



*En un Sol
Amarillo*

(Memorias de un temblor)

In a Yellow Sun

(Memories of an Earthquake)

A Teatro de los Andes Production
Directed by César Brie

DISCOVERY GUIDE

How to Use this Discovery Guide

¡BIENVENIDOS!

This guide is designed to enhance your experience and understanding of Center Theatre Group's first-ever all-Spanish play (with English supertitles): *En un Sol Amarillo*, a play developed by the Bolivian company Teatro de los Andes. It is based on research and recorded interviews from the survivors of the 1998 Aiquile earthquake, which measured 6.8 on the **Richter scale** and was one of the strongest in Bolivia during the last century.

In this guide you will find exercises that will help you gain a deeper understanding of the play. It will explore the process that Teatro de los Andes used when developing *En un Sol Amarillo*. This guide will also provide you with some tools to gather stories from family, neighbors or friends, which will help you craft an original **monologue**.

Vocabulary words are in **bold** type.
Definitions are within each section.

VOCABULARY

Monologue: A long speech by a single character to the audience or another actor

Richter scale: A mathematical scale used to express the amount of energy released by an earthquake; values go from 0 to 9; each increment of 1 is a 10-fold increase in energy

*A tremor is an instant,
but the earthquake continues.
It continues for months,
it lasts for years.*

—*En un Sol Amarillo*

Aiquile after the quake © PAHO/WHO

Objectives of this Discovery Guide

Introduce the
volatile history
of Bolivia

Build an
appreciation for
the lingering effects
of real world
catastrophes

Understand what
earthquakes are, why
they occur and how
to be prepared

Gain cultural
insights into the
artistic and dramatic
elements of *En un
Sol Amarillo*

Develop a monologue
using theatrical
interview techniques

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Aiquile after the quake © PAHO/WHO

BEFORE THE PLAY

About *EN UN SOL AMARILLO*

IN 1998, a devastating earthquake struck Aiquile, Bolivia, destroying houses, injuring hundreds and killing dozens. *En un Sol Amarillo* is a documentary play that weaves together material gathered from interviews, government reports and research about earthquakes in general and the Aiquile quake in particular. The result is a visually stunning production full of arresting choreography, haunting chants and dusky lighting. Performed in Spanish with English supertitles, *En un Sol Amarillo* tells the stories of the survivors of the quake as they deal with the after-shocks of the quake itself as well as the corrupt government and media response.

En un Sol Amarillo poetically retells these stories, which bare a marked resemblance to recent events in the United States. The play argues for social and political change, not only in Bolivia, but also in any place where elected officials have failed their citizens.



Did You Know?

- Bolivia was named for Simón Bolívar.
- Bolivia is 424,164 square miles, roughly the size of California and Texas combined.
- Bolivia has 18.6 people per square mile; California has 229.7.
- Bolivia has two capitals, La Paz and Sucre, and three official languages, Spanish, Aymara and Quechua.
- At 12,000 feet above sea level, La Paz, Bolivia, is nearly a fireproof city; there is not enough oxygen in the atmosphere to support fire.
- Bolivia has a navy but no seacoast.
- Bolivia has had 16 constitutions since it became independent in 1825; the United States, only one.
- Bolivia has suffered nearly 200 **coups d'état** in its 182-year history.
- The average Bolivian has a 7th grade education.
- Bolivia has a ratio of one television for every 10 people; in the United States the ratio is one to one.

And the Earth Moved

Adapted from "The Science of Earthquakes" by Lisa Wald, California Institute of Technology

THE EARTH HAS FOUR MAJOR LAYERS:

the inner core, outer core, mantle and lithosphere, or crust. The crust and the top of the mantle make up a thin skin on the surface of our planet. This skin is made up of many pieces, like a puzzle covering the surface of the earth. These puzzle pieces, called tectonic plates, move slowly, sliding past one another and bumping into each other. Since the edges of the plates are rough, they get stuck while the rest of the plate keeps moving. While the edges of the plates are stuck together, and the rest of the plate is moving, the energy that would normally cause the plates to slide past one another is being stored up.

When the force of the moving plates finally overcomes the friction of the jagged edges, it unsticks and all that stored energy is released. The surface where the plates slip is called a fault. The energy radiates outward from

the fault in all directions in the form of seismic waves, like ripples on a pond. The seismic waves shake the earth as they move through it, and when the waves reach the earth's surface, they shake the ground and anything on it, including our houses and us! This is an earthquake. The location on the earth's surface above the earthquake's origin is called the epicenter.

