



Blood Wedding

Author Biography

Federico Garcia Lorca was born on June 5, 1898, in the small town of [Fuente Vaqueros](#), near the city of [Granada](#), in Spain. He grew up in comfortable and pleasant circumstances, cultivating his tastes and talents for music (piano) and writing. By 1909 his family had moved to Granada, and by 1914 Lorca was enrolled in the University of Granada studying the liberal arts and law. He published a first book of collected articles and essays in 1918. In 1919, Lorca moved to the Residence of University Students in Madrid, where he believed he would encounter and benefit from a greater concentration of cultural activity than Granada, at the time, could offer. In Madrid, Lorca became acquainted with and established close, lifelong associations with [Salvador Dali](#), the surrealist artist, and [Manuel de Falla](#), the orchestral composer, amongst others.



Lorca's childhood home in Fuente Vaqueros



Lorca's house in Granada – Huerta de San Vicente

While Lorca wrote some dramatic pieces in his early writing years, he began his literary career most notably as a poet. He was also involved in a theatrical group of which he was the director. It was in the late 1920s that Lorca began to concentrate on drama. His famous trilogy of rural plays, of which *Blood Wedding* is one, was written between 1933-1936. Two of them were also staged during these years. (This trilogy includes *Yerma* and *The House of Bernardo, Alba*.)

Lorca's short life was busy and full. He wrote a great deal, he was feted and admired, and he travelled extensively (for example, to the United States, Cuba, and South America).

While Lorca's public life is well documented, biographers are less certain about precise details concerning Lorca's private life. The reason for this is that Lorca was gay, and the frank disclosure of such a fact during his time would have substantially endangered his career and social position.

Lorca was assassinated in 1936 just outside of Granada. The Spain of the early 1930s was a country uneasily negotiating the shift from monarchical, parliamentary traditionalism to full democracy and cultural liberalism. The political and social situation in Spain was as beleaguered and chaotic as that which characterised European politics and society, in general, at the time. The continent as a whole was struggling with the effects of lingering post-WW I economic depression as well as the rise of [fascism](#) in Italy, Germany, and Spain. The fascist army general Francisco [Franco](#) was gaining support in Spain, primarily from those who feared substantive change in either cultural or political terms. It was supporters of right-wing leaders such as Franco who saw Lorca and others as threats to the traditionalism and dictatorial society and law they wished to impose upon the Spanish nation. Lorca was arrested on August 16, 1936, and shot on either August 18th or 19th.



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HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The True Story

The Spanish title is Bodas de Sangre, or 'Wedding of Blood'. The [title](#) and theme came from a murder committed in 1928 in the town of [Nijar](#) in the Spanish province of Almería, when a young woman, Francisca Cañada Morales, ran off with her cousin, Francisco Montes Cañada, moments before her wedding to a local man. The cousin was then shot dead by the prospective bridegroom's brother. Lorca read about the incident in the Heraldo de Madrid newspaper and kept the cutting until he came to write the play in 1932.

A Nation Divided

Spain entered the twentieth century as a [constitutional monarchy](#). The Spanish populace, however, had little faith in this regime as the country was hampered by persistent and grave economic instability. Clearly, a change in the political and economic order of things was necessary. Widely opposed forces vied for contention. In various parts of the country, where industrialisation had taken place, workers determined to ensure their proper treatment and compensation and to enhance their social status. These groups were eager to see a left-wing, [socialist](#) government take the reins of Spain. These groups were forward-looking in cultural terms. A society still imbued with [classist](#) notions, for example, was not a society able to accommodate a new working and middle class made up of former peasants who would no longer tolerate the old class hierarchy. This old hierarchy heavily favoured the aristocracy and educated classes. These new social groups were also staunchly anti-monarchical, and they were also secular in view. To the opposing groups of Spaniards, these forces of change represented a drastic and fearful break from centuries of tradition, whether in social, cultural, or political terms. These other groups wished to maintain a traditional class structure, the succession of kings and queens, and the Catholic Church as a centrally shaping social and educational force. Lorca was on the side of change. His relations with the left-wing government voted into power in 1931 were cordial. Its Minister of Education, Fernando de los Rios, funded the theatre project of which Lorca was artistic director (the project was called [La Barraca](#)).

