

EDUCATOR GUIDE

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Discipline: Theatre

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Carlos Baron directs the cast of *Poeta Pan*
Still image from the Spark story, 2007.

SECTION I - OVERVIEW

SUBJECT

Carlos Baron

GRADE RANGES

6-12

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Theater, Language Arts

OBJECTIVE

To provide a forum for students to understand the political history of Chile and to introduce them to the elements of play and poetry writing.

STORY SYNOPSIS

Playwright Carlos Baron has brought the influence of poet, Pablo Neruda and his personal story of living in Chile to his writings over decades as an exile from his homeland. Spark follows Baron as he and a group of young actors rehearse and perform his 2005 play *Poeta Pan* in San Francisco and in Chile.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Hands-on group projects, in which students assist and support one another

Hands-on individual projects, in which students work independently

Group oral discussion and analysis, including peer review and aesthetic valuing

Teacher-guided instruction, including demonstration and guidance

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

To foster an understanding of the political history of Chile

To illustrate the challenges and rewards of working as an actor or playwright

To analyze how theatre traditions change and develop

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

SPARK story on Carlos Baron on DVD or VHS and related equipment

Computer with Internet access, navigation software, speakers and a sound card.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Access to libraries with up-to-date collections of periodicals, books, and research papers
Pencils, pens, and paper

INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED

Logical-Mathematical – the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically

Interpersonal – awareness of others' feelings, emotions, goals, motivations

Intrapersonal – awareness of one's own feelings, emotions, goals, motivations

Bodily-Kinesthetic – the ability to use one's mind to control one's bodily movements



See more information on
[Multiple Intelligences at
www.kqed.org/spark/education.](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education)

MEDIA MATTERS

The following SPARK stories may be used for compare/contrast purposes:

- Forbidden Territory: Traveling Jewish Theatre
- Fusion: Calligraphy of Thought
- Home, Sweet Home: headRush
- History Retold: Berkeley Repertory Theatre's "The People's Temple"
- Let's Talk Politics: Berkeley Repertory Theatre

SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

CONTENT OVERVIEW

A childhood in Chile marked by both the lyricism of Pablo Neruda's poetic legacy and the violence of the Pinochet regime flavors the experiences that poet and playwright Carlos Baron has brought to his writings over decades as an exile from his homeland. Spark follows Baron as he and a group of young actors rehearse and perform his play *Poeta Pan* in San Francisco and in Chile.

Poeta Pan or "Bread Poet" is an evocation of Baron's Chilean roots through the poetry of Neruda. A multi-faceted collaboration with Latin jazz flutist John Calloway, Rafael Manriquez and choreographer Martha L. Zepeda, the play calls up comparisons between September 11, 2001 and the Pinochet coup d'etat that occurred 28 years earlier on the same date.

After studying sociology and theater arts at UC Berkeley in the late 1960s and early 70s, Baron returned briefly to Chile to defend the Salvador Allende government, for which he was imprisoned. Upon returning to the Bay Area, in 1975 he helped to found the La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley, a cultural meeting ground for Chilean exiles, where he was the first cultural coordinator. As a poet and a professional storyteller, Baron's impassioned work has appeared throughout the world at festivals in Cuba, Chile, and the United States.

Multiculturalism and Latino theater remain the primary interests for Baron, who was also the theater and dance coordinator for the Mission Cultural Center and founder of San Francisco's Teatro Latino. As a professor of theater arts at San Francisco State University, Baron has not only helped to expand La Raza and multicultural studies at the university, but also directs the university's Teatro Arcoiris, or Rainbow Theater, a multicultural theater workshop.

An activist and an actor, Baron has worked with Berkeley Rep, the Magic Theatre and the San Jose Repertory Theater. He has also had a hand in radio and television for many years, as a programmer for both KPFA and KPOO, and has consulted for Antenna Theater, Intercultura and the McNeil/Lehrer Newshour among others.

THE BIG PICTURE

Carlos Baron describes the creation of "Poeta Pan" (Bread Poet) as a project of collaboration and challenge. The collaboration is multilayered; there is Baron's text, John Calloway's musical compositions, Matha L. Zepeda's choreography, and the cast's strong ensemble performances. Then, there is the poetry of Pablo Neruda: sensual yet spiritual, inspirational yet grounded in a fierce love for everyday things. Finally, there is the presence of the people of Chile (literally, as audience members, and figuratively, as characters in "Poeta Pan") who identify both with Baron's memories of life under Pinochet's rule, and Neruda's eloquent and often deeply political poetry.

