please take a moment to discuss the following pointers prior to seeing the performance:

- ▶ Use the restroom before seeing the show as we do not have intermission during our school performances.
- ▶ Stay seated during the performance.
- ▶ Be respectful to the performers and other people in the audience by not talking during the performance. Remember, the actors can see and hear the audience just like you can see and hear them.
- ▶ Appropriate responses such as applause or laughter are always welcome.
- ▶ Food, candy, gum and beverages are not allowed during the performance.
- ▶ Use of cell phones (including text messaging), cameras or any other recording device is *not allowed during the performance at any time!*
- ▶ Following the performance (time permitting), the actors will give the audience an opportunity to ask some questions. The Q & A usually lasts about five to ten minutes.

**Hold That Thought:** Ask students the questions in **bold type** on this page before seeing the play and ask them to find the answers while watching the play. After the performance, review the questions and ask students to share their answers.

**About the Production:** How is an overhead projector used to help communicate the story?

**How are puppets used in the play? How do the actors use their voices, bodies and imaginations to create different characters? How many characters does each actor play? How many languages are spoken in the play?**

**Here are some vocabulary words to review:**

egrets \* eagles \* herons \* sagebrush  
\* mesquite \* evaporation \*  
melodramatic \* canal \* trench \*  
primitive \* commandeer \* riparian \*  
biodegradable \* conservation \*  
environmentalism \* habitat \* global  
warming \*

**The Art of Storytelling:** In the play, the character Marie is a professional story teller and Liz and Enrique are her apprentices. The entire premise of the play revolves around telling the story of the ribbon of green – a river in the desert. The oral tradition of storytelling has been around as long as humans have been on earth and have been able to communicate. Stories were often used to explain the unexplainable: life and death, nature, and the spiritual world, for example. As stories passed from one teller to another, from one generation to the next, they gradually changed and were recorded thus preserving their content. Today, the formal art of storytelling has grown in popularity with storytelling festivals happening all over the world. Storytelling, whether sharing a short tidbit about a personal experience or performing a story in front of an audience, is a tradition that is and will continue to be a major part of the human experience. Talk about storytelling before you see the production. **What makes a good story? What are the parts of a story (character, setting, conflict, resolution, point of view, etc.)? What is the difference between a personal story (one you tell to another) and a formal, written story? What makes a good story**

**teller (use of voice, body, eye contact, etc.)?**

**How Exposure to Nature Affects Our Children:**

The term “biophobia” is used to describe children (and adults) who display an aversion to nature. Are we creating a generation of “biophobic” children? Is this “biophobia” contributing to problems like childhood obesity and attention deficit disorder? Studies now say that children need nature in order to improve mental and physical well-being. The phrase “nature deficit disorder” (coined by Richard Louv in his book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*) has been used to describe the effects of the absence of nature in a child's life. Louv says that problems like obesity, depression, attention disorders and stress can help be alleviated with regular exposure to nature. Before computers and video games, children were sent outside to entertain themselves. Nowadays, children are involved in a number of organized activities from soccer practice to piano lessons and their unstructured free time is limited. Many parents are more comfortable with children playing indoors so they don't have to worry as much about their safety. A study by the University of Maryland reported that between 1997 and 2003 there was a 50% drop in kids who participated in outdoor activities. The Nature Conservancy found that children under 13 now take part in freestyle, play outdoors for only a half-hour a week. When children have free time to play and explore they engage their imaginations in a different way than they do when playing sports or other organized activities. The benefits of spending time outdoors are numerous and can only help our children to gain respect for the environment and living things.

-Source: Raising Healthier Kids, USA WEEKEND, Nov.16-18, 2007

## Things To Talk About and Do After Seeing *A Little Bit of Water...*

### Discussion Starters

**Story Structure:** All plays have three P's: People in a Place with a Problem. **Where does the play take place (setting)? Who are the people (or characters)? What are the problems (conflicts)?** Talk about the plot: **What happens at the beginning of the play? The middle? The end? What is the climax or high point in the plot? Resolution?**

**Change:** In most stories and plays, characters make discoveries and often change as a result of their discoveries. **What discoveries do the characters make in the play? How do the characters change from the beginning of the play to the end?**

**Teamwork:** The two characters Enrique and Liz disagree throughout most of the play, but in the end, work as a team to accomplish a goal. **In what situations is teamwork important? Have you ever found it difficult to be a team player? What can you do to improve a situation in which someone doesn't want to cooperate as a team?**

