Performances
plus!

Presents

Walk Two Moons

Thursday, March 23, 2005
10am
Concert Hall

Study guides are also available on our website at www.fineartscenter.com - select Performances Plus! from Educational Programs, then select Resource Room.

The Fine Arts Center wishes to acknowledge MassMutual Financial Group for its important role in making these educational materials and programs available to the youth in our region.
DEAR TEACHER:

We have created the following study guide to help make your students’ theater experience with Theatreworks/USA’s production of *Walk Two Moons* as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a live theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long-lasting. Our study guide provides pre and post production discussion topics, as well as related activity sheets. These are just suggestions; please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion. We hope you and your class enjoy the show!

-- THE STORY --

Based on Sharon Creech’s Newbery Medal-winning novel *Walk Two Moons*, Theatreworks/USA’s play begins in Lewiston, Idaho, as thirteen-year-old Salamanca Tree Hiddle climbs over roadside guardrails in the middle of the night. Sal, as she’s commonly called, explains that she had to reunite with her mother Chanhassen (whose American Indian name means “sweet tree juice”) on her birthday and further clarifies by telling a local sheriff (and the audience) a “story within a story that turns out to be another one altogether.” (Teachers, you may wish to explain to your students the dramatic/literary device of a *flashback*.)

While accompanying her grandparents on a cross-country trek to Idaho to be with her mother, Sal entertains Gram and Gramps on the long trip with a strange story about her friend Phoebe Winterbottom, her over-active imagination, her disappearing mother, and a “potential lunatic.” When Phoebe tells her mother that a “potential lunatic” came to see her when she was out, Mrs. Winterbottom acts strangely. Even stranger are the series of cryptic notes left on Phoebe’s doorstep. Phoebe soon discovers another note, this one from her mother, explaining that she had to leave for a few days. Phoebe is convinced that the “lunatic” kidnapped her, but discovers the truth when Mrs. Winterbottom eventually returns.

In the course of telling the story of Phoebe to her grandparents, Sal comes to terms with truths about herself and her own mother’s journey.

-- DISCUSSION QUESTIONS --

**PRE-PERFORMANCE**

1. If time permits, read *Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech with your class. Explain that they will see a dramatic adaptation of the book, and ask them what they expect of the 60-minute live performance featuring six actors. For example, how do they think the road trip will be staged, how will the stage production depict particular moments of the story, etc.

2. Review vocabulary words featured in the production:

   - agenda
   - dastardly
   - ornery
   - cadaver
   - lunatic
   - privy
   - cholesterol
   - minion
   - rhododendron
3. Discuss the concept of oral history and the telling of folk tales and myths to explain the way things work and why things are the way they are. Sal’s grandparents ask her to tell stories passed down from her American Indian mother. Ask your students about their own heritage – do any of their cultures have a tradition of folk or mythological tales? Encourage your class to research and then orally present stories based on their ethnic background (Greek, African, Chinese, Irish, Norse, etc). Students who are unfamiliar with their roots may wish to research American tall tales. Your students may be surprised at some of the similarities in stories of different cultural backgrounds.

4. Talk about the title of the book and show, Walk Two Moons. What does your class think it means, given the lead character’s American Indian background?

**POST-PERFORMANCE**

1. As soon as possible after the performance, engage your students in conversation about the production. How did the play differ from the book? How was it similar? Why do they think the playwright, Julia Jordan, made changes to the story? Who was their favorite character, and why? Now that your class has seen the play, how do they feel about the title? Is it appropriate, given the theme of the play? Why or why not?

2. Why did Gram, Gramps, and Sal’s father insist that she go on this journey, even though Sal didn’t want to?

3. Why does your class think that Sal told Phoebe’s story to her grandparents? How is Sal’s story similar to Phoebe’s? How is it different? What does Sal’s telling this story tell you about her character and her journey?

4. Discuss the notes left on the Winterbottoms’ doorstep, and what they mean in “plain English”.
   - “Don’t judge a man until you’ve walked two moons in his moccasins.”
   - “Everyone has his own agenda.”
   - “In the course of a lifetime, what does it matter?”
   - “You can’t keep the birds of sadness from flying overhead, but you can keep them from nesting in your hair.”

