THE TASTE OF SUNRISE



STUDY GUIDE

Haley Flanders, Dramaturg

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DRAMATURG'S NOTE:

This is a very special play. It will probably be unlike any play you have ever witnessed before. Not only is it unique because it takes place in the mind and memory of Tuc; it also is performed simultaneously through the spoken word and American Sign Language (ASL). To playwright Suzan L. Zeder, "Sign language is the most poetically visual, beautiful language you can imagine onstage. And I was captivated by just the sheer power of what that language looks like in performance." Although Zeder does not sign, nor is she deaf, she captures both the strength and vulnerability of what it is like to live and communicate as a deaf person in a hearing world. This story highlights the stories of the often silent and empowers those with disabilities, focusing instead on their miraculous abilities. As Zeder emphasizes, "these words need to be spoken, these signs need to be seen, because Tuc's life needs to be shared with others who only see what people cannot do and cannot be."

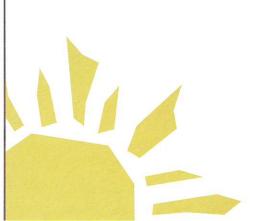
The play's title comes from the first play in this trilogy, Mother Hicks, where Tuc emphasizes how his lack of hearing strengthens his dependencies on his other senses to understand and find beauty in the world as he searches for a place to call home:

"You look at me and only see the things I cannot do, things I cannot be; but I can taste the cool spring water and know what month it is. I can smell the difference between the smoke of hickory and apple wood. I can see the sharp sting of honey, and I can taste the sunrise."

As you watch this beautiful play, focus on how the signing enhances the characters' individual stories and conversations, and how we too can become empowered by our abilities, regardless of the abilities we may lack.

In the lobby display, please take note of our video montage, which features local members of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. They generously volunteered to tell you their stories and express their feelings of identity and empowerment through American Sign Language. Tuc's story can strengthen us all, yet it also shines a light on this community, and we desired to highlight those around us who can empathize with Tuc and have equally powerful journeys and messages to share.

-Haley Flanders, dramaturg





ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT, SUZAN L. ZEDER

Suzan L Zeder is one of the leading playwrights for young and family audiences in the country. Her plays have been produced by professional, university, and community theatres. She is a six-time winner of the Distinguished Play Award from the American Alliance of Theatre & Education (AATE), including 2015 awards for both Wiley and the Hairy Man (musical) and The Edge of Peace. She is a member of the College of Fellows of the American Theatre and the Academy of Distinguished Teachers at the University of Texas at Austin, where she headed the playwriting program for 23 years. Zeder was the first holder of an Endowed Chair in Theatre for Youth and Playwriting in the United States.



AWARDS FOR THE TASTE OF SUNRISE

AATE Distinguished Play

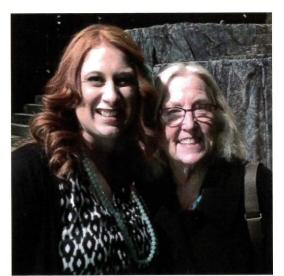
ASSITEJ/USA Outstanding Play

SUNNY Award for Best Play

OTHER POPULAR PLAYS BY ZEDER

Wiley and the Hairy Man Step on a Crack Do Not Go Gentle Doors Oma of Oz: A Tale of Time

The Play Called Noah's Flood



Did you know?

Zeder workshopped a production of her play Milk Dragon at Utah Valley University in March 2015.

Here is a picture of me (dramaturg Haley Flanders) with Zeder after a performance of Milk Dragon. Zeder will also be attending a performance of The Taste of Sunrise, since all three plays in this trilogy will be performed as part of the Theatre in Our Schools Conference at BYU at the end of March. This event is part of the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE).

TRY YOUR HAND AT AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

Match the following words from the play with the American Sign Language (ASL), demonstrated by cast members Ben Featherstone, Abbie Craig, Jason Keeler, and David Hampton.



















FATHER

WIND

BIRD













HOME

FORGIVE

SUNRISE





















. Bird, 2. Water, 3. Home, 4. Father, 5. Promise, 6. Sunrise, 7. Wind, 8. Forgive

THE WARE TRILOGY

Did you know that this play is part of a trilogy? Zeder premiered the first play, Mother Hicks, in 1983, yet she felt that Tuc had a rich backstory as a deaf boy in this town. So in 1996 she published the second play, The Taste of Sunrise, as a prequel to Mother Hicks, showing how Tuc grew up and became friends with Nell Hicks. Then she wrote The Edge of Peace in 2013 as the final installment to Tuc's story. All three plays first premiered at Seattle Children's Theatre.

