



A sneak peek of Childsplay's production of:

# THE SUN SERPENT

By José Cruz González

Music Composition by Daniel Valdez

October 29 - November 13, 2011

Tempe Center for the Arts, Studio Theatre

Recommended for ages 8 and older

[www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)

### Interesting Internet Links:

[www.aztec-history.com](http://www.aztec-history.com)

*A comprehensive source for Aztec history*

[www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Spanish\\_conquest\\_of\\_Mexico](http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Spanish_conquest_of_Mexico)

*Info on Spanish conquest of Mexico*

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<http://tinyurl.com/3kddd3g>

*Great video of Voladores (Sky Dancers)*

[www.native-languages.org/aztec-legends.htm](http://www.native-languages.org/aztec-legends.htm)

*Link to Aztec folktales and myths*

### Books to Check Out:

*Hernán Cortés* by Heather Wagner Lehrer

*The Spanish Conquest of America* by Michael Burgan

*The Aztec Empire* by Sunita Apte

*Aztec, Inca and Maya* by DK Publishing

*Indio* by Sherry Garland

*The Captive* by Scott O'Dell

### **The Story:**

Old and new worlds collide in this visually-stunning story of the conquest of Mexico. Is Cortés the Sun Serpent of Aztec legend rising from the sea to bring peace and harmony? Young Anahuac and his older brother believe so at first but Anahuac soon realizes all is not what it seems. He sets out to warn his brother who's marching with the conquistadors and discovers much about Aztec culture on his journey. A Childsplay world premiere featuring masks by Arizona's Zarco Guerrero.

### **Themes/Curricular Ties:**

Aztec culture \* Myths \* Spanish Conquest \* Storytelling \* World Religions \* Metaphor \* Journeys \* Loss of family \* Oppression \* Languages \* Epidemics \* Refugees \* War \* Cultural Identity \* History

### **Questions to ask before seeing the production:**

- 1) What are rituals and why are they important in cultures? What are some rituals you have in life?
- 2) What is a metaphor? Look for examples of metaphor in the play.
- 3) If you were to self identify as an animal what would it be and why?
- 4) What are some of the things the Spanish introduced to the Aztec culture? What are the riches that existed in the culture before the Spanish arrived?

### **Questions to ask after seeing the production:**

- 1) Share 3 visual images that stayed with you after seeing the play.
- 2) Tlememe, Anáhuac's older brother, decides to leave his family and fight for Cortés. Why does he make this choice? Why does Anáhuac chose not to join his brother in fighting for Cortés?
- 3) What are some examples from the play that can parallel events that are happening in our world today?
- 4) Teudile presented Cortez with a basket with the very best things from his culture. What would your basket include?

### **Sample Classroom Activities Connected to Arizona Education Standards:**

**5**

**Minute Activity**

When the Spanish came to what is now Mexico they gave people Christian names. These names surely sounded foreign to the Aztec people. Imagine that someone from another place decided you should have a new name. What would that name be and why? Take turns sharing with the class. **SS:G4: S2: C5: PO2: Describe the impact Spanish exploration had on Aztec and Incan cultures.**

**15**

**Minute Activity**

Talk about examples of ritual in the play. In pairs, come up with a ritualistic way to greet another person. Your greeting should have at least five steps including movements, sounds, and/or words. Practice your greeting with your partner. Try doing both a dramatic and comic version of your greeting. Share with the class. **SS: G4: S4: C4: PO6: Describe elements of culture.**

**30**

**Minute Activity**

Choose one character from the play and create your own mask for that character that you can wear or just hold in front of your face. Use ideas from the play or from your own imagination. Use paper plates, cardboard, markers, crayons and any other craft supplies you may have. Really think about designing your mask to communicate the personality of the character. Wearing the mask, try communicating: looking around, reacting in fear, showing sadness, about to attack, extreme fatigue, etc. **Theatre: S1: C2: Int: PO 201: Work individually to create a character for different types of theatre.**



### **About Childsplay:**

Childsplay is a professional non-profit 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, those hallmarks of childhood that are the keys to the future.

### **What We Do:**

In addition to our weekend public performances, we also offer three theatre experiences for our school audiences: Field Trips, School Tours and Artist in Residence Programs. Field trip performances, where students come to the theater and see a production, can be booked by contacting Beth Olson at 480-921-5757. School Tour Performances, where we come to your school or other location and perform, can be booked by contacting Jaime Fox at 480-921-5751. Artist in Residence Programs, which can be individually designed to meet the needs of your school or can be based on one of our many existing formats (page to stage, creating original work, use of drama to teach curriculum, professional development for teachers), can be booked by contacting Patricia Black at 480-921-5750.

### **Our Home:**

The Sybil B. Harrington Campus of Imagination and Wonder at Mitchell Park (formerly Mitchell School) is where you'll find our administrative offices, costume shop, prop shop, rehearsal spaces, and Academy classrooms. We love to hear from our audiences. Send your letters and reviews to:

**Address:** 900 S. Mitchell, Tempe, AZ 85281

**Phone:** 480-921-5700

**Email:** [info@childsplayaz.org](mailto:info@childsplayaz.org) **Web:** [www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/childsplayaz](http://www.facebook.com/childsplayaz)

**To help extend your theatre experience, check out the 360° Theatre Resource Center on our website!**



**We perform at the Tempe Center for the Arts  
700 W. Rio Salado Parkway  
Tempe, AZ 85281**

### **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 the audience can see and hear them.
- Appropriate responses such as applause or laughter are always welcome.
- Food, candy, gum and beverages will not be allowed in the theater/during the performance.
- Use of cell phones (including text messaging), cameras or any other recording device is not allowed in the theatre/during the performance at any time.
- Following the performance (time permitting) there will be a brief question/answer session where audience members will have an opportunity to ask the actors questions about the production.

