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## A story, a story: A children's neighborhood performance project

Leslie Allison Bryan

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A STORY, A STORY: A CHILDREN'S  
NEIGHBORHOOD PERFORMANCE PROJECT

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Interdisciplinary Studies:  
Performing Arts Management

---

by  
Leslie Allison Bryan  
June 1998

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NEIGHBORHOOD PERFORMANCE PROJECT

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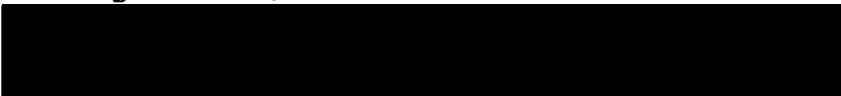
by  
Leslie Allison Bryan  
June 1998

Approved by:

  
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June 12, 1998  
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## APOLOGIA

### **Introduction**

Children of the twentieth century's technological age live in a world inundated with electronic stimulation and virtual simulation. They spend countless hours playing hand held computer games which provide little opportunity for creative expression. Even within the public education system children often lack exposure to venues that provide opportunities for not only creativity but artistic capabilities. I have always been interested in developing young people's sense of creativity believing that all children should be provided with opportunities for self-expression. It is this belief that prompted me to initiate a graduate project that would use children's literature, explored through drama and dance, as a means to increase student's creative expression. I believe that when you provide children with ways to increase their self-expression you are also increasing their self-esteem and personal development.

This project entitled *A Story, A Story: A Neighborhood Performing Arts Project*, focused on transforming a chosen piece of children's literature into a live performance. It was a process driven project which did not solely focus on the final production. Within this project I decided to use the conceptual framework as a basis for teaching drama and movement instead of the rote method of learning. I also

felt that the students should not just read literature or learn dance and drama concepts but they should take it a step further and share their learning on stage, with a live audience. The students who participated in this project were mostly fourth and fifth graders from neighboring elementary schools. There were six boys and five girls. Some of the students had previous dance and/or theater experience and some had none at all. It was a diverse group of students as one would find in any typical classroom. I also had two assistants to help with this project. One assistant is a student at CSUSB, completing her Bachelors degree in Musical Theater. The other assistant is a Claremont graduate student and a third grade teacher at Karyn Elementary School. They both provided invaluable help and support through these past few months.

This project explored children's literature through a theatrical production and included aspects related to the analysis of children's literature, drama and movement concepts, classroom management strategies, directorial choices, technical aspects, marketing, publicity and financial aspects. The following sections and appendixes will provide information on the technique and tools I used to dramatize a piece of literature; from the selection process through the final presentation. My objectives in this project focused on the following areas: choosing an appropriate text, methods for dramatizing the story,

creative dramatics and movement for children and management strategies.

### **Story Selection**

My first step in this project was to research various forms of children's literature to find the most appropriate tale to dramatize. I followed the standards set by Gale Heing author of *Creative Drama for the Classroom Teacher*, that the story be of good literary quality, it appealed to both me and the children, was simply told, had plenty of action and interesting dialogue (226). I decided to research trickster tales from a diverse array of native cultures because of the values and morals they teach. The tales I read came from the continents of Africa, North and South America, Asia and the Caribbean and had tricksters in the form of animals such as spider, coyote, tortoise and raven. I discovered that just as trickster tales teach eastern children the values and wisdom of the indigenous population, they can also teach these same truths to western children and the communities they live in.

Roger Abrahams, author of the book *African Folktales*, states that trickster is "a figure who, at one and the same time, represents primal creativity and pathological destructiveness, childish innocence and self-absorption" (155). This description is illustrated in native trickster tales where animals such as Anansi the spider, Leuk the hare, Tortie the tortoise, Coyote and Raven are viewed as

cunning rascals who do not always think things through and therefore have to suffer the consequences of their actions. The same can be said for many of today's children who could be considered western tricksters. They often times get themselves into difficult situations through schemes and plots which show little regard for future consequences.

Abrahams further states that trickster values include, but are not limited to: the ability to quickly solve problems as they occur, the ability to read and assess situations and other people and the ability to use what you have in order to gain what you want (19). It is these values that become moral lessons for children, helping them to live in the complex world of today. Although I was only able to dramatize one story for this project I did share several others with the students including Coyote and Raven tales and other variations of Anansi tales. This allowed the students to experience a wider range of the same genre of stories.

