



LEWIS FAMILY
PLAYHOUSE
AT VICTORIA GARDENS
CULTURAL CENTER

Behind the *Scenes*

A Guide for Parents & Teachers



Show Times:

Public Performances:

October 12 - 27, 2019

Saturday, October 12th • 5:00 pm Only

All other Saturdays 1:00 pm & 4:00 pm

Sundays 1:00 pm

School Performances:

October 7 - October 25, 2019

Week 1: Monday & Tuesday - 10:00 am

Wednesday - Friday- 9:15 am & 11:15 am

Week 2: Wednesday - Friday- 9:15 am & 11:15 am

Week 3: Wednesday - Friday- 9:15 am & 11:15 am

Inside the guide:

Play Introduction & Meet The Authors.....	pg.2
Some Facts to Put the Play in Context.....	pg.3
Discussion Questions: After the Play	pg.6
Art Activity.....	pg.7
Meet the Team & Cast.....	pg.8
Plot Synopsis.....	pg.10



OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE CITY OF RANCHO CUCAMONGA

lewisfamilyplayhouse.com | 909.477.2775
12505 Cultural Center Drive, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91739

Play Intro & Meet The Authors:

OLIVÉRio: A Brazilian Twist is a joyful retelling of *Oliver Twist* set in modern-day Rio de Janeiro that tackles issues of poverty, inequity and injustice while exploring Brazil's rich music and culture. Esperanca Oliverio, nicknamed Oli, is a homeless orphan girl who asks Iemanjá, the goddess of the sea, for a "little bit more" in her life. Con-artist Falcão and her artful young thief Zé Esquiva invite Oli to live with them in the favela, hoping they can use her sweet nature as a perfect distraction to steal from Rosa Maria, the rich widow who lives in a penthouse in Copacabana. In the favela, Oli meets Nanci, a young woman who begins to teach Oli how to read. But when Nanci's jealous police officer boyfriend, Sykes, gets involved, everyone's life is in peril and everyone has to choose between doing what is easy and what is right.

About the Authors

Karen Zacarias (Book/Lyrics) was recently hailed by *American Theatre* magazine as one of the most produced playwrights in the United States. Her plays include *Destiny of Desire*, *Native Gardens*, *Mariela in the Desert*, *Legacy of Light*, *The Book Club Play* and *The Sins of Sor Juana*; adaptations include *Into the Beautiful North*, *Just Like Us* and *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accent*. Zacarias has written 10 TYA musicals with composer Deborah Wicks La Puma including *OLIVÉRio: A Brazilian Twist*, *Ella Enchanted: The Musical*, *Chasing George Washington: A White House Adventure*, *Einstein Is a Dummy*, *Looking for Roberto Clemente*, *Frida Libre*, *Jane of the Jungle*, *Cinderella Eats Rice and Beans*, *Ferdinand the Bull* and *The Magical Piñata*. Her plays have been produced at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Goodman Theatre, South Coast Repertory, the Guthrie Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Round House Theatre, GALA Hispanic Theatre, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Dallas Theater Center and many more. Zacarias' awards include the National Latina Playwriting Award, the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding New Play, the Francesca Primus Prize, the Stanford University Equity

in Theater Award and The Strindberg Citation. She has also been a Susan Smith Blackburn Prize finalist among others. Zacarias is an inaugural resident playwright at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., as well as a core founder of the Latinx Theatre Commons, a national network that strives to update the American narrative to including the stories of Latinos. She is the founder of Young Playwrights' Theater, an award-winning theatre company that teaches playwriting in local public schools in Washington, D.C., where she lives with her husband and three children.

