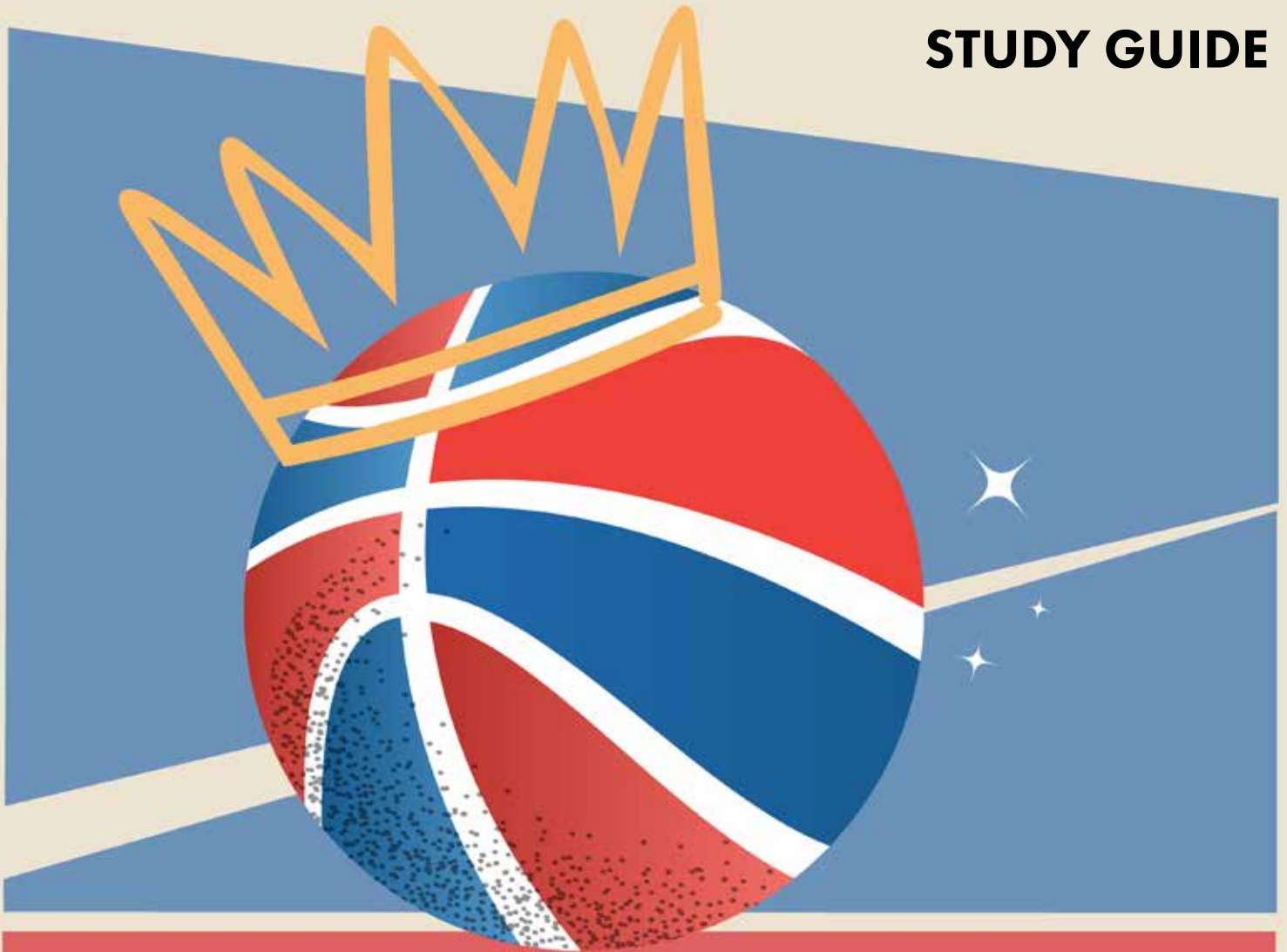




# South Coast Repertory

**STUDY GUIDE**



## ***CINDERELLA:*** **A SALSA FAIRY TALE**

book & lyrics by Karen Zacarías  
music by Deborah Wicks La Puma  
directed by Sara Guerrero



