Blood Wedding
by FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA
Adapted by JOHN GRAHAM
Directed by CHRISTINE ADAIRE

STUDY GUIDE
Livestream dates: Oct 23–30, 2020
On-Demand viewing: Nov 6–13, 2020
Welcome All to *Blood Wedding*!

I love this play. Lorca’s relentlessness owns me. The play begins with a conversation between a mother and son.

"Hijo . . . you need lunch."
"Don’t bother yourself. I’ll eat some grapes. Get the jack knife for me.”
"Para qué"
"To cut the grapes."
"La navaja, la navaja . . . knives . . . Damn each and all and the monster who invented them."
"Let’s not start that."
"And shotguns, and pistols. The smallest knives. And even scythes and pitchforks. . ."
"Bueno. . ."
"Everything that can pierce a man’s body. A handsome man with the flowers of life in his mouth, going out to the vineyards or to his own olive trees, his inheritance. . ."
"Please, enough."

And the play comes to an end with that same mother in mourning, repeating these lines about the knife or la navaja at the beginning.

"And it barely fits in his hand,
But it penetrates cold,
Into the flesh amazed.
And there it is now at the place
Of trembling, entangled
Dark roots of a scream."

I am not giving anything away, as this is a play with a title that comes to be. This is a play of vendettas, and vendettas come to inevitable conclusions. This is a play about the legacy of violence and surviving grief, but also with real sparks of love and passion and mystery. The moon speaks after all. This is a play that is profoundly of its own time when written by Federico García Lorca in the 1930s, and it continues to resonate in our moment. It is a classic.

I am excited to see what the committed and deeply creative MFA class of 2022 directed by Christine Adaire, core faculty member and head of voice, will make this lean adaptation by John Graham. It is a testament to their ingenuity that this production demands a choreographer to make this piece soar. The pulse of this world must be obeyed. Enjoy!

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Pam MacKinnon (she/her)
Artistic Director

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Hello everyone,

Welcome to our fall season!

We are pleased at the ingenuity and resilience of the team at A.C.T. As a producing theater we are driven to create. While many theaters are not producing theater right now, we are bringing you numerous creations virtually until we can be together in person.

We have found a way to keep artists working and to profile the talents of our MFA students as part of our mainstage season. You are witnessing some of the top actors in this country at the beginning of their careers. It is inspirational to experience their learning and growth at the same time that they are pioneering live virtual theater for the field.

As part of our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, we are in the process of building a meaningful, continual relationship with the local Indigenous theater community. As part of this we begin by honoring the lands upon which we do our work. We would be proud to offer deep gratitude to the tribal band of Ramaytush Ohlone peoples and their lands that cover Northern California and down the Pacific coastline. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the 1700s, the Ramaytush Ohlone numbered approximately 1500 persons, and made their life on the sacred lands. Due to the invasion and the establishment of Franciscan Missions throughout California, only a few families survived and still remain. Those descendants make up the membership of the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone (ARO) today. We honor the Ohlone as a people, their resilience, and all they have done and continue to do in maintaining sacred and ancestral lands, ceremony, and communities to this day.

Thank you for being a part of this season. As a season pass holder, you have access to all virtual performances through June 2021. We plan on adding more events along the way, and those will all become a part of your package at no extra cost! If you’re coming to us by way of single tickets to this production, I hope you’ll check out the others we have to offer this fall. You can read more about them here. Then, stick around in December for our very first *A Christmas Carol: On Air*—a radio play adapted from our beloved holiday tradition.

One of the best ways you can help theaters navigate this time is to continue your commitment as a ticket buyer, as a donor, and to spread the word to your networks. Thank you for your participation. Enjoy the show!

With appreciation,

Jennifer Bielstein (she/her)
Executive Director
By FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA
Adapted by JOHN GRAHAM
Directed by CHRISTINE ADAIRE

THE CAST

BRIDEGROOM: HERNÁN ANGULO
LEONARDO’S WIFE: ZOE CHEN
FLAMENCO DANCER, MOON: EVANGELINE EDWARDS
MAID: GRACIE FOJTIK
NEIGHBOR, WOODCUTTER: NICK GIOVANNONI
LEONARDO: WESLEY GUIMARÃES
FATHER: MORGAN GUNTER
MOTHER-IN-LAW, YOUNG WOMAN: CASSANDRA HUNTER
MOTHER: BREEZY LEIGH
FLAMENCO DANCER, WOODCUTTER: JAMES MERCER
BRIDE: NICOLA RINOW
BEGGAR WOMAN: MADELINE ISABEL YAGLE

All cast members are students in A.C.T.’s Master of Fine Arts class of 2022.