Deborah Wicks La Puma (Composer) is a composer, music director and orchestrator. Her adult works include the lyric opera, *Dakota Sky*; the musical comedy, *One Bad Apple*; the pet-centric cabaret show, *PetPourri*; a Mexican folk musical entitled *Perdita*, based on Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*; and Cornerstone Theater Company's *Making Paradise: The West Hollywood Musical*. Her many and diverse works for young audiences with playwright Karen Zacarias include *Ella Enchanted* (based on the book by Gail Carson Levine), *OLIVÉRio: A Brazilian Twist* (The Kennedy Center), *Frida Libre* (La Jolla Playhouse), *Chasing George Washington: A White House Adventure* (The Kennedy Center), *Looking for Roberto Clemente* (Imagination Stage) and *Einstein Is a Dummy* (premiered at the Alliance Theatre). With bestselling author Mo Willems she has created *Elephant and Piggie's: We Are in a Play* (The Kennedy Center), *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience* (Seattle Children's Theatre) and *Don't Let The Pigeon Drive the Bus: The Musical*. With playwright Doug Cooney, La Puma created *Nobody's Perfect* (based on the book by Marlee Matlin), a bilingual musical in English and American Sign Language, commissioned by Very Special Arts and the Kennedy Center. With Adam Tobin, the musical *She Persisted* (based on the book by Chelsea Clinton) premiered at Bay Area Children's Theatre earlier this year. She received her MFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and her bachelor's degree from Stanford University, and she studied folk music with ethnomusicologist Alfredo López Mondragón. Her honors include the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award, an NEA New American Works Grant, two Parents' Choice Awards, and a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical Adaptation. A proud Mexican-American and "Navy brat" who grew up in Brazil, Portugal and California, La Puma is a member of TYA USA/ ASSITEJ, ASCAP and The Dramatists Guild. Mother to three daughters and Mimi the Cat, La Puma lives in Southern California with her PR agent and loving husband, Chris.

Some Facts To Put The Play In Context



The musical takes place in Brazil and uses various types of Brazilian music to help tell the story. Just as the Dickens characters live in poverty in London, our writers have set part of the story in the favelas of Rio De Janeiro.



According to a study released in 2013 by the Data Popular Institute,

- **85%** of favela residents like the place where they live
- **80%** are proud of where they live
- **70%** would continue to live in their communities, even if their income doubled.

In a 2014 study by the Data Popular Institute, 94% of favela residents state that they are happy.

Favelas are often called the "slums", but that doesn't really describe the richness and history of these neighborhoods. Rio's oldest favela, Providência, was founded in 1897 within a decade of the abolition of slavery, next to the Port that received two million enslaved Africans (four times the number taken to the entire United States).

Today, in the city of Rio, close to 1.5 million people – around 23-24% of the population – live in favelas. Even though technically the homes are built illegally, residents put decades-worth of income and physical labor into the construction and consolidation of their homes. Many of these homes have the basics like electricity, running water and indoor plumbing, but also television and, in over 44% of cases, a computer. Favelas are not just homes – they often include entire communities with a vibrant commercial scene, with many people living above their shops.

Some Facts To Put The Play In Context



PORTUGUESE

Although Spanish is the predominant language in most of Central and South America, in Brazil people speak **Portuguese**. During the 15th & 16th centuries, Spain and Portugal were rivals in their attempts to “discover” and colonize the rest of the world. In 1494, the two countries signed the Treaty of Tordesillas, which basically divided the newly discovered lands outside Europe between them.

The Portuguese language was brought to many regions in Africa, Asia and the Americas. Local officials and Europeans of all nationalities used Portuguese as a *lingua franca* (a common language) to facilitate communication. Portuguese was also used by Roman Catholic missionaries in Asia, and today there is a cultural presence of Portuguese in parts of India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Indonesia. Today, Portuguese is an official language in ten countries.

In addition to Brazil, they include Mozambique, Angola, Portugal, Guinea-Bissau, East Timor, Equatorial Guinea, Macau, Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe.

In the play some of the dialogue includes Portuguese words.

Were you able to understand the meaning based on what else they were saying?

Esperanca	Hope
A praia	The beach
Obrigada	Thank you
Boa noite	Good night
Jornais	Newspaper
Menina	Little Girl
Para!	Stop!
Todo mundo sabe	Everyone knows

Some Facts To Put The Play In Context



IEMANJA: The Goddess of the Sea

Although most of the characters in *OLIVERio* are based on Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, there is one character who is completely Brazilian: IEMANJA, the goddess of the sea.

Iemanjá is a central deity in the Candomblé religion. Candomblé is a wide and varied form of worship that

came about in Brazil when slaves came from West Africa in the 16th century. Prohibited from following their own religion, they were forced by their masters to practice Catholicism. Similarities between Yoruban *orixás* and Catholic saints led to the merging of aspects of the two religions, which led to this hybrid, Candomblé.

Iemanjá is alleged to be a combination of a Yoruban deity and the Virgin Mary. It is said that she watches over sailors and fishermen and controls their catches. She is very powerful and is concerned with every aspect of womanhood and family, and is also the protector of children. She often is depicted as a mermaid and is always dressed in either white or blue.

Even today in Rio de Janeiro on New Year's Eve, people wear white clothes, and thousands gather on the beach to ask the goddess to grant their wishes. People throw flowers into the sea, and many people make little boats with candles or other offerings and put them in the water, as well. Tradition says that if the boat returns, you won't get your wish and need to try again next year, but if the boat is carried out to sea, Iemanjá will grant your wish.