You may wish to split the class into groups to do this exercise and have the groups eventually compare their own interpretations. Additionally, discuss why Mrs. Winterbottom reacts so strongly when she receives these messages. In retrospect does her reaction make more sense?

5. What does Phoebe mean when she says her mother lives a “small life?” Do you agree or disagree with her? Why? What does Mrs. Winterbottom’s departure have to do with her overhearing this comment? Phoebe says that her mother is perfect; is this a good thing or a bad thing? Do you think Mrs. Winterbottom is happy being “perfect?” Is she perfect?

6. In the play, Sal borrows Gramps’s car keys and drives alone to Lewiston, Idaho because she is afraid of not arriving in time for her mother’s birthday. Was Sal justified in this action? Why or why not? What would the possible ramifications be of Sal’s underage driving without a license? If your students were in Sal’s shoes, would they have done the same thing? Why or why not?
7. Both Sal’s and Phoebe’s mother leave in the course of the story. Why do your students think they do this? What did the mothers hope to gain by leaving? Why does Phoebe’s mother return wearing very different clothes? How does Phoebe respond to this? How does your class think Phoebe adjusts to this abrupt change, not to mention the introduction of a half-brother into her life?

8. Why do your students think Sal speaks throughout the play as though she doesn’t know what has happened to her mother? What do they think Sal hopes to gain by following her mother’s path across the country?

9. Major themes of *Walk Two Moons* are change and loss. Discuss these in terms of Phoebe and Sal. Have your students ever experienced massive changes like these characters? How were they affected? Did they eventually accept the change? Why or why not?

**-- CROSS-CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES --**

**GEOGRAPHY**

On their cross-country journey, Sal and her grandparents travel from Euclid, Ohio through Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana en route to their ultimate destination of Lewiston, Idaho. Have your class map out their journey (don’t forget to pass the Black Hills, Yellowstone, Old Faithful, and Mount Rushmore on the way!).

**MATH**

To tie the above activity into math exercises, encourage them to calculate the total distance, and the distance between landmarks on the way, in miles, kilometers, yards, inches, etc. Additionally, have them figure out how long it would take them to travel, given an average speed of, say, 65 miles per hour. If you have the time, it might also be interesting for them to calculate the amount of money they’d spend on hotels, gas, food, etc.

This activity can be modified so that students plan a fantasy road trip to anywhere in North America (or even in their home town).

**WRITING/ART**

To further expand on the above activities, students can create tourism brochures for their make-believe vacations (or for Sal’s journey). Be sure and encourage them to discover interesting attractions along the way.

Have your class put themselves in the mind of Sal’s mother, and write postcards back from her road trip. What would Sal’s mother say to her? Would she try to explain why she left? Would she tell Sal about all the amazing natural wonders she saw? Would she tell Sal about the other passengers on the bus, including Mr. and Mrs. Cadaver? Students may decorate the back of the postcards with images of the things Sal’s mother sees on her travels.

**MORE WRITING**

According to Sharon Creech’s website, many of her novels are interconnected: several stories take place in, or refer to, the fictional town of Bybanks, Kentucky, including *Walk Two Moons*, *Chasing Redbird* (about Sal’s friend Zinny Taylor), and *Bloomability*; *Absolutely Normal Chaos* is the journal Sal’s classmate Mary Lou Finney keeps (as mentioned in the novel, but not the play, *Walk Two Moons*). Encourage your class to write short stories based on *Walk Two Moons* from the perspective of other characters. For example, they could write from the perspective of Mike (the potential lunatic) about the hostile reaction he gets when he tries to visit Mrs. Winterbottom; or from the
Sharon Creech says that she got many of the ideas in *Walk Two Moons* from a fortune cookie message she once found: “Don’t judge a man until you’ve walked two moons in his moccasins.” Have your class write their own fortunes (if you have time, you can bake them into actual cookies), then mix them up and redistribute them to the class. Let the students interpret these fortunes, and write a short story inspired by their messages. Alternately, you can give the entire class the same message, and ask them to write a short story – they may be surprised at all the different interpretations of the same fortune!

