

Outreach and Education Materials for the Department of Theatre and Drama
University Theatre Production of *Pedro and the War: A Cantata*

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NOTE

The study guide, sculpture activity, and the pre- and post-show activities were specifically devised for our production. Our annual Theatre for Young Audiences Production is tied to a semester long class which is scheduled Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 am to 1 pm. For the first 9 weeks, the cast rehearses the production during that time, while the Education Team, or E-Team, devises pre- and post-production activities to be implemented with the school audiences. In the two weeks leading up to the production, the E-Team travels to the schools for pre-assemblies. At this time they also pick any art work (in this case the sculptures, see below) instructions and materials for which are sent to individual classes beforehand. These works are displayed in the lobby during the run of the production. In addition, the teachers received a studyguide at the assembly, which they can copy and hand to their students or discuss as a group in class. Then post-production activities take place immediately following the performance and are led by the E-Team, with the actors.

While every production requires its own specific outreach activities, we hope that the ones included below may be helpful and serve as an inspiration. They are free to use as you wish. Please acknowledge the TfY Education Team of the Department of Theatre and Drama at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Manon van de Water

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Pedro and the War Cantata Sculpture Project

Enclosed you will find a variety of materials with which your class can make a sculpture to be displayed in the theatre lobby during the performances of *Pedro and the War Cantata*. We want this to be a collaborative artwork that relates to the themes of the play. We would love to see your creativity!

In *Pedro and the War Cantata*, the themes of hope, reconstruction, human resilience and the power of imagination are very important. You can use one of these themes as your inspiration or come up with a theme for your artwork based on something that is important to your class's culture.

In this kit you will find the following:

- Wood scraps from our scene shop
- Fabric scraps from past productions
- “Gel” – used for coloring lights onstage
- Buttons
- Feathers
- Foam shapes
- Colored rice
- Beads
- Batting
- Floral tape
- Wire
- Chenille stems
- Glue dots
- Tissue paper
- Stickers
- Pom-pons
- Construction paper
- Cardboard trays
- A few other surprises!

Feel free to use all of the materials and to add your own if you like.

We would love to see how your unique sculpture is created, so please include pictures of the artistic process (you can email them to us or print them out). You may also want to include an artists' statement (a piece of writing that explains your artistic approach to your sculpture) with your sculpture to help audience members understand how you created it.

PEDRO AND THE WAR CANTATA

by María Inés Falconi

UW-Madison Department of Theatre and Drama

The Playwright

María Inés Falconi is a very popular writer in Argentina and throughout Spanish-speaking countries in Ibero-America. She began writing plays (*teatro*) for young people (*espectáculos para niños*) in 1985. Her first play was *Tornillos Flojos* (*Loose Screws*). María Inés's plays have been produced by companies in Argentina (Province of Santa Fe, Cordoba, Entre Rios, Tierra del Fuego, Bahia Blanca, Necochea, Mar del Plata) and abroad (Spain, Venezuela, El Salvador, Uruguay). She also writes novels (*novelas*) and stories (*cuentos*) for young people. More than 20 of her novels and short stories have been published in Argentina and throughout Central America. Although María Inés Falconi's plays have not been translated to English very often, she is a very well-known author and playwright in Latin America. The production you are going to see is an original translation and adaptation, and the US premiere of the play.

Other Works

Here are some of the other plays María Inés Falconi has written. Try to guess what some of her plays might be titled in English.

1. Paquetito
2. Más Malo Que el Lobo
3. Chau, Señor Miedo
4. El Gordo y el Flaco
5. Caidos del Mapa
6. El Árbol de las Manzanas de Oro
7. Las Brujas No Existen

Answers: 1. Little Packet 2. The Worst Bad Wolf 3. Goodbye, Mr. Fear 4. The Fat One and the Skinny One 5. Fallen Map 6. The Tree of Golden Apples 7. Witches Don't Exist

Speak Spanish!