Carnaval

The Carnaval is celebrated in Brazil every year, 46 days before Easter. The Carnaval in Brazil is believed to have originated during the European dominated era. Back then, followers of the Roman Catholic Church would indulge in a last day of dance and fun just before the start of Lent.

There are Carnivals in many cities, but the most famous is the one in Rio De Janeiro. Thousands of people throng the Sambodromo stadium in the city. People often wear masks and colorful costumes, and they dance the Samba. Hundreds



of people join in the parade as part of the festivities. Many people who take part in the Samba Parade are from the favelas. They practice and make their costumes and floats all year. Each area has their own samba school and they compete against their local rivals at the Carnaval.

Classroom Activities:

- 1. HISTORY:** Read about London during the time that Dickens wrote *Oliver Twist*. How have things changed? How have things stayed the same? Are women and girls treated differently today than they were in Dickens time?
- 2. GEOGRAPHY:** Look at a map of the world and find Brazil. Can you find Rio de Janeiro, where our play takes place? Learn three interesting things about Brazil and share them with other students.
- 3. MUSIC/DANCE:**
 - a. The show uses various types of Brazilian Music to tell the story, and we're lucky to have a wonderful live band performing with the cast. What types of instruments were in the band?
 - b. Can you come up with your own movement using some traditional Brazilian music?
 - c. On New Year's Eve in Rio de Janeiro, many people dance a very specific danced called The Samba. What types of steps does it entail? Can the class try it?
- 4. THEATRE:**
 - a. The play uses a convention that we often call a "play within a play" to help tell the story. How do the actors we meet at the beginning of the play transform into the characters in the story? Do they ever become "actors" again?
 - b. Think about the scenery, costumes and the lighting. How do these elements help to tell the story?

Discussion Questions:

After the Play

- If you were to ask Iemanjá for a wish, what would it be?
- Oli believes that there is good in everyone. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Nanci teaches Oli how to read. Why is that important?
- Oli's innocence affects all the other characters in the play. How do each of them change?
- Contrast Rosa Maria's penthouse with the favela. Can you name 3 things that you saw on the stage that made you know when you were in each place?
- Everyone needs a costume to participate in the Carnival. What costume would you wear, and why?

Art Activity:

Make a mask or
paper hat,
like Zé does
in the play!



Make A Paper Hat!



1. Fold Newspaper
in Half. (Like it
comes.)



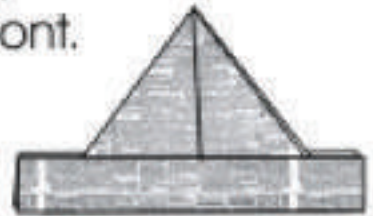
2. Fold top down
to meet bottom.



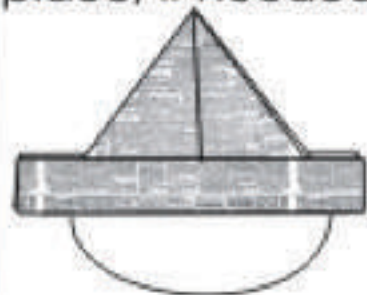
3. Fold right and
left sides towards
the middle to form
a point.



4. Open bottom,
and fold bottom
up on back and
front.



5. You may use a
piece of elastic to
hold the hat in
place, if needed.



Meet the Team!

In addition to the actors and the musicians, it takes a lot of people to bring a production to life. The following are just a few of the people who are working to create this show for you! You can read about each of them, and the rest of the team, in the program you'll receive when you come to see the show!



Robert Castro [Director]: He's responsible for setting the vision of the overall production and working with all of the creative artists to make it come to life. He also works with the actors on their interpretations of each role, and with the **Choreographer, Tamica Washington-Miller**, who comes up with all of the dances.

Richard Miller [Musical Director]: is responsible for making sure the actors learn all of the songs. He'll be playing the guitar during the show, and also leads the band.



Victoria Petrovich [Scenic Designer]: dreamed up what all of the physical space would look like. The setting for the play isn't realistic, although it takes its inspiration from the real beach in Rio De Janeiro. The scenery is used in very imaginative ways to let the audience know in what location each scene takes place.

John Zalewski [Sound Designer]: makes sure the audience can hear the band and the singers, and also creates all of the recorded sounds that helps set the mood for our story.



Bosco Flanagan [Lighting Designer]: uses light to help the audience know exactly where to look, and to change the mood for each scene.