Gail Haley, author of the Caldcott winning story, *A Story A Story*, retells a perfect trickster tale of how Anansi the spiderman received the stories from Nyame the Sky God. I chose this tale to dramatize because of its easy adaptation for creative drama and movement and because it followed the standard format for trickster tales, a trickster who must outwit those more powerful than himself. It had an easily identifiable beginning, middle and end



which made it easy to divide into sections. It also had lots of action with simple characters and settings that generated movement. In this tale, Anansi the spider wants Nyame the Sky God's stories. In order to gain these stories Anansi must capture Osebo the leopard, Mmboro the hornet and Mmoatia the fairy and bring them to the Sky God. Anansi devises a plan to outwit each of the three characters tricking them into captivity. He eventually takes all three captives to Nyame and joyfully receive all the stories for the world, calling them spider stories. This tale illustrates trickster's ability to outwit someone who is bigger and fiercer than himself by using his brains and not his bronze and to utilize who and what is available in his surroundings. This lesson teaches children that the power of their brains is most important.

The children in this project responded to the trickster tales by talking about them in their process journals. I had asked the students who in their lives did they consider to be tricksters. Bart Simpson was cited as a trickster because "he always plays tricks on his family and at school". One child identified Coyote as a trickster from his own culture. Bugs Bunny in Disney's Space Jam was called a trickster because "he tricked the aliens into playing basketball". Will Smith from Fresh Prince of Bel Air was said to be trickster because "he is always trying to trick people out of making him do his work and then ends up

messing it all up". The student's believed that Anansi in Haley's tale was a sneaky trickster but since he was able to bring all the spider stories to the world then his deeds actually helped others more than hurt them.

### **Dramatization Methods**

Most folktales are meant to be read but not necessarily dramatized. This means the story I chose would have to be adapted to accommodate the space in which it takes place, the total number of students involved, limitations on financial resources and the amount of time available to complete the final presentation. For this project I needed a rehearsal space as well as a performance space. I was fortunate to have access to facilities at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB), using the dance studio for rehearsals and the recital hall for the final production of the story.

In order to accommodate all students involved in this project I had to expand some of the character roles. In the story I was presented with five basic characters and one narrator. Instead of having only one narrator I expanded this part to six narrators, dividing the story at appropriate intervals and paying attention to the order of the stories characters, in case narrators were also doubling as other characters. The role of Anansi the spider was expanded to five Anansies with each one being responsible for one section of the tale. There was only one Sky God

which was played by the oldest boy and one leopard which was played by one of the girls. Mmboro the hornet had friends added for a total of three hornets and Mmoatia the fairy had three fairy friends added. I developed the Court Noble characters giving the roles to two girls. In this way all students were able to have an active role in the story that included not only movement but dialogue.

As a graduate student I had limited financial resources to cover the cost of producing this tale. I applied for a graduate research grant to cover the cost of renting the recital hall, the programs and the flyers. To defer the cost of costumes I was granted access to the University Dance Company's costume supply and the sewing skills of a relative. The students took part in decorating the set, making tree vines from rolled brown paper bags attached together, with cut out leaves stapled on. These vines which had no cost involved, hung from the ceiling and were very effective. The brown paper bags were collected over a period of time from grocery stores and the leaf pattern and required construction paper were donated by one of the parents. The only other set piece was the tree that Anansi ties all his captives to and this was donated by the CSUSB scene shop.

I had to budget an adequate amount of time to not only teach the drama and movement concepts but to have enough time to apply these concepts to the story in a way that best

dramatizes it. Therefore, I had to allow two quarters to complete this project. The first part took place during the fall quarter 1997 and focused on dance and movement concepts taught in a classroom setting. Approximately eight weeks, one hour per week, was spent developing the student's understanding of drama and movement concepts, expanding their creative processes and generating material that could be adapted for Haley's story. The movements were generated through games and structured activities that presented the dance and theater concepts in a way which allowed the students to internalize the movements. During these games and activities movement motifs begin to develop and some of them eventually became the basis for choreography. I named the motifs as the students developed them, for example: Jessica's air path or Robert's traveling movement. This created a sense of ownership for the students and made the choreography their own. I have found that when children create this way they are more prone to remember the movements and they have a vested interest in performing them.

During the process of learning the concepts I focused on identifying which students had a strong understanding of which concepts and which concept best demonstrated certain parts of the story. I was looking for individual strengths of the students and later assigned characters and/or narration parts accordingly. After learning the concepts

and assigning the characters, blocking and staging took place. It is during the winter quarter 1998 that rehearsals took place and I along with the students finalized the presentation. During this time I video taped the rehearsals and then had the students watch, first just to enjoy seeing themselves on video and then in order to critique and refine their work. During the entire project I had the students keep a process journal of their feelings and beliefs. At the end of every lesson or rehearsal the children would be prompted by questions and they responded in their journals. They reflected on their own work, personal or group goals, things they liked and didn't like about the process and their feelings related to the final presentation of the story. These journals provided me with a way to see what the students were comprehending (or not) and how it was affecting them. I could see their development throughout the process as their responses became more detailed and included more artistic vocabulary as they became more critical in their analysis. Throughout the project I also kept a process journal where I recorded research notes, lesson plans, observations and student reactions. I also noted any revisions or additional thoughts or learnings I may have experienced myself. My journal eventually became the source for most of the projects documentation.