We translated *Pedro and the War Cantata* from Spanish, and it still includes several Spanish expressions. Did you know that over **400 million people** on Earth speak Spanish as their primary language at home? Here are some populations of Spanish-speaking countries and territories:

Argentina: 38,747,000	Ecuador: 13,228,000	Panama: 3,232,000
Bolivia: 9,182,000	El Salvador: 6,881,000	Paraguay: 6,158,000
Chile: 16,928,000	Guatemala: 12,599,000	Peru: 27,968,000
Colombia: 45,600,000	Honduras: 7,205,000	Puerto Rico: 3,726,000
Costa Rica: 4,401,000	Mexico: 112,322,000	Spain: 44,116,000
Cuba: 11,269,000	Nicaragua: 5,487,000	Uruguay: 3,463,000
Dominican Republic: 10,090,000		Venezuela: 26,749,000



La Música

In this play, music is very important. The title includes the word *cantata* (a medium-length narrative or descriptive piece of music with vocal solos and usually a chorus and instruments). One of the songs from the play is written below in both Spanish and English – see if you can say it in Spanish!

Por la mañana planto tomates
Por la tarde los veo crecer
Por la noche cae rocío
Y al otro día los voy a comer

I plant the seeds in the morning
After noon I watch them grow
The dew falls while I'm sleeping
And the next day I have tomatoes.

(This line is a tongue twister in Spanish and English! See how fast you can say it!)

Toma Tomás sus tomates
Y tus tomates, ¿quién los tomó?
Si Tomás toma sus tomates,
Mis tomates los tomo yo.

Tomás eats his tomatoes
And your tomatoes, who will eat those?
If Tomás eats his tomatoes,
In my belly, my own will go.

Who's Who in the Play

In this play, five actors play nineteen different parts. When you watch the play, pay close attention to each actor to see when he or she is switching roles.

Pedro is a young boy who is inquisitive and active. He experiences great change during the play and must persevere in a difficult situation.

Don Jose is an old man who helps with errands at the village school and befriends Pedro. He is not formally educated, but he is very wise.

Maria is Pedro's mother. She is a caring and protective mother who is very close to Pedro.

Don Cosme is the owner of the village store where everyone gathers. He seems to know everything that happens in the village.

La Maestra/Teacher is Pedro's teacher. She teaches all of the children of the village together, regardless of their ages.

Girl is one of Pedro's classmates in school.

Pancho is an older man who takes care of the cemetery. He is a little grumpy and not very smart.

Juan is a villager in the town where Pedro and his family live.

Margarita/Nurse is a nurse at the hospital in the play. She is kind, caring, and understanding.

Soldier is a man who meets Don Jose and eventually visits Pedro in his village.

Old Man, Woman, Man, and Boy are narrators in the story.

Get talking (or just thinking)!

Talk to a friend, in a group, or just think about these questions before and after the play!

Before the play

1. What stories are most important to you, your family, and your friends?
2. Have you ever found yourself in a situation beyond your control? How did you deal with it?
3. What do you learn from older people (like grandparents or older neighbors) in your community?
4. What is war, and why do we have war?
5. What gives you hope?
6. What do you do when you're bored?
7. How do you think the actors and designers will show war on stage? Or boredom? Or bring stories to life?

After the play

1. What was the first item you noticed on the stage?
2. Name three things you noticed about the set. Did the set help tell the story? What sort of set would you have designed?
3. What did you like about the costumes? Did they fit the story? What sort of costumes would you have designed?
4. What role did lighting play in telling the story? How did the lights enhance what you were seeing?
5. Were there moments you were so caught up in the story that you forgot you were watching a play? Talk about those moments.
6. What makes a stage play different than a television show or movie?
7. All actors play multiple characters. At what point in the play could you tell that it was the same person? What are some ways that you can be the same person but play different characters?

Be a Reviewer

We'd love to hear what you think of our production. Write a review of Pedro and the War Cantata. Tell us what you thought of the play and the story. Include some comments about the production elements, including the actors, set, costumes, sound, lights and special effects, then email it to us at **TFYproductions@theatre.wisc.edu**.