Raquel Barreto [Costume Designer]: is responsible for everything the actors wear on stage!

Meet the Cast!



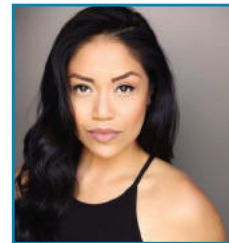
GIGI BERMINGHAM



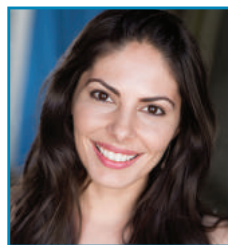
JANET GREAVES



PATRICIA JEWEL



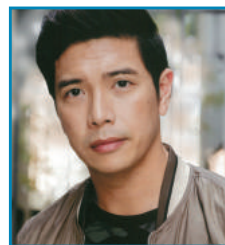
ANTHEA NERI



ELLA SALDANA NORTH



MAX TORREZ



REUBEN UY

Ask Your Students:

To write a review of the play, describing the scenery, lighting, music, costumes, and performers. Maybe we'll feature it on our blog!

How did the scenery or the lighting help you to know what location each scene was in?

What was your favorite part of the play and why? Can you draw a picture of it?

Which was your favorite character and why?

TIPS

For Teachers & Students to make your field trip fun & successful:

- Please arrive in plenty of time so the ushers can seat your group.
- Please make sure your electronic devices are off.
- Please don't take any photos or video -it's not only distracting to the rest of the audience, but can be dangerous to the performers. (plus, it violates our agreements with all the theatrical unions)
- Please be polite to the people who are sitting around you.
- Remember that this is a live performance, which means the actors can hear you. Please wait until the play is over to talk about it - but do show your appreciation by laughing or applauding!

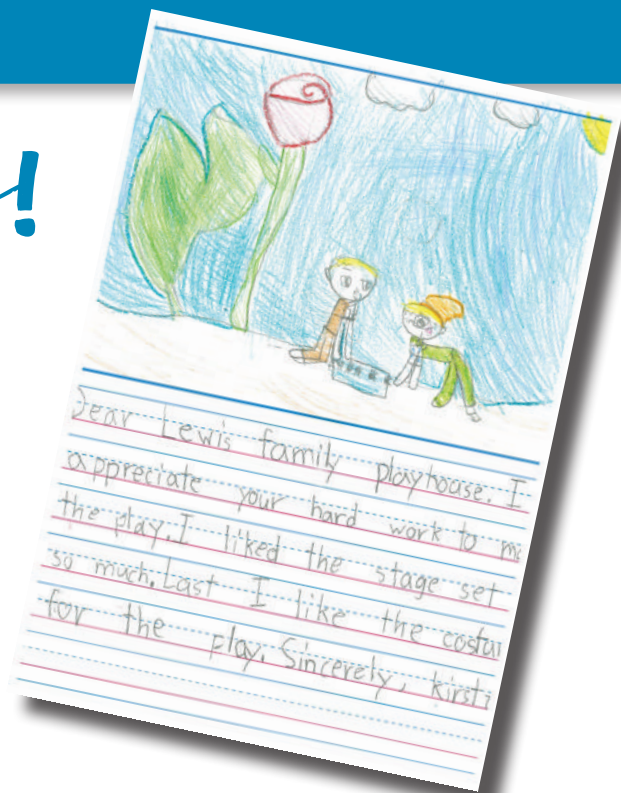
Connect with us!



MainStreet Theatre Company has a Facebook page! You are welcome to post your comments and questions about the play and we will answer them.

Also, we love getting letters in the mail letting us know what you thought. 12505 Cultural Center Drive, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91739

Sign up for "MainStreet Scoop" to get e-mail updates on all the goings on at MainStreet!
www.facebook.com/MainStreetTheatreCompany



Oliverio: Plot Synopsis

The Prologue:

Actors arrive to the theatre expecting to be performing a "Readers Theatre" version of "Oliver Twist", but something has gone wrong! The costumes and set are wrong, and there are musicians. The boy who is supposed to play Oliver hasn't arrived, so they decide to cancel, even though the audience has already arrived. A Kid from the audience asks them to reconsider and she offers to play Oliver, even though she's a girl. They realize that life in the favelas have similarities with the poverty in Dickens' London, and decide that if they improvise a bit, they can tell Dickens' story in a new way, set in Brazil. And the story begins...