## **Creative Dramatics for Children**

Creative drama done in a classroom setting can be challenging and rewarding for both the teacher and the students. The challenge I faced in this project was to facilitate a positive learner-centered environment where students could safely express themselves. Pamela Cooper author of *Communication For The Classroom Teacher* states that teachers should provide supportive classroom climates in order for students to develop "positive self-images and enhance self-concept" (2). This notion was the underlying focus of my project as I presented open-ended drama lessons that prompted students to learn and explore creatively.

Drama lessons in this project were guided by examples from June Cottrell's *Creative Drama in the Classroom Grades 4-6* and Ruth Heing's *Creative Drama for the Classroom Teacher*. The lessons focused on pantomime skills, gestural skills, vocal expression and readers theater techniques. Both Cottrell and Heing provide a range of activities that include pantomime games, drama games, creative movement activities and verbal expression activities that are designed for the elementary classroom. I started the class sessions with drama exercises instead of dance movement lessons because I believed the students would be more comfortable with these. Sometimes students, both young and old, are intimidated by just the word "dance" and are hesitant to move in front of a class of students. I felt

the drama games and exercises would provide a way for students to get to know one another and become comfortable with the class.

The drama exercises focused on how to pantomime brief vignettes, how to role play different characters and/or topics, and how to pantomime emotions. We pantomimed waking up in the morning, eating your favorite meal and simple emotions like happiness, sadness, fear, surprise and anger. The best application of pantomime skills is when the students, in groups of three-five, pantomimed each section of *A Story, A Story*. I divided the story into five sections with my assistants and I taking the first section. The students had to "tell" their section of the story through pantomime. Not only did this exercise strengthen the student's skills but it also provided them with another way to internalize the sequence and actions of the story. Some of these pantomime motifs were eventually used in the final dramatization.

In order to help the students develop their vocal skills we did facial warm-ups and tongue twisters. These exercises helped the students with the enunciation and projection of their lines. We also did choral readings so I could determine who was most comfortable with the written word, who was expressive in their vocalization and who had stronger or weaker voices. I could then determine future casting of narrators and/or characters.

## **Creative Movement for Children**

The bulk of this project focused on creative movement for children. Most of my artistic training and education at CSUSB has been in this field. Within each lesson I focused on providing open-ended experiences that could be further developed for use in the final production. For resources in this area I turned to Anne Green Gilbert's book, *Creative Dance For All Ages*. The strongest aspect of this book is that it moves away from the rote method of teaching dance and instead focuses on creative movement that combines skill development with exploration and improvisation. Gilbert claims that "... creative dance combines the mastery of movement with the artistry of expression...[it] teaches dance concepts rather than just steps" (3). Gilbert provides the basic concepts of dance; space, time and energy in a framework of creative dance lessons. For this project I chose to work with the concepts of space including general and self space, levels, directions, pathways and the concept of relationships. Each of these concepts was used to demonstrate a certain part of the tale. A levels motif was used for Oseobo the leopard, pathway motifs for Anansi and Mmboro the hornet and a relationship motif for Mmoatia the fairy.

At first the students resisted some of the movement exercises dismissing them as stupid or boring. At this point most students had little or no idea how to express



themselves in a creative manner through movement. They did not have the artistic vocabulary or tools to accomplish this task. They seemed uncomfortable moving in their own bodies and their movement responses were stagnate and one dimensional. However, after a few weeks as they learned more concepts and their skills improved, students begin to expand their creative responses. They were able to overlap concepts without me prompting them to and their movements had more depth to them. They had internalized the movement concepts and were able to use them more effectively in movement motifs.

### **Benefits of Project**

This project was very successful in attaining its goals. I was able to not only teach basic concepts of dance and drama but with the help of the students, dramatize Gail Haley's tale in a theatrical setting. There were several aspects of this project that worked well. First of all, the way I was able to expand the character roles allowing for all students to have an active part in its dramatization. This adjustment developed as we went along. At first I thought I would use one Anansi but during classes I realized that no one boy could manage the weight of this part. By giving it to five boys, each could easily handle the smaller section. Also by expanding the narrators it alleviated some of the stress related to memorizing a larger part. I felt there was a good balance amongst the roles;

everyone had lines to memorize and speak, dramatic moments to enact and dance motifs that they either helped create or participated in.

The second positive aspect of this project is how well the students worked together and how they were able to compromise with each other. Their group skills were excellent in how they communicated with and adapted to each other. These students came from all walks of life both socially, economically and racially and had varying degrees of theatrical experiences. Nevertheless, they were able to get along despite their difference and create a wonderful presentation of their work.