### Activities Linked to Standards (samples noted in bold):

**Creative Drama/Theater: Public Service Announcements (P.S.A.):** In teams of two or three, write a 30-60 second commercial that communicates something that can be done to help the environment. Rehearse your P. S. A. and then share it with the rest of the class or make recordings of them and watch them on T.V. **T-S1C1-401, 4WP-RI**

**Character Interviews:** In pairs, create T.V. interviews with desert creatures, native peoples, pioneers,

wind, water, land or any other character that could be connected to the play. Write out a list of questions that the interviewer can ask and talk about what the answers should be. Rehearse asking and answering the questions and then share your interviews with the class. **T-S1C1-401, W-S3C2-01,-02,-03**

**Creature Puppets:** Choose one of the desert creatures mentioned in the play (or another one) for which you can create a puppet. It can be a hand puppet made with a sock, a finger puppet, a stick puppet or any other type you can imagine. Be creative with materials; you can make a puppet out of almost anything. Have a puppet sharing circle where everyone takes turns introducing their puppet to the rest of the group. **T-S1C2-01, VA-S1C-01,-02,-03**

**Personal Stories:** Think of something memorable that has happened to you that you could develop into a two minute story. Write down an outline of your story making sure it has a clear beginning, middle and end. With a partner, practice telling your story out loud. Think about using a loud voice, speaking clearly and using eye contact with your audience. Make your story interesting and fun to listen to. **T-S1C1-401, W-S3C1-01,-02**

### **Visual Art:**

**Sand Creations:** One of the inspirations for the use of the overhead projector in this production was the art of Ilana Yahav ([www.sandfantasy.com](http://www.sandfantasy.com)). You'll need a clear, glass pan (pyrex cake pan or pie dish), fine craft sand and an overhead projector. Put the pan on top of the projector and pour some sand into it. Turn on the projector and create things in the sand. Can you use this technique to help tell a story? **VA-S1C1-01,-02**

**Bird Drawings:** Research the many types of birds that can be found in Arizona and choose one

that you like. Find a good, color picture in a book or on the internet that you can use to help you draw your own version of the bird. Hang them around your classroom. **VA-S1C4-101, 5T-F1-01,-02**

### **Music:**

**Water Conservation Jingles:** A jingle is a catchy tune that is used to influence people to remember a product or a company. It's usually just a few sentences set to music. In teams, create short jingles to help audiences remember something about water conservation. Share with your class. **M-S1C4-01**

### **Writing and Reading:**

**Make Your Voice Heard:** You can influence change in the world by being an active member of society. Write a letter to the governor with your suggestions on water conservation. Take turns reading them out loud to the class. **W-S3C4-01**

**Cinquains:** A cinquain is a five line poem. Write a cinquain about water, (or something else connected to the production. Here's the format:  
line 1 - one word (noun) a title or name of the subject  
line 2 - two words (adjectives) describing the title  
line 3 - three words (verbs) describing an action related to the title  
line 4 - four words describing a feeling about the title, a complete sentence  
line 5 - one word referring back to the title of the poem  
Take turns reading them out loud to the class. **W-S3C1-01,-02**

### **Native Peoples:**

-Read Native American folktales. Identify the themes in the folktales and the moral of each tale. Write your own folktale about wastefulness. Be sure to include a beginning, middle, end and a moral.  
-Read about the lost Hohokam tribe. Use your imagination and write a story about what you think happened that caused them to vanish. **R-S2C1-01,-03**

## Interesting Internet Connections:

<http://phoenix.gov/riosalado>

-official website for The Rio Salado  
Habitat Restoration Area

<http://az.audubon.org>

-Arizona Audubon website

[www.caph2o4u.com/contest/correlations.htm](http://www.caph2o4u.com/contest/correlations.htm)

-Central Arizona Project educational website

[www.ag.arizona.edu/AZWATER](http://www.ag.arizona.edu/AZWATER)

-Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona

[www.projectwet.org/index.html](http://www.projectwet.org/index.html)

-teaching educators to teach students about water

<http://askabiologist.asu.edu/expstuff/experiments/birdsongs>

-ASU's great interactive site about birds and their songs

[www.whitehutchinson.com/children/articles/outdoor.shtml](http://www.whitehutchinson.com/children/articles/outdoor.shtml)

