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HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

an interactive storytelling show
written by Brian Guehring

Draft # 3.44
2005 Rehearsal Draft

This is an interactive storytelling show about 55 minutes long introducing children (primarily pre-schoolers and younger elementary students) and their families to winter holiday stories from around the world. An distinguished, but silly inventor invites the audience to try out his new transport devise to travel all around the world and help teach his uptight research friend how to have fun for the holidays. The audience will experience a Greek story about Saint Nicholas and Christmas stockings, a Russian Christmas folktale of Babushka and the Christmas star, the Jewish dreidel game, the Mexican Christmas legend of the poinsetta and a Kwanzaa tale from Africa about the lazy rabbit.

The original production held a post-show activities booth for the audience to enjoy traditional holiday food, crafts, and games from around the world.

This play was first produced by the Omaha Theater Company for Young People for school groups and public audiences in December 2002.

storytellers: Brian Priesman and Tina Dixon
director: Kevin Barratt costume designer: Helen Humble
set designer: Sprite Hascon dramaturg: Michael Miller

It was remounted in December of 2003 and 2004 with these new artists:
Dr. Upton: Amanda Kibler Stanley: Brian Priesman
director: Janeve West.

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STORY 3: MEXICO The Legend of the Poinsetta

STANLEY

On to Mexico next, just south of the United States. Move your arms like this.

DR. UPTON

In Mexico, they say Feliz Navidad!

(STANLEY and audience repeats. The box lights up in glow in the dark paint and cool traveling music covers the room. Lights return to normal as Mexican music is heard).

STANLEY

The next story is about the first poinsetta, this bright red Christmas flower.

DR. UPTON

I can smell cinamon.

STANLEY

From the Christmas baking!

DR. UPTON

For this story we are going to need a lot of help.

STANLEY

Can we get 5 children to walk in a parade?

(STANLEY gets about 5 audience volunteers)

DR. UPTON

I also need a little girl to play Maria.

(STANLEY gets 1 volunteer)

STANLEY

I will be Maria's father. El padre de Maria.

(STANLEY puts on costume piece)

DR. UPTON

Everybody else I need you to play townspeople. When I point to you, you will say, "We're sorry, we have no room."

(DR. UPTON points to audience)

STANLEY and AUDIENCE

We're sorry, we have no room.

DR. UPTON

Great.

STANLEY

And you'll play....

DR. UPTON

Oh, that's ok. I'll just tell the story. Actors ready?

STANLEY and VOLUNTEERS

Ready.

DR. UPTON

Let's begin. A long time ago, in Mexico, there was a young girl named Maria. She was a very shy, but sweet girl. She lived alone with her father.

STANLEY as PADRE

You are such a sweet little girl, Maria. You make me happy. Soy muy feliz.

DR. UPTON

One year when Maria was about 5, they moved to a bigger village. They moved just in time for Christmas. Well, each Christmas season the children of this village would act out la posada. One of the older girls would carry a statue of Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus. And one of the older boys would carry a statue of Joseph, Jesus's father. The other children would get in line behind them.

(DR. UPTON lines up 5 volunteers for parade)

STANLEY as PADRE

Hija, look! A parade. You should join the other kids in the parade.

DR. UPTON

But Maria shook her head.

(DR. UPTON models for MARIA)

STANLEY as PADRE

I know you are shy. Eres timido. But please do this for me. Para tu padre.

DR. UPTON

Maria agreed and joined in, the last one in line. The children carried the statues of Mary and Joseph and knocked on a door looking for a place to stay.

STANLEY

I'll be a door.

(STANLEY acts as door and makes knocking noise)

DR. UPTON

The neighbors said,

STANLEY and AUDIENCE

We're sorry, we have no room.

DR. UPTON

The parade went to the next door.

(STANLEY acts as door and makes knocking noise)

DR. UPTON

Those neighbors said,

STANLEY and AUDIENCE

We're sorry, we have no room.

DR. UPTON

They went to another home.

(STANLEY acts as door and makes knocking noise)

DR. UPTON

Those neighbors said,

STANLEY and AUDIENCE

We're sorry, we have no room.

DR. UPTON

Just like what happened to Mary and Joseph a long time ago. Finally the procession of children would arrive at the church where there is a beautiful nativity scene set up. There are angels, shepherds, sheep, donkeys, cows, and a manger. The kids knocked.

(STANLEY pushes DR. UPTON to the church and takes away her notebook)

DR. UPTON as NUN *(kinda getting into it)*

Oh, of course, here there is room.