STAGE MANAGEMENT

STAGE MANAGER: SAM L. WONG

CREATIVE TEAM

COSTUME DESIGNER: JESSIE AMOROSO
VISUAL/PROPS DESIGNER: RANDY WONG-WESTBROOKE
SOUND DESIGNER: CHRISTOPHER M. SAUCEDA
VIDEO DESIGNER: LUIS GARCIA
CHOREOGRAPHER: GABRIEL ROMERO
FLAMENCO CHOREOGRAPHER: DANYON DAVIS
FACULTY MOVEMENT COACH: LISA ANNE PORTER
FACULTY VOICE & DIALECT COACH: LILY HARRIS
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: RADHIKA RAO
STUDY GUIDE COPY: KARINA ANGULO, LEANNA KEYES, JOHNNY RICE, CONNOR SMALL, CHRIS STEVENS

CONSERVATORY PRODUCING TEAM

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS: KEN SAVAGE & ARIANA JOHNSON
CONSERVATORY PRODUCTION MANAGER: MIKE ANDERBURG
ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: ANDY CHAN DONALD
VIDEO CONTENT PRODUCER: BERYL BAKER

SPECIAL THANKS

KARINA ANGULO, LEANNA KEYES, JOHNNY RICE, CONNOR SMALL, CHRIS STEVENS

THIS PRODUCTION IS MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY:
THE BERNARD OSHER FOUNDATION AND JEWELS OF CHARITY, INC.
PLOT SUMMARY

Federico García Lorca’s *Blood Wedding* is a tragedy focusing on a woman and the two men who love her. The play examines the societal norms that keep her from being with the man she loves. The power of desire is explored as the play unveils the consequences of gender roles and isolation.

The Bride is in love with Leonardo, but their families do not get along, so Leonardo marries another woman. The Bride is also arranged to be married to another man, whom she doesn’t love, but will marry to appease her family’s wishes. Although Leonardo is married already, he confesses to the Bride that he is still in love with her. At first, she tells him to be silent, but then confesses that she still loves him, too.

Despite these revelations, she goes on with her marriage to the other man, but on the night of her wedding reception, she elopes with Leonardo. When their disappearance is revealed, the Mother commands that everybody search for them. In the forest that the Bride and Leonardo have fled into, the play takes a surrealistic turn. The Moon and Death work together to encourage the Bridegroom and Leonardo to kill each other. Leonardo and the Bridegroom meet and kill each other in a knife fight.

At the end of the play, the Bride returns to the church hoping the Bridegroom’s Mother will kill her, but she doesn’t. The play closes with both women reflecting on the deaths of the men. It should be noted that an alternate version of the play exists in which the Bride returns to town and is killed by the Mother to restore balance.

*This production contains brief references to violence and sex.*

*If you would like additional information about anything listed here, please call our Box Office at 415.749.2228.*

Share your show experience! Tag us in your posts (@ACTSanFrancisco) and use the hashtag #ACTBloodWedding
Federico García Lorca was obsessed by the spirit of Duende. Duende is one of the most elusive words in the Spanish language. Literally, it means “ghost” or “goblin.” In art, particularly drama, dance, and the music of Flamenco, it refers to the powerful energy emitted by a performer to captivate the audience. Lorca gave a lecture in Buenos Aires in 1933 in which he described duende as “a force, not a labor, a struggle, not a thought,” “the mystery, the roots that cling to the mire we all know,” and “a creature who sweep[s] the earth with its wings of rusty knives.” It is not based in reason or the intellect, it “surges up from the soles of the feet.”

Blood Wedding was inspired by a true story of a fatal feud between two families in Almería, high in the mountains of Southern rural Spain. It is a fierce play, written in only a week, in a frenzy of inspiration. Death, violence, pride, lust, and love are explored in a breathless race to a tragic end. In this production, we’ve introduced two Flamenco dancers who embody the spirit of duende. Their passion and relentless rhythm guide us through the story.