Or mail your review to us:

Pedro and the War Cantata E-Team
University Theatre
821 University Ave.
Madison WI 53706



Pedro and the War Cantata

Pre-Workshop Lesson Plan

Group Size: Flexible (up to 80)

Time Allotment: 30 minutes (flexible to 45)

Target Age: 8-13 (grades 3rd - 6th)

Materials: Bean Bags (24)

Workshop Goals: Student will be introduced to themes of community and cooperation via creative dramatics techniques in order to prepare students for a production of *Pedro and the War Cantata*.

Welcome and Gathering: (3 minutes)

Leaders will welcome the students and introduce themselves as part of the *Pedro and the War Cantata*'s Education Team. One of the leaders will explain that the students are coming to see a production of *Pedro*, and that the Education Team is here to prepare them for a journey into the life of a boy whose world was radically altered by the devastating effects of war.

Sensory Warm-up: Creative Movement and Finding Shelter

E-Team members (leaders) will have all students get on their feet and walk around the space, filling the entire room. Students will be sidecoached to incorporate different prompts to shift their movement. The sidecoaching moves from literal to abstract as students demonstrate increasing competency with the exercise. Prompts may include:

- Move various speeds (fast, slow, through maple syrup, as if wound up like toy, etc.)
- Move through different states of weather (a beautiful summer day, a cold snowy evening, a terrible thunderstorm)
- Move through different states of being (angry, happy, silly, wide, tight)
- Move as colors

Leaders will prepare students for a non-verbal game of finding shelter. As the students move through the space while listening to the leaders' sidecoaching, leaders will call out, "Find shelter!" Groups of three students will create a shelter structure as fast as possible (2 students reach out their arms, forming a shelter with their bodies. Another student will enter the shelter, crouching inside). The participants will be asked to complete this task as fast as possible. As soon as the group makes their shelter, the leaders break them up and begin the creative movement exercise again. Leaders sustain the activity for several minutes. Upon completion, the leaders will ask the following questions:

- How did you figure out how to show the different feelings or states of being in your movement?
- How did the need to find shelter change your movement?
- Did anyone start moving closer to friends so you could form a shelter together? Why?
- Did anyone end up in a shelter with someone they did not know well? How did that feel?
- Was anyone left out? Did anyone let someone in even after you had three people? Why?

Leaders facilitate a brief conversation about Finding Shelter’s connection to *Pedro and the War Cantata*: “In the play, a community has to come together in an emergency to help out people they may not know or even like. Some of the issues that came up in our activity also come up for the characters in the play. Let’s do another activity to think about these issues.”

Activity: Bean Bag Express

Leaders will instruct students to form two lines: Line A and Line B (additional lines may be formed based on group size)

Leader will instruct the groups to send the bean bags down the line (6 per line). Leader explains that if a beanbag drops, the line will need to send it back to the beginning and start over. The group begins. At first, this activity will be very easy. Most students simply pass down the beanbags with their hands and quickly finish.

The leaders engage in a conversation about this activity:

- How many people found this activity really easy? Why?
- How many people were trying to race? Why?
- Was it easy or difficult to cooperate on this task? Why?
- What makes cooperation effective or ineffective?

The leaders then increase difficulty, taking away the hands of the participants. They may pass the beanbag any way as long as no hands touch it. Leaders will sidecoach to encourage cooperation to complete the task instead of to be the winner. Afterwards, group will discuss how they approached the task:

- What were modifications you had to make to pass the beanbags?
- Was this level still easy? Why?
- Did any new challenges come in? What were they? How did you deal with them?