Sometimes an earthquake has foreshocks. These are smaller earthquakes that occur in the same place as the larger earthquake that follows. Scientists are unable to recognize that an earthquake is, in fact, a foreshock until the larger earthquake happens. The largest, principal earthquake is called the mainshock. Mainshocks always have aftershocks that happen in their same location. Depending on the size of the mainshock, aftershocks can continue for weeks, months and even years!

A Short History of Political Turmoil in Bolivia

By Rosemarie Lima

SINCE ITS INDEPENDENCE from Spain in 1825, Bolivia has endured constant political and economic instability, marked by war, military coups, social unrest and an ever-increasing gap between the country's rich and poor citizens. With large deposits of tin and natural gas, the country is rich in natural resources. This has attracted not only greedy politicians, but also the attention of the country's foreign neighbors.

In 1879, Bolivia lost its mineral-rich coastal territory to Chile, thus becoming a landlocked nation. The rubber-rich province of Acre was surrendered back to Brazil in 1903, following a successful independence movement within the region. In 1932, Paraguay won the Chaco War, gaining control of the Paraguay River – the only access to the Atlantic Ocean for both landlocked countries, and a region thought to be rich in oil.

Domestic politics in Bolivia has been characterized by constant turnover of corrupt governments, each seeking to milk personal profits from the country's resources. Military dictators and politicians competed

for control of the faltering economy and silenced dissent. From 1934 to 1982, there were 25 presidents and numerous coups d'état. Except for the brief Bolivian National Revolution period in the mid-1950s, the poor and indigenous populations have been largely ignored by their leaders. Although they make up two-thirds of the nation, until this century, the native peoples had little or no representation in government.

In 1982, democracy was established, but tensions continue between national leaders and the populace. Strict economic policies have spurred growth, but also increased unemployment, lowered wages and raised prices. Current president Juan Evo Morales Ayma, the first **indigenous** president, has promised to address these frustrations and increase representation for the indigenous peoples. Although his proposed reforms attract support from the poor, Morales faces opposition from wealthier regions and interests abroad, who fear that his plans might hurt the economy and stir up violence. In a country with a long history of political **tumult**, maintaining a democratic system remains one of Bolivia's greatest challenges.

PERU & BOLIVIA

BY J. ARROWOOD



Are You Ready?

Southern California is earthquake country. Below is a checklist of important items to have in a Disaster Kit at home. Talk to your family about being prepared.

- Toilet paper or tissues
- Flashlight & radio with extra batteries
- Whistle & light sticks
- Hand sanitizer or moist towlettes & trash bags
- Emergency blankets
- Cell phone
- Basic first-aid kit
- List of important phone numbers (Fire Department, Red Cross, family members, friends and neighbors)
- Fire extinguisher
- Dust masks
- Work gloves (to protect from broken glass)
- Nonperishable food (energy bars, canned meats & vegetables)
- Manual can opener
- Bottled water (3 gallons or more per person)
- Waterproof matches & a 100-hour candle
- Copies of important family documents

VOCABULARY

Coup d'état: A sudden, forcible takeover of a government, usually from within

Indigenous: Native; originating in a particular place

Tumult: A riot, uprising or commotion

Characteristics of Latin-American Theatre

LATIN AMERICA IS DEFINED as Mexico, all of Central and South America and the Spanish speaking Caribbean. The theatre of this region is usually performed in Spanish and blends traditions of both the indigenous peoples and European colonizers. Common elements include **tableau**, dance, religious themes and imagery, indigenous traditions, **satire**, **pun**, political activism, fable and audience participation.

The tradition of politically active theatre in Latin America has its roots in the ongoing political turmoil and instability of the region. *En un Sol Amarillo* combines criticism of a corrupt government with audience participation in a scene during which the audience is invited to throw paper rocks at a presidential candidate. The play uses tableaux to show the deep sorrow of losing loved ones and incorporates Quechua, the ancient language of the native peoples. In this case, using the indigenous language serves both to identify the primary victims of the quake and to give voice to a point of view usually ignored by the government.