# Welcome to the Theatre

**T**heatre is an art form that depends on both the artists and the audience. A performance is influenced by an audience, just as an audience is influenced by a performance. With this play, the artists and staff of South Coast Repertory have created a special new world for you. Sometimes that world is so exciting that you can barely hold still. But remember: once the play begins, you are connected to all the other people in the audience, as well as to the actors on the stage, because you're all in the same room. The actors can see you, hear you and feel you, just as you can see, hear and feel them. Your attention, involvement, responses and imagination are a real part of each and every performance. The play can actually be made better because of you!

## STUDENT TIPS FOR THEATRE TRIPS

- Stay with your group at all times and pay attention to your teachers and chaperones.
- Take your seat in the theatre before going to the bathroom or getting a drink of water.
- Make yourself comfortable while keeping movement to a minimum.
- Do not stand up, walk around or put your feet on the seat in front of you.
- Absolutely no chewing gum, eating or drinking in the building.
- No backpacks, cameras or electronic devices are permitted in the theatre.
- Feel free to talk quietly in your seats before the show.
- Show your appreciation by clapping for the actors at the end of the play.
- After the lights come back up, wait for the ushers to escort your group out of the theatre.

## THEATRE VOCABULARY

- **Backstage** The space behind the acting area, unseen by the audience.
- **Blocking** The movement designed by the director and performed by the actors.
- **Box Office** A windowed space at the front of the theatre building where tickets are sold.
- **Choreography** The art of creating and arranging dances onstage.
- **Cue** The last words or action of an actor immediately preceding the lines or business of another actor.
- **Downstage** The part of the stage closest to the audience. At one time, stages were raked, or sloped, with the lower ("down") part closest to the audience, and the higher ("up") part farther away.
- **Green Room** A room near the stage where actors await entrance cues and receive guests. The room's name comes from Elizabethan times, when actors waited on a real "green" (or patch of grass).
- **Matinee** A morning or afternoon performance of a play.
- **Props** All the hand-held items and stage furnishings, including furniture, that are physically used by the actors.
- **Rehearsal** Time performers use to practice privately before a performance in front of an audience.
- **Script** The text of the play, including dialogue and stage directions, all written by the playwright.
- **Upstage** The area of the stage farthest away from the audience and nearest to the back wall.



# The Play

## THE STORY OF CINDERELLA: A SALSA FAIRY TALE

**F**airy Godmothers work hard, and even they need a break sometimes. A chance to sneak out of town, maybe visit a spa and relax. But what's a Cinderella Story without a Fairy Godmother?

Well, we're about to find out. Because one of those stories is unfolding right now, and with Fairy Godmother on vacation, Padrino—her husband and an Almost Fairy Godfather himself—decides the best thing to do is jump in on his own and try to smooth things over. He knows a little magic, and he's *so close* to getting his wings. The only problem is he doesn't totally remember the story. He knows it involves a prince...and maybe a ball?

Meanwhile, at Pumpkin Grove Elementary, Cenicienta (also known as Cinderella), an exchange student from Puerto Rico, has just met Rosa, the most wicked-cool girl in school. Rosa immediately dislikes Cenicienta. Although Rosa's parents are from Puerto Rico, Rosa doesn't understand Cenicienta, who speaks little English, wears old-fashioned skirts and shoes, and seems so meek. To make matters worse, Rosa, the self-appointed best basketball player in school, discovers that Cenicienta has *moves* on the court. It only makes Rosa dislike Cenicienta more.