STANLEY

The children put their statues of Mary and Joseph into the nativity scene. *(The first children put down their statues)*. Maria was very happy to see such a beautiful scene. Then each child brought a gift for Jesus. They placed these in front of the manger. One brought some beautiful fruit. *(The third child puts down gift)*. One child brought a gorgeous doll. *(The fourth child puts down gift)*. One child gave a few gold coins. *(The fifth child puts down gift)*. DR. UPTON is starting to get into it and acting along with the children)

Maria realized she had nothing she could give Jesus. She ran back to the street and was looking for anything to give the baby. The only thing she could find was a bunch of green branches. She said, "These are simple but pretty."

MARIA

These are simple but pretty.

STANLEY

Maria thought it would be something a baby would like to look at. When she brought the branches to the nativity scene, everyone giggled at her. (*CHILDREN giggle*) Some said, "She is bringing weeds."

CHILDREN

She is bringing weeds.

STANLEY

Others said, " That is ugly."

CHILDREN

That is ugly.

STANLEY

Maria was really embarrassed now, but she still put her gift in front of the manger. No matter what other people thought, she thought it was important to give something to the baby Jesus.

Well when she put the simple green branches in front of the manger, each branch blossomed into a bright red flower. (*The lights become red on stage*) Everyone was amazed. And every Christmas after that the poinsetta became an important reminder that gifts don't have to be expensive,

DR. UPTON

but just given from the heart.

STANLEY

Let's give a big hand to our wonderful performers!

(*STANLEY leads audience volunteers back to their chairs*)

STORY 4: KENYA: The Lazy Rabbits

DR. UPTON

This is fun, Stanley. Let's tell the Kwanzaa story next.

STANLEY

Kwanzaa, the 7 day celebration of African American culture.

DR. UPTON

Beginning the day after Christmas, and everyone is invited to celebrate.

STANLEY

We're going to Kenya now.

DR. UPTON

Kenya is in east Africa. Everyone put their arms up like this.

STANLEY

In Kenya, people speak Swahili.

DR. UPTON

For each day of Kwanzaa the greeting is Habari Gani.

STANLEY and AUDIENCE

Habari Gani

(The box lights up in glow in the dark paint and cool traveling music covers the room. DR. UPTON and STANLEY travel to the African section of the map. Lights return to normal as African music is heard).

STANLEY

Great job audience. We made it to Kenya.

DR. UPTON

It's dry and hot here, even in December. But the savannah is so beautiful. And the sounds of the birds and elephants.

STANLEY

Dr. U, what does Habari Gani mean?

DR. UPTON

Oh, that means "What is today?" The answer changes each day of Kwanzaa because each day of the holiday focuses on a different principle. The focus on the first day is Umoja or unity.

STANLEY

Umoja. Unity.

DR. UPTON

So on December 26, if I say Habari Gani? What would you answer?

STANLEY

Umoja. This story is all about how important it is to work together. I'll be a lion for this story.

DR. UPTON

There are a lot of animals in this story. We could use everybody's help right where you are for this one.

STANLEY

Will everybody help?

AUDIENCE

Yes.

STANLEY

Great teamwork! Good Umoja.

STANLEY

And Dr. U, you'll be our giraffe.

DR. UPTON

Me? I don't know how. How's something like this?

(SHE strikes a pose)

STANLEY

That's great. I knew you could do it.

DR. UPTON

Okay! This is actually very exciting.

STANLEY

Let's begin.

DR. UPTON

Our story takes place a long time ago when the animals could walk and talk. And there are lots of animals living in Kenya. Of course, there were elephants, there.

STANLEY

Can this section be the elephants and show me their long elephant trunks?

DR. UPTON

These elephants were loud and stuck up. They always chanted in their elephant voices:
GET OUT OF OUR WAY

STANLEY

Let's hear the elephants chant GET OUT OF OUR WAY:

STANLEY and ELEPHANTS
GET OUT OF OUR WAY

DR. UPTON

Also living on the African savannah were the hyenas.

STANLEY

Can this section be the hyenas and show me their hyena claws?

DR. UPTON

The hyenas were always in a good mood and they always chanted in their hyena voices: THAT'S SO FUNNY, HA HA HA

STANLEY

Now let's hear the hyenas chant THAT'S SO FUNNY HA HA HA.

STANLEY and HYENAS
THAT'S SO FUNNY, HA HA HA

DR. UPTON
Good job, children. I mean Hyenas. Tortoises (or turtles) also lived on the African savannah.

STANLEY
Can this section be the turtles and show me your turtle shells?

DR. UPTON
The turtles were always negative and they always chanted in their turtle voices:
THAT WON'T WORK

STANLEY
Let's hear the turtle chant.