-an interesting article on children and playing outdoors

[www.ecokids.ca/pub/eco\\_info/topics/water/water/index.cfm](http://www.ecokids.ca/pub/eco_info/topics/water/water/index.cfm)

-water conservation around the house

<http://earth911.org/just-for-kids>

-all about what kids can do to help protect the environment

[www.ci.phoenix.az.us/WATER/watermen.html](http://www.ci.phoenix.az.us/WATER/watermen.html)

-city of phoenix water info for kids

[www.abirdsworld.com/html/kidsnest.html](http://www.abirdsworld.com/html/kidsnest.html)

-lots of links to bird sites

[www.sandfantasy.com](http://www.sandfantasy.com)

-inspiration for the use of sand and the overhead projector in  
the production design

[www.epa.gov/region01/students/pdfs/gndw\\_712.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/region01/students/pdfs/gndw_712.pdf)

-water cycle and water conservation guide for students



## About Childsplay:

Childsplay is a non-profit professional theatre company of adult actors, performing for young audiences and families.

Our Mission is 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, the hallmarks of childhood, which are the keys to the future.

We love to hear from our audience members!

**Childsplay**

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## A Little Bit of Water Booklist

Prepared with the help of  
Tim Wadham, Youth Services  
Coordinator for the Maricopa  
County Library District



### Curriculum Connections:

#### Nature

*Shape Me a Rhyme: Nature's Forms in Poetry* by Jane Yolen

*Color Me a Rhyme: Nature Poems for Young Readers* by Jane Yolen

*Linned's Almanac* by Christina Bjork

*Look Again!* By Tana Hoban

*Uno's Garden* by Graeme Base

*On Meadowview Street* by Henry Cole

*Yum! Mmmm! ¡Que Rico: America's Sproutings* by Pat Mora

#### Science

*Earth-Shaking Science Projects about Planet Earth* by Robert Gardner

*Exploratopia* by Pat Murphy

*The Magic School Bus and the Science Fair Expedition* by Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen

#### Water Conservation

*The Secret of Water: For the Children of the World* by Masaru Emoto

*The Magic School Bus at the Waterworks* by Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen

*What is Water? and Where is Water?* by Robin Nelson

*Water, Our Precious Resource* by Roy A. Gallant

*Agua Agua Agua: an Aesop's Fable* by Pat Mora

*The Water Hole* by Graeme Base

#### Environment

*Earth Smart: How to Take Care of the Environment* by Leslie Garrett

*Common Ground: The Water, Earth and Air We Share* by Molly Bang

*Just a Dream* by Chris Van Allsburg

*Window* by Jeannie Baker

*Where the Forest Meets the Sea* by Jeannie Baker

#### Desert

*Deserts: Thirsty Wonderlands* by Laura Purdie Salas

*A Desert Scrapbook: Dawn to Dusk in the Sonoran Desert* by Virginia Wright-Frierson

*One Day in the Desert* by Jean Craighead George

*Listen to the Desert/Oye al desierto* by Pat Mora

*The Desert is My Mother/El desierto es mi madre* by Pat Mora

*Coyote Raid in Cactus Canyon* by Jim Arnosky

*The Seed and the Giant Saguaro* by Jennifer Ward

#### Storytelling

*Jack Plank Tells Tales* by Natalie Babbitt

*The Adventures of Marco Polo* by Russell Freedman

*Wait! I Want to Tell you a Story* by Tom Willans

#### Southwest History

*In the Days of the Vaqueros: America's First True Cowboys* by Russell Freedman

*Empires Lost and Won: The Spanish Heritage in the Southwest* by Albert Marrin

*Weedflower* by Cynthia Kadohata

#### Native Peoples

*All Our Relatives: Traditional Native American Thoughts About Nature* by Paul Gobel

*Brother Eagle, Sister Sky: A Message from Chief Seattle* by Chief Seattle

*Bird Springs* by Carolyn Marsden

*Into the West* by James M. MacPherson

All materials are available through your local library. Check it out!



## Want Some Drama in Your Classroom?

If you would like help incorporating drama into your curriculum by having Teaching Artist come into your classroom, Childsplay can help. We offer a variety of artist-in-residence and teacher training experiences. We can also help with pre- and post-show activities related to the production as well as AZ Education Standards connections. For more information, contact Patricia Black, Director of Education, at: [pblack@childsplayaz.org](mailto:pblack@childsplayaz.org) or 480-350-8129