**SCIENCE/GEOLOGY**

On their journey, Sal and her grandparents pass through several national parks and see some incredible geological wonders and rock formations. Here’s a list of facts about the parks and attractions they see:

**THE BLACK HILLS NATIONAL FOREST**

- The Black Hills are located over 1.2 million acres (125 miles north-south and 65 miles east-west), mostly in western South Dakota, and stretching into northeastern Wyoming.
- In 1897, President Grover Cleveland established the Black Hills Forest Reserve, which was transferred to the Forest Service (an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture) in 1905. In 1907, it was renamed the Black Hills National Forest.
- The name “Black Hills” comes from the American Indian Lakota tribe’s words “Paha Sapa,” which means “hills that are black.” Seen from a distance, these hills do, indeed, look black, because of the thick dark green pine tree vegetation.
- The Black Hills feature rugged rock formations, canyons and gulches, open grassland parks, streams, lakes, and caves.

**BADLANDS**

- Covering 24,400 acres in southwestern South Dakota, the Badlands feature numerous interesting geological features, including buttes (hill that rises abruptly from the surrounding area and has sloping sides and a flat top), pinnacles (tall pointed mountain peaks), and spires (a slender, sharply tapering peak).
- These geological features were created through slow and steady erosion (the group of natural processes, including weathering, dissolution, abrasion, corrosion, and transportation, by which material is worn away from the earth's surface). Please see links for a simple science experiment demonstrating erosion.
- One of the most striking features of the Badlands is Devils Tower, a 1267 foot tall rock with a nearly sheer face jutting out of the earth's surface, and created through millions of years of erosion. T. Roosevelt named Devils Tower America’s first national monument in 1906. This is a sacred site for many Indian tribes.

**YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK**

- Located over 3,472 square miles mostly in Wyoming, but also stretching into Montana and Idaho, Yellowstone is the world’s oldest national park, designated in 1872.
- Yellowstone was created as the result of a volcanic eruption of 640,000 years ago. The park sits on one of the world’s largest active volcanos. This active volcano accounts for the interesting geothermal (of or relating to the internal heat of the earth) activity and features, including:
GEYSERS

- Old Faithful is one of the most famous geysers in the world (though it is not the largest or most regular geyser in the park). Its average interval between eruptions is about 91 minutes, and lasts 1.5 – 5 minutes, expelling 3,700-8,400 gallons of boiling water, and reaching heights of 106-184 feet.
- Geysers are an extremely rare phenomena because of they require an unusual combination of geology and climate. Of the world’s 800 geysers, 400 are located in Yellowstone. Neptune’s moon, Triton, also features geysers, but these seem to be driven by solar heating rather than geothermic energy.
- Please see the internet resource area for a description of geysers, and for a classroom experiment to replicate a geyser.

--- INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR SHARON CREECH ---

(from www.SharonCreech.com)

Where did the idea for Walk Two Moons originate? Were the characters conceived before the setting and plot?

Walk Two Moons had a rather bumpy evolution. After over two years of attempting a story whose first narrator was Mary Lou Finney, and whose next narrator was Phoebe Winterbottom, I rediscovered a fortune cookie message in the bottom of my purse: "Don't judge a man until you've walked two moons in his moccasins." The suggestion of a journey in that message sparked the third attempt, this time with Salamanca as narrator, and incorporating the two previous stories within hers.

I read that when you were a child, like Salamanca, you took a trip to Lewiston, Idaho. How was your experience similar to and/or different from Salamanca's trip?

It was similar in that we followed the same route that Salamanca does, and I was transformed by the experience of seeing our huge country and its beautiful landscapes. It was different in that none of the things that happen to Salamanca along the way happened to me!

The characters in Walk Two Moons all experience loss to some degree. How can you so accurately express the emotions of such great loss?

Perhaps because I've felt them. My father died just a few years prior to writing this book. But I was also drawing on another kind of loss as well. My daughter had recently left England (where we were living at the time) to attend college in the States, and I felt tremendous loss; I missed her so much!

How does Bybanks, Kentucky, fit into your life?

Bybanks is based on Quincy, Kentucky, where my cousins live. It's a beautiful setting, with hills and trees, and lots of places for a child to roam. We visited there often when I was young.

What characters in Walk Two Moons, if any, are based on people you know? How are they similar?

None were consciously based on people I know, but now that I have distance from the book, I can see that Salamanca is probably what you would get if you took me and my daughter and squished us together; and Gram and Gramps have pieces of my parents, grandparents, and siblings. It is hard to accurately identify which pieces came from whom, though. You'd have to see us all together.

