



**La Cucarachita
Martina** (Martina, the
Little Roach)
By Teatro SEA of Puerto Rico and NY

Oct 5 - 16, 2011
Performances Wednesday - Sunday
Call 404.873.3391 to book your group



The Center for Puppetry Arts is supported in part by:



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The Center also serves as headquarters of UNIMA-USA, the American branch of Union Internationale de la Marionnette, the international puppetry organization.

A note from the Education Director

Dear Educator,

Welcome to the Center for Puppetry Arts and this production of *La Cucarachita Martina* (*Martina, the Little Roach*) by Teatro SEA (Sociedad Educativa de las Artes/Society of the Educational Arts) of Puerto Rico and NY.

This information, when used in tandem with the Teacher Resource Guide created by Teatro SEA (http://www.puppet.org/pdf/Martina_Teacher_ResourceGuide_TeatroSEA.pdf), can be used to enhance the educational opportunities provided by this show. Though an excellent way to prepare for the experience of seeing a live puppet theatre production, this information can also be used as a springboard for follow-up fun after the curtain has gone down.

To access the Georgia Performance standards for this show that correlate to each programming area at the Center (performance, Create-A-Puppet Workshop, Museum) click the links below:

- [La Cucarachita Martina/Martina the Little Roach, P-K & K](#)
- [La Cucarachita Martina/Martina the Little Roach, Grade 1](#)
- [La Cucarachita Martina/Martina the Little Roach, Grade 2](#)
- [La Cucarachita Martina/Martina the Little Roach, Grade 3](#)
- [La Cucarachita Martina/Martina the Little Roach, Grade 4](#)
- [La Cucarachita Martina/Martina the Little Roach, Grade 5](#)
- [La Cucarachita Martina/Martina the Little Roach, Grade 6](#)

To access a complete list of standards for all grades and subjects, please visit <http://www.georgiastandards.org/>.

Thank you for choosing the Center for Puppetry Arts for your study trip. We hope that your students' experience here will live on in their memories for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Aretta Baumgartner
Education Director
Association of Theatre Movement Educators
American Alliance for Theatre & Education
Educational Theatre Association

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES / DISCUSSIONS

WHAT IS A PUPPET?

A “puppet” is an inanimate (non-living) object that is brought to life by an outside force (usually a human being working as a performer) in order to tell a story.

La Cucarachita Martina (Martina the Little Roach) is a bilingual (two language) show performed by two onstage narrators and four puppeteers. The puppeteers manipulate all of the puppet characters in the show and provide the voices for the characters as well. The puppeteers dress entirely in black from head to toe operating their puppets in a “curtain of light” that extends across a table-top stage. Sometimes we see puppets that have been painted with bright fluorescent paint glowing under black lights for a special dramatic effect.

- **DISCUSSION:** ask the children what puppets are. Have they seen them before? Are they real or pretend? What can be used as a puppet? Out of what materials can puppets be made, and why would you choose some materials over others for certain projects?

WHAT IS A PUPPETEER?

A performer who uses a puppet or puppets to tell a story is called a “puppeteer.”

There are four puppeteers in *La Cucarachita Martina (Martina the Little Roach)*: Ana Campos, Miron Gusso, Hector Palacios, and Daisy Payero.

There are also two narrators in the show. A narrator is a person onstage who tells the story to the audience. The narrators in *Martina* are Andrea Sousa and Indra Paloma.

The narrators and puppeteers will be telling parts of the story in the Spanish language and parts of the story in the English language.

- **DISCUSSION:** What are the differences between narrators and puppeteers? What are the similarities? Can a puppeteer be a narrator? Can a puppet be a narrator? Which type of performer would you prefer to be and why? Discuss some challenges that the performers might face in learning and presenting a bilingual show. Name some narrators in popular movies and television shows.

WHAT IS AN AUDIENCE?

Being a good audience member is as important as being a good puppeteer! It takes teamwork between audience and puppeteer/actor to make a show successful. There are “rules of etiquette” that need to be employed, such as:

- **A LIVE SHOW IS DIFFERENT THAN TV OR MOVIES.** It’s okay to have fun, but do remember that the people on-stage (and in the audience) can hear you—be polite!
 - **MAKE SURE EVERYONE CAN SEE.** Stay seated so the audience members behind you can see the show.
 - **BE SUPPORTIVE.** The way audience members show they like something is to applaud. Make sure to applaud if you appreciate what you see and hear. Between songs or scenes, after the show, and after the post-show demonstration are appropriate places/times to show your appreciation.
 - **LISTEN CLOSELY.** It’s important that you hear all the details of the story so that you can enjoy it fully.
- **DISCUSSION:** review the “rules” of being a good audience member. Role play what is appropriate and what is not.

WHAT IS THE STORY WE'LL SHARE (THE STORY SYNOPSIS)?

One day while sweeping the floor in her house Martina the cockroach finds a penny. She spends her newly acquired wealth on some face powder to make herself beautiful in order to attract a mate. Martina is pleased when her plan works. Indeed she catches the eye of several suitors: a rooster, a cat, and a dog. Despite their good intentions, none of them turn out to be a good match for Martina. Finally, a sensitive and caring mouse named Perez happens by and wins Martina's heart. Martina and Perez wed in splendor and live happily ever after.

WHO CREATED THE PUPPET SHOW?