STANLEY and TURTLES
THAT WON'T WORK

DR. UPTON
Great job. Its sounds just like Kenya. The other large group on this savannah were the rabbits.

STANLEY
Can this section be the rabbits and show me your rabbit ears?

DR. UPTON
The rabbits were lazy and they always chanted in their rabbit voices:
WHO CARES?

STANLEY
Lets hear these lazy rabbits.

STANLEY and RABBITS
WHO CARES?

STANLEY
Excellent rabbits.

DR. UPTON
Well there were lots of other animals on this savannah, too. Zebras, giraffes, antelopes, chipmunks, birds, and even a lion. They all stayed in their area of the savannah and everything was fine.

Until one day when a terrible thing happened.....The rain stopped. It started to get dry and hot. And all of the animals were thirsty. In fact when you heard their

chant you could tell their throats were dry and the animals were much quieter.
(STANLEY cues the sides of the audience to chant)
Well the drought continued until there was no more water left. Then the King of the Beasts, the Lion arrived.

STANLEY as LION

Roarrrr!

DR. UPTON

And all the animals were quiet and listened to their leader.

STANLEY as LION

We have a big problem. There is no more water. What should we do?

DR. UPTON

Nobody had an answer. Finally a young giraffe stuck out its neck and said, (*letting down her hair to become the young giraffe*) I think we should dig a new watering hole.

STANLEY as LION

That's an interesting idea. Fellow animals, what do you think?

DR. UPTON

Well all the elephants answered, "Get out of our way"
(*DR. UPTON cues and joins elephant chant*)

Then the hyenas answered "That's so funny. Ha HA ha"
(*DR. UPTON cues and joins hyenas chant*)

Then the turtles answered, "That won't work."
(*DR. UPTON cues and joins turtle chant*)

Finally the rabbits answered, "Who cares?"
(*DR. UPTON cues and joins rabbit chant*)

STANLEY as LION

Roarrrr! Enough! Little giraffe, I think it was a wonderful idea. I think if we work together we can solve this problem. Elephants will you try?

DR. UPTON

And the elephants nodded their big heads.
(*ELEPHANTS and Dr. U nod*)

STANLEY as LION

Hyenas will you help us?

DR. UPTON

And the hyenas nodded their furry heads
(*HYENAS and Dr. Upton nod*)

STANLEY as LION

Turtles will you help us?

DR. UPTON

And the turtles nodded their smooth heads.

(TURTLES and Dr. Upton nod)

STANLEY as LION

Rabbits will you help us?

DR. UPTON

But the rabbits shook their fluffy heads no and hippity hop hippity hopped away.

(DR. UPTON models behavior as RABBITS shake their head no and hop in place)

STANLEY as LION

Well there is nothing we can do about the lazy rabbits now. Lets all work together and dig.

DR. UPTON

So the elephants used their trunks. *(ELEPHANTS dig)*

STANLEY

And the hyenas dug with their claws. *(HYENAS dig)*

DR. UPTON

And the turtles slowly dug with their front feet. *(TURTLES dig)*

STANLEY

But the rabbits did not. They just hippity hop hippity hopped *(RABBITS hop in place)*.

DR. UPTON

Well all the other animals dug and dug and kept digging. Until they hit water! All the animals cheered and whooped. *(ANIMALS and Giraffe cheer)*

STANLEY as LION

Good work, animals. By working together we have water again. I think we should be careful of the lazy rabbits. They did not want to help us, but they might try to sneak in and drink our water. Who will guard the water tonight?

DR. UPTON

And the elephants volunteered.

STANLEY as LION

Thank you elephants! You are mighty. Make sure the rabbit gets no water.

DR. UPTON

But the turtles didn't think that would work and they chanted.

DR. UPTON and TURTLES

THAT WON'T WORK

STANLEY as LION

Sure it will. That's enough Turtles.

DR. UPTON

So the elephants stood up and kept a close eye on the watering hole.

STANLEY

Soon enough the rabbits came hippity hopping along. (*RABBITS hop*) The elephants all said, NO WATER FOR YOU!

DR. UPTON and ELEPHANTS

NO WATER FOR YOU!

STANLEY

And the rabbits answered with their chant.

STANLEY and RABBITS

WHO CARES?

STANLEY

The rabbits hip hopped around the elephants as fast as they could. (*RABBITS hop in place*)

DR. UPTON

They were too fast for the elephants to stop and they got to drink the water. (*RABBITS drink*) The lion was upset that the rabbits had drunk from the watering hole.

STANLEY as LION

We must watch for the tricks of those lazy rabbits. They did not work with us and should not drink from our well. Who will guard the water tonight?

....