The leaders institute an additional level of complexity: no use of arms. The leaders may need to discuss with the participants how they might move the beanbags if the group struggles. Many

groups will use feet, torsos, etc. The game will be challenging and may even need to be stopped before completing the task for discussion:

- Did anyone experience frustration? Why? How did you deal with it?
- How did you manage to cooperate?
- Did you complete the task? Why or why not?
- Did anyone cheat at the game (let a beanbag drop and not send it back, use a hand or arm)? Why? What effect did it have on the game?

This conversation leads into a discussion of Pedro and the War Cantata through leaders connecting the increasing difficulty of the game to the experiences a community might feel after a tragic event:

- “In *Pedro and the War Cantata*, an entire community must come together to rebuild their community. What are some challenges they might experience in accomplishing these tasks?”
- Do you think the community had any struggles with cooperation? How did they sort them out?
- Do you think community members might cheat the rules? If so, why? If not, why?
- How do communities come together and work toward a common goal? Did you and your line adopt any of these strategies to help you with beanbags?

Extension Activity: Community Tableaux

Leaders explain the concept of tableaux (a frozen picture made of actors that conveys an idea) and leads the group through creating a tableaux about themes related to cooperation and community emergent from the discussion during the Beanbag Express activity. The leaders should first model the concept using student input. Example: “Sara mentioned that she and her group had to move their bodies in different ways to get the beanbag to move. Where is another moment in life where you might have to adjust your movement to help someone or be part of a team?” Possible responses: “When I play soccer, I have to be certain not to use my hands so I don’t foul the team.”

The leaders sidecoach the creation of a tableau that depicts this student’s idea. They might include a referee, two players, a soccer ball, etcetera. Leaders might engage students, based on comfort level and ability, about the differences between literal and figurative representation and model if time permits.

Afterwards, the group breaks in smaller groups of 3-5 students. They generate a tableau that demonstrates an image of cooperation different than the example used in the modeling. Leaders can engage participants in a conversation about the different tableaux:

- What do you see here?

-
- How does this tableaux show us cooperation?
- Who has power in this image? Why?

If time permits, the leaders might facilitate modifications to the tableaux.

- How would this tableaux look different if it were from a different person's perspective?
- How do we increase the emotion in this image?
- How can we add a sense of movement or motion to this image?

Conclusion:

Leaders will thank students for their active participation and tell them that we cannot wait to see them again at the performance of *Pedro and the War Cantata*. Leader answer any questions about the performance from students if time permits.

Pedro and the War Cantata **Post Show Workshop**

Overview: The post show workshop was held immediately after the performance (in the original production, we led the audience on a backstage tour to provide the actors a short break before the workshop). We employed techniques adapted from Augusto Boal's Forum Theatre to engage students in an interactive, participatory workshop.

We were not looking to solve conflicts from the play's larger narrative during this workshop, but instead, we used points of conflict to activate conversation with our audiences about major issues in the play including relationships between parents and children, the impact of war on communities, the importance of hope and resiliency, etc.

Scenario 1. A Visit to the Village (5-10 minutes)

Objective: Encourage interaction between character and audience and open a space for open engagement about the play.

Performers needed: Full Cast

To begin, Education Team Facilitator invites actors back to the stage. The Facilitator explains that the actors had been taking a break and were now out of character. Facilitator surveys the audience to determine the different character roles portrayed by each of the actors, and one by one, asked the actor to transform into a character from the village. Audiences witness the actor transition from themselves into the character they played in the village. Characters included:

- Pancho
- Pedro
- Maria (mother)
- Don Jose
- Don Cosme

After the actors transform into the characters, the Facilitator encourages the audience to ask questions about the village before, during, and after the war. *Some questions asked by our audiences during the workshops:*

- *What exactly happened the day of the bomb?*
- *What is life like after the bomb?*
- *How old are you, Pedro?*
- *What do you all eat in your village?*
- *What happened to Don Jose after the hospital?*
- *What do you do for fun in your village?*

Actors answer the questions in role.

Scenario 2: Pedro, Lucia, and the Ponytail (8-10 minutes)

Objective: Explore alternative solutions to unseen scenes in the play via dramatic engagement with the audience; introduce Forum theatre techniques

Characters Needed: Pedro, Lucia, Teacher

Facilitator invites Pedro, character playing Lucia, and the teacher to the stage.

