A Few More Things

MEET DAVID

David Gonzalez is an award-winning master storyteller and also a poet, actor, musician, writer, and music therapist who has performed for audiences worldwide. In creating 8430 of the House, he wanted to explore how people begin to understand their heritage, using his own experience searching for his Cuban father.

YOUR ROLE

Watch for:

• How words, movement, music, videos, and lighting help you understand each character’s personalities and feelings
• A wide range of feelings or emotions, including nervousness, anger, happiness, shame, and fear
• How David performs conversations between two characters

LISTEN FOR:

• Sound effects such as ticking clocks and opening doors
• How music and sound effects signal a flashback
• When Pablo asks to be called Pablo

And remember:

To be a good audience, there are just a few things you need to do:
• Turn off and put away your phones and devices
• Turn on your imagination
• Stay quiet once the performance begins
• Clap at the end!

WHAT ABOUT YOUR STORY?

Try searching your own history for story ideas. To start, David suggests asking yourself:

• Where do you come from?
• How did you learn about your history?
• What questions do you have about your family?
• Then start imaging. How might a ‘pretend you’ go into the world to discover more about yourself? Write down your ideas for a story and share them with family and friends, and by performing a short part of it.
THE STORY OF A BOY ON A PERSONAL JOURNEY

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE STORY
It’s the early 1970s, and 13-year-old Pablo has questions. Where is his father? Why did he abandon Pablo and his mother six years ago in New York City? Who is this man from Cuba?

Now Pablo is ready to find the answers. Visiting his aunt in Miami, Pablo gets his big break when he tracks down his dad’s phone number. Once he calls, both father and son begin a sometimes funny and often difficult journey to learn about each other. Can Pablo truly reconcile with his father and rebuild his family?

THE BIG IDEAS
In following Pablo’s journey to learn about his father, the story explores some big ideas, or themes. They include determination and not giving up despite difficulties, understanding and accepting your parents, and growing up. During the performance, make sure to watch and listen for these themes.

BIG SHOES TO FILL
“Son, I’ve got to go. Now you are the man of the house.” These are the words Pablo’s father heard when his father left. The expression, “man of the house,” usually refers to the person in charge of things in a family, but it can also mean growing up and becoming aware of who you are and how you affect the world. During the performance, think about why David chose this expression for the title.

CUBA’S CULTURE
Pablo’s father comes from Cuba, an island country 90 miles south of Florida’s coast in the Caribbean Sea. During the performance, you’ll notice a few aspects of Cuba’s culture.

Language
In Cuba (like in much of the Caribbean and Central and South America), most people speak Spanish. The Spanish name Pablo is a variation of the name Pablo, which is Spanish for “Paul.” Pablo is similar to saying “Little Paul” in English. During the show, other Spanish words are spoken. Don’t worry if you don’t know them, you’ll understand what’s happening from David’s expressions.

Spirituality
A religion called Santería (pronounced sahn-tay-ry-ah) began in Cuba when the island’s African slaves blended elements of West African religion with the Catholic traditions of Cuba’s Spanish colonizers. People practicing Santería often have statues of gods and altars for saints in their homes, and they perform rituals of worship that sometimes include chanting, dancing, and music. During the performance, watch how Pablo discovers the religion of his father’s family.

Music
Cuba’s cultural melting pot also created a distinctive Afro-Cuban musical sound featuring vocals and percussion instruments—mostly drums, but other instruments could include sticks and shakers. Afro-Cuban music is performed for pure entertainment as well as in religious services. In the music’s percussive sounds you’ll hear:

- polyrhythms—several different rhythms being played at the same time
- call-and-response vocals—a pattern in which one phrase is sung and then “answered” by other participants
- syncopation—crossing a note in an unexpected place
- improvisation—adding words or musical phrases spontaneously while performing

Change Comes to Cuba

THE EXILES
Frustrated with these changes, tens of thousands of Cubans left Cuba by 1963, leaving behind their homes, businesses, and possessions. Many exiles (people living outside their home country) moved to Florida. They remained bitterly angry with Castro’s government as they started their lives all over again.

AMERICA WORRIES
At the same time, U.S. leaders grew alarmed at Cuba’s friendship with America’s enemy the Soviet Union, and they assigned the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA, a U.S. agency that gathers information from outside the United States to help protect national security), to find ways to overthrow Castro. But the CIA efforts failed. To pressure the Cuban government to change, the United States banned trade with the island nation—a practice that continues today.

THE REVOLUTION
In 1959, Cuba’s people rebelled against their unpopular president in what became known as The Revolution. After the president stepped down, rebel commander Fidel Castro (1926-2016, age 90) became Cuba’s new leader. Many Cubans thought there would finally be the change and freedom from many years of corrupt leadership and influence by other nations.

Castro, however, made changes that surprised many citizens. For example, he instituted communism (a system of government in which the state owns all a country’s resources and divides the nation’s wealth among its people). Castro’s government took over land and businesses without paying the owners and harshly treated people who protested against the government’s policies.

IN THE STORY, Pablo learns how Cuba’s history affected his family. Here’s an overview of events you might hear about.

The Exiles
The Revolution

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE
Allen of the House is Pablo’s story—but it also belongs to David González. That’s because David wrote this play—a story told on stage with videos, lights, and objects—based on real events from his own childhood.

And such a personal tale comes with a special telling of it. In a storytelling style, David will narrate the story and portray all five characters (yes, it takes a lot of talent). You’ll also hear plenty of music and sound effects. And just one more thing...you are the first people to see this brand new show!