The challenge may have emerged from several sources, not least from the multidisciplinary and multicultural nature of "Poeta Pan," which requires the committed cast of Teatro Arcoiris (Rainbow Theatre) to sing, dance, create shadow puppetry, act in both English and Spanish and perform on tour in Chile. In creating "Poeta Pan," Baron borrows from grassroots theater traditions that embrace both the collaboration and challenge within their communities.

American Grassroots Theater

Considering the history of grassroots theater, it seems appropriate that Teatro Arcoiris hails from San Francisco State University. In North America, grassroots theater first found its footing at

universities. In 1917, Frederick Koch, a professor in the University of North Carolina's theater department, proposed a vision of a grassroots American theater that mirrored Neruda's belief about poetry. ("Poetry is like bread; it should be shared by all...") In order to capture the true culture of America, he believed theater needed to record the lives of ordinary people, and be performed for ordinary people. Koch urged his students to write and present "folk plays" exploring their backgrounds and local communities. Realizing that a community's voice must reflect the diversity of that community, Koch chose students from a variety of ages, races, as well as social and economic backgrounds. The students' diverse cultural traditions reflected in the themes, dialogue, staging and music of the plays they created.

Koch also insisted that students' plays focus on what they considered real issues of the day. For example, "Job's Kinfolks" by Loretto Carroll Bailey examined urban mill life; other student works included "Country Sunday," an anti-lynching play, and "According to Law," about the unjust trial of an innocent black man caught in a white man's court.

During Koch's nearly 30 years on faculty at the University of North Carolina, his students wrote and toured more than a thousand of these "folk plays." To Koch, touring was an important component of grassroots theater. Instead of performing at an arts center for conventional theater patrons, Koch cut through perceptions of theater's cultural elitism by taking plays directly to the people. He believed that these stories of everyday Americans must first be told by the people of that community, for that community, and then shared with others. Sharing performances with other communities promoted learning, open discussion, and an understanding of, and appreciation for, the scope and richness of American life.

Around the same time, Alexander Drummond, drama professor at Cornell University in New York, partnered farmers interested in writing plays with graduate student dramaturges, to create plays with authentic rural voices. At the University of Wisconsin in 1945, playwright Robert Gard (author of "Grassroots Theater") took inspiration from the state's populist government and envisioned a Wisconsin where every citizen was writing, and

where theater served the people. Working with members from the community, Gard saw that in the act of bringing their stories to the stage, people found their voices, saw their experiences reflected back to them, and felt empowered.

Grassroots theater's ability to empower the community became attractive to Civil Rights activists in the 1960s and 1970s. While most socially engaged theater ensembles used political theater's blend of satire and allegory to inform and galvanize audiences, companies like Tennessee's Carpetbag Theatre, Minnesota's Mixed Blood Theatre Company and New York's Teatro Pregonos appreciated that community participation and access were central to the grassroots theater movement. And the multiculturalism reflected by a diverse community also appealed to their desire for representation and equity. These companies began diving into issues facing their own communities, involving residents in the creation of plays, and creating education and outreach programs for local neighborhoods.

Activist companies that took up grassroots theater soon found the plays they created in this mode were highly effective political appeals for social justice. Simply by committing to portray the lives of real people, grassroots theater revealed uncensored stories of injustice and abuse. And as is the case with Neruda's poetry, playwrights found that when an individual's experience is presented with truth and integrity, it carries a universal appeal.

Grassroots Theater in Latin America

At the same time the Civil Rights movement was growing in North America, Latin America was experiencing its own politically-motivated grassroots theater. Brazilian theater director Augusto Boal sought to make theater more interactive, to transform the "monologue" of a traditional play where actors perform for passive viewers, into a "dialogue" between performers and "spect-actors", audience members who take part in the dramatic action.

In Columbia and Cuba, popular theater was fueled by the *creación colectiva* (collective creation.) Initiated by Columbian theater artist Enrique Buenaventura, *creación colectiva* modeled theater companies on cooperatives, with each artist

contributing an equal voice, role and responsibility in the ensemble. To a lesser degree, the *creación colectiva* movement also swept through Costa Rica, Peru, Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador and Mexico. In Nicaragua, *creación colectiva* stoked the Sandinista revolution and was a catalyst for a nationwide arts and literacy campaign.

