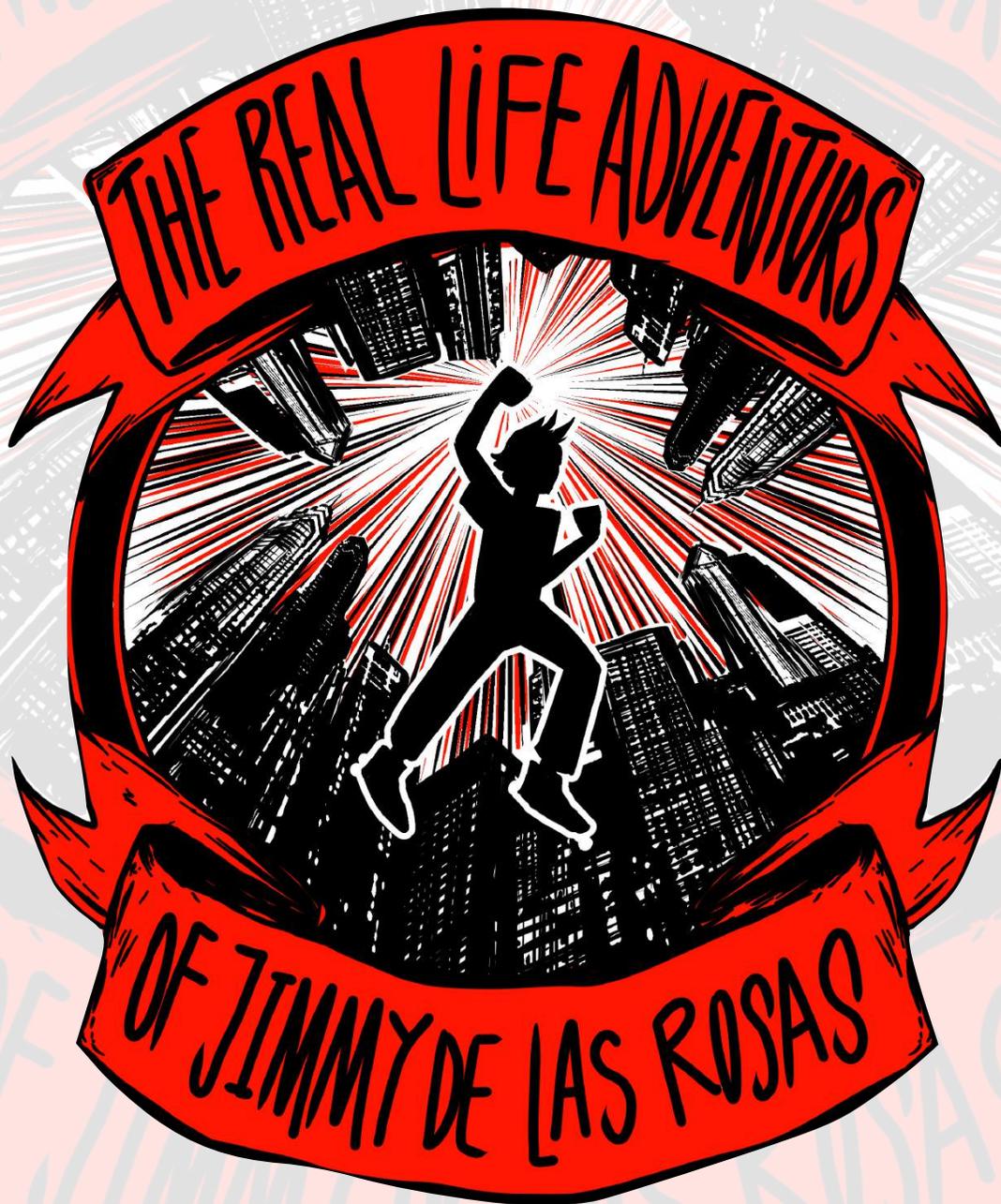


Passage

THEATRE COMPANY

Postscript (Teachers' Guide)



Postscript by Jennifer Nelson & Kara Jönsson
The Real Life Adventures of Jimmy De Las Rosas by Ricardo Gamboa

MEET THE PASSAGE TEAM



Jennifer Nelson (Education Volunteer) is a playwright, high school French teacher, writer, and journalist. MFA in creative writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts. She committed to writing a play after attending a workshop with award-winning playwright Jacqueline Goldfinger at the University of Pennsylvania. She participated in a playwriting class at the Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope, PA, and was thrilled to join Playmate Playwrights to see their works produced in a front of al live audience. Playmate Playwrights will staged additional productions in this region in late January and June 2019.