**JOHN GRAHAM**
(Adaptor) is an actor, director, educator, and vocal coach. He has worked at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, La MaMa Umbria International, Cincinnati Opera, San Francisco Stage Company, The Michael Chekhov Association, Plan-B Theatre Company, and StageWest Theatre. He has taught at Utah Valley University, The University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, Macalester College, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and is currently associate professor of theatre and head of the BFA acting program at Drake University. He received his BFA from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and an MFA in Acting from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**CHRISTINE ADAIRE**
(Director) is head of voice at A.C.T. She is a Designated Master Linklater Voice Teacher, and has worked as an actor, voice coach, and director in many American regional theaters, including The Old Globe, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, Chicago Shakespeare, Goodman Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Court Theatre, Theatre for a New Audience (NYC), Santa Cruz Shakespeare, La Jolla Playhouse, and Shakespeare & Company. Adaire has taught at DePaul University, National Theatre School of Canada, University of Massachusetts–Amherst, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, and Roosevelt University. Her current area of research and writing is gender affirming voice. (she/her)
**ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT**

**Federico García Lorca**  
Playwright, Poet (1898–c. 1936)

Federico García Lorca is considered one of Spain’s greatest poets and dramatists. One of his most successful poetry collections was *The Gypsy Ballads*.

Federico García Lorca was born June 5, 1898, in Fuente Vaqueros, Spain. He went to Madrid in 1919 where he met Salvador Dali, who would later design the scenery for a production of Lorca’s play. Lorca’s two most successful poetry collections were *Canciones* (Songs) and *Romancero Gitano* (The Gypsy Ballads). During the Spanish Civil war, he was shot to death by supporters of Francisco Franco.

Lorca’s two most successful poetry collections were *Canciones* (Songs), published in 1927, and *Romancero Gitano* (The Gypsy Ballads), published in 1928. Romancero Gitano was especially daring for the time with its exploration of sexual themes and made Lorca a celebrity in the literary world. In the 1930s, Lorca spent much of his time working on plays, including a folk drama trilogy: *Bodas de Sangre* (Blood Wedding) in 1933, *Yerma* in 1934, and *La Casa de Bernarda Alba* (The House of Bernarda Alba) in 1936.

Read more [here](#)

**Did you know?**

- From the 1920s to 1930s, Lorca lived with painter Salvador Dali and filmmaker Luis Buñuel in Madrid. Together they formed the avant-garde artist group La Generacion del 27.
- In 1929, he visited New York for ten months, a trip that reinvigorated his writing.
- Lorca was fascinated with the concept of Duende, and gave a speech about it in 1933.
- On Aug 16, 1936, Lorca was executed by Franco’s troops for being famous, homosexual, and liberal. In The New Yorker, John Lee Anderson writes about how the mysterious circumstances surrounding his death is forcing Spain to confront its civil war history.
- In 2015, newly released documents revealed the final hours of Lorca’s life.

**Read More!**

- [Lorca mystery may soon be solved but much of Spain’s past remains buried](#)
- [Dictators Kill Poets: On Federico García Lorca’s Last Days](#)
- [The Complicated History of Flamenco in Spain](#)
AN ACTOR’S NOTE—FROM HERNÁN ANGULO

Before we began rehearsal, we learned about *duende* (doo-EN-deh). It’s a Spanish term that is connected to flamenco. The term is also connected to the spirit of evocation, inspiration, and ignition. It’s a spirit that enters the body of the artist when they are performing, writing, and/or painting. It also enters the bodies of audience members when they see a performance or hear a song. Think about the last time you saw a performance that gave you chills or moved you so much it made you laugh or cry—that’s *duende*. We hope that when our audiences see *Blood Wedding*, they can feel the *duende* enter the soles of their feet and travel all the way up to their chests as they see the electrifying flamenco dancing and the characters in the play pursue the dualities of their freedom and possessions.
BLOOD WEDDING CREATIVE TEAM

CHRISTINE ADAIRE
Director

LILY HARRIS
Assistant Director

JESSIE AMOROSO
Costume Designer

RANDY WONG-WESTBROOKE
Visual Design/Props

CHRIS SAUCEDA
Sound

LUIS GARCIA
Video Designer

SAM L. WONG
Stage Manager

LISA TOWNSEND
Choreographer

GABRIEL ROMERO
Flamenco/Latin Dance Choreographer

DANYON DAVIS
Faculty Movement

LISA ANNE PORTER
Faculty Voice

Adapted by John Graham
by Federico García Lorca
DEATH AND WEDDINGS

Woodcutter 1:
Oh, rising death!
Death of the large leaves.