Although each *creación colectiva* had their own style and methods, they shared common performance elements. Play themes were carefully researched and explored the cultures and interests of the people the collectives performed for, often drawing on texts that resonated within communities, as Baron does with Neruda's poetry in "Poeta Pan." Baron also followed the traditional arrangement for *creación colectiva* productions; tapping into folk entertainment collectives used music, movement, and simple but flexible stage sets that could be adapted to a variety of indoor and outdoor venues for touring. These limitations often challenged ensembles to be more creative and place more emphasis on a multidisciplinary theater experience.

For each production, the cast collaborated in a lengthy creative development process. And unlike Boal, who recognized every person at a performance as a potential actor, the *creación colectivas* consisted of full-time, professionally trained actors who strove to make works relevant to the communities for whom they performed.

Theater in Chile

In Chile, the theater scene prior to 1973 included companies like Teatro Experimental, founded in 1937 to present socially relevant drama by Chilean playwrights, and the popular satirical group, Ictus. Sadly, Augusto Pinochet's regime silenced the majority of Chile's theater artists with state censorship and physical intimidation. The arts languished under his dictatorship, theaters produced work secretly and audience members who took the risk of attending performances often feared for their safety.

Today in Chile, young artists and audiences are hungry for the art denied them for 17 years. New theater schools, companies, festivals and cultural centers spring up each year as the theater scene enjoys a cultural revitalization and a growing range of local and international performances.

RESOURCES - TEXTS

Cooke, Dudley, Newman, Harry and Salmons-Rue, Janet. From the Ground Up: Grassroots Theater in Historical and Contemporary Perspective. New York, Community Based Arts Project, Cornell University, 1993.

Dorfman, Ariel, Aguilera, Pilar (Editor) and Fredes, Ricardo (Editor). Chile: The Other September 11: An Anthology of Reflections on the 1973 Coup. London, Ocean Press, 2006.

Gard, Robert. Grassroots Theater: A Search for Regional Arts In America. Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 1955.

Neruda, Pablo, St. Martin Hardie (Translator). Memoirs. New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001.

Neruda, Pablo, Kerrigan, Anthony (Translator). Pablo Neruda: Selected Poems (Bilingual Edition). New York, Mariner Books, 1990.

Neruda, Pablo, Walsh, Donald Devenish (Translator). Residence on Earth (Bilingual edition). New York, New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2004.

Politzer, Patricia and Wachtell, Diane (Translator). Fear in Chile: Lives Under Pinochet. New York, New Press, 2001.

van Erven, Eugen. Community Theatre: Global Perspectives. Oxford, Routledge, 2001.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Delano, Poli, Monroy, Manuel (Illustrator), Higgins, Sean (Translator). When I Was a Boy Neruda Called Me Policarpo: A Memoir. Toronto, Greenwood Books, 2006.

Dipiazza, Francesca Davis. Chile in Pictures. Twenty-First Century Books, Minneapolis, 2007.

Goodnough, David. Pablo Neruda: Nobel Prize-Winning Poet. New Jersey, Enslow Publishers, 1998.

Neruda, Pablo and Merwin, W.S. Twenty Love

Poems and a Song of Despair: Dual Language Edition. New York, Penguin Classics, 1993.

Ray, Deborah Kogan. To Go Singing Through the World: The Childhood of Pablo Neruda. New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

WEB SITES

Article on "Poeta Pan" and link to video clip about the production.

<http://xpress.sfsu.edu/archives/arts/003025.html>

San Francisco State University's Theater Department
www.sfsu.edu/~tha/

Pablo Neruda's poems in English
www.poemhunter.com/pablo-neruda/

Pablo Neruda's poems in Spanish
<http://luis.salas.net/indexpn.htm>

Audio clips of Neruda's poems in Spanish
http://www.logoslibrary.eu/pls/wordtc/new_wordth_eque.w6_home_author.home?code_author=17082&lang=EN

"The Greatest Poet of the 20th Century In Any Language," Celebrating Chilean Poet Pablo Neruda – article and podcast:
www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=04/07/16/1442233

"A Reading in Honor of Pablo Neruda's Centennial" – article and podcast
www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=3319014

Information on Augusto Pinochet
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augusto_Pinochet

Government of Chile's website
www.gobiernodechile.cl/index/index.asp

VIDEO / AUDIO RESOURCES

Missing (based on Charles Horman's disappearance after the Chilean coup), directed by Costa Gavras. Available at most video/dvd rental stores.