1. Facilitator asks the audience: Do you remember a problem Pedro described in school with the pretty neighbor girl, Lucia? *In our production, all audiences remembered Pedro's discussion of pulling Lucia's ponytail from the play.*
2. Facilitator explains that audience didn't see this scene in the play, but they can see it now to learn more about Pedro and his experiences in the village.
3. Facilitator asks: Why would Pedro pull Lucia's ponytail?
4. Facilitator solicits several answers from the audience. *Examples of some answers given by our audiences:*
 - a. *He wants her attention.*
 - b. *He likes her.*
 - c. *He is bored in school.*
5. Facilitator asks the audience to watch the scene. Actors improvise a classroom where Pedro pulls Lucia's ponytail. The teacher intervenes, and the audience sees Pedro lie about pulling Lucia's ponytail.
6. Facilitator freezes the scene.
7. Facilitator asks:
 - a. What is happening here?
 - b. Does this seem like something that happen in your classroom? *If audience says "No," Facilitator should make adjustments to the scene and replay it for the audience. We found that audiences found it realistic.*
 - c. What does Pedro want? What does Lucia want? *Examples of responses from our audiences:*
 - i. *Pedro wants to get Lucia's attention.*
 - ii. *Pedro want not to be bored in class.*
 - iii. *Pedro wants some attention.*
 - iv. *Lucia wants Pedro to leave her alone.*
 - v. *Lucia wants to pay attention to the lesson.*
 - d. Two options exist here: To follow the scene from Pedro's perspective or from Lucia's perspective.
 - i. For Pedro, Facilitator asks:
 1. What can Pedro do to get what he wants? *Examples from audiences:*
 - a. *He can send her a note.*
 - b. *He can show her his drawings.*
 - c. *He can move his seat.*
 - ii. For Lucia, Facilitator asks:
 1. What can Lucia do to get what she wants? *Examples from audiences:*
 - a. *She can hit him.*
 - b. *She can pull his hair back.*
 - c. *She can tell the teacher.*
 - d. *She can move her seat.*
 - e. Facilitator solicits responses from the group. In this moment we found it

very important to take all responses without judgment including those that adults might find objectionable, like hitting, since we wanted to create an open space where audiences felt comfortable sharing.

- f. Facilitator asks if a member of the audience would like to try out an idea on stage. Facilitator selects a volunteer from the audience and together, they decide on a possible alternative. *Often, we found that the students liked choosing a hitting option for Lucia, which we would allow. We never had a student actually hit our actor playing Pedro, and the scene always developed with both Pedro and Lucia getting in trouble with the teacher, and thus, neither of them got what they wanted.*
- g. Facilitator allows the audience member and Pedro to play out the scene until a moment of conflict or tension.
- h. Facilitator engaged audience in discussion about what was happening and if the characters were getting what they wanted
- i. Facilitator tries 3-4 different solutions.

Scenario 3: Convincing the Soldier (Good Conscience/Bad Conscience)

Objective: Recognize competing motivations for characters in challenging situations and explore the inner thoughts of characters.

Characters Needed: Don Jose, Young Soldier

1. Facilitator asks:
 - What did the Soldier deliver to Pedro in the village?
 - Why was this delivery important? *Sample responses:*
 - *People would know that Pedro wasn't crazy.*
 - *Pedro would know he didn't dream everything.*
 - *Pedro would know that Don Jose was really there.*
 - *Pedro's mom would let him help in the village.*
2. Facilitator explains that Don Jose had to convince the Soldier to bring the letter to Pedro.
3. Facilitator asks:
 - a. Why would the Soldier not have wanted to bring the letter? *Sample responses:*
 - i. *He was injured.*
 - ii. *He wanted to see his own family.*
 - iii. *He thought Don Jose was crazy or lying.*
 - iv. *He had to go back to work.*
 - b. Why would the Soldier have wanted to bring the letter? *Sample responses:*
 - i. *He wanted to be nice.*
 - ii. *He felt bad for the old man.*
 - iii. *He is a soldier and part of his job is serving the people of his country.*
 - iv. *He wanted to know if the boy was real or not.*
 - c. What could Don Jose say to the Soldier to help convince him? *Sample responses:*
 - i. *"I am on my deathbed!"*