The Democratic Republic Versus the Dictatorship

The political scene in Spain was highly changeable during the late 1920s and early 1930s. A left-wing government, elected in 1931, was voted in again in 1936 after a brief return to a right-wing government in between. But Spain seemed determined to change, to try to negotiate the difficulties of modifying political and cultural institutions shaped for centuries by attitudes and beliefs no longer viable. This effort was effectively halted, however, as one of the leaders of Spain's traditionalist factions staged a coup d'état, or overthrow of the government, in 1936. This army general, Francisco Franco, was funded by fellow European nationalist and fascist leaders Adolf [Hitler](#) and Benito [Mussolini](#). A bloody three-year civil war ensued, with the forces of Franco finally winning. As Lorca was clearly aligned with the forces of change, he was an obvious political target at the time. He declared his solidarity with workers and the republic on a number of public occasions. His murder was an act of terror, designed to quell the spirit of those who contested Franco's right to claim power by force instead of by election. [The Civil War](#) attracted a number of foreigners, both men and women alike, sympathetic to the Republic. In democratic regimes around the world, the Republican effort would come to be known as "The Good Fight."



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Act I

The play opens in the home of the Mother and Bridegroom. It is learned that her husband and other son met violent ends, presumably in a feud. They also discuss the son's upcoming betrothal and marriage, until he leaves for work at his vineyard. A neighbour woman arrives and provides information concerning the Bride and her family. She confirms the mother's suspicions regarding the Bride having had an earlier love, and it turns out that this love, Leonardo, is from the family whose members are responsible for the deaths of her husband and son. The second scene takes place at Leonardo's house. Leonardo's wife and mother-in-law are rocking a baby to sleep. Leonardo's wife asks him why his horse is always tired these days; she says he has been seen "on the far side of the plains," which is where the Bride lives. Leonardo denies that he has been riding in that vicinity, and the subject of conversation shifts to the upcoming marriage of the Bride and Bridegroom. The third and final scene of Act I takes place at the Bride's home. The mother of the Bridegroom and the father of the Bride formalise the match, each praising the worthiness of their offspring. The Bride is demure and reticent in company, but once alone with the Servant she expresses her true frame of mind, which is impatient and frustrated. The Servant asks her if she heard a horse at the house the night before, and the Bride says no. But, at this point, a horse is heard and both see that it carries Leonardo.

Act II

Act II takes place at the Bride's house on the day of the wedding. Young girls and others appear singing and chanting wedding songs. Leonardo and his wife and mother-in-law are the first guests to arrive, and soon Leonardo and the Bride are speaking heatedly. He declaims against her marriage, their continued separation, and the disaster of their never having married. She replies that she is marrying to finally bury the past and the memory of him. By the second scene of Act II the guests have returned from the marriage ceremony. The wedding celebration is set to begin. In the midst of a large gathering, the mother and father speak of Leonardo, noting his family's reputation for violence. Soon, the overwhelmed Bride announces her wish to rest for a time. When the Bridegroom goes to find her a bit later, she is nowhere to be found. It is discovered that the lovers have fled. A party with the Bride-groom at its head is formed to seek out the lovers and exact revenge for their transgression.

Act III

Act III takes place mostly in a forest. This is as far as the lovers have managed to flee by the time the party catches up with them. Three woodcutters open the scene, commenting on the terrible events. Death and the Moon also appear in this scene, both looking forward to what will be, inevitably, somebody's death. Death, as a beggar woman, points the way to the lovers for the Bridegroom. In the meantime, the Bride encourages Leonardo to escape without her, as their horse is unable to carry them both. She knows that they will try to kill him. He refuses to leave her. With the stage directions having indicated the lovers' exit and the Moon's entrance, two shrieks are heard. At the sound of the second shriek, Death appears and moves to centre stage with her back to the audience. She spreads out her arms such that a great cape unfurls. This impressive sight ends the second scene of Act III. The final scene of the play opens with two girls winding a skein of red wool. Confusion reigns with various characters appearing and asking for definitive news about the hunt for the lovers. Finally, the Mother is apprised of the terrible truth; her last son is dead at the hands of Leonardo. Leonardo is also dead. The Bride appears, dejected, asking for death. The Mother barely registers her presence as she announces her final descent into inconsolable pain and suffering.



