



**By José Cruz González**

**Music and Lyrics by  
José Cruz González**

**Musical Arrangements by  
Adam Jacobson**

Adapted from the book "Tomás and the Library Lady" by Pat Mora, illustrated by Raul Colón. Published by Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House, Inc. Text copyright (c) 1997 by Pat Mora. All rights reserved.

Directed by **David Saar**

Scenic and Costume Designs by  
**Holly Windingstad**

Sound Design by **Anthony Runfola**

Projection Design by  
**Eric Ting and Anthony Runfola**

**National Tour, 2007-2008**

**State Academic Standards:**

Your visit to the theater as well as the preparation and follow up activities can involve many content areas from your state's K-12 Academic Standards.

Many of the suggested discussion topics and activities can be tied to standards in several areas.

**Preview Guide for Parents and  
Teachers to Childsplay's  
Production of**

***Tomás and the Library Lady***

We hope you find this guide helpful in preparing your children for an enjoyable and educational theatrical experience. Included you'll find things to talk about before and after seeing the performance, classroom activities that deal with curriculum connections and education standards, and resource materials.

A world premiere adaptation by one of Childsplay's favorite playwrights! Pat Mora's beloved book is brought to the stage in an innovative and moving production by acclaimed playwright José Cruz González.

**The Story:** Tomás Rivera travels with his Amá, his Apá, his Grandfather, Papá Grande, and his little brother Enrique from Crystal City, Texas, all the way to Hampton, Iowa, to find work picking corn, spinach and beets. Tomás is haunted by memories of a teacher in his Texas school who punished him for speaking Spanish. His parents are worried about him, but reassure him that he is smart and talented, and that his Papá Grande thinks he will become a writer or a painter some day. When the Riveras arrive in Iowa, they discover that their new home is little more than a chicken coop. But the family carries on, getting occasional treats like *pan dulce*, (sweet bread) and listening to Apá Grande's stories. One day Tomás' Amá sends him to the post office, and he discovers the Carnegie Library next door. The Library Lady invites him in and introduces Tomás to books about anything and everything he can possibly imagine. Tomás enthusiastically shares the new stories that he has found with his family, and he and his brother Enrique find other books in the town dump. Tomás teaches the Library Lady some Spanish, while he becomes more confident in English and realizes that he doesn't need to be afraid of the Nightmare Teacher any longer. Then comes the day when Tomás comes to visit the library with his Papá Grande and tells her that he must teach her a sad word in Spanish: *Adiós*. Tomás Rivera grew up to become the father of Chicano literature, as well as the Chancellor of the University of California at Riverside. The library there bears the name of the boy who was encouraged to read by a library lady in Iowa.

## Things to Talk About and Do Before the Show~

**Theater Etiquette:** It's helpful to review the rules of theater etiquette before seeing a show especially since this may be the first live theater experience for some of your students. Please take a moment to discuss the following pointers prior to seeing the performance.

~Stay seated during the performance.

~ Be respectful to the performers and other people in the audience by not talking during the performance.

~ Appropriate responses such as applause or laughter are always welcome.

~Use of cell phones, cameras and any other recording device are *not allowed in the theater at any time!*

**Read the Book!** Before you watch the play version of *Tomás and the Library Lady*, read the book version by Pat Mora.

### About Pat Mora:

Pat Mora founded the family literacy initiative El día de los niños/El día de los libros, Children's Day/Book Day, the April 30th celebration that links all children to books, languages and cultures on a daily basis. An award-winning author of more than twenty-five children's books, as well as adult poetry and nonfiction, Pat is a popular national speaker shaped by the U.S.-Mexico border. She speaks often at conferences, universities, and schools about the writing process, family literacy, and leadership. Her picture books include *Doña Flor: A Tall Tale About a Giant Woman with a Great Big Heart*, *The Song of Francis and the Animals*, and the alphabet book, *iMarimba!* *Animales A-Z*. The proud mother of three grown children, Pat enjoys time with family and friends, reading, gardening, cooking, museums, and the wonder of the natural world both when she travels and when she returns to her home in beautiful Santa Fe, NM (from patmora.com).

### About Tomás Rivera:

*Tomás and the Library Lady* is based on the real life of Tomás Rivera who was born in 1935 in Crystal City, Texas, to a migrant Chicano family. Despite facing the oppressive conditions of migrant life, Rivera graduated from high school and went on to receive a bachelor's and master's degree in education from South West Texas. In 1960, he received a Ph.D. in Romance Languages from the University of Oklahoma. In 1979, he became the highest-ranking Chicano in public and private education when he accepted the position of chancellor at the University of California, Riverside. During those years he published extensively, including his landmark novel *...y no se lo tragó la tierra* (1971), short stories and poetry posthumously gathered in *The Harvest and The Searchers: Collected Poetry*. All of his works, including his essays, are now found in *Tomás Rivera: The Complete Works*, edited by Julián Olivares (1992). All of his writings deal with the harsh life faced by Chicano migrant workers and their remarkable resiliency. Rivera was particularly concerned with the liberation of the children of Chicano migrant workers. For Rivera, this liberation was to be achieved through education. Today, Rivera is considered to be one of the most important Chicano writers and educators.

