

ANGELA LLOYD

A Quilt of Poetry, Story and Song

Art Form: Storytelling

Style: Contemporary

Culture: American

MEET THE ARTIST:

"If you're a kid, **Angela Lloyd** comes on like a slightly wacky favorite aunt -- and here she is a grownup, dancing around, playing kazoos and washboards," says the Arizona Daily Star. Offstage, Ms. Lloyd is a performer with a Master of Fine Arts degree in Acting from Florida State's Asolo Conservatory. Angela surprises and delights her audiences with stories from the oral and literary traditions, as well as original tales based on her experience. She plays autoharp, guitar, *cuarto* and spoons and is an absolute virtuoso on her washboard. A resident of Victorville, California, Angela has performed at storytelling and music festival across the United States including the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesboro, Tennessee.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

Quiet your faces; be crossed every thumb;

Fix on me deep your eyes;

And out of my mind a story shall come,

Old, and lovely, and wise.

Walter de la Mare

A Quilt of Poetry, Story and Song is a tapestry of folk tales and music, some old and some new. Ms. Lloyd uses a variety of musical instruments and her unique washboard to serenade with her stories. The quilt which serves as a backdrop for the performance was sewn by a woman named Star Moxley, a quilter and costume designer. The name of the quilt is "The Open Hand." In her show, Angela Lloyd uses her talent as a minstrel and folk artist to weave words and melodies which children's imaginations embroider, creating a heart-warming and memorable story time.



PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

The Art of Storytelling:

The storyteller of today is a link in the long chain of storytellers stretching back to the past and into the future. Before the days of writing, when the spoken word was the only means of communication, stories were an essential and enjoyable part of life. Without written records, the history and laws of a tribe had to be remembered and passed on orally, often in the form of stories. From the early days, storytelling had an importance and value for everyone in the community.

Two of the most common type of stories in the earliest days of storytelling were the "Warning Example" and the "Embroidered Exploit." Mothers of every generation have known the necessity and effectiveness of warning children against danger by an example in the form of a story. "Once there was a child," says the mother, "who went down to the river although his mother told him not to. Listen to what happened to him." Such warning stories would often be aimed not only at children, but at any member of the community who offended against the laws of the tribe. The "Embroidered Exploit" would have originated as a factual report of a hunter's encounter with some wild animal. Exaggeration was inevitable with each retelling, so that in the course of time, the exploit assumed such magnitude that it was far beyond the capabilities of any human being.

Stories also developed as a means of explaining natural phenomena, such as thunder and lightning, earthquakes and floods, the phases of the moon, and the changing seasons. Inevitably such stories involved supernatural beings. Man's ignorance of natural causes resulted in a wealth of imaginative tales, explaining the mysteries of the heavens and earth, as well as the creation of man, animals, and all life forms.

At first every person was their own storyteller, but inevitably one member of the tribe would stand out for the skill and effectiveness in which they related their own and their peers' tales. As time went on, such people would devote all their lives to remembering and telling the tribal stories of past history and heroic deeds. These early professional storytellers established a traditional custom which was to endure in many forms and in many lands for centuries.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Which story, poem or song from the performance did you like best? Why?
- Which character from any of the stories would you like to meet in real life? Why?
- What countries, cities, towns or countryside were the settings for the stories and songs?
- Had you ever seen anyone play an autoharp or a washboard before?
- Does your family have a special quilt like the one used as a backdrop in the performance? Is there a story that explains its significance?
- Did any of the stories have a lesson or moral? Give examples.

FRAMEWORK FOCUS: VISUAL/PERFORMING ARTS

Storytellers can also be music-makers, creating sounds and rhythms to use with their stories. Angela Lloyd's stories are often accompanied by imaginative musical scores. Every instrument she uses has a story all its own, including her unique washboard. Inventing musical instruments is an easy and fun way to explore sound. Ask students to bring in materials for making instruments. Some suggestions:

- Hang kitchen utensils from strings and tap them to see if they ring.
- Scrape a cheese grater with a pencil or a wooden clothespin.
- Fill water glasses with diminishing levels and tap them gently with a spoon.
- Two pie tins glued together with pebbles or popcorn kernels inside make a rattle.
- Drums can be made from coffee cans, bowls, pots or waste baskets.
- Sandpaper on wooden blocks makes a percussion instrument.
- Combs and wax paper make homestyle kazoos.

Divide into small groups and experiment with ways to create sound or music. Choose a story and have the various groups create sound effects and/or musical underscoring to help bring the story to life. Invite another class to be an audience for your storytelling jamboree!

- Legend:
- ☉ Artistic perception
 - ❖ Creative expression
 - ▶ Historical & cultural context
 - 📖 Aesthetic valuing
 - * Connections, Relations, Applications

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

- ☉ **Story Sharing and Comparing** -- Explore how one story or tale is interpreted in two different versions or in two different cultures, contrasting the variations and highlighting the similarities. Examples: "The Gingerbread Man" and "The Stinky Cheese Man"; "The Three Little Pigs" and "The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs"; and "Cinderella" and the Chinese or Russian version of the Grimm's fairy tale.
- ❖ **Word Weaving** -- Spin a yarn as a class. The story starter should introduce a setting (time and place), a few key characters, and a conflict or problem. When these have been established, pass the story to the left. Encourage the students to listen very carefully. Stress that they must accept each other's contributions and may not negate pieces that come before theirs. When the tale has gone around full circle, resolve the conflict and complete the story "tapestry."
- ▶ **Quilt Patterns and Patchwork** -- Angela used a quilt in her presentation showing how folk art can carry special meaning and serve as a metaphor for story themes. In the United States, quilting has been a vital, living craft for several centuries. Although it originally evolved as an economical way of providing warmth, it quickly outgrew its practical beginnings to become a means of artistic expression. Have students research and bring in color examples of specific patterns: Tumbling Block, Windmill, Cross and Crown, Lone Star, School House, Log Cabin, Sunbonnet Sue, Grandmother's Flower Garden, Mariner's Compass, etc.
- * Discuss ways that the lessons conveyed in the various stories make connections to experiences in students' lives. Divide the class into small groups to role-play selected scenarios.



BIBLIOGRAPHY/DISCOGRAPHY:

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- Sawyer, Ruth. *The Way of the Storyteller*. Penguin Books, New York, NY: 1977.