Woodcutter 2:
Do not open the jets of blood!

Woodcutter 1:
Oh, solitary death!
Death of the dry leaves.

Woodcutter 3:
Do not cover the wedding flowers!

Woodcutter 2:
Oh saddened death! Leave a green branch for love!

Woodcutter 1:
Oh, wicked death!
¡Deja para el amor la verde rama!

Death in Lorca’s plays always occurs in the fantastic, imaginary, poetic world placed offstage. The promise of abundance achieved through the ideal of the family, “where blood sits down to share a meal,” is proved to be false. The link between wedding and death appears in other classic plays such as Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, and female characters in Greek tragedy, which have been subject to enforced marriage under the threat of death: for example, Helen of Troy, Cassandra, and Antigone. For the Catholic Spanish society in which Lorca lived, death was an integral part of daily life. *(Sydney Theater, 2011)*

METAPHOR & SYMBOLISM

Mother: Aquí. Here is where I want to be. And in peace. Now they are all dead. At midnight I sleep, and I sleep without the fear of gun or knife. Other mothers would peer out of windows lashed by rain looking for the face of their child. Not I. I will make of my dream a cold ivory dove carrying camellias of frost to the graveyard. But, no! Cemetery? No. No cemetery; a bed of soil: a blanket and bed that cradles and rocks them in the sky. (Enter a woman in black that crosses right and kneels. Another Neighbor.) Take your hands from your face. We must face terrible days. I do not want to see anyone. The earth and me. My weeping and me. And these four walls. Ay! Ay! (Sits transfixed)

The metaphor is the most used literary form in Lorca’s work. Under the influence of Luis de Góngora, Lorca uses quite risky metaphors, where the distance between the real term and the imaginary one is quite big. He’s also a big fan of Neo-folklorism. Lorca never had a problem assimilating the new literary tendencies, but his work is full of traditional elements that denote his enormous literary culture. Music and traditional songs are constant presences in his poetry. However, from a formal point of view he’s not a poet who shows the variety of the traditional forms, instead he chooses to delve in the traditional aspects of his people and the country he lived in. *(Spanish Books)*
THEMES IN BLOOD WEDDING

MARRIAGE & MONEY

Mother in Law: They have money.

Young Girl: And they bought delicate lace stockings... Oh, what stockings! Stockings a woman dreams of! Look: a swallow here (points to her ankle), a ship here (points to her calf), and here a rose. (points to the thigh)

Mother in Law: ¡Niña!

Young Girl: A pink rose with stamen and stem! Ay! Everything in silk!

Mother in law: The rich marry the rich, increasing their capital.

Greed is a reoccurring theme in *Blood Wedding*. The economic standpoints of the Bride and Bridegroom are what determined their arrangement to marry, ensuring a healthy economic structure in their families. The Bride’s father works hard to make his money but cannot compete with the wealth of the Bridegroom. Leonardo being unable to marry the Bride had to do with his economic stability and how he cannot advance himself materially in the world. Individualism is also an important theme in the play. Leonardo is the only named character in the play and is trying to break away from society. He is a married man, but still in love with the Bride, therefore he runs off into a forest with the Bride in hopes to break away from the pressures of society.

THE INDIVIDUAL VS SOCIETY

Leonardo: Since my own wedding I’ve asked myself night and day who was at fault, and every time I find a new fault it eats up the old one; but there is always fault left!

Bride: A man on his horse knows much and can do much to press in on a girl abandoned in a desert. But I have my pride. That’s why I marry. I shall shut myself away with my husband, whom I have to love above all.