Kara Jönsson (Artistic and Education Intern) is a developing artist from Santa Cruz, California. Kara is the Director of Operations for the National A1 Audition Conference, The Grove TV & Film Studio, and the International Exchange Coordinator for the Musical Theatre training facility: The Growing Studio. Recent work includes Company Management at the Forestburgh Playhouse, Choreography at Cabrillo Stage Professional Musical Theatre Festival, and Internships with Wolf Talent Group and Michael Chekhov International Intensive. BFA Westminster College of the Arts at Rider University.



C. Ryanne Domingues (Artistic Director) has had the pleasure of directing plays that challenge and excite audiences for over 15 years. Born and raised in Altoona, Pennsylvania, she received her undergraduate degree from Bloomsburg University while working with the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble. Following graduation and a yearlong directing and dramaturgy internship with Portland Stage Company, she spent six years in Philadelphia co-founding Simpatico Theatre while working for a variety of other companies, including The Wilma Theater, InterAct Theatre Company, and Plays & Players Theatre. Ryanne received her MFA in Directing from the University of California, Irvine in 2013 and is currently an adjunct faculty member at Rider University.



Damion A. Parran (Managing Director) hails from Washington, DC. He recently completed three years of managing arts programs as the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington's Regional Arts Manager. He is a recipient of The Kennedy Center Arts Management Institute Fellowship (2010). Prior to returning to Washington, DC, in 2009, Damion spent five seasons as the Managing Director of Watts Village Theater Company (WVTC), a nonprofit multicultural theater organization based in Los Angeles, California. He received his BFA in theater management from CalArts. After completing his BFA, he joined Cornerstone Theater Company's artistic ensemble and administrative staff. In 2005, Mr. Parran received Cornerstone Theater Company's Quentin Drew Community Bridge Award. He recently completed a two-year term as board treasurer and chief financial officer for River East Emerging Leader.



Elizabeth Zuckerman (Administrative and Marketing Associate) joined Passage in 2015. A native of Philadelphia, PA, she received her BA in theatre from Sweet Briar College. In her administrative career, she has supported Sweet Briar's Academic Resource Center, Millett Design, and the Senior Resource Group. She has done voiceover work for The PHILO Project, podcasts with the [Adjective] Sphinx network, and is a member of the Shakspere [sic] Society of Philadelphia.

Danny Viola (Production Manager) is excited to be part of the Passage family this year! Select professional regional technical work at Passage: *Caged*, *Paradise*. At Luna Stage Company: *American Moor*, *The Man in Room 306*, *Razorhurst*, *Tranquil*, *King of the Mountains*, *The Tall Girls*, *Thrill Me*, *Tar Beach*, *Tilt the Unlit Candle*, *Lines In The Dust*, *Master Harold...* Other: *The Hummingbird's Tour*, *Mothers & Sons* (World Premiere).
DannyViola.com

ASK PASSAGE

Who is a hero in your life? What made this person a hero? Describe this person. Why are they a hero?

Jennifer:

My hero has always been my dad. He's the one who instilled in me a curiosity about the world, a desire for adventures, and a thirst for knowledge. He could interact with everyone, from the teenage gas station attendant to a foreign minister, drawing out their stories with humility and kindness. Whenever I have a problem, I think about how my dad would resolve it: logically, but always considering feelings and intuition.

Stelline:

My mother has always been one of my heroes. I remember she worked tirelessly, as a single mother with three jobs so she could provide a safe and stable environment for my sister and I when we were young. My mother will always be a pillar within our family, our church, and our community, and I strive to have her loving personality, nurturing spirit, and her strength in God that allows her to always remain at peace.

Danny:

My family is filled with heroes, but specifically my Dad. He is a man who knows how to make sacrifices for the betterment of our family. He has his weaknesses, like all heroes, as he may shut down his emotions. But it's only so he can focus on what he feels is best for our family. It doesn't always feel right, from my perspective. But as time passes by, I can always begin to see what my dad has seen the entire time: a dream true, a plan coming to fruition, an adventure occurring then completing.

Ryanne:

My mother is my hero. She is kind and very smart. Even though she knew that it would be difficult, she still returned to school to get her college degree while raising three children. She has taught me the value of believing in myself. I look up to her, and I am always impressed by her courage, strength, and warmth.



Left: Free Street Theater's 2015 production of *The Real Life Adventures of Jimmy de las Rosas*, directed by Coya Paz.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

THEMES:

- Community and community activism
- Caring for the Environment
- Immigration
- Good versus evil
- Adolescence
- Family

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

Role of superheroes in our lives

1. What do these people with extraordinary powers mean to you? Think of films like *The Incredibles* and *The Avengers*. What powers do they have to combat evil? If you could choose a super power, what would it be?