Il Postino (fictional movie about Pablo Neruda's exile in Italy), directed by Michael Radford. Available at most video/dvd rental stores.

Pablo Neruda, The Poet's Calling: documentary by Mark Eisner. Order at:
http://redpoppy.net/store/catalog/product_info.php?cPath=22&products_id=30

BAY AREA FIELD TRIPS

La Peña Cultural Center
Presents cultural and educational programs that increase understanding of different cultures and support efforts to build a more just society.
(510) 849-2568 / www.lapena.org

The Poetry Center
Presents public programs throughout the year, on the San Francisco State University campus and houses original audio and video recordings available for public access. (415) 338-2227 / www.sfsu.edu/~poetry/

Center for Latin American Studies at the University of California at Berkeley
Presentations, lectures, visual art exhibitions and other events meant to increase understanding of Latin American peoples, cultures and politics.
(510) 642-2088 / <http://socrates.berkeley.edu:7001/index.html>

Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts
Latino cultural arts organization offering exhibitions, classes, youth and senior programs.
(415) 821.1155 / www.missionculturalcenter.org

Bay Area Theater companies:

Campo Santo and Intersection for the Arts
Presents new and experimental work in the fields of literature, theater, music, dance and the visual arts.
(415) 626-2787 / www.theintersection.org

Teatro Vision
Produces plays that explore the Chicano/Latino experience.
(408) 272-9926 / www.teatrovision.org

SECTION III – VOCABULARY

DISCIPLINE-BASED VOCABULARY AND WORDS AND CONCEPTS IN THE SPARK STORY

Salvador Allende

Socialist President of Chile from 1970 until his death in 1973, Allende was deposed by the military junta established by General Pinochet in that year. Historically Allende became a controversial figure, symbolizing socialism and aligned with Castro's Cuba and the Soviet Union against America and Western capitalism.

Authentic

Genuine, real, true

Eclectic

Diverse assortment, mix

Ethnicity

Cultural identification with a particular social group sharing traditions, such as language, religion, customs etc., but not biological or physical makeup

Icon

Sign or symbol, star or celebrity

Inclusive

All encompassing, inviting everyone, irrespective of race, class, age, gender etc., to take part

Multicultural

Inclusive of all races, creeds, and cultures in the broadest sense. Multiculturalism recognizes both difference and equality as important principles that should govern relationships between people, and furthermore celebrates diversity as positive and enriching for society.

Pablo Neruda (1904-1973)

Influential Chilean poet, considered to be one of the greatest poets of the 20th century. Poet, diplomat and revolutionary, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1971.

Augusto Pinochet (1915- 2006)

General and President of Chile from 1973 to 1990. In 1973 he orchestrated the coup that deposed the democratically-elected President Salvador Allende and established a military government which remained in power until 1990.

Revere

Admire, respect, look up to, venerate

SECTION IV – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

Carlos Baron’s Chilean Roots

Carlos Baron’s work is firmly rooted in the political and cultural history of Chile. To promote an understanding of Chile, start by projecting a map of Chile onto the wall or projector screen in the classroom and locate Chile in South America. Invite students to share what they know about Chile, focusing particularly on the modern history of the country.



From Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Chile

Ask students to work in groups to research the history of Chile from the 1970s, organizing their research around the key moments and themes listed below.

- The election & politics of Salvador Allende
- The role of the USA in Chilean politics in this period
- The circumstances surrounding the coup which deposed Allende
- Pinochet's military dictatorship (1973-1989)
- “The disappeared” -who were they?
- Transition to democracy in 1988
- Economic changes in Chile

Schedule a screening of *Missing* (1982, directed by Costa Gavras), based on the true story of an American journalist who disappeared after the Chilean coup of 1973. This film will offer students a sense of the political issues at stake in Chile during that period.

Celebrating Pablo Neruda

Carlos Baron expresses his Chilean identity through the poetry of Pablo Neruda, who is the major cultural influence on his work and the focus of *Poeta Pan*.

"Neruda is considered by many to be the best poet of the 20th century." "As a Chilean, (Neruda is) maybe the number one figure in our cultural history."

(Carlos Baron)

<http://xpress.sfsu.edu/archives/arts/003025.html>

To introduce students to the work of Neruda, read a selection of his poems from

<http://www.neruda.uchile.cl/>

<http://www.poemhunter.com/pablo-neruda/>

<http://www.public.asu.edu/~nielle/neruda.htm>

Additionally, use audio recordings of Neruda reading his own poetry and then invite students to select a poem and read it to the class. Ask them to comment on the imagery, but also the emotions and ideas in his work. How would they describe him?