### About Migrant Farm Families in America:

Thanks to Cesar Chavez, the conditions that migrant farm workers face today are much better than they were when Tomás Rivera was a boy. Cesar's dream was to create an organization to protect and serve farm workers, whose poverty and disenfranchisement he had shared. For more than three decades Cesar led the first successful farm workers union in American history (known today as the United Farm Workers of America), achieving dignity, respect, fair wages, medical coverage, pension benefits, and humane living conditions for hundreds of thousands of farm workers. Today, hired farm workers make an

important contribution to agricultural production, accounting for about 30 percent of all farm workers. Hired farm workers help provide labor during critical production periods. Some migrate from production area to production area during several months of the year, others work locally only during harvesting season, and some work full time for a single employer.

**Storytelling:** All cultures have stories, legends and myths that they share. Families, too, pass stories down from generation to generation. Storytelling started as an oral tradition and eventually stories were documented in various ways: cave wall drawings, signals or sign language, and, of course, written language. Stories are told for entertainment, to teach a lesson, to help understand the origin of things or to help understand why things happen. Tomás listens to his Papa Grande's stories and later becomes a storyteller himself when he discovers books in the library.

### Reading is Fundamental:

Libraries are a fantastic (and free) resource for learning to read or improving reading skills. It is important for adults to share the library experience with their children. Preschool children whose parents read to them are much better prepared to start school and perform significantly better in school than those who have not been exposed to reading. Children for whom reading is not part of the parent-child relationship or who have illiterate parents, often have poor school achievement and drop out before completing school.

**According to the National Adult Literacy Survey, 42 million adult Americans can't read; 50 million can recognize so few printed words they are limited to a 4th or 5th grade reading level; one out of every four teenagers drops out of high school, and of those who graduate, one out of every four has the equivalent or less of an eighth grade education.**

By encouraging children and families to make using the library a lifelong habit, hopefully these statistics will change for the better.

## Things to Talk About and Do After the Show

- All plays have three P's: *People* in a *Place* with a *Problem*. Where does the play take place? Who are the people? What are the problems? What happens at the beginning of the play? The middle? The end?
- How is the play different than the book? How is it similar to the book?
- Tomás develops a special relationship with the librarian. Is there an adult who has influenced your life or shared something special with you?
- Tomás learns English as his second language. Do your parents speak a language other than English at home? Have you ever been in a situation where you didn't understand the language someone was speaking?
- Tomás moves a lot between Texas and Iowa. Have you ever had two "homes" at once? What would it be like to have to leave your home for months at a time? What would you miss the most?
- When Tomás reads, his imagination takes him right into the story. If you could become a part of one of your favorite books, which book and what part of the story would it be?

### Reading Activities:

*What Do You Want To Know?* Tomás tells the library lady he would like to read about tigers and dinosaurs. What do you want to learn about? Make a list of 5 things that you would like to read about. Ask a parent or teacher to help you find books about your topics and as you read, write down the information you learn in a notebook. Share the information with a family member or friend. Read a little everyday!

*Read to Someone:* Share your reading skills with someone who doesn't find reading easy: maybe they don't understand the language very well, maybe they can't see very well, or maybe they just haven't developed their reading skills as well as you have. Choose a book (or part of a book) that you

can read aloud as they follow along.

### Writing Activities:

*A Story in Two Languages:* Papá Grande always starts his stories with "En un tiempo pasado..." (once upon a time). Write a story starting with these words and incorporate as many Spanish words and phrases as you can (or start with "Once upon a time," write the story in Spanish and incorporate English words). Take turns reading aloud to the class.

**Working together in teams, translate the following Spanish words into English. All of these words were used in the play. See what you can remember (or what you already knew).**

compadre	maestro
Vámonos	la luna
elotes	betabeles
espinaca	carro
familia	cuento
carne	libros
prestar	el tigre
lapis	pájaro
gato	perro

### Art Activities:

*Pictures Tell the Story:* Illustrations are a big part of the book *Tomás and the Library Lady*. Write a story (or use the bilingual story from the above activity) that has a clear beginning, middle and end. Next, trade stories with a classmate and illustrate your friends' story. Choose at least two moments (or more) from the story that you can draw illustrations for. Hold up your illustrations while the author reads his/her story aloud to the class.

*What Do They See?* Research the route from Iowa and Texas and draw pictures of things that Tomás and his family might have seen along the way. Look for geography, towns, terrain, weather, plant and animal life. Label each picture with what it is and where it can be found along the route. Hang around the classroom.

### Drama Activities:

*When One Minute Seems Like An Hour:* Divide into groups of 4 or 5. Create a scene that shows just a minute of time in which Tomás and his family are on the long truck ride to Iowa. What would they do? What would they talk about? How would they feel about being in the hot truck for such a long time? Make a choice about what happens during your minute and then rehearse it. Remember, scenes only need to be a minute long. Share your scenes with the rest of the class.