Discuss the title of the play

2. What are Jimmy's adventures? Does the title make you think of any other work of literature? If so, what? Why do you think the playwright chose the title?

Disappearances of people

3. Have you heard of anyone being kidnapped or leaving without explanation? How and why do you think this happens? Discuss incidents in which this might occur, such as kidnappings, drug addiction, deportation, and homelessness. The term in Spanish is "los desaparecidos."

POST SHOW ACTIVITIES

Spanish dialogue in the play.

1. What did you think of the playwright using some Spanish in the play? Why do you think he did this? Did it help or hinder your understanding of the plot?

Discuss sources of Gamboa's ideas for the play.

2. He drew on comic books, samurai action flicks, classical texts such as Chekhov's *The Seagull*, and popular cinema for his depictions of monsters, wolves, and mutant Chihuahuas. Pinpoint where you see these references used in the text.

The Abuse of Power.

3. Discuss Don Manuel's speech on page 57 of the play. Can evil be eradicated? How can power be used for good instead of evil means? What does social activism by citizens mean to you? What other forces in society help fight the abuse of power?

Spanish-speaking culture.

4. What did you learn about Hispanic culture through this play? Bring up specific objects in the play, such as Abuela's cart, the piñata, and zarape. Find or draw pictures of these objects. What do they tell you about this culture?

The characters in the play.

5. Which character in the play do you understand the most, or identify with the most? Why? Describe this character. Create a monologue in the voice of this person—or a dialogue with a partner who has chosen another character to depict.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



Ricardo Gamboa is an award-winning artist, activist, and academic creating radically politicized work in their native Chicago and New York City. In Chicago, Ricardo is a member of Free Street Theater and founding adult founder of the controversial, politically-charged ensemble The Young Fugitives. In New York City, they are a fellow of the EmergeNYC program at Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics and member of the New York Neo-Futurists. They are finishing their doctorate degree at New York University's renowned American studies program and received their MA in arts politics (2013) from the Tisch School of the Arts. Ricardo has won several awards

including a Joyce Award and an International Connections Award from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. They have worked with over 5,000 young people in the hemisphere. Their current projects include the underground live and live-streamed news show *The Hoodoisie*, the audience- and critically-engaged, community-based theater piece *Meet Juan(ito) Doe* and *BRUJOS*, the genre-bending, ground-breaking web series about four gay Latino doctoral students who are also witches.

INTERVIEW WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT

Interviewed by Jennifer Nelson

1. What enticed you to write a play for children that features mutant Chihuahuas, telekinetic kids, and toxic spills?

Well, I grew up loving comics with mutants and superheroes and watching fantasy films and games and all that kind of stuff. And I realized so many of the figures and the worlds depicted in that media were nothing like the reality I was living in--I grew up Mexican-American and on the Southside of Chicago. So, I wanted to create some heroes and fantasy action for young people that I once was and that are growing up in spaces like I did. But, also, it was a way to understand the world that young people are growing up in, that although it may not be real, doesn't mean it's not true. So, thinking about kids with superpowers is actually about young people of color today that I do believe are superhuman for surviving oppression and challenges and do have the capacity to affect and change their communities. Or the toxic dumping that is discussed in the play is also about how so often communities of color are treated as wastelands and disposable and that oftentimes makes life there toxic--and mutates how we live and love, etc.

2. How and when did you set about writing the play? Also, can you talk about the development process of the play after its first draft?

I wrote the play in a week ten years ago. And it received several readings but no productions and I was really committed to making sure that if it was produced, it'd be produced in a way that was accessible to communities of color and youth of color--which is hard in Chicago because so much of the theater occurs in the more affluent Northside of the city. But a few years ago Free Street Theater decided to do a touring production of it that presented it in parks in Black and Brown neighborhoods across Chicago. When we were getting ready to do that, we workshopped the play with actors

and there were some changes. Now, we're putting it up again indoors and I am doing a bigger re-write to it. A major change is that Juani joins them on their journey and it exposes Ayana and Eddie's backstory: they're on the run after their mother was killed by a police officer. But I don't know if it's a new version as much as it is an alternative version that theaters could produce. I think *The Real Life Adventures of Jimmy de las Rosas* is an important play and it strikes me how this play that I wrote ten years ago was prophetic about so many issues we are fighting today--like immigration, police brutality, and environmental degradation.