VOCABULARY

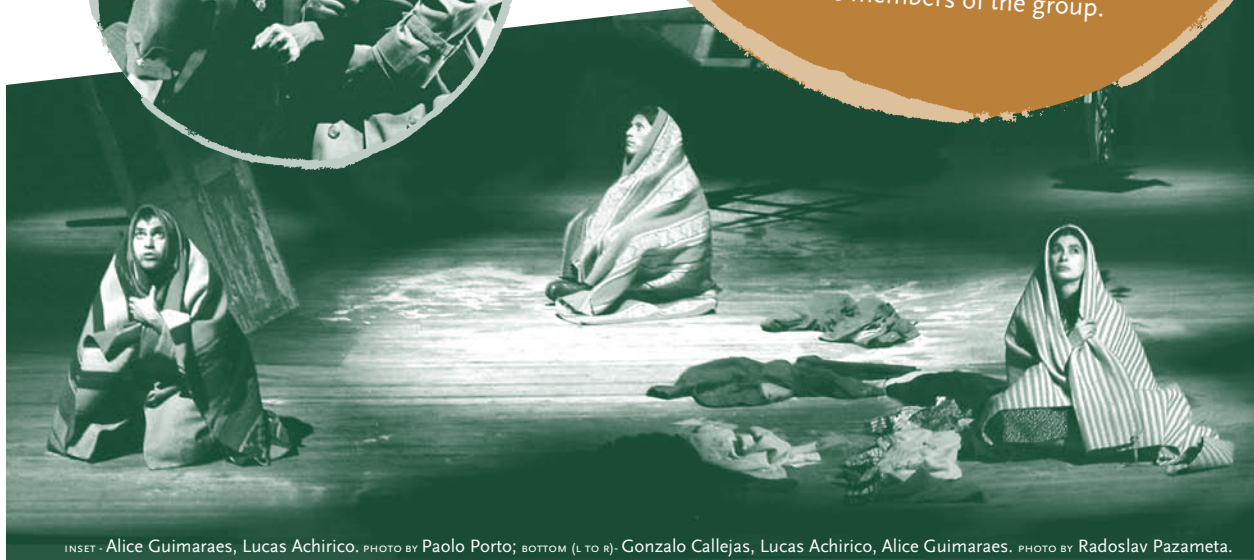
Pun: A form of wordplay in which a similar sounding word is substituted for comic effect

Satire: A comedic literary form that uses absurd exaggeration and implied comparison to point out flawed logic, inconsistency and incompetence

Tableau: A silent, motionless depiction of a scene or moment; plural: tableaux

The Company That Plays Together...

TEATRO DE LOS ANDES uses a cooperative approach to developing and staging work. They stay close to their roots by including Andean dance in their daily physical conditioning and hold meetings to decide upon future projects collectively. The actors handle all aspects of the theatrical creation process, from set design to choreography; actors are expected to crew their own shows and often hang their own lights and make their own costumes and props. Logistical planning and scheduling also falls to the members of the group.



INSET - Alice Guimaraes, Lucas Achirico. PHOTO BY Paolo Porto; BOTTOM (L TO R) - Gonzalo Callejas, Lucas Achirico, Alice Guimaraes. PHOTO BY Radoslav Pazameta.

Collecting Stories



EN UN SOL AMARILLO was crafted using interview-based theatre, a method that calls for a research and interview process revolving around a central event or issue. Teatro de los Andes interviewed survivors of the 1998 Aiquile earthquake and reviewed official documents about the government response. All of the text in the play is directly rooted in interviews with people with first-hand knowledge of the quake and its aftermath. Transcripts of the recorded interviews were edited and arranged to form the play.

Interview-based theatre was popularized in England in the 1970s by the Joint Stock Theatre Company. They created a distinctive style of playwriting, in which the actors helped to gather information and interviews.

This material was then used in a workshop setting to collectively develop a play with a playwright and director. Creating in this way adds authenticity and allows the audience to hear multiple voices and points of view.

Since then many people have used methods similar to Joint Stock, often to deal with the aftermath of a tragic event. Two examples of this are *The Laramie Project* by Moises Kaufman and the Members of the Tectonic Theatre Project, about a hate crime in Wyoming, and *Twilight: Los Angeles* by Anna Deavere Smith, about the riots following the acquittals in the Rodney King beating.

Aiquile after the quake © PAHO/WHO

Exercise: WHAT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED?

Is it important to recount personal histories and individual hardships? Why or why not?

Think about a disaster that has happened in your lifetime, such as the Minneapolis bridge collapse or Hurricane Katrina. If you were to write a monologue to show the experiences of the survivors, what would you want to know? Write down three questions you would ask.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



Lucas Achirico, Alice Guimaraes. PHOTO BY Paul Mehy.

Exercise: COLLECTING MEMORIES

Conduct an interview of a family member or other adult about a brush with disaster. Try to write down exactly what they say. After seeing the show you will use the answers to write an interview-based monologue.

1. What is a catastrophe you have witnessed? It could be a natural, social or political disaster (examples: earthquake, riot, military coup).

