

breadbox theatre

Presents

Blue Moon

Created by Emil Sher
Performed by Nicole Grainger



Study Guide

Discussion Questions • Activity Centres • Resources

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About Breadbox Theatre

Breadbox Theatre was launched in 2005 by playwright Emil Sher to introduce younger audiences to the wonders of theatre on a small-scale. How small? The entire world of *Blue Moon* fits into a breadbox. Breadbox shows are performed in classrooms, libraries or similar intimate spaces, providing children from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 2 with a first-hand look at how a bit of an imagination goes a long way in feeding creativity.

About the Creative Team

Emil Sher founded Breadbox Theatre to serve a small community with large needs: younger, school age children whose first taste of theatre deserves all the thought and care that goes into a big-scale production. Emil is a former playwright-in-residence at the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People, where his adaptation of *Hana's Suitcase* premiered in March 2006. Other works for young audiences include *Bluenose*, a tale of three colonizing, clumsy pirates that toured Montreal in 2003 in a co-production by Black Theatre Workshop and Geordie Productions. *Beneath the Banyan Tree* — commissioned by acclaimed choreographer Lata Pada — chronicles a South Asian girl's journey to Canada through dance, puppets and music. A new production staged by Theatre Direct Canada toured schools in Ontario in the winter and spring of 2006. Also in the works is a play about schizophrenia that Emil is developing with the Workman Arts.

Nicole Grainger has been performing on both sides of Canada and in both Official Languages since she was 18 years old. She graduated with her Theatre Arts Diploma from Grant MacEwan College in 1997. Theatre for Young Audiences has always been a joy for her. She's toured with L'Uni Theatre in the French black light puppet theatre show *Barbapoisson* for schools across Alberta. One of her proudest accomplishments was when Theatre Zocolo hired her to choreograph and musically direct thirty-six children aged 8-16 in *The Other Party*. It received wonderful reviews and was a "Pick of the Fringe" at the Edmonton Fringe Festival. In Toronto, while pursuing a film and television career, Nicole couldn't resist the chance to choreograph *Fast Food Follies* for Solar Stage. She is thrilled to be performing *Blue Moon* for one of her favorite audiences. Nicole has also taught Acting for the Camera and Movement for Actors to children, teens and adults.

What's Inside Our Breadbox?

Characters

Oof (from Ouef, French for egg) — A friendly yellow egg

Layo (from “lay” an egg) — A yellow egg and friend to Layo

Groof (**Green** + **Oof**) — A green egg that comes from another planet

Rotto (as in a **Rotten** Egg) — A bully egg who leads other eggs to exclude Groof

Rotto's posse (bullies)

Spatula

Egg Slicer

Whisk

Props

Vegetable Steamer = Spaceship

Egg carton = Car

Egg cup = chairs (or stands for the eggs)

Egg timer = Clock (to show passage of time)

Cookie cutters = Stars

Paper plates = Moon and Sun

Synopsis

Blue Moon begins with a yellow sun (paper plate) rising over a yellow world as the sound of a crowing rooster marks the start of a new day. Two yellow eggs — Oof and Layo — begin the day by playing and singing *Yellow Submarine*. Their fun is cut short when a spaceship (vegetable steamer) lands in their midst. An alien (green egg) steps out of the spaceship, which then lifts off, leaving Groof the alien to fend for himself. Oof and Layo don't know what to make of the stranger. At first they're cautious, and then curious. They introduce themselves and everyone gets along but then Oof and Layo run off, leaving Groof feeling confused. A few moments later Oof and Layo return with some friends in a car (egg carton) and ask Groof to join them. He's glad to have some new friends, and everyone gets along well until Rotto (a bully) arrives on the scene. He orders Groof to separate himself from everyone else and tells Oof, Layo and the other eggs to leave. Rotto tells Groof he doesn't want him around but Groof stands his ground. Rotto calls on some mean-spirited friends (a spatula, whisk and egg slicer) to tease and taunt Groof, to no avail. Groof stays put but the experience of feeling ostracized leads him to tears. His cries attract the attention of Oof, Layo and their friends. When Groof wails and opens his mouth he exposes his insides: a yolk. No one can believe their eyes: Groof is just like them! Rotto refuses to believe it but can't deny that, appearances aside, he has a lot in common with Groof.

The sun goes down, a blue moon (paper plate) rises and a star (cookie cutter) twinkles in the sky. All the eggs head home for the night. But Groof has nowhere to go. Rotto invites him to stay at his home (an egg carton). As they sleep through the night the blue moon sprinkles moondust onto Rotto. The next morning, Groof jumps out of the carton and wants to play. But where's Rotto? Rotto finally emerges and Groof can't believe his eyes: Rotto is green. The new friends begin to play, looking forward to all that the day and their friendship have in store for them.

