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El Tigre / Juan Darien

E. Thomalen

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

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ISBN 978-0-573-70265-5

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EL TIGRE / JUAN DARIEN was first produced by Hip Pocket Theatre at The University of Texas at Arlington Theatre Arts Program on December 1, 2001. The performance was directed by Diane Simons, with sets by Lake Simons, costumes by Diane Simons, lighting by Michael Garner and musical direction by Brandon Brown. The cast was as follows:

STUDENT/CHILD/MS. JAGUAR	Lori Fox
THE MAYOR	 Shawn Gann
JUAN DARIEN	 Jonathan Hernandez
THE ANIMAL TRAINER	Brad Hughes
MOTHER	 Lisa James
PALLBEARER	 Jason Kendall
KNIFE THROWER/MR. BONES	 Paul Logsdon
CIRCUS BARKER	 Mike Murray
TRAPEZE ARTIST	 Nicole Murphy
SNAKE	 Dennis O'Neill
HUNTER	Gustavo Valentin
TEACHER	William Whitehead
STUDENT/CHILD/CIRCUS TROUPE MEMBER/MR. JAGUAR	..Billy Wise
CHILDREN	 Erika Bustamate, Melissa Hurta
STUDENTS	Aja Jones, Emmy Zabcik
CIRCUS TROUPE MEMBERS	Jodi Ganshirt, Kristen Hudson,
	Kerri Montagnino
MUSICIANS	 Brandon Brown, Joe Stencel

CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

STORYTELLER

MR. JAGUAR

MS. JAGUAR

(KIT)JUAN DARIEN

HUNTER

MOTHER

SNAKE

TEACHER

STUDENT 1

STUDENT 2

STUDENT 3

STUDENT 4

PALLBEARER

CIRCUS BARKER

TRAPEZE ARTIST

KNIFE THROWER

ANIMAL TRAINER

MAYOR

CHILD 1

CHILD 2

Non Speaking Characters include: Pilgrim, Mr. Bones (Death), Grandmother, Grandfather, Milk Maid, Farmer, Herdsman, Priest, Bride and Groom, Altar boy, Nursing Mother, Students, Townspeople, Tigers, etc.

Doubling is possible for many speaking and non-speaking roles.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

The text for this work is but the skeleton upon which the work is co-constructed by the performers in a sense more than is true of most plays. Building it out requires music, choreography, magic and masque. It is also an ensemble piece. The lines of the STORYTELLER are delivered by the ensemble: not as a chorus, but individually, by different actors (except for the first five and last four which should be delivered by the same actor). The music may be improvisational, there are many good musicians who can work this way, and who can share in the creation of a work for the stage. The musical style may be Latin, jazz/blues, rock, or even the otherworldly Andean flute music. Dance is important to telling the story, and will depend upon the style of the music. The story should be enacted in dance, e.g., in the sequence of death taking off souls of the village, in the jaguar's courting scene, in the school scene, in death taking Mother's soul, in the mourner's scene, in the circus scene, etc. The play is meant to run about 75 minutes.

*To Diane Simons, a truly extraordinary artist, who was the first to
bring this work to life on the stage and whose artistic vision has set the
standard for all future productions of this work.
She has set a high standard indeed!*

E. Thomalen

(A man sits with his back against an adobe wall and a sombrero is tilted down over his eyes. Suddenly he appears to waken, agitated. He addresses the audience.)

STORYTELLER. Stop...Senor and listen, *Por favor!*

From dreams have I now found release, or
Am I caught in these illusions yet?
Permit me to recount what I have spied,
Then you, the matter, will decide.
I wandered through a jungle some,
And came upon a town beset,
With melancholy groans from
Every house and church and public square,
For an appalling plague had struck them there,
And so affected, many villagers have died.

