

# StoryMakers

Professional Touring Theater for Young People

## It's a Great, Really Big, Humongous, Ginormous, Lotta People Ball!

Written and Directed by Don Butler



### Performance Guide

**Performance Length:** One hour

**Recommended Grade Levels:** 3-5

**Suggested Curricula:** Character Education, Language Arts, Multicultural Education, Social Studies, Theatre

**NGSSS and Florida Standards:** RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.4.2, RL.4.3, RL.5.2, RL.5.3, RL.5.6, SS.3.G.1.3, SS.3.G.2.6, SS.3.G.4.3, SS.5.G.1.2, TH.3.S.1.1, TH.4.S.1.1, TH.5.S.1.3

Is it a small world after all? Hmmm. *StoryMakers* has looked around and decided NO! It's a huge, exciting, wondrous place with tales and lessons hidden in every nook and cranny of every country and culture on earth. And in the inimitable *StoryMakers'* way – the way of pure imagination – the best ones will spring to life before your very eyes. And who knows? Maybe you will even be asked to join it! It's a 360 degree learning curve, so hop on! Because, when you think about it, the world IS a great, really big, humongous, ginormous, lotta people ball!

In *It's a Great, Really Big, Humongous, Ginormous, Lotta People Ball!*, you'll learn lessons from five different cultures as told in their folk tales. And about ...

- South America and, specifically Brazil, maybe a few Portuguese words and a lesson in being happy.
- The generosity of the Bashkir people of Russia and the effects of being greedy.
- How the Zulu view ingratitude and how a lie can come back to harm you.
- Some ungrateful children in an oft told Jewish story.
- A dishonest Puerto Rican boy who thinks he's smarter than everybody else.

And through it all, you'll learn about some new places, some new words and meet some interesting and very flawed human beings.

## Program

### Prologue: Interactive Ball Toss

(Song: "It's a Great, Really Big, Humongous, Ginormous, Lotta People Ball!")

### Story One: Mr. Vinegar and His Fortune (Brazilian folktale)

(Song: "Robbers' Rap")

### Story Two: How Much Does a Man Need? (Russian folktale)

### Story Three: Jabu and The Lion (South African Zulu folktale)

(Song: "Wimoweh (The Lion Sings Tonight)")

### Story Four: The Chest of Broken Glass (Jewish folktale)

### Story Five: Paolo The Pesky Puerto Rican Pig Pranker (Puerto Rican folktale)

### Epilogue: The Verdict

### Finale:

(Song: "It's a Great, Really Big, Ginormous, Humongous, Lotta People Ball!")

## Vocabulary

Folklore is any of the beliefs, customs and traditions that people pass on from one generation to another. Ballads, fairy tales, folktales, legends and myths are folklore.

Folktales are often stories of animals that act like humans and live in a world of wonder and magic. Most of them have a message or moral or explain natural phenomena, such as where the sun goes at night.

Legends are fictional stories associated with a historical person or place.

Story One: Mr. Vinegar and His Fortune (Brazilian folktale)

Quetzal - vibrantly colored birds that live in the mountainous, tropical forests of Central America where they eat fruit, insects, lizards, and other small creatures.

Rainforest – characterized by high rainfall, with annual rainfall between 98 and 177 inches.

There are two types of rainforest: tropical and temperate.

Senhor – a Portuguese term of address equivalent to sir or Mr.

Siku – a traditional Andean panpipe found all across the Andes but is more typically associated with the music from the regions around Lake Titicaca.

Zampoña – a traditional Andean panpipe, commonly found in Peru, Bolivia and other areas of Latin America.

Story Two: How Much Does a Man Need? (Russian folktale)

Bashkir – a Turkic people, indigenous to Bashkortostan, extending on both sides of the Ural Mountains, on the place where Europe meets Asia.

Herring – an oily fish mostly found in the North Atlantic. They have a long history as an important food fish and are often salted, smoked or pickled.

Ruble – is a unit of currency in a number of countries in Eastern Europe closely associated with the economy of Russia.