2. After the event, how did you respond? What did you do?

3. How did you feel?

4. Did the government respond? How? Can you think of a specific story to use as an example?

5. Did the news of the catastrophe spread? How?

6. Did help arrive? In what form?

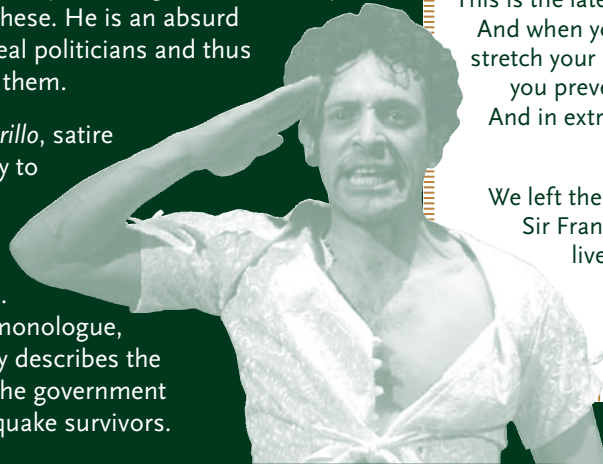
7. Had you been in charge during the catastrophe, how would you have responded to the crisis? What would you have done differently, or the same?

Satire: Comedy With Teeth

SATIRE IS a form of comedy that uses absurd exaggeration and implied comparisons to point out flawed logic, inconsistencies and incompetence. It is often used in political theatre to expose the foolishness and **hypocrisy** of governments and elected officials.

Much of the humor in *The Simpsons* comes from satire. Mayor Quimby is a satirical character, similar to politicians in *En un Sol Amarillo*. While elected officials in the real world are often accused of having affairs, stealing money or taking bribes, Quimby is guilty of all of these. He is an absurd exaggeration of real politicians and thus serves to satirize them.

In *En un Sol Amarillo*, satire is used repeatedly to critique the poor governmental response to the Aiquile quake. In the following monologue, an official proudly describes the tiny new homes the government has built for the quake survivors.



FUNCTIONARY

This house is a luxury; it's the latest fashion; it has multiple functions. A toilet with springs, no lid – your wife won't get mad that you left the lid full of urine. It also functions as a portable bathroom, you can !@#\$ wherever you want. If you have visitors you can go to the backyard, and if there's dogs you go back inside. It's earthquake proof; if there's a tremor you just put it on your head like a helmet. It's better to have your head full of !@#\$ than your head shredded to pieces. And at night, !@#\$ at home. Turn on the T.V. and the toilet can be an antennae.

Your perforated roof is perfect to observe the stars at night. If it rains, as you see, you get a free shower. This is the latest model of ecology; it's a hymn to nature. And when you sleep at night, after praying, lie down, stretch your legs and leave your legs outside, that way you prevent any bad odor entering your home. And in extreme cases, you have a natural chimney, for any unexpected odor.

We left the floor of dirt to keep it soft; and just like Sir Francis, you can share time with spiders, live with rats in supreme harmony. What more could you want?

—Translated by Sylvia Bofill

Daniel Aguirre. PHOTO BY Radoslav Pazameta.

Exercise: UNDERSTANDING SATIRE

1. Based on the Functionary's explanation, write a description of what these houses might really look like.

2. What makes the monologue funny? Be specific.

3. Who is the target of this satire? What is being said about them?

A Matter of Style

THEATRE IS VISUAL; plays are meant to be *performed*, not just read from the page. The type of visuals used and the way they are presented can change the meaning of the words you hear. Realistic imagery and movement tend to make the audience comfortable; they are seeing a world they know. Stylized or heightened images are unnatural, unfamiliar, yet the audience still understands what they are seeing. Stylization provides both emotional and intellectual impact – it makes you feel and think.

Since it is impossible to create a realistic earthquake on stage as effectively as they do in the movies, Teatro de los Andes uses stylized imagery to suggest

the terror and devastation of the earthquake. Each person’s story is told using a different visual effect, so the audience is repeatedly surprised and moved. The dead – victims of the quake – are remembered in a series of family photo-like tableaux.

All of this is achieved using four simple props: a table, a picture frame, a door, a chair. They are suspended from pulleys and manipulated to represent houses, rubble, even people. This unique visual style gives *En un Sol Amarillo* a powerful and lasting impact.

They all had the impression that an earthquake was unhinging the whole house.

—*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Gabriel García Márquez

Exercise: PLAN A TABLEAU

Take a few minutes to plan a tableau for one of the following situations or circumstances that occur in the play, and then share your work with the class.

- In an earthquake
- Building a house
- Dressing
- Giving a speech
- Buried under rubble
- Finishing a long hard journey
- Getting the news that your loved ones are alive



Are You Listening?