### **Project Obstacles**

Going into the project I did not expect to have a difficult time with just five fourth grade boys. Their behavioral problems were not different from other fourth grade boys but in this case they were also extremely unfocused. I spent twice the amount of time completing an assignment with the boys then with the girls. The pathways and locomotor movement concepts that the boys were to do had to be simplified and adapted several times before they could successfully demonstrate them. With each lesson plan I had to separately plan activities that would hold the attention of these five boys. Their attention span was approximately 20 minute where the girls could stay focused for the entire hour. Once we got to the point where I had to divide the

groups, each one with a teacher-leader, the boys became more productive. They seemed to respond better in a group to themselves than with the rest of the class. I had one boy that had a learning disability and behavioral difficulties. I was not aware of this when he came into the project but after just one class I realized that this boy was special. At first I panicked because I am not trained in working with special education children. I wanted this boy to have a successful experience and to be able to participate to his fullest potential. In keeping with Ruth Heing's advice I tried not to over react to his special needs and to focus on his abilities instead. He was able to do the same drama and movement activities as the other students, as long as I simplified the task and gave him explicit directions. There were times though when he would disengage himself from the activities if they were too much for him and either sit by his mother or sit in a corner of the room. Most often when he was ready he would return to the group but if I tried before he was ready it would actually make matters worse. I had to consciously pay attention to his reaction to the activities because certain activities would frustrate or upset him that would not trouble the other children. Despite these problems there were also times when he was completely engaged in the activities and seemed to enjoy himself immensely. The difficulty was not knowing when he would have problems with the lessons and when he would not.

In order for him to take part in the production he was the last Anansi in the tale, with the least amount of lines to learn. All of his movements were done with other students so he could use them as guides.

Another problem I encountered was dealing with the different attitudes of the group. Some of the students had previous experience in drama and/or dance and felt that since they knew more, then they were better than the other students. These few students brought certain attitudes and beliefs that were counterproductive or against my philosophy of working creatively with children. They were overly concerned with what they were going to do, say or wear on stage instead of focusing on what we were doing at the moment. Anything that did not focus solely on themselves was felt to be of little interest. I of course had to change their ways of thinking and try to get them to see that this was a collaborative effort and all student's input was equally important. I also had to help them understand that the audience does not just see them as the boy or girl they are, but as the character they are portraying and this is what they should be focusing on, their character and not themselves.

The most significant growth I experienced through this project is to realize that often times child performers do not actually perform at their best until the day of the show. I was in a panic up until the final day because in my

opinion the children had not given a performance that was to the best of their ability. It seemed as if all of the suggestions and comments made by myself and my assistants had fallen on deaf ears. The night before the show I had decided that at this point there was nothing else I could do to bring the children to their fullest potential and that whatever they did was going to have to be good enough. The next morning brought great surprises to me. Not only did the children perform without any problems or mishaps but they did their best ever. It seemed that everything that they had been told to do they were actually doing it now! This has been the hardest lesson; to have faith in the fact that the children will come through on the day of the show. Since completing this project I have been involved with several other performances that involved children and have tried to keep this theory in mind as I prepare them for their final productions. I have learned to trust in the fact that the students will excel on the day of their performance and this realization has helped to keep me from constantly drilling the students and to keep my stress levels down.

### **Project Outcomes**

There were three different artistic venues where I was able to expand my experiences from this project. First, a teacher development workshop for *RIMS California Arts Project* (RIMS CAP), second a choreographed dance piece

created for the CSUSB *University Dance Company* and third, a proposed child care center that would focus on the performing arts.

The first expansion from this project was in the form of a teacher development workshop done through RIMS CAP. This organization is the regional site for *The California Arts Project* which is one of the subject matter professional development projects mandated by the State of California. The workshop was done on the same day as the performance. Elementary school teachers within the region attended the children's performance and then spent the afternoon going through some of the same lessons the children experienced. The teachers were given handouts that were based on the objectives and lesson plans I followed throughout this project. They were then taken through a series of sample lessons so they could experience first hand the learning process involved in teaching drama and creative movement. These examples detailed my experiences in this project and were provided for the teachers to use and implement in their own classrooms.

The second expansion from this project was to see if I could take the same approach of teaching though the conceptual framework and develop a fully choreographed dance piece. I decided to choreograph a dance that had children and adults ranging in ages from three years through sixty-eight. The theme of the piece was based around the

relationships between mothers and daughters. Part of the dance was choreographed by myself and part by the dancers, both adults and children. We used the "I Am" poems as a creative tool for movement. These poems provide statements that the writer completes which portray something about that person. I focused the poems on issues relating to mothers and daughters.

I am (mother or daughter)

Every day I (activity I do as a mother or daughter)

I try (effort as a mother or daughter)

I say (verbalize a phrase said as a mother or daughter)

I hope (related to being a mother or daughter)

I am (restate the first line)

From these words dancers generated dance movements that demonstrated the meaning behind the words. These movements were then incorporated into the final dance piece and then staged by myself, grouping together similar or dissimilar movements. The children were able to create movements from simple rhythmic concepts and locomotor movements. They were able to see how the movement concepts could be applied to more technical dances and then have the experience of performing in a professional dance production.