Story Three: Jabu and The Lion (South African Zulu folktale)

Bhubesi – the Zulu name for lion.

Ingenious – clever, original and inventive.

Mfana – the Zulu word for boy.

Mpungushe – the Zulu word for jackal.

Ngane yami – the Zulu word for my child.

Stalking – pursuing or approaching stealthily.

Kwasuka sukela – “Long, long ago” or “Once upon a time.”

Story Four: The Chest of Broken Glass (Jewish folktale)

Brisket – a meat cut from the breast of an animal, typically a cow.

Bupkis – a Yiddish word for of little or no value.

Hasp – a slotted hinged metal plate that forms part of a fastening for a door or lid and is fitted over a metal loop and secured by a pin or padlock.

Hoarding - amassing (money or valued objects) and hiding or storing them away.

Locksmith - a person who makes and repairs locks.

Shards – pieces of broken ceramic, metal, glass or rock, typically having sharp edges.

Story Five: Paolo The Pesky Puerto Rican Pig Pranker (Puerto Rican folktale)

Alliteration – the repetition of the same sound or letter at the beginning of each or most of the words in a sentence.

Diabolical - having the qualities of a devil; devilish; fiendish; outrageously wicked.

Dinero – the Spanish word for money.

Menino – the Spanish word for boy.

Porquiños - the Spanish word for little pigs.  
Seis – the Spanish word for the number six.  
Slop – waste food used to feed pigs or other animals on a farm.  
Sow - a female adult pig.

## **Geography**

Andes – a mountain range in South America. The Andes, running along South America's western side, is among the world's longest mountain ranges. Its varied terrain – encompassing glaciers, volcanoes, grassland, desert, lakes and forest – shelters pre-Columbian archaeological sites and wildlife including chinchillas and Andean condors. From Venezuela in the north, it passes through Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile.

Bolivia - a country in central South America, with a varied terrain spanning Andes Mountains, the Atacama Desert and Amazon Basin rainforest.

Brazil - a vast South American country that stretches from the Amazon Basin in the north to vineyards and massive Iguazu Falls in the south.

Central America - the southernmost, isthmian portion of the North American continent, which connects with South America on the southeast.

Lake Titicaca - straddles the border between Peru and Bolivia in the Andes Mountains and is one of South America's largest lakes and the world's highest navigable body of water. Said to be the birthplace of the Incas, its home to numerous ruins.

Latin America - a region of the Americas that comprises countries where Romance languages are predominant; primarily Spanish and Portuguese, but also French.

Peru - a country in South America that's home to a section of the Amazon rainforest and Machu Picchu, an ancient Incan city set high in the Andes mountains.

Portugal - a southern European country on the Iberian Peninsula, bordering Spain and the Atlantic.

Puerto Rico - a Caribbean island and unincorporated U.S. territory with a landscape of green mountains, waterfalls and the tropical rainforest of El Yunque National Forest

Russia - the world's largest nation, bordering European and Asian countries as well as the Pacific and Arctic oceans. Its landscape ranges from tundra and forests to subtropical beaches.

South Africa - a country on the southernmost tip of the African continent, marked by several distinct ecosystems; vast shrub lands populated by big game; lush wine lands; wild beaches and craggy cliffs; forest and lagoons and the city of Cape Town, beneath flat-topped Table Mountain.

Ural Mountains - or simply the Urals, are a mountain range that runs approximately from north to south through western Russia, from the coast of the Arctic Ocean to the Ural River and northwestern Kazakhstan.

Volga River – The longest river in Europe and considered the national river of Russia. It flows from the Valdai hills northwest of Moscow all the way to the Caspian Sea.

## **Pre-performance Activities**

### **Social Studies activities**

- Discuss folktales with your students. Make sure that they know that the telling of stories is universal. It's common to both primitive and advanced societies. Even the forms of folktales are similar from culture to culture, with similar themes and narrative techniques. A folktale is a form of a traditional narrative.