Teacher Talk

Engaging the students in pre-show activities provides you with information on students' prior knowledge about the themes of the show, and prepares the student to be a more focused audience, open to what the experience has to offer.

Pre-show Discussion and Activities

Introductory Activity

- Everyone brings or is given an orange/potato.
- They look at their own and other peoples, and tries to see the differences and similarities. They give it a name, and a personality.
- In pairs or small groups, they introduce their orange/potato to other children
- Next all the (oranges/potatoes) are put in a big bowl. The students must then try to find their own.
- They explain how they know their own (shape, size, special features etc.)
- Talk about how all the oranges/potatoes seemed the same, until they got to know them, and then each one seemed special.

Note: This exercise can also be done after the performance, but it is most effective before.

Introductory Discussion

- Ask the children if they have been the new kid in a school or neighbourhood
- Find out if they have ever welcomed a new kid into the school or neighbourhood
- Ask for some ways of making friends.
- Find out if all of their friends look just like them or do they have friends who are from different communities, speak different languages. What else is different about their friends?
- Tell the children that they are going to see a story about some Yellow Egg characters, Oof and Layo, who meet a green egg character, named Groof, who looks both different and the same as them. They are yellow, and the new creature is green. At first they are curious, then afraid, then friendly. Rotto, one of the yellow creatures, tells them not to play with the green creature because it is different. The story will show what the children decide to do.

Teacher Talk

Besides the themes, you want the children to know what to expect when they arrive at the performance. It is good to introduce them to some of the techniques of theatre.

Introduction to the Art Form

- Explain that the story is going to be told as theatre, a magical place where anything can happen
- The stage is a breadbox, which opens up to be the world of the characters in the play. There are going to be objects such as eggs, spatulas, veggie steamers which come to life. Use the synopsis to explain the meaning of the names.
- There will be one actor who will change her voice to play all of the characters

Teacher Talk

Giving the students one or two specific things to watch for during the performance encourages active listening and watching. It also provides a starting place for follow-up discussion and activities

What to watch and listen for during the performance

- How the artist makes the eggs and other objects look alive
- How the actor changes voices to create the different character
- What the characters learn about friendship during the play

Post-Show Discussion and Activities

Discussion:

- Ask questions to check on the students understanding of the events of the story.
- Ask some analysis and synthesis questions to find out what they have understood about the meaning of the story.
- Ask question about the various characters and their names. See if they can figure out how the characters got their names. (see vocabulary list). Ask for suggestions to name the other characters (Spatula, Whisk etc.) Then introduce names from Vocabulary List.
- Allow them to talk about their favourite parts of the story (funniest, scariest, saddest etc.)
- Introduce some common household or classroom items and see what kind of creatures they can imagine them becoming (e.g. the stapler could be a snapping dragon)
- Revisit the “What to Watch For” section to find out what they discovered about the art form. (creating characters, the actors techniques, etc.)
- Have a discussion about how people can be different on the inside and on the outside, and which is more important.

Whole Group Activities

- Read some books the issues explored in the story
- Make a large chart with the ordinary objects and what role they played in the story
- Make a mural with a common background and have children cut and paste characters from the story on to it.
- Have the children examine classroom supplies and see what objects they could become, and create a story with these objects.
- Learn a song about acceptance and understanding or friendship
- Have children introduce one of their friends and tell what they have in common

Activity Centres

The activities in this section are designed to be completed at activity centres, but they can also be done as whole group lessons.

Drama/Puppet Making

Purpose: Making a puppet from a plastic egg.
Creating a puppet show

Material needed: Plastic eggs, one per child
Googly Eyes (available from craft stores or art supply catalogues)
Glue, scissors, coloured paper, wool, and assorted art materials, egg cups or egg cartons

Instructions:

- Create a character by gluing the googly eyes and other art materials on to the egg.
- Give the character a name, and a personality
- Bring the character to life, by using movement and a special voice
- Find something in the room that would make a good car, house, spaceship for your creatures. Be sure to ask before you use it.
- Join with a partner and have the two creatures talk to each other
- Create a short puppet show with two or three friends.

Teacher Talk

Discuss the structure of a story (beginning, middle, and end) with the whole class before beginning this activity. Make time for them to share their puppet shows with the whole class.

Language Centre: Drawing and Labeling Vocabulary from the Play

Purpose: Make a picture dictionary of objects in the play

Material Needed:

- Magazines, store flyers, catalog etc.
- Glue, scissors, markers, small notebooks (bought or made)
- Picture dictionary for reference

Instructions:

- Work with a partner or small group
- Find and cut out (or draw) pictures of some of the object used in the play
- Paste the pictures into the notebook
- Use a picture dictionary, word wall, etc. to find out how to write the name of the object
- Print the name under the picture
- Beside the picture, draw how it was used in the play.
- Have an adult help you to label you drawing
- Put your Picture dictionary in the library corner for others to read

Social Studies/Life Skills Centre

Purpose: To make the children aware of prejudice
Based on outward appearance and the need to accept differences in people

It is important to be sensitive to children's feelings in this activity. Individual children's choices should be private, and not mentioned in the group discussion.