The final step in expanding this framework of developing theatrical productions based on children's literature is to transfer these ideas to a full center for the performing arts. Instead of having a center that

focuses on recreation as most do, this center will have classes in literature, drama, dance and stage work. Throughout the year students will focus on creating theatrical experiences and present them for family, friends and community members. The center will provide a venue whereby I can facilitate an atmosphere for developing young artists and their potential talents.

### **Conclusion**

This project has fully synthesized all of my course work at CSUSB plus my work experience in children's creative drama and dance. Observations and experiences from this project have prepared me for future work in children's performing arts. I have dedicated my educational and career goals to the challenge of developing and implementing a performing arts center geared for under-represented youths; this project has been the most influential experience to prepare me for this endeavor.



SCRIPT

**A Story, A Story: An African Tale**

retold and illustrated by Gail Haley

Narrators:

1 - Saidah  
2 - Rene  
3 - Kristina  
4 - Keturah  
5 - Tehliah  
6 - Rebecca

Anansi:

1 - Bomani  
2 - Frankie  
3 - Robert  
4 - Johnny  
5 - Alex

Characters:

1 - Nyame - Aaron  
2 - Osebo - Krissy  
3 - Mmboro - Jessica  
4 - Mmoatia - Saidah  
5 - Court Nobles:  
    Keturah  
    Rebecca  
6 - Fairies; Saidah,  
    Kristina  
    Rebecca, Rene  
7 - Hornets:  
    Tehliah, Jessica

---

Narrator 1:

Once, oh small children round my knee, there were no stories on earth to hear. All the stories belonged to Nyame, the Sky God. He kept them in a golden box next to his royal stool.

(entrance: Nyame with court nobles, one carries the golden box another carries the royal stool; end with Nyame and royal subjects upstage/center)

Narrator 1:

Anansi 1:

Ananse, the Spider man, wanted to buy the Sky God's stories. So he spun a web up to the sky.

(entrance: All 5 Ananse(s) - travel circular path (3 steps & hop); at end 4 leave, Anansi 1 stays on stage)

Narrator 1:

When the Sky God heard what Ananse wanted, he laughed:

Nyame:

Ha, ha, ha. The price of my stories is that you bring me Osebo the leopard-of-the-terrible-teeth, Mmboro the hornet who-strings-like-fire, and Mmoatia the fairy whom-men-never-see.

Ananse 1:  
I shall gladly pay the price.

Nyame:  
Twe, Twe, Twe, how can a weak old man like you, so small, so small, so small, pay my price?

Narrator 1:  
But Ananse merely climbed down to earth to find the things that the Sky God demanded.

(exit Anansi 1, exit Nyame and royal subjects)

Narrator 2:           Anansi 2:  
Ananse ran along the jungle path until he came to Osebo the leopard-of-the-terrible-teeth.

(enter: Osebo; dance/pantomime movements of "terrible teeth"; chase Anansi around tree and DSL; then end center facing Ananse)

Osebo:  
Oh, Ananse you are just in time to be my lunch! I am soooo hungry and desperately looking for something to eat! You would make a nice little meal for my empty stomach!

Ananse 2:  
As for that, what will happen will happen. But first let us play the binding game.

(takes out binding rope)

Osebo:  
The binding game? How is it played? Is it like hide-and-seek, or Simon Says, or Che Che Kule?

Ananse 2:  
It is played with vine creepers. I will bind you by your foot and foot. Then I will untie you, and you can tie me up.

(Ananse 2 smiles to audience; acknowledge trick)

Osebo:  
Very well. I will play your binding game.

Narrator 2:  
Osebo had planned to eat Ananse as soon as it was his turn to bind him. So Ananse tied the leopard by his foot, by his foot, by his foot, by his foot with the vine creeper.

(movements are done by Ananse 2 to Osebo - Osebo is upside down with feet in air)

Ananse 2:

Now, Osebo, you are ready to meet the Sky God.

Narrator 2:

And he hung the tied leopard in a tree in the jungle.

(movements done by Ananse 2 - he takes Osebo to tree - then Anansi 2 exists)

Narrator 3:        Anansi 3:

Next Ananse cut a frond from a banana tree and filled a calabash with water. He crept through the tall grasses till he came to the nest of Mmboro, the-hornet-who-stings-like-fire.

(Anansi 3 enters with banana leaf and calabash)

Narrator 3:

Ananse held the banana leaf over his head as an umbrella. Then he poured some of the water in the calabash over his head. The rest he emptied over the hornet's nest and cried:

(movements are pantomimed by Ananse using props)

Ananse 3:

It is raining, raining raining. Should you not fly into my calabash, so that the rain will not tatter your wings?