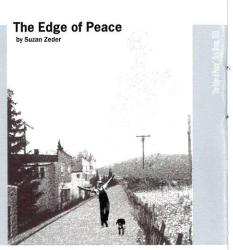
Mother Hicks

It is the spring of 1935 in Ware, Illinois. A character called Girl does not feel like she fits in because she is adopted and does not know her parents. When she learns about Mother Hicks, who is presumed to be a witch, Girl decides to become like her, because she has so much power. As she attempts to cast a spell, she accidentally cuts her leg. She is quickly rescued by Tuc and sent to Mother Hicks's cabin. Tuc lives with Mother Hicks and helps her tend to the ill and injured. Girl is convinced she is the long lost child of Mother Hicks. Tension rises when Girl's adopted parents find her in this cabin, perhaps being hexed by Mother Hicks.



The Edge of Peace

Set in 1945 in Ware, during the final days of WWII. A young man from the town is declared missing in action, and his little brother Buddy refuses to believe it. Tuc is now a mechanic and the town's postman. A German prisoner of war escapes from a nearby camp. Up on Dug Hill, Nell Hicks is suspected of being a sympathizer because she listens to radio broadcasts from Germany. A Goodyear plant recruiter tries to persuade Tuc to leave home and join a deaf community in Akron, Ohio. Buddy searches for news about his missing brother and everyone prays for peace.



WHERE IS WARE? SETTING AND SIGNIFICANCE

The play takes place in the mind and memory of Tuc, and spans from 1917 to 1928. This is during the Jazz Age, the roaring twenties and right before the Great Depression in 1929. Some pinnacle moments that occur during this timespan include the following:

1917: The United States enters World War I

1918: The League of Nations is formed

1920: Women receive the right to vote due to the 19th Ammendment

1923: Time Mazagine is created

1926: Actor Rudolph Valentino dies suddenly at the age of 31

1927: The Academy Awards is founded

1928: The Red Cross is established

Zeder came up with the idea to write Mother Hicks and to make her a presumed witch after reading a collection of folklore from the W.P.A., Federal Writers' Project, written during the Depression. The Federal Writers' Project was created in 1935 as part of the United States Work Progress Administration to provide employment for historians, teachers, writers, librarians, and other white-collar workers.







Dug Hill, the home of Nell Hicks in the play, was a popular setting for many ghost stories and legends of witchcraft. This made rural Ware, Illinois the perfect place for the trilogy to be set. The town is also in close proximity to the Central Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis, Missori, a major location in The Taste of Sunrise.

Central Institute for the Deaf in the 1910s.

THE ABC'S OF ASL



Practice signing the letters in the ASL alphabet, as demonstrated by Abbie Craig from the cast. Try signing your full name. Then try signing the names of the characters. Don't forget to look for these signs in the play when the characters introduce themselves by spelling out their names. After the character spell their names, notice how they are later identified by a single gesture called a "name sign." For example, Tuc is signed by making the letter T on the side of the forehead.

TO LEARN MORE

Interested in learning more about this production of The Taste of Sunrise? Check out The 4th Wall, BYU's dramaturgy blog: 4thwalldramaturgy.byu.edu/category/ the-taste-of-sunrise



PRODUCTION STAFF

Julia Ashworth Director

She is an assistant teaching professor of theatre education in the Department of Theatre and Media Arts at Brigham Young University. She has worked in the field of arts education as an artist, administrator, and K-12 teacher for over fifteen years. Her duties in the Theatre and Media Arts department at BYU include serving as artistic director for The Young Company and acting as program director for the Theatre Education program. Her work focuses primarily on theatre for young audiences and applied theatre practices.

Jean Bingham Assistant Stage Manager

From Mesa, AZ. Senior in the theatre education program with a minor in ballroom dance. In the past she has been stage manager for Scripts on Strike, the improvisational comedy troupe at Mesa Community College. She also just finished stage managing the mask club production of Opening Night.

Mary H. Farahnakian Costume Designer

Professor, Theatre and Media Arts, BYU. She teaches History of Costume, Costume Design Specialty, Theatre Design and Technology. Latest main stage costume designs: The Taste of Sunrise, The Winter's Tale, Arabian Nights by Mary Zimmerman, Magic Flute by Mozart, Trial by Jury by Gilbert and Sullivan, The Telephone by Menotti, Berenice, Berlin by Eric Orton (stage & film), The Music Man, King Lear, and La Traviata.