3. What are the challenges and rewards of writing a play for children?

I don't think there are any challenges. I don't try and write a "children's play." I write a play that anyone can watch but that speaks to the state of being a child and being young and centers that reality. And I think that our childhoods often is the time where so much happens that shapes us. We learn values and experience things that we wrestle with for the rest of our lives. I have an idea that people don't grow up so much as just learn to hide their child. So, I feel like I tried to write a play that relates to people of color and other kinds of difference and allows us to hug ourselves and our inner-child. And so often plays for young people and plays in general like to focus on "this issue" or only one identity, and I wanted to make a play that spoke to all the issues that intersect in my any one person's life and even in the lives of children and youth. People always act as though young people are not experiencing complex reality and they are.

4. What would you like audience members to take away from your play?

That we can change our communities and that we can change our world, we have that power, individually and collectively. I hope people leave feeling empowered to try and create a more just world. I also hope they feel affirmed and seen, that people and communities like them matter.

5. How did your work as an activist, arts educator, and artist in Chicago impact the writing of *The Real Life Adventures of Jimmy de las Rosas*?

That experience is all over the play. I've worked with thousands of young people in Chicago and that definitely helped shape who Ayana and Eddie and Jimmy are. The issues that are encapsulated in the play like immigration, police brutality and environmental degradation are all issues that I have been very involved in, so part of writing the play was trying to create a play that would archive those struggles and make them more accessible and understandable and encourage families to talk about them and communicate them through art. A big part of the play was also about highlighting the importance for us to act in our communities, but also the risk that come with being an activist because it can be dangerous, but it is necessary.

6. Can you talk about the process of making *The Real Life Adventures of Jimmy de las Rosas* into a film?

We're still working on the film version and looking for funding. But making a play into a film is hard, because you have to think like the camera and the camera is not the stage. When you're writing for stage you have to consider set changes and things like that. But for film, the camera can go anywhere, so you're not limited in the same way. And I don't think limits are a bad thing. I think it's like the board when you're playing a game: it has some parameters but those parameters help you play. I also think in film there is way more visual storytelling going on.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



José Avilés has been an actor, director and theatre arts educator for over twenty years. As an actor, he has performed at the Wilma Theater, Philadelphia Theatre Co., Philadelphia Shakespeare Festival, InterAct Theatre Co., Theatre Rumpus, and Venture Theatre. In New York, he starred alongside June Squibb in the Starfish Theater Co.'s world premiere production of *Double Cross* at Lincoln Center. He has taught acting classes at the Walnut Street Theatre, Wilma Theater, and Arden Theatre. Avilés recently directed a public reading of *Elliot, a Soldier's Fugue* by Philadelphia native Quiara Alegría Hudes for the Arden Theatre, and the Philadelphia premiere of the same play for the Walnut Street Theatre

Independence Studio on 3 Season. Other directing credits include: Walnut Street Theatre's children's theatre touring outreach productions of the Civil Rights Trilogy, *Meangirlz R Bullies 2*, and the African folktale *The Princess Who Lost Her Hair*; New York premiere production of *American Mud* at New York Fringe Festival, world premiere production of *The Domestication of Women: A Housewares Party in Two Acts* for Strawflower Productions, Christopher Durang's *Betty's Summer Vacation*, Israel Horowitz' *Rats* and productions of Maria Irene Fornes' *The Conduct of Life*, Migdalia Cruz' *Miriam's Flowers*, Antonio Skarameta's *Burning Patience*, Milcha Sanchez-Scott's *Roosters*, and José Rivera's *Tape*. He also directed *The Winged Man* for the Teatro del Sol, which he founded and is Artistic/Producing Director. José was the Education Associate at the Walnut Street Theatre and Director of Education at Taller Puertorriqueño. He is currently Director of Education Outreach for The Arden Theatre Co.

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

Interviewed by Jennifer Nelson

Why did you want to direct *The Real Life Adventures of Jimmy de las Rosas*?

After reading it the first thing I thought to myself was "...where was this play when I was a kid!" There are such few stories being told on the stage for Latinx children that take place in the world they live in that I felt its importance right away! It empowers the kids in the play to find their power, their voice to change their circumstance and in turn the world. What better way is there to introduce children to theatre than to present a story where they hear and see themselves in the characters.

What is the main message you want audience members to take away from the play?

For our young audience I want them to leave the theatre knowing that the one thing that makes you different is the very thing that makes you special and unique. Claim it, own it, nurture it and you will be better because of it. I hope our adult audiences guide and nurture the special qualities in our young people. SEE them and HEAR them and it will FREE them to see the possibilities.