- Invite your students to brainstorm about what accounts for folktale similarities among different cultures (often stories migrate with people; themes and morals are common cross-culturally).
- Also ask your students to look on a map and locate the following countries or territory: Brazil, Puerto Rico, Russia and South Africa.
- Invite them to compare and contrast the geography of these regions and to consider if the geography would contribute to the differences in the folktales.

### **Post-performance Activities**

#### Ask students to find out about their own cultural background:

- Go to the Library and find a folktale from their culture or country of origin.
- Read about their culture or country of origin by using an encyclopedia or travel material.
- Gather three facts about their cultural background to share with the rest of the class.
- Make a chart of these.

#### Conversational skills, oral language skills, listening and observation skills:

- Have the students retell the important events in the tales with the correct sequence of events.
- Ask questions (who, what, where, why, when, how) about the production and the tales.
- Solicit feedback and ask them to expand upon what they say by making personal connections.
- Discuss the setting, characters, problems, solutions and events in the tales.
- Compare and contrast two selected tales. What is the common theme in both tales? What are the similarities and differences between characters, settings and important events?
- Continue the classroom discussion while the students draw pictures of an imagined scene from the production.

#### Reading and writing skills

- Immediately after the performance, ask the class to brainstorm a list of things they thought about the production and write the list on the board. Then, ask the students to each write a letter. They may address the letters to one of the characters from the show or to one of the actors. They may use ideas from the list the class created or come up with their own.
- Use a graphic organizer to state the main idea of one of the tales and list important details. (<http://www.engagingmindsonline.com/blog/26-blog/264-use-graphic-organizers-for-note-taking-too>) Complete one together with the class, before having each student complete one for any of the other tales.
- Write the names of the main characters on the board. With the class, list 10 adjectives below each that describe that character. Have each student choose a character and write a paragraph explaining why he/she liked that character and compare him/herself to that character.



### **The Story On Story Theater**

So what's the story on Story Theater? What is it and where did it come from? Story Theater was the idea of a man named Paul Sills whose mother was a famous acting teacher named Viola Spolin. She is called the mother of improvisation. Improvisation is when actors work without a script and usually take suggestions from the audience and then make up a play or scene right on the spot without using sets, costumes or props.

Paul Sills took this idea and developed it into what we call Story Theater. Although what you see on stage has been rehearsed and the actors have used a script, a lot of what they do comes through playing theater games and improvising on fairy tales, folk tales or just about any good story. The magic of Story Theater happens when the actors use what we call "space objects". They simply "find" an object in the air and make you see it. When the actors believe that what they are doing is real, and that the things they are using are real, then suddenly, they are. When the actors can "see" the invisible and "touch" the invisible, like magic, it becomes visible and you can see it too. But they have to believe so that you can believe.

The best thing about this kind of theater is that you are limited only by your own imagination. So, if you want to be in a castle, well then, go there! If you want to ride a horse, then saddle up! Fly that plane! Grab a ball! Sail that ship! There is nothing to stop you. And if you really see it—really believe it—others will too. Go ahead. Give it a try! It's fun. It's magic. It's Story Theater.

**Additional Suggested Activities Before the Performance:**

- Read some folktales and stories from cultures around the globe and write a summary or book report of your favorite story.
- Interview family members about your cultural heritage and any stories that they might know that can be passed on to you. Record your findings and share what you learn with your class.
- Review “The Story on Story Theater” section of this guide.

**Additional Suggested Activities After the Performance:**

- Why is Brazil is the only country in South America whose national language is not Spanish?
- What's the difference between a folktale and a fable?
- Why are fairytales, nursery rhymes and folktales sometimes often scary?
- Take a story that you have learned from your family member and create your own Story Theater piece.

**Resources**

Books:

Bennett, William. *The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.

Websites:

American Folklore

<http://www.americanfolklore.net/index.html>

Read Write Think

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/exploring-world-cultures-through-91.html>

Scholastic’s “Myths, Folktales and Fairy Tales” Online Teacher’s Guide

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/index.htm>

World of Tales

[http://www.worldoftales.com/European\\_folktales/Portuguese\\_folktale\\_8.html](http://www.worldoftales.com/European_folktales/Portuguese_folktale_8.html)