(enter: hornets dance movements, 3-4 circular paths; 1 flys away and one is trapped by Ananse 3)

Mmboro:

Come with me my hornet friends - let us fly into Anansi's calabash so our wings will not tatter.

Hornet:

Thank you. Thank you....

Ananse 3:

Now, Mmboro, you are ready to meet the Sky God.

Narrator 3:

And he placed the calabash full of hornets onto the tree next to the leopard.

(Anansi 3 exits - Anansi 4 enters with wooden doll, bowl of yams)

Narrator 4:        Anansi 4:

Ananse now carved a little wooden doll holding a bowl. He covered the doll from top to bottom with sticky latex gum. Then he filled the doll's bowl with pounded yams.

He set the doll at the foot of a flamboyant tree where fairies like to dance. Ananse tied one end of a vine around the doll's head and holding the other end in his hand, he hid behind a bush.

(Anansi 4 pantomimes movements and hides behind tree)

Narrator 4:

In a little while, Mmoatia the fairy-whom-no-man-sees came dancing, dancing, dancing to the foot of the flamboyant tree.

(enter: Mmoatia and fairies; solo to group to solo dance; ends with Mmoatia by doll/bowl; other fairies exit)

Narrator 4:

There she saw the doll holding the bowl of yams.

Mmoatia:

Gum Baby, I am sooooo hungry. May I eat some of your yams?

Narrator 4:

Ananse pulled at the vine in his hiding place, so that the doll seemed to nod its head. So the fairy took the bowl from the doll and ate all the yams.

(Anansi 4 pantomimes pulling vine; Mmoatia pantomimes eating yams)

Mmoatia:

Thank you, Gum Baby. (continues to eat yams)

Narrator 4:

The doll did not answer.

Mmoatia:

Don't you reply when I thank you?

Narrator 4:

The doll did not stir.

Mmoatia:

Gum Baby, I'll slap your crying place unless you answer me.

Narrator 4:

But the wooden doll remained still and silent. So the fairy slapped her crying place - pa! Her hand stuck fast to the gum baby's sticky cheek.

(pantomime movements)

Mmoatia:

Let go of my hand, or I'll slap you again! - pa!

Narrator 4:

She slapped the doll's crying place with her other hand. Now the fairy was stuck to the gum baby with both hands, and she was furious. She pushed against the doll with her feet, and they also stuck fast.

(pantomime movements)

Narrator 4:

Now Ananse came out of hiding.

(Anansi 4 moves from behind hiding space to Mmoatia)

Ananse 4:

You are ready to meet the Sky God, Mmoatia.

Narrator 4:

And he took her to the tree where the leopard and the hornets were waiting.

(Ananse 4 takes Mmoatia to tree and then takes all captives off stage left)

Narrator 5:

Ananse spun a web around Osebo, Mmboro, and Mmoatia. Then he spun a web to the sky. He pulled up his captives behind him, and set them down at the feet of the Sky God.

(enter: Nyame) (Anansi 1-5 enter one at a time)

Anansi 1:

O, Nyame, here is the price you ask for your stories.

Anansi 2:

Osebo, the leopard-of-the-terrible-teeth.

Anansi 3:

Mmboro the hornets-who-sting-like-fire.

Anansi 4:

And Mmoatia the fairy-whom-men-never-see.

Anansi 5:

Now I am ready to receive your stories.

Narrator 5:

Nyame the Sky God called together all the nobles of his court and addressed them in a loud voice:

Nyame:

Little Ananse, the spider man, has paid me the price I ask for my stories. Sing his praise. I command you. From this day and going on forever my stories belong to Ananse and shall be called "Spider Stories".

(addresses all; at end Anansi(s) & narrator exit; Nyame stays)

(Cast enters for last dance movement; ends in large circle)

Narrator 5:        Anansi 5:

So Ananse took the golden box of stories back to earth, to the people of his village. And when he opened the box all the stories scattered to the corners of the world, including this one.

(movements done by Anansi 5 - he has golden box)

Anansi 5:

Today I bring all the "Spider Stories" to the world. Let us rejoice.

Narrator 6:

This is my story which I have related. If it be sweet, or if it be not sweet, take some elsewhere and let some come back to me.

(move downstage/center)

---

Cast moves to sit on edge of stage - will read short explanations of dance/drama concepts.

APPENDIX A

**Copyright Request**

September 23, 1997

Macmillan Publishing Company  
866 Third Avenue,  
New York, NY 10022

To whom it may concern,

I am a graduate student from California State University, San Bernardino. I am currently working on a degree in Performing Arts Management and will be completing my graduate project this academic school year, 1997/98. As part of this project I will be working with a small group of young children, taking them through artistic experiences in creative dance and drama. We will be exploring various dance and dramatic concepts in conjunction with children's literature. Student's culmination work will be demonstrated for the student's family and friends.