Leonardo and the Bride find their respective social positions intolerable and rebel against their fates. They break the bonds of marriage and destroy the equilibrium of the community. The way the characters are named in Lorca’s play reveals a great deal about how the playwright conceives this problem. With the exception of Leonardo, who instigates the disequilibrium, none of the characters are given proper names. Rather, they are designated according to their societal position or role. The Bride, therefore, is on her way to become a Wife or a Mother. The Bridegroom, besides being a son, is on his way to become a Husband or a Father. What this suggests is the manner in which, in some deep sense, there are no real individuals in societies, insofar as individualism entails total self-determination. In other words, to live in harmony with other humans, human beings in fact conform to a limited number of roles and possibilities that accord with the rules and agreements of social living and life. Hence, it is only Leonardo, who contests these rules, who can be individualized by being given a proper name. (Encyclopedia)


**GENERATIONAL CONFLICT**

_Mother: I’m sorry._

_(Pause)_

_How long have you been seeing each other?_

_Bridegroom: Three years. And now I’ve bought the vineyard._

_Mother: Three years. She was engaged before, no?_

_Bridegroom: No sé. I don’t think so. Girls have to look closely at who they marry._

_Mother: True. I did not look at anyone. I looked only at your father, and when they killed him I stared at this wall in front of me. One woman with one man, and that is it._

_Bridegroom: You know she’s a good girl._

_Mother: I do not doubt it. All the same, I am sorry I do not know what her mother was like._

_Bridegroom: Why does that matter?_

_Mother: (Giving him a look) Hijo._

Although the most prominent conflict in *Blood Wedding* is between the Bridegroom and Leonardo, generational conflict plays a subtler and more insidious role in the tragic events. The Bride rebels openly against the social mores of her parents’ generation; her actions can be read as a response to feeling trapped by the limited prospects that a woman had at this place and time. Although he is a man, the Bridegroom is similarly constrained, constantly having to explain his life decisions to Mother, who cannot understand why he would take the risk of associating with Leonardo Felix’s former love. Although he tries to incorporate Mother into his life, allowing her to live with himself and the Bride, she refuses, clinging adamantly to the past, as represented by her house near the cemetery.

**“BLOOD WEDDING”**

_Woodcutter 2: You have to follow your passion: They were right to flee._

_Woodcutter 1: They were deceiving each other and were finally overcome by their blood._

Blood is used as a symbol for the embodiment of the secret, passionate desires that the characters harbor. Blood in the context of a *Blood Wedding* can very well represent the mixing of familial blood and the deflowering of a bride on the wedding night, or the violent shedding of blood in conflict. Either way, blood is traditionally associated throughout literature with fierce, uncontrollable passion and love.
PASSION & DESIRE

Leonardo: To burn with desire and be silent is the greatest punishment we can bring on ourselves. How was I served by pride and not seeing you and letting you lie awake night after night? ¡De nada! It served to pour flames into me! Because you believe that time heals and walls protect, and it’s not true, no es verdad. When things pierce to your roots, they can’t be purged by anyone.

Bride: (Trembling) I can’t hear you. I mustn’t listen...your voice...It’s like I drank a bottle of Anise del Toro and I now sleep on a blanket of roses, and it drags me under, and I know I drown, and yet I must fall back.

In Blood Wedding, Federico García Lorca scrutinizes the nature of love and the ways in which passionate romance can affect a person’s control over his or her life. In his treatment of the Bride and the Bridegroom’s relationship, Lorca presents the audience with a seemingly blissful and logical pairing, one that should—for all intents and purposes—bring happiness to both partners. Although the Bride is clearly less invested in the relationship than her fiancé, she appears to actively want to marry him for practical reasons. However, she finds herself unable to go through with the marriage because her true love lies with Leonardo, who is one of the Bridegroom’s enemies.

Even after the Bride marries the Bridegroom, she isn’t safe from her own desires. This becomes evident when she elopes with Leonardo during the wedding’s afterparty, having finally given into her yearnings. This lapse of willpower illustrates how difficult it is to resist passion.

VIOLENCE, OLD FEUDS, AND REVENGE

Mother: (To Bridegroom) ¡Anda! Go! After them! (He exits with two young men. She call after them.) No! Do not go! These people kill quickly and well; but, run, and I’ll be behind you.

Father: It is not my daughter. Maybe she’s drowned herself in the well.

Mother: Honest women drown, Pure women. That one? No! But she is my son’s new bride. Two sides. There are two sides here now. My family and yours. Let us get out of here. Shake the dust from our shoes. We are going to help my son. For he has his people here; the cousins from the sea, and all who live inland. ¡Fuera de aquí! Get out of here! Get on the roads. The time of blood has come again. There are two sides. You with yours and me with mine. After Them! ¡Atrás!