Materials Needed: pictures of children of all shapes, sizes, skin colour, eye colour, demonstrating different emotion, wearing different clothing

Instructions to the Students

- Collect and display pictures of children engaged in various activities, in various settings.
- Have children sort and categorize the pictures that they think are same and different. (rather than looking at the physical characteristics, have them focus on what the children are doing, or wearing, or how they are feeling. This way you are focusing on the similarities, in spite of the differences.

- Ask them to choose two children, from the pictures, that they imagine don't know each other, and see if they can find some things that they have in common.
- Back in the large group, discuss the choices made in general (don't centre anyone out) and talk about the importance of not judging people just by outward appearance. Remind them of the pre-show activity with the orange/potato, and the events in the play and see if they can make the connection.

Science Centre: Exploring Colours

Purpose: To find out how new colours are created by mixing primary colours together.

Material: water table, floor or desk covering, food colouring, crayons or paint and paint brush, painting paper, bowls or plastic containers, stir sticks, markers, chart paper, a commercial or homemade colour chart, including the name of the colours.

Instructions to the Students:

With food colouring

- Fill one plastic container half full of water. Add a few drops of food colouring
- Add a few drops of another colour to the container. What new colour did you create?
- Use a clean container and clean water, repeat with two new colours
- See what happens if you add a third colour to one of the containers.

With crayons or paint

- Complete the colour activity on Page 11, mixing two colours to see what new colour you make.
- Using crayon, draw a picture with a primary colour (red, blue, yellow). Using the side of a second crayon, or paint and brush, cover the picture with another colour and see what happens to the colour of your picture.

Links to Pre-Primary and Primary Curriculum

The activities in the guide will involve children in activities that:

- help them develop a sense of what is responsible, fair, and equitable treatment of themselves and others.
- include inquiry-based learning to build on children's spontaneous desire for exploration and to gradually guide them to become more focused and systematic in their observations and investigations
- allow them to explore objects and events around them and observe the results of their explorations
- invite them to gather, compare, sort, classify, order, interpret, describe observable characteristics and properties
- encourage them to interact with the children at the learning centres to introduce new vocabulary in all areas of learning

Teacher Resources

Program

Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades
[Video and Book] Sara Bullard, Jim Carnes, Marie Hofer, Nancy Polk, Rosa Hernandez Sheets. (1997). Southern Poverty Law Center: Montgomery, Al.
<http://www.splcenter.org/>

Books Available from Amazon.ca

Different Just Like Me (Hardcover)
by Lori Mitchell

Whoever You Are (Reading Rainbow Book) (Paperback)
by Mem Fox (Author), Leslie Staub (Illustrator) "Little one, whoever you are, wherever you are, there are little ones just like you all over the world..."

Three Cheers for Tacky (Paperback)
by Helen Lester (Author), Lynn M. Munsinger (Illustrator)

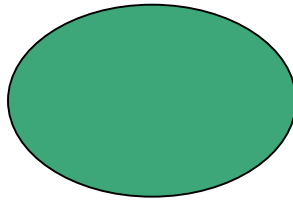
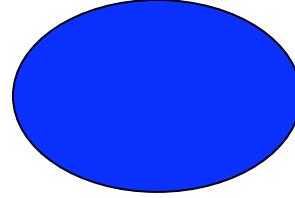
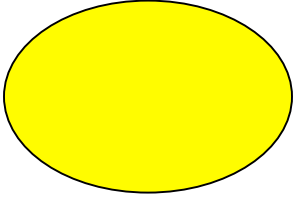
Websites

Multicultural Education and Culturally Responsive Teaching
<http://www.ithaca.edu/wise/topics/multicultural.htm> a link to many websites on related topics

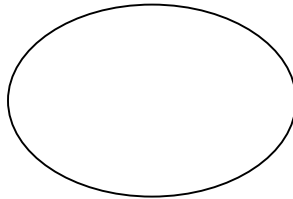
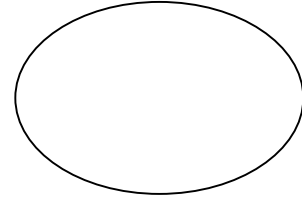
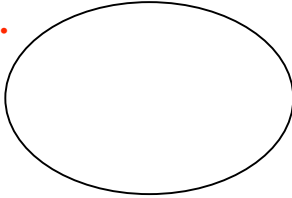
Mixing Colours

Colour the egg on the left one colour and the egg on the right another
Mix the two colours together on the third egg, to see what new colour appears.
Try some more on the back of the paper. Try mixing three colours together.

1.



2.



3.