To help Cenicienta, Padrino disguises himself as Coach Prince—the most famous basketball coach in the land—who's come to throw a ball (game) at Pumpkin Grove Elementary. The game is a basketball

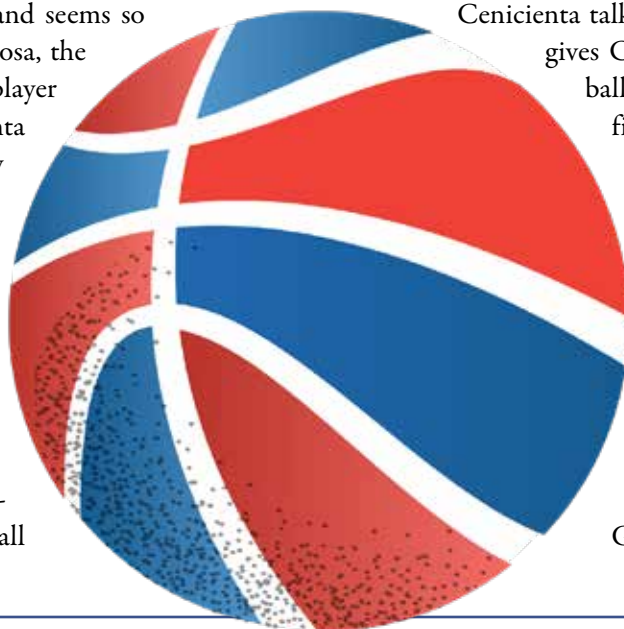
tryout at which Coach Prince will select only one girl from the school to play for the Sooper Dooper Eastern Western Division Basketball Team.

On the day of the tryouts, Rosa is crumbling under the pressure. Everyone actually likes Cenicienta and seems to be rooting for her. In an act of defiance, Rosa writes "CINDERELLA EATS RICE AND BEANS!" on the blackboard. But bullying Cenicienta only makes Rosa feel worse. Padrino, who's been watching the whole time, realizes that Rosa is the one who really needs a Fairy Godmother (or Godfather!), and he reveals himself to her. To prepare her for the ball game, Padrino dresses Rosa in similar clothes and shoes to those of Cenicienta, whom he calls "the fairest of them all."

But the tryout is anything but fair. When Rosa tries to cheat by stomping on Cenicienta's toe and stealing her shoe, Cenicienta retaliates by starting a fight. Padrino, at his wits' end, drops his disguise as Coach Prince and gives both girls detention. Once alone, Rosa and

Cenicienta talk. As a peace offering, Rosa gives Cenicienta her fancy basketball sneakers, and both girls finally know what it's like to walk in each other's shoes.

After dismissing Cenicienta and Rosa from detention, Padrino realizes he's given this Cinderella story a happy ending. And in one final surprise, Padrino—at last—gets his Official Fairy Godfather Wings.



# Classroom Activities

## BEFORE THE SHOW

**C***inderella* is one of the most famous fairy tales. Although the version of *Cinderella* best known in the US is often traced back to Charles Perrault's *Cendrillon* (published in his 1697 collection of fairy tales) and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's *Aschenputtel* (published in their collection in 1815), the story's origins are, perhaps, much older and more expansive. *Rhodopis*, first recorded by Greek historian Strabo in the late first century BCE, shares similar plot elements with *Cinderella*, including a mysterious lost sandal. There are also famous folktales from China, Vietnam, and Italy that share key similarities.

1. Have your students read Charles Perrault's *Cendrillon* on their own—or read it aloud as a class. The text can be found online here: <https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/perrault06.html>.

After reading, ask your students to:

- Recall the plot's main events.
- Identify the story's themes and underlying messages.
- Discuss how Perrault's version differs from other versions of *Cinderella* that they know.
- Write or tell their own "Cinderella Story." How would they change the story and why? Would it have a different ending?

For a deeper dive, check out these other adaptations of *Cinderella* from around the world: <https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/type0510a.html>.

2. *Folktales*. Before movies and television came along, the telling of tales out loud was one of the main sources of entertainment and helped to carry on the traditions, values, and beliefs that were shared by the common folk of a country or region—that's why they're called folktales. (Fairy tales are just folktales that include magic or supernatural creatures like fairies, giants, witches, and dragons.) Besides *Cinderella*, what are some other folktales or fairy tales you've heard or seen in a movie or on TV? (Hint: Disney has turned a lot of them into movies.)