In Blood Wedding, Lorca studies the allure of violence, investigating the odd way that humans are drawn to acts of revenge and retribution. By telling a tale about two families that have long been at war with one another, the playwright invites audience members to question the motivations that lie behind the various acts of violence fueling the feud.
BILINGUAL

Leonardo: (Rising) Vamos.
Wife: Together!

Leonardo: Sí. (Pause)
Let’s start! (He exits, leaving the wife alone on stage)

The production, in a new translation by John Graham, contains text in both English and the original Spanish. In this way, this adaptation of the play seems on one hand, closer to the original, and on the other, closer to contemporary United States, where Spanish is the second most spoken language (41 million native speakers which is 13% of the population).

POETRY AND VERSE:

Lorca’s playwriting reflected his genius as a poet. One might say that his plot was fairly simple; however, the poetry heightens its dramatic structure and intensifies the tragedy at the end.

First Young Man:
Awaken young dove!
The dawn is banishing
The shadows of Matins.

First Guest
The bride, the bride gowned in white, Today’s Maiden, Tomorrow’s wife.

First Young Woman:
Descend, dusky maid,
Dragging the silk of your train.

First Guest
Descend, small, dark maid.
Morning dew falls like cold rain.

First Young Man:
Awaken, my lady, awaken,
The orange blossoms pour through the breeze.
PRODUCTION PHOTOS OF BLOOD WEDDING

Blood Wedding at Augustana College in 2008

Blood Wedding at Wilma Hothouse Incubator. (Photo Credit- Bill Hebert)

Blood Wedding at Young Vic in London (Photo Credit: Marc Brenner)

Blood Wedding at University of Colorado, Denver
Discuss in Class!

• When are you carried away by your passions?
• What are some things you feel pressured to do that you would rather not?
• What are some aspects of society that are in conflict with your individuality?
• Which characters did you relate to the most? Why?
• How do you think Lorca’s Blood Wedding speaks to contemporary American society?

Standards Addressed:
National Arts Standards
Responding: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.
Anchor Standard #7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.
Anchor Standard #8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

CA VAPA Standards
Adv.TH:Re9
a. Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.
b. Compare and debate the connection between a drama/theatre work and contemporary issues that may impact audiences.
5. TH:Cn11.1
b. Explore the ethical responsibilities to oneself and others when observing and performing.

Let’s do some Improv!
Improvisation, or improv, is a form of live theatre in which the plot, characters, and dialogue of a game, scene, or story are made up in the moment. Often improvisers will take a suggestion from the audience or draw on some other source of inspiration to get started. Improv is based on the principle of Yes-And: improvisers agree and say yes to the made-up reality that starts off with audience suggestions or a scene partner’s initial move.

The challenge? Without a prewritten script, the actors act, direct themselves, craft the plot, and interact with each other all at the same time without previous planning.

What’s the Yes-And Principle of Improv?
Tina Fey sums it quite well in her book Bossypants (2011)
The first rule of improvisation is AGREE. Always agree and SAY YES. When you’re improvising, this means you are required to agree with whatever your partner has created. So if we’re improvising and I say, “Freeze, I have a gun,” and you say, “That’s not a gun. It’s your finger. You’re pointing your finger at me,” our improvised scene has ground to a halt. But if I say, “Freeze, I have a gun!” and you say, “The gun I gave you for Christmas! You bastard!” then we have started a scene because we have AGREED that my finger is in fact a Christmas gun...

...The second rule of improvisation is not only to say yes, but YES, AND. You are supposed to agree and then add something of your own. If I start a scene with “I can’t believe it’s so hot in here,” and you just say, “Yeah…” we’re kind of at a standstill. But if I say, “I can’t believe it’s so hot in here,” and you say, “What did you expect? We’re in hell.” Or if I say, “I can’t believe it’s so hot in here,” and you say, “Yes, this can’t be good for the wax figures.” Or if I say, “I can’t believe it’s so hot in here,” and you say, “I told you we shouldn’t have crawled into this dog’s mouth,” now we’re getting somewhere.
Solo Improv: Speak like Lorca’s characters!