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Style

Setting

Lorca's stage directions indicate settings that are simple, stark, and highly symbolic. The play opens within the house of the Bridegroom in a room that is painted yellow. The Bridegroom will be associated with yellow throughout the play. This colour symbolises his wealth, since gold is yellow, and his vigour, since yellow is the colour of wheat, from which bread, the food of life, comes. It also symbolises his eventual death, since yellow is the colour of his lips when he is dead at the play's end. Leonardo's and the Bride's homes, however, are characterised by the colour pink, a variant on red which is the colour of passion and of vibrant life (or blood). They are, certainly, the characters who are the most passionate in the drama. The final scene takes place in a stark white dwelling, as if to suggest a place bleached of life and hope. The stage directions say that the room's white lineaments should resemble the architecture of a church. A church is the place where the rituals of birth and death are routinely commemorated; hence, it is an appropriate place for the mother to learn of her last son's demise and to accept her future drained of happiness. In contrast to these dwellings, is the forest to which the lovers flee. The forest has long been that setting in literature where society's rules mutate, change, break down, or no longer apply. It is a wild place, beyond human-made, communal order. These lovers, clearly, cannot be together within their community, and so their only recourse is to attempt to escape its bounds. Their true home, in some sense, therefore, is this forest.

Modernism

The movement in the arts known as Modernism was an international, metropolitan set of movements. Impressionism and Dadaism in the arts, stream-of-consciousness techniques in the novel, and atonality in music are some of its central artistic movements and forms. It was announced very vigorously by Picasso's strange Cubist paintings, for example, that instead of painting people how they seemed in real life, painted them with three eyes, two heads (or one head seen from different perspectives), and so forth. Other modernist movements were Symbolism and Surrealism, to which Lorca was close. Lorca's play is a modernist play. Like Picasso's paintings, it departs from realism, or the highly naturalistic and realistic sets, plots, and action that dominate European and Spanish theatre in the decades immediately preceding this set of movements. Lorca's modernism entails the attempt to return the "drama" to drama by making the theatrical event into a feast for the senses and the deepest emotions. The stark settings, the chanting, and the songs and music all contribute to an event which is designed to move an audience through all of the visual, aural, and dramatic means available to the dramatist.

Chorus

A chorus in a play is made up of a group of commentators, chanters, or singers not directly involved in the play's action. The chorus's role is either to comment on the action, to present the views of the community regarding the events, or, simply, to lyrically accompany action. Choruses of all of these types were common in Classical-age Greek plays. Lorca's play adapts from this tradition. A single girl, or a pair or groups of young girls, for example, will enter and circulate at various points, singing or chanting songs and commentary. In the final scene of the play, two young girls sing about how brief mortal life is and what might have happened at the wedding. Their contribution is primarily a lyrical accompaniment to the action, as the mother waits in fear to hear about the fate of her son.



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Themes I

Death

There are two ways the theme of death is developed in this play. First, there is death as the end, and the enemy, of mortal life. Death as an inevitable end that must be accepted is developed through the character of the Mother, who often laments the deaths of loved ones, while stoically enduring these painful losses nevertheless. There is more to this first theme of death than death's inevitability, however. The passionate bond of the lovers gives shape to another aspect. Their bond represents human life in general as being characterised by our connections to others. Death, therefore, kills not only our physical body, it also puts an end to that which makes us human. In claiming a person's life, Death sunders human bonds. Lorca introduces and develops this of death in the actions of his characters. For example, it is learned at the play's outset that the Mother's husband and one son were violently killed. One way the Mother mourns these events is by pointing to the fact that the killers reside seemingly content in jail. Not only do the killers escape real punishment, but she, the wholly innocent one, is the one being punished by having been deprived of her loved ones, and they, the loved ones, are being punished by having been deprived of their share of life. Death does not simply end life, it is anathema to it by destroying precious connections. Hence the play's characterisation of death as a cruel and cold beggar woman who acts as the lovers' "enemy" by revealing their whereabouts to the hunters.