- Folktales and fairy tales usually include things that can't happen in real life. What are some examples of that in *Cinderella*?
- Fairy tales and folktales often have happy endings. Is that true of *Cinderella*?
- Fairy tales are sometimes called "wonder tales" because of the wondrous things that happen in them. Can you think of modern-day stories (from movies, television, books, or comics) that include wondrous characters or events?

3. *Telephone*. Have the students play Telephone: One student tells a simple story (about a paragraph long) to another student; the second student tells the story to a third student; the third tells it to a fourth; and so on. How does the story change from the first telling to the last? (The first person in the chain might want to write their story down, so they can show how it has changed along the way.)

4. Discuss the difference between a prose story (told out loud or written down) and a musical. Explore what it means to "adapt" a story into a musical.

- Have the students talk about how they think the story of *Cinderella* will be brought to life in South Coast Repertory's stage version.
- What might the scenery on stage look like?
- What about the costumes?
- How do they think that music will be used in the storytelling?

5. Discuss the different jobs involved in bringing a production like *Cinderella: A Salsa Fairy Tale* to life. Have the students research the occupations on this list and share what they find with the class:

- Actor
- Director
- Playwright
- Composer
- Choreographer
- Music Director
- Designer
- Stage Manager
- Stage Crew

## WORDS! WORDS! WORDS!

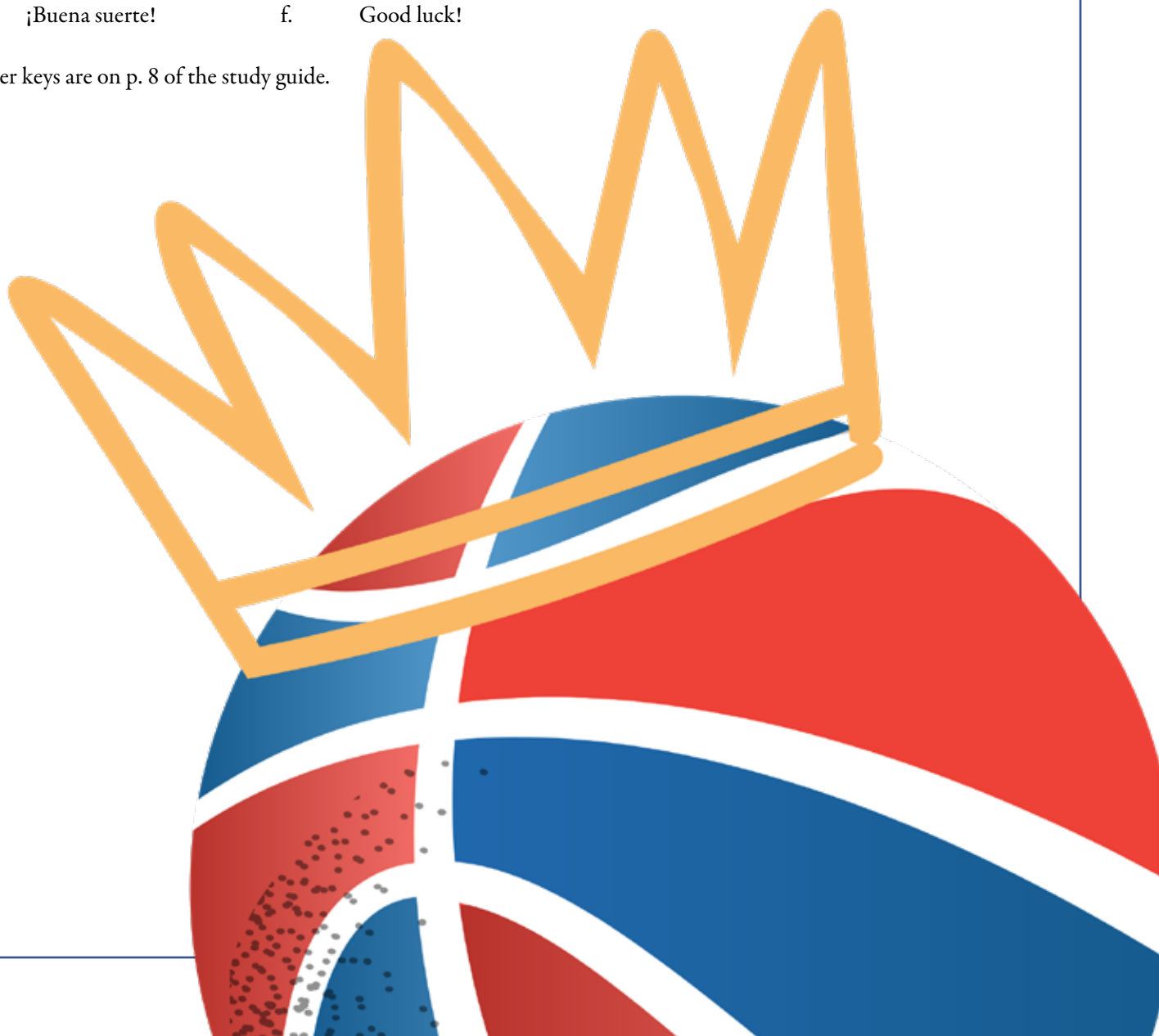
Match these English words with their definitions and then listen for them during the performance.