Haley Flanders Dramaturg

BA in theatre arts studies and MA in theatre history, theory, and criticism from BYU. Minor in music. She is a former high school drama teacher and instructor at BYU. She acted in Water Sings Blue (Mother). She was the 2015 Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region 8 winner for dramaturgy (The Fisherman and His Wife) and fellow for the national festival. Currently the drama specialist (Beverley Taylor Sorenson Arts Learning Program) at Walden School of Liberal Arts in Provo.

Emilee Knell Music Director

From Provo, UT. She is adjunct faculty in music education at BYU. Her specialty is early childhood music education. Although she participated in many productions in her youth, this is her first time serving as music director for a

Michael Kraczek Lighting Designer

Teacher for theatre design and technology at BYU. He has worked professionally as a lighting designer, theatre consultant, and technical director. His recent lighting design credits for BYU include The Count of Monte Cristo and Pride and Prejudice. Theatre Engine: FlashMob, his audience interactive research project, performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2015. Michael holds a BA in theatre education from BYU and an MFA in design and technology from the Yale School of Drama.



PRODUCTION STAFF (CONT.)

Heather Richardson Production Stage Manager From Plano, TX. Senior majoring in theatre arts studies with an emphasis in stage management. Recent stage management credits include Production Stage Manager for Dogville, Microburst Theatre Festival, and Cymbeline at BYU and Assistant Stage Manager for the BYU Spectacular, Christmas Around the World, and The Servant of Two Masters at BYU. She was nominated for the KCACTF competition. Currently she is the Stage Manager for the BYU Ballroom Dance Company Touring Team and is excited to tour through Europe with them this summer for the Blackpool Competition. She also was the hair and makeup supervisor on Misalliance (BYU) this past fall and loved the change of scene from stage managing. This is her last main-stage theatre performance at BYU and she could not think of a better way to end it than with The Taste of Sunrise cast and crew.

Taylor Robinson Props Manager Taylor is a Sophomore at BYU enrolled in the theater arts design and production program, and is from Pittsburgh PA. He has been in the past two semester's 24 hour theater performances, the UVU production of *A Night of Blacker Darkness*, and BYU murder mystery dinner. He has been working with the prop shop on shows since August last year and hopes to continue studying and helping to make stage magic happen.

Taylor Stroupe Assistant Stage Manager From Escondido, CA. Junior in theater education. Credits include dancer in *The Alchemist*, Yente in *Fiddler on the Roof*, and Florence in the female version of *The Odd Couple*. She and her husband, Tyler Stroupe, were married in January.

Kirsten Watkins Makeup &Hair Designer From Lehi, Utah. Senior in theatre arts studies with an emphasis in costume and makeup design. Recent credits include costume and makeup designer for BYU's theatre ballet *Alice in Wonderland* and assistant costume designer for *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*.

THANK YOU

There are so many people we need to thank, so many people who worked and volunteered to help this production come to pass. This note is an effort to thank some of the most prominent players in the process.

First, we would like to thank Jason Burr and BYU's Accessibility Center. Not only did they help us navigate new waters in our earliest stages of production, but their services provided us with clear communication throughout the entire rehearsal process. We had a few interpreters work with us, but the majority of the time we were blessed to work with Ann Hicken and Kim Hawker. They truly became part of our family, and feel like an extension of our cast. Thank you Ann and Kim, we love you!

Next, we would like to thank superstar David Hampton. Not only does David have three roles he portrays in the play, but he also served as our ASL Coach. He really helped provide us with confidence in the beginning of our process that we could do this – he, and fellow cast members Ben Featherstone and Jason Keeler (two more superstars) helped translate the script for the cast, train actors in sign language and graciously invited us all in to the world of Deaf culture. David, Ben, and Jason—we are forever indebted to you, feel honored to have worked with you, and love you dearly.

Last, but in no way least, we would like to thank Sarah Leathers. She came into our lives midway through the process—she teaches drama at the Jean Massieu School of the Deaf in Salt Lake City—and like an angel from above, she saved us. Not only is Sarah's background in Deaf theatre crucial to our experience, but also she generously and graciously volunteered countless hours to travel to Provo and work with us. Her perspective, insight, and talent are evident throughout the entire production; we would have been lost without her. Her dedication to this project really is inspirational—Sarah, we cannot thank you enough. From the entire cast and crew, thank you, thank you, thank you!

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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants, and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers, and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction, and performance.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

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Madison Lucero Chelsea Paxton

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