If death is anathema to life, then being deprived of a full life is like death-in-life. The theme of death-in-life is generally most closely associated with the female characters, although it is also closely associated with Leonardo and the Bride, in particular. It is linked to Leonardo and the Bride since, to them, not to be able to love each other is not to live fully. Hence, at the end of the play, both would prefer death than endure the death-in-life of separation. As the First Woodcutter says, "Better dead with the blood drained away than alive with it rotting." In terms of the female characters, the theme of death-in-life takes on broader connotations. Women as beings whose lives occur behind "thick walls" is underscored throughout the play. For example, at one point in the play, the Mother asks the Bride: "Do you know what it is to be married, child?" The Bride says she does but the Mother emphasises her point anyway: "A man, some children, and a wall two yards thick for everything else." Their lives, in the private realm of the home, is like life within a thick-walled coffin. It is a death-in-life because these exaggerated limits on women's social roles prevents them from pursuing all of the joys and varieties life has to offer. The men come and go; but the women are mostly at home. While the women are depicted as having many responsibilities and solid social stature, they are nevertheless firmly excluded from deciding how the community is run and what its rules, laws, and traditions will be. The stark separation of male and female spheres no longer seems like fairly divided work when the differing nature of the work is considered. If women cannot contribute to making the rules, then the rules might not accommodate their needs. If their needs are not accommodated then they cannot live fully and must live a death-in-life.



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Themes 2

The Individual Versus Society



Alhambra

The theme of the individual versus society is central to *Blood Wedding*. Leonardo and the Bride find their respective social positions intolerable and rebel against their fates. They break the bonds of marriage and destroy the equilibrium of the community. The way the characters are named in Lorca's play reveals a great deal about how the playwright conceives this problem. Leonardo, who instigates the disequilibrium, is the only character with a name (Leon - big cat + 'ardo' - 'I burn') and as part of the Felix (cat) family is fated. None of the other characters are given proper names, rather, they are designated according to their societal position or role. The Bride, therefore, is on her way to become a Wife or a Mother. The

Bridegroom, besides being a son, is on his way to become a Husband or a Father. What this suggests is the manner in which, in some deep sense, there are no real individuals in societies, insofar as individualism entails total self-determination. In other words, to live in harmony with other humans, human beings in fact conform to a limited number of roles and possibilities that accord with the rules and agreements of social living and life. Hence, it is only Leonardo, who contests these rules, who can be individualised by being given a proper name. The play's development of this problem gives credence to those critics who see the play as a criticism of sectors of Spanish society unwilling to countenance change. These views will ring true as long as there is a need for persons to assert themselves against their society when its institutions or laws do not allow for the reasonable happiness and creativity of its members. Since the play generates sympathy for the passion of the lovers, it can be seen to generate sympathy for the forces of change.

Duel Imagery & 'Blood Wedding'

Dualism: opposed or contrasted aspects; the state of being divided.

This is the elemental force that drives all the characters.

The images within the play strongly oppose each other, all of which are centred around two forces - life & death. There is an irresolvable tension in these two forces - death is inevitable.

All the other images that Lorca uses are tense but resolvable, but always come back to this main theme of life & death.

e.g. the knife versus blood - the knife = death, - blood = life.

These images re-occur within Lorca's plays, to make us constantly emotionally involved; intensifying our emotions so that we feel the push and pull of forces upon the characters. This occurs because Andalusian culture had very strong association with the images, such as the horse symbolising male power & sexuality. The audience would, therefore, respond emotionally to the image. All the images within the play are those that were common in Andalusian culture.

The imagery was the most direct way that Lorca could gain the audience's emotional response.



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Symbolism and Metaphor

When asked what he would call the most gratifying part of *Blood Wedding*, Lorca said, "The one where the Moon and Death intervene as elements and symbols of fate. The realism that predominates the tragedy up to that point is broken and disappears to give way to poetic fantasy where I naturally feel as comfortable as a fish in water."

For example, in Act 3 Scene 1, Lorca uses Beggarwoman to symbolise death; a character to represent a personification of the moon; woodcutters to comment on both sides of the story; stage symbolism (at the end) to represent the deaths; violins to represent the forest, and poetic verse for Bride and Leonardo.