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 1. Custom        | a. A formal public announcement   |
| 2. Proclamation  | b. To move in a quick and agitated manner                               |
| 3. Scurry        | c. The quality of being determined                                      |
| 4. Vital         | d. Of the utmost importance   |
| 5. Scintillating | e. A practice or tradition common to a specific place, group, or person |
| 6. Tenacity      | f. Excitingly clever or stimulating                                     |

Match these Spanish words and phrases with their English translations and then listen for them during the performance.

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. ¡Es la hora!   | a. Leave it/let it go  |
| 2. Relámpagos     | b. Godfather (in this play, the godfather is a Fairy Godfather)              |
| 3. El padrino     | c. My shoes  |
| 4. Déjalo         | d. Lightning (used to describe how fast people speak Spanish in Puerto Rico) |
| 5. Mis zapatos    | e. It's time!  |
| 6. ¡Buena suerte! | f. Good luck!  |

Answer keys are on p. 8 of the study guide.







## AFTER THE SHOW

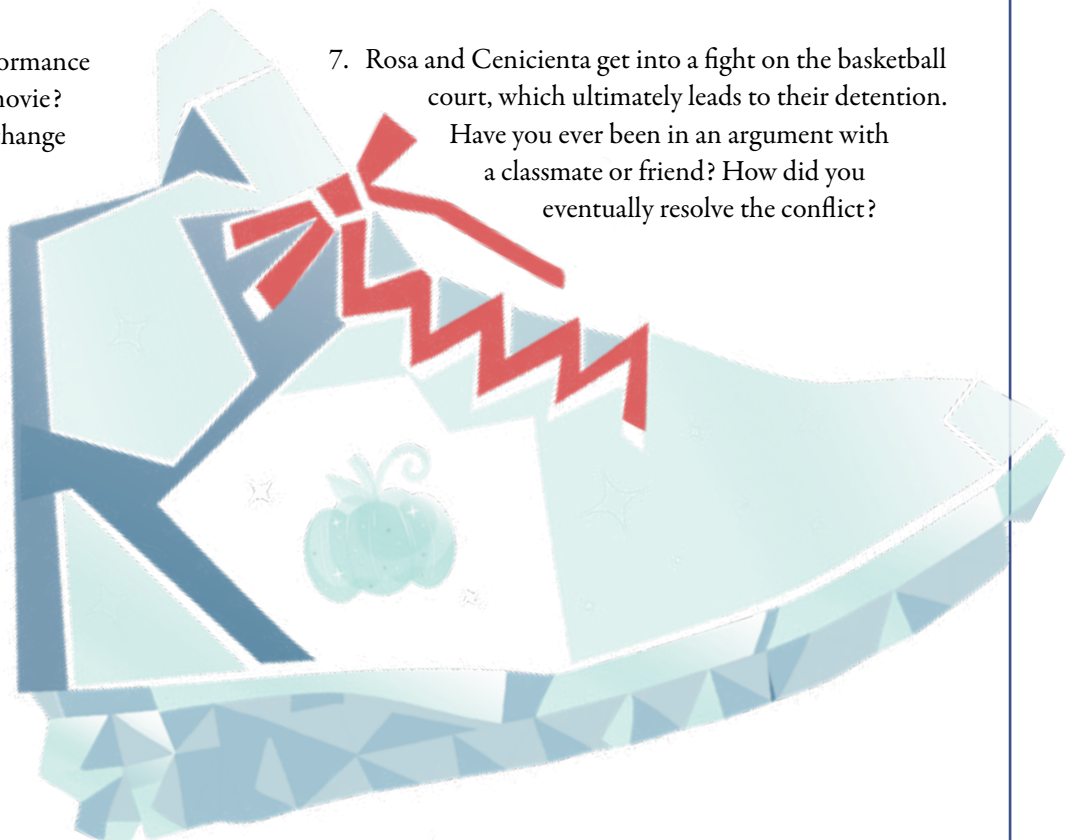
### Discussion about the Theatre

When you return from the performance, hold a class discussion and ask the students about their experience attending live theatre.

1. What was the first thing you noticed about the theatre? What did the stage look like?
2. Discuss the technical elements of the production—the sets, lights, costumes, and sound. Ask the students what they liked best and why. How did these elements create and define Cenicienta and Rosa's world?
3. In musicals, characters express themselves through music and movement. How did the songs help move the story forward? How did the choreography show you the differences between characters?
4. How is attending a live performance different from attending a movie? How does your experience change when you know the story is being performed live and the actors can see and hear you?
5. Cenicienta has a Fairy Godmother and Rosa has a Fairy Godfather. Their Fairy Godparents offer them wisdom and advice (and a little bit of magic!). Who is someone in your life that offers you guidance when you feel lost?
6. Think about what it's like to be the new kid in school. How does that feel? What are ways to make new students feel welcome?