Does a piece of you exist in any of the characters? How does that character reflect who you are?

A piece of me exists in all the characters, I think. If you took all my characters (even the odd ones, like Phoebe) from all my books, you might have a good portrait of me. Like many of my narrators, I love the outdoors, have a big family, am sometimes stubborn, sometimes serious, and sometimes funny, etc.
What did you learn about yourself while you were writing *Walk Two Moons*?

I learned that I was fairly patient (to stick with that story through at least a dozen completely different drafts) and also a bit stubborn (I wasn’t going to let go of that story!), and that both of these qualities are useful when it comes to writing.

Do you think any of the characters in *Walk Two Moons* will resurface in another novel?

They already have. Mary Lou Finney is the main character in *Absolutely Normal Chaos*. Salamanca gets brief mention in *Chasing Redbird*. Zinny (from *Chasing Redbird*) is alluded to in *Bloomability*, etc. I may reunite some of these characters in another novel some day. You never know …

Many layers of understanding permeate your novel, and your use of a story within a story helps reveal those layers. How did you determine that this technique would work?

It evolved gradually, and I didn't know it would work until I was finished. It was a bit like doing a huge puzzle, and that challenge intrigued me.

How does this book’s message compare with other books you have written?

I don’t think this book has one message, and if it did I’m not sure I could articulate what that was. Each reader finds something different in each story. One central motif, though, of putting yourself in another's place in order to better understand that person, recurs in many of my books. Perhaps this is because this is also the writer's challenge: to put herself in the place of her characters in order to better understand them.

**-- INTERNET RESOURCES --**

- [www.sharoncreech.com](http://www.sharoncreech.com) (*Walk Two Moons* author Sharon Creech’s website, which includes information on all her books and a teacher’s guide which features additional discussion questions about her book)
- [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) (an easy-to-use map/navigation website)
- [www.fs.fed.us/r2/blackhills](http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/blackhills) (US Dept of Agriculture Black Hills site)
- [www.nps.gov/deto/](http://www.nps.gov/deto/) (National Park Service’s Devils Tower site)
- [www.nps.gov/yell/](http://www.nps.gov/yell/) (National Park Service’s Yellowstone site)
- [www.wyojones.com/geysers.htm](http://www.wyojones.com/geysers.htm) (a great site full of geyser information and experiments)
- [www.nps.gov/yell/oldfaithfulcam.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/oldfaithfulcam.htm) (a live webcam of Old Faithful)
Evacuation Procedures

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation of the building, procedures are in place to ensure that the audience can exit safely.

Sections 1, 2, 3 & Pit
Exit toward stage.

Sections 4, 5, 6
Exit through the lobby.

Note: Interior house conditions may necessitate alternate exit routes.

Mezzanine 1, 2, 3
Exit rear through lobby.

Balconies 1, 2 exit toward stage, up two flights and down interior fire escape.
NOTICE TO ALL TEACHERS AND CHAPERONES

- **PERFORMANCES BEGIN PROMPTLY AT 10AM OR NOON.**
  Many of our performances sell-out. This means we can have up to 1,600 students to seat. Please help us by arriving at least **30 – 15 minutes** prior to the start of the performance. This will allow our ushers to get everyone seated and for you and your students to visit the rest rooms and get settled. It is important that we begin our performances on time so that all schools can meet their lunch and/or dismissal times.

- **PLEASE CHECK LOCATION OF PERFORMANCE WHEN MAKING YOUR BUS RESERVATION.**

- The staff of the Fine Arts Center need your help! An increasing number of students are coming into the performance space with gum, food, beverages and portable music players. **None of these items is allowed in the halls for performances.** Many of these items are stowed in backpacks and are not easily noticed. Our goal is to offer high quality performances for young people. In order to enhance the experience, we ask for your cooperation in preventing these items from entering the hall.

- For the comfort of all concerned, we ask that backpacks, lunches and other gear be left on the bus. Our long-standing policy of no cameras or tape recorders still is in effect.

- At the conclusion of the performance please remain in your seats until your school group is dismissed.

*We hope that you and your students enjoy your theatre experience!*
PARKING POLICY

FOR GROUPS NOT TRAVELING BY SCHOOL BUS

We are pleased to announce that we have made arrangements with the UMass Parking Services to allow our patrons to park in the Campus Parking Garage for the reduced rate of just $1 during your stay.