Chapter 1:

It's New Year's Eve in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. People have gathered to ask IEMANJA, the Goddess of the Sea, to grant their wishes. Mostly they ask for money, or power, or material things. OLI taps the Goddess on the shoulder and tells her she's an orphan and has come from far away. OLI says the thing she wants is to thank IEMANJA. (OBRIGADO). OLI thinks people are generally good and want to change for the better and tells IEMANJA to have more hope.

Chapter 2: Poor meets Rich

On the beach, OLI meets ROSA MARIA, a rich widow who lives in a penthouse. ROSA MARIA gives OLI a few coins, but really doesn't want anything to do with her. When ROSA MARIA trips, FALCÃO, a con-artist, and her young sidekick ZÉ come to her aid, but it's a pretense for robbing her of her jewelry. They ask OLI how she got the widow to give her money, but innocent OLI doesn't understand, and believes they are kind. They're confronted on the beach by SYKES, a corrupt policeman, who wants to arrest OLI for begging on the beach. He agrees to let FALCÃO take her home with them after they give SYKES money. They explain to OLI that when you live on the streets, it's important to take advantage of opportunities that come your way, in order to survive (JEITINO BRASILEIRO).

Chapter 3: Home Sweet Home

In the favela, OLI is grateful for the roof over her head, while ZÉ complains about the living conditions. OLI is trying to teach herself to read, and ZÉ tells her about Carnaval.

Chapter 4: A New Day

In the morning, OLI meets, NANCÍ, the washerwoman. NANCÍ gives FALCÃO her breakfast and gives OLI what is left over. OLI offers to share her small portion with NANCÍ and ZÉ, which surprises everyone. Nanci worries that OLI is so innocent that she'll be taken advantage of. NANCÍ works for FALCÃO because her parents died when she was young, and they owed her money, but when she was little she liked to read. OLI asks NANCÍ to teach her, and when she hesitates OLI tells her that the impossible is possible. They dance and hope for a better future. (A LITTLE BIT MORE)

Chapter 5: Darkness Sets in

SYKES the policeman comes to the favela to arrest OLI for stealing. ROSA MARIA is offering a reward for the return of her jewelry, and Sykes has decided that OLI is the culprit, even though he knows it was really FALCÃO. (EAT OR BE EATEN).

Chapter 6: Justice is (DeServed)

IEMANJA plays the role of the judge in the courthouse, where SYKES makes his case. To everyone's surprise, OLI pleads guilty – of trying to be helpful, and of wanting hope (I'M GUILTY). ROSA MARIA has a change of heart and drops the charges. IEMANJA/JUDGE demotes SYKES and tells him to leave the courtroom. NANCÍ offers to take OLI home with her to the favela, but the judge releases her in ROSA MARIA's care. ROSA MARIA says she doesn't know how to take care of a child, and OLI convinces NANCÍ to come with them. OLI wants NANCÍ to be her teacher – but ROSA MARIA is happy to have a new maid. SYKES, who thinks NANCÍ is his girlfriend, vows to get revenge on OLI and to bring NANCÍ back to the favela.

Chapter 7: A Vida Boa

NANCÍ and OLI are impressed with ROSA MARIA's very fancy penthouse. OLI asks if they can go to Carnaval, but ROSA MARIA is too afraid to leave the safety of her home. Meanwhile, SYKES has convinced ZÉ and FALCÃO to go to the penthouse. ZÉ arrives first and tries to warn NANCÍ, but SYKES arrives and says she much go with him or else! Just as he's about to hit her, OLI breaks character to ask why Dickens chose to have SYKES kill NANCÍ in his book. When the Director can't answer, they decide to change this part of the story so NANCÍ isn't hurt. Instead, SYKES grabs OLI and takes her away! The others decide to try to get her back.



Chapter 8: The Final Chapter

IEMANJA is on the beach and upset that something terrible will happen to OLI. ("THE STORM"). OLI tries to tell SYKES that he can change and become good, but he says no. A huge wave appears, and OLI and SYKES fall into the water. Everyone is upset until they see OLI come out of the water. Sykes, however seems to have been swept out to sea. OLI is sad that her belief that everyone is good inside might not be true of everyone. ("A WISH OUT TO SEA"). ZÉ and FALCÃO see the errors of their ways and decide that they can change. ROSA MARIA asks OLI to come and live with her permanently, and NANCÍ asks OLI to come back to the favela with her instead.

At this point the actors break character and The Kid asks how the story should end. They decide that NANCÍ will start a school in the favela, and that ROSA MARIA will help pay for it, so that all the kids, not just OLI, can have a better life.

IEMANJA now has hope for humanity, and the show ends with everyone at the Carnaval.