As you enjoy *En un Sol Amarillo*, pay close attention to not only the things you see, but also what you hear. Listen for the following phrases:

SPANISH	ENGLISH
No nos pregunte más ... no queremos acordarnos.	Don't ask us any more questions ... we don't want to remember
Luego, silencio total.	Later, there was total silence.
¡Gracias terremoto gracias!	Thank you earthquake, thank you!
Cierro los ojos a ver si así me hablan los muertos ...	I close my eyes to see if the dead speak ...

Aiquile after the quake © PAHO/WHO

AFTER THE PLAY

Exercise: REFLECTING

Take some time to reflect on your experience while watching *En un Sol Amarillo*. Think about what parts really stood out for you. What emotions did you feel while you were watching this play? What have you been thinking about since you left the theatre?

Review “A Matter of Style” on page 11. Think of all the different images you saw on stage. Describe three moments that you think were the most effective, and explain why.

1.

2.

3.

Review “Making a Statement” on page 9. Choose one example from the exercise above and describe what Teatro de los Andes wants the audience to do or think. Is it effective? Why or why not?

Concluding Remarks

Theatre has the power to communicate important ideas and concepts in many different ways and in many different languages. We hope this guide has enhanced your ability to relate to *En un Sol Amarillo* by providing background information, highlighting concepts and dissecting elements embedded in the play. Catastrophes affect us all whether they take place in the United States or across the world.

RESOURCES

WEBSITES

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/country_profiles/1210487.stm
BBC News country profile of Bolivia

teatrodelosandes.com
Teatro de los Andes official website (in Spanish)

www.data.sceec.org/chrono_index/northreq.html
The Southern California Earthquake Data Center

www.fema.gov/kids/index.htm
Federal Emergency Management Agency site for kids

www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio_Episode.aspx?episode=296
“After the Flood” interviews with people who lived through Hurricane Katrina

www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5028497
“After Katrina, ‘No Normal’ at Mississippi School”: Teachers speak about the pain and stress of many middle school students, displaced by Hurricane Katrina

www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1026774
“The Big One”: Interview with a seismologist from the U.S. Geological Survey

PLAYS

Twilight: Los Angeles by Anna Deavere Smith
(Anchor, 1994)

The Laramie Project by Moises Kaufman
(Vintage Books, 2001)

RECORDINGS

Donaueschinger Musiktage
(Col Legno / Qualiton imports, Ltd. CD, Released 2006)
Features songs by composer Cergio Prudencio, a contributor to the *En un Sol Amarillo* soundscape

ABOUT P.L.A.Y.

For 37 years, Center Theatre Group’s P.L.A.Y. (Performing for Los Angeles Youth) has served 25,000–35,000 young people, teachers and families annually through a variety of performances, residencies, discount ticket programs and innovative educational experiences. P.L.A.Y. offers programs that allow young people, teachers and families to attend productions at the Mark Taper Forum, Ahmanson and Kirk Douglas Theatres for low or no cost. P.L.A.Y. is dedicated to artistic excellence and innovation in its theatrical productions and to the development of young people’s skills and creativity through the exploration of theatre, its literature, art and imagination.

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DISCOVERY GUIDE CREDITS

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ON THE COVER: Daniel Aguirre. PHOTO BY Paolo Porto.

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P.L.A.Y.

PERFORMING FOR LOS ANGELES YOUTH



Target Family Performances

Spend a weekend afternoon with your whole family. See a play and you will have something new to talk about, something new to laugh about, new songs to sing together. These special performances are followed by a post-show discussion in the theatre. Get the most from the experience by brushing up before the show: check out the free Discovery Guides on our website.

AGES 6+

My Fair Lady

April 12, 2008, 2pm
Ahmanson Theatre

The classic musical about Eliza Doolittle's transformation from flower-seller to lady

A Waitress in Yellowstone

May 31, 2008, 2pm
Kirk Douglas Theatre

A contemporary musical fable about the hazards of doing the right thing

The Drowsy Chaperone

July 12, 2008, 2pm
Ahmanson Theatre

The madcap musical comedy returns after a run on Broadway.

AGES 11+

En un Sol Amarillo

November 3, 2007, 2pm
Kirk Douglas Theatre

A highly theatrical presentation of a story about the survivors of an earthquake; performed in Spanish with English supertitles.

No Child...

March 15, 2008, 2pm
Kirk Douglas Theatre

Thirty characters, one actress: a solo performance about the struggle to put on a middle school class play

HAVE QUESTIONS? Call Audience Services at [213.628.2772](tel:213.628.2772) or check out the parent guide on our website, CenterTheatreGroup.org/education.

Special
discounted ticket
prices start at just

\$20



L.A.'s Theatre Company

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