*Living Pictures:* In groups of 3 or 4, choose a picture from one of your favorite books or from *Tomás and the Library Lady* that you could bring to life. Look at the picture and decide what happens next. Decide exactly what happens, what the characters say and do and give the scene a definite ending. Then re-create the picture using the people in your group. Freeze in place for a good 5 seconds and then let the picture come to life and continue into a scene. Create an equally interesting frozen picture to hold at the end of the scene. Share with the rest of the class.

### Library Magic



*"¡Vamos! Let's go to the library!"* Tomás said to his family. He showed them his favorite books and his cozy reading nooks.

*"¡Vamos! Let's go to the library!"* Tomás said to his friends. "Hurry!" They saw *libros* in stacks and rows. They laughed at funny puppet shows.

*¡Vamos! Let's all go to the library!* Join the fun, a treasure house that's free. Bring your friends and family. Stories, computers, maps and more, facts, fun. Enter the magic door. Like Tomás, open books and soar. Be a reader. Explore galore.

*In memory of the leader, educator and author, Tomás Rivera*

Pat Mora, 2005

## Tomás and the Library Lady Booklist

Prepared with the help of Tim Wadham,  
Youth Services Coordinator  
for the Maricopa County Library District



## Other books by Pat Mora:

*Confetti: Poems for Children*  
*A Library for Juana: The World of Sor Juana Inés*  
*Doña Flor: A Tall Tale About a Giant Woman with a Great Big Heart*

## Libraries

*How My Library Grew: By Dinah* by Martha Alexander  
*I Like Books* by Anthony Browne  
*Book! Book! Book!* by Debora Bruss  
*Sophie and Sammy's Library Sleepover* by Judith Caseley  
*Clemens' Kingdom* by Chris L Demarest  
*Jazper* by Richard Egielski  
*Stella Louella's Runaway Book* by Lisa Campbell Ernst  
*A Bedtime Story* by Mem Fox  
*Quiet! There's a Canary in the Library* by Don Freeman  
*The Babies are Coming!* by Amy Hest  
*Walter's Magic Wand* by Eric Houghton  
*The Tale of Thomas Meade* by Pat Hutchins  
*I Love My Little Storybook* by Anita Jeram  
*I Take My Frog to the Library* by Eric A. Kimmell  
*Book George* by Ella Lyon  
*Edward and the Pirates* by David McPhail  
*Edward in the Jungle* by David McPhail  
*Fix-It.* by David McPhail  
*Beatrice Doesn't Want To* by Laura Joffe Numeroff  
*I Like the Library* by Anne Rockwell  
*Wild About Books* by Judy Sierra  
*The Library* by Sarah Stewart  
*Read to Your Bunny* by Rosemary Wells  
*Library Lil* by Suzanne Williams

## Migrant Workers

*Amelia's Road* by Linda Jacob's Altman  
*Migrant Worker: A Boy from the Río Grande Valley* by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith  
*Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* by Kathleen Krull  
*Cesar: Si Se Puede* by Carment T. Bernier-Grand  
*Elgy on the Death of Cesar Chavez* by Rudolfo Anaya  
*Lights on the River* by Jane Resh Thomas  
*Children of the Dust Bowl: The True Story of the School at Weedpatch Camp* by Jerry Stanley

## Telling Stories

*Voices from the Field: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories*  
*Gooney Bird Greene* by Lois Lowry

## About Childsplay...

Childsplay is a non-profit professional theatre company of adult actors, performing for young audiences and families. Our Mission is to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, the hallmarks of childhood, which are the keys to the future.



We love to hear from our audience members!

Send letters, drawings or reviews to:

Childsplay, PO Box 517, Tempe, AZ 85280

Call us at 480-350-8101 or 1-800-583-7831 (in-state)

Email us at: [info@childsplayaz.org](mailto:info@childsplayaz.org)

Check out our web site: [www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)



## Internet Connections

[www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org)

-Reading is fundamental!

[www.patmora.com](http://www.patmora.com)

-Author Pat Mora's website

<http://home.att.net/~teaching/littlelessons.htm>

-some great literacy lessons

<http://bogglesworld.com/>

-great ESL lessons and activities

[www.cesarchavezfoundation.org](http://www.cesarchavezfoundation.org)

-curricular resources on Cesar Chavez

[www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)

-The Library of Congress

## Integration

*The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles  
*Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges  
*Remember: The Journey to School Integration* by Toni Morrison

## Speaking Two Languages

*Pepita Talks Twice/Pepita Habla Dos Veces* by Ofelia Dumas Lachtman  
*Margaret and Margarita/Margarita y Margaret* by Lynn Reiser

All materials are available through your local library. Check 'em out!

## Families

*Poems to Dream Together/Poemas par soñar juntos* by Francisco X. Alarcón  
*Barrio: José's Neighborhood* by George Ancona  
*In My Family* by Carmen Lomas Garza  
*Family Pictures/Cuadros de Familia* by Carmen Lomas Garza  
*Magic Windows* by Carmen Lomas Garza  
*Calling the Doves/El canto de las palomas* by Juan Felipe Herrera  
*The Mexican-American Family Album* by Dorothy Hoobler