Graffiti in Granada

The critics immediately recognised *Blood Wedding* as a work of innovation for its adventuresome use of an unusually broad range of the theatre resources. Also impressive was its consistent high seriousness, and its almost classical delineation of the tragic conflict.



Oranges

What people were least prepared for was the mixture of realism and poetic symbolism. Lorca had established the tragic potential of the action during the first two acts in an identifiable social context where social dissonance and contradictions were driving the action towards a tragic crisis.

The problem of mixing prose and poetry throughout the play had been an over-riding concern of Lorca's in rehearsals, and he tirelessly worked with the cast to maintain a single principle: to make the transitions from prose to poetry as natural; as possible by avoiding the declamatory style of acting that was the dominant technique on the stage at the time.

"Symbols are the key element of the mythical Lorcan universe. They basically reproduce the essential underlying conflict behind all of the mythologies about life and death. Their multiple, irrational meanings allow the reader an interpretive freedom that enriches the text with infinite connotations" Rafael Alberti.

"great art depends upon a vivid awareness of death, connection with a nation's soil, and an acknowledgment of the limitations of reason," Lorca

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Flamenco and Dance

Flamenco is the traditional song and dance of the Gypsies (flamencos) of Andalusia in southern Spain.

The art form developed over several centuries from Gypsy, Moorish, Andalusian, and other roots. Flamenco music and dance became popular in the early 19th century as café entertainment.



Young Flamenco Performers

Canto (“song”) is the core of flamenco, and like *baile* (“dance”), it has three forms: *grande* or *hondo* (“grand” or “deep”), intense, profound songs, tragic in tone, and imbued with *duende*, the transformation of the musician by the depth of the emotion; *intermedio* (“intermediate”), moderately serious, the music sometimes Oriental-sounding; and *pequeño* (“small”), light songs of exuberance, love, and nature.

Individual genres include the light *bulerías*; the more serious *soleares* and its lighter descendant, the *alegrías*; the *fandangos grandes*, a serious adaptation of a lighter

non-Gypsy genre; the *malagueñas*, an offshoot of the *fandangos*; and *cantos grandes* such as the *siguiriyas gitanas* and *saetas*.

Both text and melody of these songs, like the flamenco dance, are improvised within traditional structures such as characteristic rhythms and chords. *Zapateado*, intricate toe- and heel-clicking steps, characterises the men's dance; the traditional women's dance is based more on grace of body and hand movement.

The *baile grande*, especially, is believed to retain elements of the dance of India, where the Gypsies originated. Castanets, found in Andalusian dance, are not traditional to flamenco.

Song and dance may be accompanied by *jaleo*, rhythmic finger snapping, hand clapping, and shouting.

In the 19th century, guitar accompaniment became common for many genres, and guitar solos also developed. In the 20th century, commercial pressure distorted much traditional flamenco dance.

Blood Wedding shows clearly how the simple tragic tale is as one with the spirit of flamenco; with its pain, with its passions; with its withheld eroticism.



Young Flamenco Performers



Blood Wedding

PLOT SUMMARY

Act I Scene 1

Mother has a feud with the Felixes;
her husband and son murdered;
the second son is now getting married;
bride (to be) has been Leonardo (Felix)'s girlfriend;
Bride's mother appears to have been unfaithful.

Act I Scene 2

Mother-in-law and Wife sing a symbolic lullaby;
we are introduced to Leonardo;
Wife asks him about where he's been;
there is an argument about the horse;
a girl brings news about the wedding and the luxuries the Bridegroom's family have bought;
Leonardo storms off;
the baby wakes, lullaby repeated

Act I Scene 3

Mother meets Father (of Bride) & the Bride herself at the cave house four hours away;
Very formal; like a business meeting;
Talk is about land, money and the qualities of children - almost like a slave auction;
gifts; uncomfortable hospitality;
Mother and Bridegroom leave (as the Father shows them out) and the Bride fights with servant about
i) the presents, and
ii) Leonardo's visits on horseback;
the scene ends with the sound of (Leonardo's) horse whinnying.