Teatro SEA (Sociedad Educativa de las Artes/Society of the Educational Arts) of Puerto Rico and NY, a bilingual arts-in-education organization & Latino theatre company for young audiences, is dedicated to the empowerment and educational advancement of children and young adults. SEA creates educational theater and arts programs specifically designed to examine, challenge and create possible solutions for current educational and social issues affecting our communities.



Learning and Enrichment Activities

Compassion and Consideration

What morals (lessons) did the characters in the story learn? Were these journeys of self-discovery easy or difficult? Can you think of an example of a difficult time you've been through that has taught you a lesson? Write this personal story down (changing any names or details that make you uncomfortable in sharing the story, details that might be too personal for you or a friend or family member), add illustrations, and present it to your classmates so they can learn from your personal wisdom.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: Physical Education (Personal and Social Behavior), English Language Arts & Reading

Food and Cooking

Creating and enjoying meals together, as a family, is an important part of Puerto Rican culture. Many recipes, with secret ingredients and slight variations unique to each family, are passed down from generation to generation. One such recipe is arroz con leche, or rice with milk. Visit PBS' Kids GO! Website to link to an easy recipe for this dessert, and create and enjoy some together as a class: http://pbskids.org/buster/recipes/fl_miami_rec.html.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: Modern Languages (Spanish Language), Physical Education (Nutrition), English Language Arts & Reading

Music

Explore how music can help tell a story. Music (specifically Rock and Roll and Latin music) was a big part of this theatrical experience. How did music help you understand the actions of the play and the feelings of the characters? Make your own music: play drums you make out of coffee cans, guitars you make out of cereal boxes and rubber bands, and flutes you make out of empty plastic bottles. What mood or emotion do these different instruments suggest? Listen to the music of famous American Rock and Roll musicians like Chuck Berry (1926 -) and Elvis Presley (1935 – 1977), and Latin musical artists such as Tito Puente (1923 – 2000) and Enrique Jorrín (1926 – 1987). Discuss what their music makes you feel, think and visualize.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: Fine Arts/Music, Fine Arts/Visual Art

Places and People

What parts of the story made you think/know it was set in Puerto Rico? Find the country of Puerto Rico on a globe. Talk about the costumes, scenery, and the characters in the puppet show and how they are representative of the country of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory of the United States. What does this mean? How are these things similar to and/or different from our customs in the United States of America?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION: Social Studies



Puppetry

How are puppets brought to life? How are puppet shows created? Have the students create a puppet show using objects they can find in the classroom and/or in their desks. Have them each bring in one kitchen utensil from home (marked with their name on masking tape!) and brainstorm how to re-create a favorite fairytale using these utensils.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION: Theatre Arts

Puppetry Traditions in Puerto Rico

Puppetry is fairly new to Puerto Rico, emerging as a professional art form only since the 1960s. As they move forward to develop their own unique styles and traditions, Puerto Rican puppeteers borrow puppetry inspiration from other parts of the world. In *La Cucarachita Martina*, we see an influence of Japanese puppetry styles by their use of bunraku techniques. How do you think Teatro SEA became familiar with bunraku puppetry? Do you see other culture's influences in this show (such as American phrases, American music, etc.)? What examples of blended cultures do you see around you in everyday life, perhaps in food, language, clothing, tools, customs?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: Fine Arts/Visual Art, Social Studies, Theatre Arts

Stories and storytelling

What are the different types of stories that are told? What elements characterize these specific types of stories? The story that inspired this puppet show is called a "folktale." Folktales illustrate how characters cope with the events of everyday life and involve crisis/conflict and a moral. By contrast, fairy tales tend to involve magic and fantastical creatures; myth has at its core the origins of a people, and is often sacred in nature. What are examples of other folktales? Can you think of examples of fairy tales? Of myths?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: Theatre Arts, English Language Arts & Reading

For further reading: a Bibliography

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- Simpson, Martha Seif and Lynne Perrigo. *Storycraft: 50 Theme Based Programs Combining Storytelling, Activities and Crafts for Children in Grades 1-3*. McFarland & Company, 2001.



For further online exploration: Internet Resources

http://www.sea-ny.org/SEA_ArtsInEducation.html

Visit the website of Teatro SEA, NY.

http://www.coedu.usf.edu/culture/Story/Story_Cuba_girl.htm

Read the story of *La Cucaracha Martina* (the Cuban version of this popular tale) at Multicultural Education Through Miniatures (folk dolls and puppets) website.

<http://www.pestworldforkids.org/index.html>

Learn interesting facts about cockroaches (and other insects) here.

<http://worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/carib.htm>

Check out WorldAtlas.com, a great resource for full-color maps of the Caribbean.

<http://welcome.topuertorico.org/index.shtml>

Explore the history and culture of Puerto Rico at this comprehensive website.

<http://www.americanfolklore.net/ss.html>

Read folktales, myths, legends, and ghost stories from each of the fifty United States at this American folklore website.

http://www.unima-usa.org/publications/28/puerto_rico.html

Gain knowledge about the past, present and future of puppetry in Puerto Rico by reading “An Overview of Puppet Theatre in Puerto Rico” by Manuel A. Morán Martínez, Ph.D. (published in *Puppetry International*, FALL & WINTER 2010- ISSUE NO. 28).

<http://rockhall.com/education/>

Experience the rich musical and cultural history of Rock and Roll via the educational resources page of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.

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