An actor (student) volunteers to play. The rest of the students are in the audience. Audience gives a suggestion of a mundane phrase: “the sky is blue” or “I love my mother.” The actor must spontaneously monologue for 20 seconds about starting with the mundane phrase but then using metaphors and similes to describe the sky or one’s love for their mother.

For example:

The sky is as blue as a glistening sapphire, as the Mediterranean ocean on a summer afternoon, as the curtains in my grandmother’s house....

Encourage the actors to be as grand in their speech and as big in their performance as they can be. Use your facial expressions, hands, body, props if you must. Over-the-top and obvious are stronger choices in Improv!

Once a student is done, have another actor rise up and receive another suggestion.

Note: The idea is not to make sense or analyze what you say too much. Merely think of the first thing that comes to your mind and commit fully to using as many flowery metaphors and symbols as you can in 20 seconds!

Writing Alternative:

Give the students a list of “mundane prompts” and ask them to write a paragraph or a poem that uses metaphors and symbols akin to Lorca’s characters. Encourage your students to read their writing out loud as they are performing it. Welcome the use of Non-English Words, Signs, Gestures, Images, and Sounds as occasional substitutes for English language words to add further creativity to your lesson and be more inclusive. Like Graham’s adaptation of Blood Wedding, please welcome bilingual expression in this exercise if students speak more than one language!

Infuse your Improv with Social Justice!

Come up with a mundane prompt that has social justice implications.

For example: “Climate Change is real” or “Black Lives Matter”

For example: Black Lives Matter, like oxygen is important for life, like a mountain peak that stands tall and demands attention, like an open wound in our country’s heart that needs to be sutured and healed.

Arts standards:

English Language Arts/Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.D

Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
Let's get Passionate about Something!
This is a two-person improv game that’s a natural progression from the first game. Two students volunteer to be in a scene. The scene can only have 5 lines. The audience offers a suggestion of where they may be, and what their relationship to each other is. (Note: Stay away from playing strangers for this game). One person says a mundane thing and the other person must react to it in the most passionate and dramatic way. In 5 lines, the students will work to justify the passionate response to a rather mundane first line, while maintaining the relationship and the location that the audience suggested.

Example:
Audience Suggestion:
Location: Japan, In a Kitchen.
Relationship: A Mother & Teenage Child

5 Line Scene
Mother: I cooked some ramen today, Charley.
Teenager (Passionately): Whaaaat??
Mother: Don’t worry, this time I won’t drizzle it with chili sauce the way I did last time.
Teenager continuing to protest passionately): Please just let's go out to a restaurant!
Mother: Charley, you are so spoiled!

Note:
- Assign an actor as A or B (X or Y). A goes first, B goes second.
- The audience may also suggest an emotion for actor B (who receives the first line) to play, therefore exploring multiple ways of passionate expression (anger, sadness, joy, excitement, fear)
- Keep encouraging the students to say yes to what their co-actor does in the scene and add to the scene (using the Yes-And principle)

Arts Standards Addressed
HS Proficient
TH:C.5.I.I.
b. Explore physical, vocal and physiological choices to develop a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant to a drama/theater work

HS Accomplished TH:Pr5.I.I.
a. Refine a range of acting skills to build a believable and sustainable drama/theatre performance.
How to Maximize Your Live Video Theater-Viewing Experience

By Ariana Johnson and Livian Yeh

Even though we can’t gather in person, live theater can still happen! Thank you for gathering in this virtual space for Federico García Lorca’s Blood Wedding. Below are a few tips to help maximize your live video theater-viewing experience.

Know that this is a new kind of theater
This isn’t like in-person theater performances, or film and television. In livestreamed theater, both audience and artists meet in a digital space, where art is created live and in real time.

Embrace the medium
Keep an eye out for the characters’ names, settings, and soundscapes. The artists worked hard to build a fully immersive virtual world despite physical distance.

Engage with the fellow audience
Once the show is running, there will be a chat function at the bottom of the screen, where you can converse with other audience members. Make sure you’re sending chat messages to panelists AND attendees. We encourage you to exclaim, react, and applaud!

If possible, make sure you have a secure connection
Use a wired internet connection, or make sure you are close to your router if using Wi-Fi. If the connection is very laggy or slow, reduce the quality of the video or turn off Wi-Fi on unneeded devices.

For better sound/visuals
Use headphones (ideally wired) for optimal sound quality and watch in full screen.