Act 2 Scenes 1 and 2

Hair do in the dawn;
Leonardo arrives early;
we learn about Leonardo's poverty having stopped his marriage to the Bride;
Bride really still wants Leonardo, though she tries to suppress that feeling;
Leonardo expresses his love for the Bride;
Servant is appalled by their informality and by what they are saying;
Leonardo and Bride act out a (false) farewell;
we can tell through the introduction of the (singing) guests that society expects her to marry.
The servant prepares the wedding feast while the others have gone to the church;
after the guests return, the tension gradually increases, with people crossing and recrossing the stage, until
the climax is reached when the Wife screams out that Leonardo and the Bride have fled on the horse;
the Mother instigates the chase.

Act 2 Scene 3

Leonardo and the Bride are running away, pursued by the Bridegroom;
In the moonlight, both Leonardo and Bridegroom die in a knife-fight.



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IDEAS FOR TEACHING I

Drama

Devising actions to accompany text requires an understanding of what is really going on. In *Blood Wedding*, the Mother's opening lines, for example, are, on the face of it pretty meaningless; what she wants is simply to hold her son in conversation long enough for him to bring up the question of his marriage. Or at least, this could be one interpretation.

Finding "actions" to accompany the text then is an important start to the process of converting script to performance. Some directors call this "actioning the text".

Ask yourself: what is the playwright's aim in this scene?

Ask yourself: what would my aim as a director be in presenting this scene for performance?

Start writing letters to Lorca. While [Stanislavsky](#) worked on [Chekhov's](#) plays, notably *Three Sisters* and *The Cherry Orchard*, he constantly wrote to Chekhov, then living in the Crimea, to ask for advice and elucidation regarding the text. (In his replies, Chekhov was often frustrated by the director's inability to see things as subtly as he himself did!)

If you were directing this scene, what observations would you make to its author, Lorca, if you were able? What issues does it raise which engage your interest? How and where would you congratulate Lorca for specific achievements? What problems does the opening scene raise?

Flamenco

Blood Wedding was adapted into a film in 1981. The film, directed by [Carlos Saura](#), tells the story through a stylised form of flamenco dance (a flamenco troupe was used in the film). The film is in Spanish, but subtitled versions are [available](#)

Try comparing *Blood Wedding* on the stage with [Carlos Saura's](#) 1981 film.

Curiously, perhaps, Saura declines to present Act 3. There are no Woodcutters; Scene One is reduced to a stylised knife-fight. There is no mourning: Scene Two is reduced to one despairing gesture from the Bride.

Using flamenco music and ideas from the film, devise mime or dance performances of Scenes One and Two from Act Three.



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IDEAS FOR TEACHING 2

Creating a Monologue

Take the idea of removing all the lines of a character and piecing them all together to create a monologue. This could be done with the character of the Mother to increase understanding of the thoughts and feelings of that character. This is a task that would also work well with playwrights such as Chekhov who often isolates his characters in their dialogue. They appear to converse but are often so absorbed in their own tales that nobody actually listens. Some characters are still talking of the same things throughout the play while the other characters are oblivious.

Looking beyond the Surface of the Dialogue

Take a couple of lines at a time and discuss all the different ways in which those couple of lines could be delivered. This task will encourage the pupils to think more deeply about the content within the dialogue of the scene and the various possible subtexts that could be bubbling beneath the surface.

Communicating with Body Language

There is a practical extension of this: Act out a scene in which two people play the same character simultaneously. One plays the actual action and meaning of dialogue whilst the other plays the subtext. This can be used to help pupils consider how they can communicate subtext and tension through their body language and movements without altering dialogue. All these skills will hopefully contribute to an improved piece of drama.

Music and Passion

Look at Lorca's love of the Spanish Flamenco – a passionate dance about temptation. Though this is not specified in the text, any opportunity to see Flamenco performed (better in reality but on video would suffice) would help the pupils to understand the depth of emotion that Lorca would have wanted to be apparent from the movements of his players.