- ii. *“I have to make sure he knows I am ok.”*
 - iii. *He can beg.*
 - iv. *He can offer him money.*
4. Facilitator asks the actors to play the scene. Don Jose gives the letter to the soldier. The soldier has several reasons why he does not want to deliver the letter: he wants to get home to his family, he’s never been to Pedro’s town, he doesn’t know how to find Pedro, etc.
 5. Facilitator freezes the scene and asks for two volunteers to represent the opposite sides of his conscience, like a devil on one shoulder and an angel on the other, to try to persuade the soldier.
 6. Facilitator starts the scene, asking the consciences to engage with each other, speaking loud enough for the audience to hear.
 7. If necessary, Facilitator might freeze the scene and let the audience offer other suggestions or substitute in new participants.

Scenario 4: Convincing Mom

Objective: Engage with issues of powerlessness in children’s lives and discuss possible strategies for empowerment.

Characters Needed: Mom, Pedro

1. Facilitator asks
 - a. What would have happened to Pedro if Don Jose hadn’t convinced the Soldier to bring the letter to Pedro? *Sample responses:*
 - i. *He might go crazy.*
 - ii. *He might get mad.*
 - iii. *No one would believe him.*
 - iv. *He would have to find a way to get people to believe him*
 - v. *He would have to go find Don Jose.*
 - b. Facilitator asks Pedro and the Mom to act out the scene where Pedro attempts to convince his mother that Don Jose was in the cave with him. Actors improvise, with Pedro and his Mom discussing Pedro’s experience in the cave. Mom wants Pedro to stop telling stories because she thinks that he is either lying or being mentally affected by the stress of the ordeal.
 - c. Facilitator freezes the scene.
 - d. Facilitator asks:
 - i. Is this realistic?
 - ii. What does Pedro want? What does Mom want? Are either of them getting what they want? *Sample responses:*
 - a. *Mom wants Pedro to not be crazy.*
 - b. *Pedro wants his mom to believe him.*
 - e. Facilitator asks the audience for possible tactics for Pedro to try to get what he wants. *Sample responses:*
 - i. *He can show her the axe.*
 - ii. *He can show her the sweater.*
 - iii. *He can cry.*
 - iv. *He can beg.*

- v. *He can explain that he knows it sounds crazy.*
- f. Facilitator invites an actor to play Pedro to try to convince Mom. Mom is unwavering and continues to think Pedro is unwell.
- g. Facilitator asks the volunteer to incorporate other audience suggestions. After each attempt, Facilitator asks if Pedro is getting what he wants.
- h. Facilitator asks:
 - i. Have you ever tried to convince a grown up, like your mom or a teacher or your dad, that something was true, and they didn't believe you?
 - ii. How did that make you feel?
 - iii. How does Pedro feel right now?
 - iv. If the letter doesn't come, what will happen to Pedro?
- i. *We found this series of questions brought out some compelling conversation from the audiences. They discussed anger, mental health, how Pedro can cope if he's never believed, etc.*

Talkback: After scenario 4, Facilitator asked the actors to drop character, then the audience had a chance to engage in a Question & Answer session with the actors.

Facilitation Prompts

1. Was this realistic?
2. What was happening in this scene?
3. Who was the main character?
4. What did the main character want?
5. How did she try to get what she wanted?
6. Did she get what she wanted?
7. Did she make decisions that she wanted to make?
8. What prevented her from getting what she wanted?
9. What else could she have done to get what she wanted?
10. What other choices did she have?