Please explain the importance of the puppets to *The Real Life Adventures of Jimmy de las Rosas*.

Ahhhh, yes, the puppets! Ha! Well, the puppets are not just fun but they introduce a sense of magic and danger to the story and the characters. The play is written in a comic book superhero world where good wins over evil. The puppets help us create that bigger-than-life world and how scary the world can be at times, even in our own communities.

Can you relate to any character or situation in *The Real Life Adventures of Jimmy de las Rosas*? If so, which one or ones, and why?

Yes! I can totally relate to Jimmy! While growing up, I always knew I wanted to be an artist and everyone would try to tell me to do something else like be a doctor or a lawyer. But I knew that being an artist was my superpower and that if I followed my heart great things will happen, and here I am directing this play!

Where and what plays will you be working on next?

I will be working on creating a Latinx theatre company called Teatro del Sol where we will tell more Latinx stories told by Latinx voices.

Why did you become interested in pursuing a career in theatre arts?

I always knew since I was little that I wanted to be an artist. I just didn't know what kind until one day my fourth grade teacher, Ms. Creighton, recognized that I loved stories but had trouble reading in English. She started to ask us to act the stories out in class, and just like that I understood and all my potential opened up. I want to do for others what Ms. Creighton did for me.

Would you like to add anything else about working at Passage Theatre in Trenton or this play?

I am excited that Passage is doing work for Young Audiences and that so many different communities and cultures are being represented on the stage this season. I can't wait to see what the future holds!



Left: Free Street Theater's 2015 production of *The Real Life Adventures of Jimmy de las Rosas*, directed by Coya Paz.

GLOSSARY

Elotes: a popular street food in Mexico, although it is frequently served at home prepared in the same way (boiled or grilled in husk). It is customarily consumed on a stick, or by grasping the husk of the cob that has been pulled down to form a "handle".

Metahuman: a superhuman power

Telekinetic: moving objects without any touch or human contact

Katana blade: a traditionally made Japanese sword that was used by the samurai of ancient and feudal Japan

Clobber: to hit someone with a lot of force

Lament: a passionate expression of grief or sorrow

Pigskins: the hide of a domestic pig

Corrugated metal: steel or iron with a protective zinc coating applied, to prevent rusting

Cayenne pepper: hot-tasting red powder prepared from ground dried chili peppers

Cumbias: a kind of dance music of Colombian origin, similar to salsa

Nortenas: a genre of Mexican music related to polka and corridos (a ballad in a traditional Mexican style)

Rancheras: a type of Mexican country music typically played with guitars and horns

Telenovela: (in Latin America) a television soap opera

Teletubby: a popular British television series for young children that started in 1997

Guayabera: a lightweight open-necked Cuban or Mexican shirt with two chest pockets and two pockets over the hips, typically having short sleeves and worn untucked

Huaraches: a leather sandal, originally worn by Mexican Indians

Canasta: a card game resembling rummy, using two packs, usually played by two pairs of partners; the aim is to collect sets of cards

Paleta: A caramel lollipop or ice lolly made from fresh fruit

Zarape: a shawl or blanket worn as a cloak in Latin America

Castaways: a person who has been shipwrecked and stranded in an isolated place

Mastermind: a person with an outstanding intellect

Puppeteer: a person who works puppets

Grand pooba: a term derived from the name of the character Pooh-Bah in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*

Amnesia: a partial or total loss of memory

Telepathic messages: capable of transmitting thoughts to other people and of knowing their thoughts

Soul food: traditional southern African-American food

Knuckle sandwiches: a punch in the mouth

Syndicate: a group of individuals or organizations combined to promote some common interest

Lavish: very rich, elaborate, or luxurious

Injustice: lack of fairness or justice

Grimace: an ugly, twisted expression on a person's face

Schlepping: haul or carry

Mutated: change or cause to change in form or nature

Brat: a child, typically a badly behaved one

Demonic: resembling or characteristic of demons or evil spirits.

Swarming: an aggressive gathering of many individuals



Above and Right: Photos from Free Street Theater's 2015 production of *The Real Life Adventures of Jimmy de las Rosas*, directed by Coya Paz.

Children's Post Script: Teacher Edition

Word Scramble Key

LEALVENETO

TELENOVELA

DANA

NADA

BEELBTYTU

TELETUBBY

BUEALA

ABUELA

BOYALZY

LAZY-BOY

PARZAE

ZARAPE

PCOHOTETK

HOTPOCKET

AASTWASYC

CASTAWAYS

RMAENDTISM

MASTERMIND