This rate is available to home school families and schools that will arrive by private transportation rather than by bus. Please let us know at the time you make your reservations that you will be traveling by car. Parking passes will be mailed with your invoice approximately one month prior to each performance. You will be sent a sheet that includes 10 parking passes that you may cut and give out to drivers in your group. Should you require additional passes, please photocopy the sheet. The passes are valid for the garage only on the date of your reserved performance. You may park in the garage for performances in either the Concert Hall, Rand Theater or Bowker Auditorium. Parking at meters on campus does not apply.

We hope that this policy will better meet your needs. Please do not hesitate to call our office if you have questions.

Programming Office: (413) 545 – 0190.
PARKING AND DIRECTIONS FOR THE FINE ARTS CENTER
CONCERT HALL and RAND THEATER

CONCERT HALL

School Bus Parking: Students should be dropped-off at Haigis Mall off of Massachusetts Avenue. University Security will direct buses to an appropriate parking lot during the performance (typically by the football stadium). PLEASE BE SURE YOUR BUS DRIVER KNOWS THAT ALL PERFORMANCES LAST APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR AND THEY SHOULD RETURN A FEW MINUTES BEFORE THE ANTICIPATED END TIME. If drivers are not with the buses, they may miss the radio call from security asking them to return for pick-up, resulting in unnecessary delays returning to your school.

Individual cars: If necessary, individuals may drop-off students with a chaperone at Haigis Mall (you will be directed by security to the mid-point turn of Haigis Mall – see map) prior to parking. We recommend parking in the Campus Center Parking Garage to avoid searching for a metered space. It is a five-minute walk to the Concert Hall. All other available parking during weekdays is at meters. Available lots and pricing (current as of 9/1/04) are listed below:

Parking in the Garage is available to our patrons at a discounted rate of $1. To receive this rate you MUST give the Garage attendant a parking pass. To receive your pass, please call our office to let us know that you will be arriving by car. Parking passes are sent with the invoices. (413)545-0190

Parking meters are enforced Monday – Friday, 7AM – 5PM. Meter rates are $1.00 per hour.

Parking Garage – near Campus Center, across from the Mullins Center off Commonwealth Avenue
Lot 34 – Behind Visitors Center with 3, 5 & 10 hour meters available
Haigis Mall – 2 hour maximum on meters
Lot 62 - Adjacent to Fernald Hall with 3 hour maximum on meters, limited spaces available.

From the North: (Vermont, Greenfield) I-91 south to Route 116. Follow signs on 116 “To the University of Massachusetts.” Exit ramp leads to Massachusetts Avenue. Turn left (east) on to Massachusetts Avenue toward the campus. Continue through one light and watch for Lot 34 by the Visitors Center on your right and the entrance to Haigis Mall on your left.

From the South: (Springfield, Holyoke) I-91 north to Route 9. East on Route 9 over the Coolidge Bridge and through Hadley. Left at Route 116 (across from Staples) heading north toward campus. Right at first exit at “University of Massachusetts” bear right onto Massachusetts Avenue toward campus. Continue through one light and watch for Lot 34 by the Visitors Center on your right and the entrance to Haigis Mall on your left.

From the West: (Northampton, Pittsfield) Route 9 east through Northampton and over Coolidge Bridge. Follow remaining directions from “From the South” above.

From the East: (Belchertown, Ludlow) North on Routes 21, 181 or 202 to Route 9 into Amherst. Right on to North Pleasant Street (main downtown intersection), north through center of town. Turn left at Triangle StreetBertucci’s Restaurant on your right), rejoining North Pleasant Street. To reach Lot 34 and Haigis Mall continue on main road, which becomes Massachusetts Avenue. Haigis Mall will be on your right, Lot 34 on your left.
For Concert Hall, Rand Theater and Bowker Auditorium – Patrons traveling by car are encouraged to park in the parking garage. Discounted parking is available in the garage for $1. A parking permit is required for discounted parking in the garage. Call the Programming Office if you require permits at (413) 545 – 0190. All other parking on campus is at available meters at the rate of $1 per hour. Parking is enforced Monday – Friday, 7AM – 5 PM.

Buses will drop-off students as indicated on map. Buses will be given parking instructions by Campus Security.