I am requesting permission to use the story, "A Story, A Story" An African Tale retold and illustrated by Gail E. Haley, ISBN 0-689-71201-4. This story will be used for educational purposes as part of a classroom activity. There are no fees for the student's participation and no admission fees for the culmination activity. I have tried to reach your office by phone but have not been able to obtain the correct phone number.

Please indicate your approval of this permission by signing the letter where indicated below and returning it to me as soon as possible. You may fax your response to (909) 880-7016 attention Leslie Bryan or mail to 48 San Mateo St #7, Redlands Ca 92373. You can also reach me at (909) 335-7238. Thank you for this consideration.

Sincerely,

Leslie  
Bryan

---

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

PRINT NAME

---

SIGNATURE

---

DATE

---

**Project Information Sheet**

\*\*\*\*\*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS:

\_\_\_\_\_

PARENT'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK #: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

STUDENT'S GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_ MALE/FEMALE \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ ETHNICITY/OPTIONAL \_\_\_\_\_

HEIGHT: \_\_\_\_\_ WEIGHT: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

DANCE EXPERIENCE:

\_\_\_\_\_

STAGE EXPERIENCE:

\_\_\_\_\_

OTHER ARTISTIC EXPERIENCES:

\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

ARE YOU AVAILABLE SATURDAY MORNINGS FOR EXTRA REHEARSALS IF  
NEEDED?

YES/NO \_\_\_\_\_ IF YES, AT WHAT TIME? \_\_\_\_\_

DO YOU HAVE A CONFLICT WITH THE PRODUCTION WEEK SCHEDULE?

YES/NO \_\_\_\_\_ IF YES, WHICH DAY AND/OR TIME?

DAY: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_



## Actor's Contract

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to take full responsibility for the part of \_\_\_\_\_ in the performance *A Story, A Story*.

I will attend all rehearsals, arriving at the scheduled time. I will call in case of emergency or if I have to miss rehearsals. I will leave a message with Leslie Bryan at (909) 335 -7238.

I understand that all students must attend rehearsals on February 15th and 22nd as well as March 1st, 5th and 6th (unless previous arrangements have been made).

I will take full responsibility for the use of all costumes and/or props assigned to my character in this production. I understand that all props and/or costumes must be returned promptly at the conclusion of the performance.

I will conduct myself in a professional manner. I will not engage in any disruptive behavior such as ( but not limited to) fighting, harassment, abusive language, foul play or verbal threats. I understand that the director reserves the right to drop a participant from the production due to disruptive behavior.

I will cooperate with my fellow students, the director and other assistants. I will support and commit myself to the production as a whole as well as the character(s) I play.

I will discuss these policies and procedures with my parents and/or guardian so there is a clear understanding of expectations.

**STUDENT'S SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

To ensure a better production for all, each parent and/or guardian should discuss these policies and procedures and any other questions or expectations you may have with their child(ren).

**PARENT'S SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**ASI Research Fund Application**

Deadline: February 20, 1998

ASI RESEARCH FUND  
GRADUATE STUDENT APPLICATION  
RESEARCH: CHILDREN'S NEIGHBORHOOD PERFORMANCE PROJECT

Supplies:

1. Recital Hall Rental	
base fee	\$100.00
technician fee 15 hrs. @\$12.00/hr	180.00
2. Copying Costs	
400 pages @ .04/page	
(300 - programs, 100 - flyers)	\$16.00
3. Stamps (to mail flyers)	
100 @ .35 cents	35.00
 TOTAL REQUESTED	
	<hr/>
	\$331.00

ASI RESEARCH FUND

GRADUATE STUDENT APPLICATION

RESEARCH: CHILDREN'S NEIGHBORHOOD PERFORMANCE PROJECT

This research project is a culmination activity for my Interdisciplinary Masters Degree in Performing Arts Management. The degree draws from several disciplines including Business Management, Theater Arts, Communications and English; and focuses on issues related to children and young adults. The project provides me with the opportunity to consummate all of the knowledge gained throughout my academic training. It is the result of extensive research of children's literature and the application of artistic skills combined with curriculum materials related to the classroom development of literature for presentation. My work has focused on the development of concepts and skills of young people including movement, oral interpretation, rhythm and African culture studies. These skills will be realized in a theatrical production for young people in order to actualize the full effect of a theatrical performance. As part of this culmination project I have also developed an artistic script, generated a marketing plan and budget, formed production and design teams, developed promotional activities and held auditions. I am currently working on rehearsals, production meetings and

finalizing the final performance. I have already discussed this project with the human research review committee and have been told that this research project does not fall into the category of "human subject research" and is therefore exempt from their requirements.