(MR. BONES appears and dances with the old man and woman and each character mentioned)

Death carried off the nodding pair,
The grandmother and grandfather,
Who smoothed their grandchild's hair.
Yes, and it struck the milk maid, too;
And, taking from that death a cue,
It struck the cow and chicken too.
The maize no longer felt the hoe,
For even the farmer was laid low.
Nor did the herdsman, or the herd, survive
Nor was the priest left long alive.
The fortune of the bride and groom
Was but a short-lived honeymoon;
An uninvited specter at the feast
Left not until his palm was creased

With a grave, *pestilential*, trist.
Nor was the mewling infant spared,
Nor altar boy uniquely fared.
The nursing mother's milk went dry,
No longer hearing the new baby's cry.
And when the bitter plague was done,
When all were dead, or fled, save one,
Who still remained within her home;
The jungle, then, o'er grew the town.
But who was left alive of all
That once had lived there, great and small?
It was a woman, childless now,
Without a husband, horse, or cow.
And every day she cut a flower,
Hoping to receive its power.
Though never did she bloom like it!
For after the plague's fury hit,
She could no longer that grief quit.
While all around the fecund jungle lay,
And in its fronds the beasts did play!

MR. JAGUAR. Come my pretty, come with me!

MS. JAGUAR. Oh Sir, where are you *taking* me?

MR. JAGUAR. Far from the lonely sadness of the loon,
To the *intoxicating* gardens of the moon!

MS. JAGUAR. For *sure* that is a spot that's rare!
We can enjoy our revels there!

MR. JAGUAR. I will give you sweet pleasure and a kit
And you shall evermore remember it!

(*They go off.*)

STORYTELLER. And so a Jaguar cub was born,
Betimes, upon a winter's morn.
Into a world both lush, and green,
Into a world that hummed unseen.
And pleased was he, this master, small,

With Mother there at every call!
But to the rich and verdant spot
A hunter came with gun and shot,
Just looking for an ornamental thing,
A bird, or snake, or jaguar skin.

HUNTER. This bird's bright feather will make a fine hat.

I am certain of that!
And this serpent's shiny scales
Will certainly enhance my sales!
But still, a jaguar fur's a prize
That can make any buyer rise
And seize it, quickly, if he's wise!

STORYTELLER. The Hunter waited, silent as the trees,

And listened to the sound on every breeze.
He listened for the low and carefree growl,
Looked for the jaguar's tawny cowl,
Arising from the dappled jungle floor,
Arising to drink, or to eat, once more.
But at that special, clanging hour
Did all the animals begin to cower,
Except man, trusting to the rifle's power,
Rose, and looking grim and dour,
Destroyed the jewel of nature's bower.
And when he came upon his kill,
There lying in its warm blood still,
His eyes alight with gory thrill
For hunting was his only skill,
Then had he not yet *all* his fill!
Examining what he had shot,
He knew that this mother was not
Alone, but had a kit with her.
And so he listened, yet once more,
To see whether the kit might stir,
And he obtain another fur.

But the kit had perceived the power
Of the hunter, and the rifles glower,
So it was still, as sunshine in that hour,
Before the dark, before the show'r.
The hunter looked then to detect the track,
But dusk had fallen, and night was black.
And the kit, with its Mother dead,
Having waited out the hunter, fled.
Yet having left that dreadful scene,
The kit no longer knew where it had been,
Nor where it was, nor what had seen.
All its firm sinews now were slack,
And in its head there was a clack.
It only felt its hunger keen,
And hoped for something not too mean,
To fill its stomach, calm its spleen,
Against its terrors form a screen.
And in this very jumbled state,
It came upon a garden gate;
And there, at first, did hesitate;
Should it turn back, or pass, and separate,
From all it had known of the wild estate.
And so it paused, and so it stood,
Yet undecided what it would.
But, there, both weak and desperate,
It trusted to its hidden fate,
Whether to refuge find or counterfeit;
And pushed through the unlocked and unclosed gate,
Just as the childless Mother's dark mood
Made her come out for a spate
Of walking, and to ruminate
On her own child's unkind fate.
So it was the unlikely pair
Met in the evening's troubled air.

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