Neruda was known as the "poet of the people". He was recognized as the voice of oppressed people and he fought passionately for social justice. "Poetry is an act of peace," he wrote. "Peace goes into the making of a poet as flour goes into the making of bread."

Explore Neruda's vision with students, his ideals and political purpose as expressed in his work, drawing out his commitment to socialism and freedom for the people of Latin America. Information about his work and ideas is available at the following Web sites. http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1971/neruda-bio.html

Screen the SPARK story and invite students to listen carefully for ways in which *Poeta Pan* articulates the ideas and aspirations of Neruda, as well as Baron's tribute to Neruda.

- What are the ideals that are expressed in the play?
- Why is the play performed in Chile?
- What is Carlos Baron seeking to achieve?

Encourage students to discuss these questions and describe the feelings evoked for them by Baron's work. The performers and their response to Baron's project are also important in this discussion.

Holding Ideals

Carlos Baron explains the title of the piece "*Poeta Pan* means bread poet"..."(Neruda) talks about his poetry like bread...as an essential element to the life of men and women..."Poetry that serves people in their struggle for a better life, and the struggle for bread. He wanted his poetry to be accessible, and comforting and filling like bread."

Carlos Baron shares this ideal. Initiate a discussion about ideals. What is the difference between an ideal and a goal? Is it to do with scale, principle, whether the ideal is realizable, tangible? Explore this issue with students.

Ask each student to reflect on their own ideals. Do they hold ideals? Are ideals a product of struggle in the way Neruda describes?? Is it different today? How?

Suggest that students summarize their thoughts in one or two sentences and then invite them to share their thinking with the class.

Identify an ideal that students can all subscribe to and ask them to work in groups of six or more and devise ways to dramatize this ideal. They should feel free to use drama, dance, music, video, poetry, mime, artwork or any device that enables them to communicate their message.

SPARKLER:

The Odes to Common Things was written by Neruda later in his life. He writes of ordinary everyday objects, a table, a chair, pliers, hats, flowers etc. and infuses them with meaning and associations that comment on the larger questions that face us. These objects become special through his eyes.

Share with students a selection of Neruda poems such as "Ode to Common Things" or "Ode to a Tomato" then invite them to write an ode to a common thing. For students who enjoy artwork, encourage them to illustrate their poems. If the class is comfortable with sharing their work, arrange a celebratory reading of their poetry and display the artwork.

RELATED STANDARDS - LANGUAGE ARTS

Grades 9 & 10

1.0 LISTENING AND SPEAKING STRATEGIES

1.1 Formulate judgments about the ideas under discussion and support those judgments with convincing evidence.

1.0 WRITING STRATEGIES

1.1 Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing.

Scripting Exercise

Suggest that students work in small groups to discuss different forms of oppression such as racism, sexism, homophobia or the discrimination that arises from accent or social class.

They should then choose a short scenario to illustrate one of the ways in which they have experienced oppression. It could be an incident they have experienced themselves, been told about, or witnessed. It could have happened at home or in school or with friends.

Encourage students to discuss the incident or scenario and decide how they want to represent it - what is the key thing they want to say about it? The situation or conflict does not need to be resolved or to close happily, but simply to be expressed and enacted.

Ask students to write a five or ten-minute script of the scenario to dramatize the situation. Explain that one member of each group will be asked to introduce the scenario – where it takes place, who the characters are etc. to set the scene.

When the groups are ready, invite each group to perform their scenario. Review the scenarios with the whole group and discuss the strategies the group would suggest to resolve the situation. The intention is to use this scripting exercise to develop strategies for young people to empathize with people who are oppressed and deal with difficult situations.

SPARKLER:

*Invite students to write freely about a time when they or someone they know experienced oppression. Ask them to describe what happened and express how they felt.

RELATED STANDARDS – THEATRE

Grade 7

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

4.2 Explain how cultural influences affect the content or meaning of works of theatre.

Grades 9-12 (Proficient)

2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

2.2 Write dialogues and scenes, applying basic dramatic structure: exposition, complication, conflict, crises, climax, and resolution

3.0 HISTORICAL & CULTURAL CONTEXTS

3.2 Describe the ways in which playwrights reflect and influence their culture in such works

For more information about SPARK and its educational content, including the Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the Web site at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/education>.



For more information about the California Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the CA Dept. of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/index.asp>.