The final product and public demonstration of this research is the production of the folktale *A Story, A Story*, an African-American trickster story by Gail Haley. It will be presented at California State University San Bernardino in the Recital Hall and will be open to the campus and community. As part of the promotion and marketing strategy this project will be presented as a Teacher's Professional Development Workshop for elementary school teachers through RIMSCAP, the regional site of The California Arts Project (TCAP). The final project will be videotaped and evaluated by my advisors followed by an oral interview by members of my committee. The research will become part of the ongoing discussion about the value and classroom applications of the arts in public education and teacher development.

Promotional Flyer

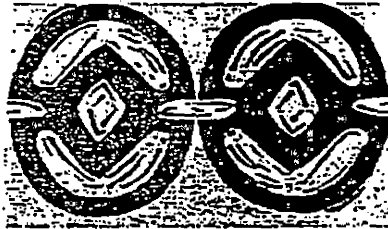
# A STORY, A STORY

by gail haley

*a theatrical experience combining children's literature, dramatics and movement*

PRESENTED BY  
*elementary school children from our community*

DATE: Saturday March 7, 1998  
TIME: 10:00 a.m. -- 11:00 a.m.  
PLACE: California State University,  
San Bernardino  
Creative Arts Building  
5500 University Pkwy  
San Bernardino, CA  
COST: 1.00 donation



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CONTACT Leslie Bryan at (909)335-7238

*This presentation culminates Leslie Bryan's CSUSB Interdisciplinary Graduate Project, focusing on the process of using text as a basis for children performances.*

**Directions to CSUSB:**

Take the 215 North. Exit University Pkwy. Turn Right. Follow University Pkwy directly to the campus. Parking is \$1.50 at the permits dispenser. Park in Lot C. The Creative Arts Building is the single story building in front of Lot C.



### *Special Thanks*

Special thank-you to Kathy Ervin and Sarah Boeh for their undying support and encouragement; to Trudy Storm and Harlan Jeglin for donations to this production; to Janys Antonio and several members of University Dance Company for their time and energy, and finally to Kris Alexander and RIMS California Arts Project for enlightening me on the value of arts education. Also special thanks to all the parents who allowed their children to take part in this theatrical production.



### *Director's Notes*

This presentation culminates Leslie Bryan's California State University San Bernardino, Interdisciplinary Graduate Project which focuses on the process of using text as a basis for children's performances. It incorporates the basic elements of drama with concepts of movement for children.



Program

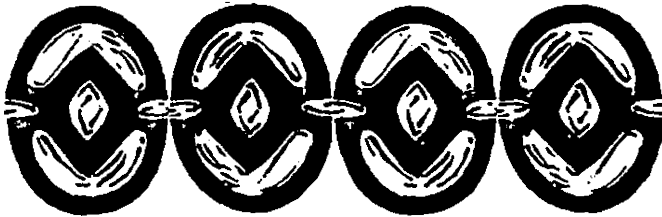
# A STORY A STORY

BY GAIL HALEY

*a theatrical experience combining children's literature,  
dramatics and movement*

presented by

*elementary school children from within our community*



March 7, 1998 - 10:00 a.m.

California State University San Bernardino  
Creative Arts Building Recital Hall  
sponsored in part by ASI





## The Cast

Narrator 1	.....	Saidah Story
Narrator 2	.....	Renee Williams
Narrator 3	.....	Kristina Garza
Narrator 4	.....	Keturah Boyce
Narrator 5	.....	Tehlijah Johnson
Narrator 6	.....	Rebecca Garza
Anansi 1	.....	Bomani Story
Anansi 2	.....	Franklin Antonio
Anansi 3	.....	Robert Owens
Anansi 4	.....	Jonathan Bryan
Anansi 5	.....	Alex Lewis
Nyame	.....	Aaron Jimenez
Royal Subject	.....	Keturah Boyce Rebecca Garza
Osebo	.....	Kristen Johnson
Mimboro	.....	Jessica Owens
Hornet Friend	.....	Tehlijah Johnson
Mmoatia	.....	Saidah Story
Fairy Friends	.....	Kristina Garza Rebecca Garza Renee Williams



## Production

Director - Leslie Bryan

Director Assistants

Kharyshi Wiginton - Stephanie Henderson

Technical Director - Dan Robinson

Costumes - Louise Knight

Lobby Display - Heather Jenkins

Children's Reception - Renea Wickman

## Upcoming Events at CSUSB

### Dance Workshops

Master Class in Capoeira with  
Paul Zmolek, Master Dance Educator  
Saturday, March 14, 1998 from 1 - 2:30 pm

Hip-Hop with Bradley Rapier from Tremaine Studios  
March 19, 1998

### Performances

University Dance Company  
April 22-26, 1998

University Theatre  
*Rumors and Learned Ladies*  
March, 1998

Please contact Jany's Antonio for further information  
at 880-7234 or Kathy Ervin at 880-5982

APPENDIX B

**Performance Video**

See accompanying slipcase.

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