



# Young Audiences of Massachusetts

## *Educational Materials*

Please forward to teachers

### **ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:**

**Behind the Mask Theatre:** *The Woman Who Outshone the Sun*

**Grade levels:** 1-6

**The Woman Who Outshone the Sun** is a story about a beautiful and mysterious woman with magical powers who is exiled from her mountain village. The river, their only water source, also leaves, for this is a magic river, in love with the heroine of this tale. Through their suffering for what they have lost, the villagers learn important lessons of tolerance, forgiveness, and the frailty of the ecosystem. **The Woman** is performed as a bilingual play (Spanish and English), and adapted from book by Rosalma Zubizarreta, based on a poem by Alejandro Cruz Martinez, which is inspired by a Zapotec folk tale.

### **LEARNING GOALS:**

1. To bring to life the story of **The Woman Who Outshone the Sun** through the use of mask theatre.
2. To explore the lessons of traditional folklore in modern society.

### **PRE-ACTIVITY SUMMARY:**

Wearing masks helps us to understand characters from folklore. When we put on a mask, we look at the world through the character's eyes and find new voices, movements, and points of view. As a group, imagine you looked, spoke, and moved as a character very different from yourself.

### **POST-ACTIVITY SUMMARY:**

Retell the **Woman Who Outshone the Sun** with students. Have students recreate the story so it takes place today. Do students better understand the lessons in the folk tale when it is set in modern times?

### **CURRICULUM LINKS:**

Visual Arts, Theater, Music, History and Social Science, Spanish Language Arts

## PRE-ACTIVITY: *Bringing Stories to Life with Masks*

### LEARNING GOAL:

To understand different points of view by portraying a character through wearing a mask.

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Plain white paper and drawing supplies.

TIME: 1 hour

**STEP 1: Ask** every student to name a favorite book, folk tale, and fairy tale. **Name** their favorite character in each of the three forms. (ie. Goldilocks - baby bear)

**STEP 2: Ask** every student to share *one* story and character from their list with the class.

**STEP 3:** Children will **choose** their favorite character from one the three categories, then, **draw** the face of that character on plain white paper and cut it out.

**STEP 4: Divide** the class into groups of four. Have children hold up the masks they made, then **walk, talk, and act**, like the character they chose within their groups.

**STEP 5: Discuss** with students how they felt when they were pretending they were somebody else. Was it easy or difficult for them to feel like a different person?

### EXTENSIONS:

Use a variety of arts materials in making the mask. Find out if the art teacher is willing to extend "mask- making" into his or her activities.

# POST-ACTIVITY: The Woman Who Outshone the Sun Today

**LEARNING GOAL:** To retell and discuss the story of **The Woman Who Outshone the Sun** in a contemporary setting.

**TIME:** 45 minutes - 1 hour

**STEP 1: Ask** students to retell the story of *The Woman Who Outshone the Sun*. Have one student begin with one sentence, then go around the room with each student adding one sentence to the tale until it is told in its completion.

**STEP 2: Discuss** ways to update the story to current time in regards to:

**Setting:** Where the story takes place.

**Characters:** Who will be portraying the important characters in the tale in regards to job, age, etc.

**Plot:** How events in the story could be changed to events that could happen now.

**STEP 3: Tell** the story again with the updated, modern details.

**STEP 4: Ask** students what they learned from the original version of the tale. Is the modern version easier to understand? Did they learn more from the characters once they were placed in situations the children could better relate to?

**VOCABULARY:**

Transformation

Bruja

Donde esta?

Perdon me.

Danos el rio, porfavor.

Iguana

Elder

Riverbed

Mexico

Villagers

**ABOUT THE PERFORMERS:**

Founded in 1990 by Eric Bornstein, Behind the Mask Theatre brings diverse, international folklore to life through the magic of Mask Theater, original music, and dance. Based in New England, the performers each bring unique skills to the troupe. Mr. Bornstein has studied mask making with prominent masters in Bali and Italy. His masks have appeared at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, The Fuller Craft Museum, Boston Lyric Opera, and Boston Ballet II; the troupe has performed at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, King Richard's Faire, and Christmas/Summer Revels. This show also highlights singer/actor Naomi Gurt Lind, stilter/clown Barbara Michaels, and artist Katja Esser. For more information on Behind the Mask Theatre, please consult the web site:

[www.behindthemask.org](http://www.behindthemask.org) or

<http://www.communityartsadvocates.org/behindthemask.html>

**ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:**

Young Audiences of Massachusetts (YA) is the oldest, largest and most utilized arts-in-education organization in the state and one of the largest in a national network of 33 chapters. For 35 years, YA has distinguished itself as the vital link between Massachusetts schoolchildren (K-12) and nearly 120 of the region's most accomplished actors, dancers, singers, instrumentalists, and storytellers. Its 32 ensembles offer over 60 interactive arts programs that represent a range of cultures, historical periods and artistic disciplines. YA is unique in its flexibility to offer interactive performances, tailor-made residencies, workshops, teacher-training, curriculum planning and multi-year projects. All programs come with educational materials and satisfy local, state and/or federal arts education standards.

**MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS CONNECTIONS**

*The Woman Who Outshone the Sun*

<i>Arts-Theatre 4</i>	Technical Theatre...demonstrate skills in using the basic tools, media, and techniques involved in theatrical production.
<i>Arts-Theatre 10</i>	Interdisciplinary Connections...Students will apply knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history, and social science, mathematics, and science and technology / engineering, and scripted scenes.
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<i>Arts-Music 6</i>	Purpose and Meaning in the Arts...describe the purpose for which works of dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and architecture were and are created.
<i>Arts-Music 8</i>	Concepts of Style, Stylistic Influence, and Stylistic Change... demonstrate understanding of styles, influence, change.
<i>Arts-Music 10</i>	Interdisciplinary Connections...apply knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history, and social science, mathematics, and science and technology / engineering.
<i>Arts-Connections 6-10</i>	Students will investigate the historical and cultural contexts of the arts, learn about the arts in their communities, and use their knowledge of the arts in the study of other disciplines.
<i>English Language Arts 9</i>	Students will identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed.
<i>English Language Arts 16</i>	Students will compare and contrast similar myths and narratives from different cultures and geographic regions.
<i>History &amp; Social Science 8</i>	Places and Regions of the World...Students will identify and explain the location and features of places and systems organized over time.