7. Rosa and Cenicienta get into a fight on the basketball court, which ultimately leads to their detention. Have you ever been in an argument with a classmate or friend? How did you eventually resolve the conflict?

### Discussion about the Play

1. What was your favorite moment in the play? What was the funniest? What was the most surprising?
2. Many Cinderella Stories are told from the point of view of the main character.



## ACTIVITIES

1. “Magic of Music” Dance Party: Create an appropriate playlist of 10-12 songs for your students. It can be a mix of genres and styles—but consider including some salsa, cumbia, and merengue music. The students may stand or remain seated. Have them keep both feet planted (not moving beyond their own bubble) and close their eyes. As you shuffle through the playlist, encourage the students to move their body (hands, arms, shoulders, elbows, etc.) to the spirit of the song. You can skip to the next song every 20-30 seconds. At the end of the activity, have the students discuss how different music made them feel. What did they imagine as they danced?
2. Magic shoes: Cenicienta and Rosa both have singular shoes. Have the students draw their favorite pair of shoes—either real or imaginary.



## LETTERS OF THANKS



rite a letter of thanks to SCR and describe the most memorable aspects of attending a performance of *Cinderella: A Salsa Fairy Tale*.

**South Coast Repertory**  
**Attn: TYA**  
**PO Box 2197**  
**Costa Mesa, CA 92628-2197**



# Resources

## MORE ABOUT CINDERELLA

The full text of Charles Perrault's *Cendrillon* (published 1697): <https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/perrault06.html>

Other *Cinderella* Stories from around the world: <https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/type0510a.html>

## MORE ABOUT PLAYWRIGHT KAREN ZACARÍAS

Karen Zacarías official website: <http://www.karenzacarias.com/>

## MORE ABOUT COMPOSER DEBORAH WICKS LA PUMA

Deborah Wicks La Puma official website: <https://crunchynotes.com/>

## FACTS ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/geography/states/article/puerto-rico>

## THE HISTORY OF BASKETBALL

<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/basketball/352831>

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## WORDS! WORDS! WORDS! ANSWER KEYS:

English words: 1.e, 2.a, 3.b, 4.d, 5.f, 6.c

Spanish words/phrases: 1.e, 2.d, 3.b, 4.a, 5.c, 6.f