Essay Suggestions

- Which character do you sympathise with most?
- There is a lot of symbolism in *Blood Wedding*. In what way is Leonardo's character symbolic?
- How is symbolism used in *Blood Wedding*. How far is each character a symbol?
- How would you stage Act 3 of *Blood Wedding*? What problems would there be?
- How does the writer use choral devices to effect? In what way are the woodcutters a chorus?
- How is the role of the Mother investigated in the play?
- Reread the last three pages of *Blood Wedding*. How far do you think Mother and Bride are reconciled at the end? How does staging contribute to meaning?

Sources:

Notes on Drama *Blood Wedding* on Answers.com. [Notes on Drama](#) Copyright © 2006 by Answers Corporation.
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IDEAS FOR TEACHING 3	AREAS & SKILLS
<p>Discussion: Discuss the rules that govern our behaviour within the home and society.</p>	<p>Social, Historical, Cultural</p>
<p>Small group improvisation: Improvisation based upon rules discussed above, about rules within the home/ family/ group of friends/ society.</p>	<p>Subject matter & its treatment. Interpretation of meaning.</p>
<p>Individual Scenes & Discussion: Show scenes & discuss the rules, controls set, & the effects upon individuals & relationships within the family and/or society. How might this exercise relate to the text? Which characters have to abide by similar rules? What rules governed the lives of people in Spain in the 1930's?</p>	<p>Characterisation. Subject matter & its treatment. Interpretation of meaning. Social, Cultural, Historical</p>
<p>Improvisation based upon life in Rural Spain – use the characters they know if they wish. Complete a scene taking these rules into consideration – show in some way that they perhaps doubt these rules</p>	<p>Characterisation. Subject matter & its treatment. Interpretation of meaning. Social, Cultural, Historical</p>
<p>Re-work improvisation scene: Re-work the improvisation with attention to making the dialogue richer: using metaphors & similes to express the rules. Consider the use of space to show status – mark your most poignant moments</p>	<p>Subject matter & its treatment. Interpretation of meaning. Language Visual spatial, aural</p>
<p>Discussion: Does the language affect the playing style of the scenes? How does Lorca use Language within the play? Introduction to the term 'poetic realism'. How does it enhance the play?</p>	<p>Subject matter & its treatment. Interpretation of meaning.</p>
<p>Other work: Look at the symbolism within the play – highlight examples of simile , metaphor, poetic realism, symbolism</p>	



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Interview with the Director – Jen Heyes

What made you decide to present and direct Federico Garcia Lorca's Blood Wedding?

I had directed [Yerma](#) (one of the other plays in the trilogy) in Portugal 2003. So *Yerma* planted a seed of longing to direct *Blood Wedding* and through this experience I discovered that I had a great connection with him through his work. I found that the earthiness, the nature, imagery, poetry, symbolism, themes, music and style of his writing gave me a great freedom of expression as a director and supported my artistic view of the world.

How do you begin visualising a show such as this?

Funnily enough it wasn't a visual image that guided my initial ideas, it was a sound – the sound of flamenco heels hitting a wooden floor. I wanted to explore the rhythm that inspired Lorca to write the piece in the first place and I imagined an empty space in darkness with the sound of the flamenco heels driving a rhythm which would set the tone of the play, these rhythms are very distinct and recognisable cultural reference of Andalusia, Southern Spain where Flamenco originates from. I was very adamant that my interpretation would aim to capture an authentic cultural voice I wanted to find where Lorca was coming from!



Jen Heyes



In the Garden at Huerta de San Vicente

So began the journey of visualising the whole, because it is impossible to imagine the whole thing in detail at the start of the process. I knew that I wanted to create a piece that would be driven by the text, the actor, the music, the visual image, the sound and to use the [Brechtian](#) technique of stepping in and out of character. I visualised an ensemble piece that has the versatility to move in any direction and drive the dynamic, the actors would also become a Greek chorus in parts as I was interested in the power of the [Chorus](#) in tragedy. Obviously I researched from books, the internet and libraries as one does, but this couldn't give me all that I needed which was to experience Lorca's culture first hand. So I travelled to Granada and Madrid to broaden my knowledge and to see with Lorca's eyes.

What is important to you as a director when creating a show like this?

The important thing is to not be rigid with your thoughts and ideas to include all things from a colour or an image or a sound, however small, into your plan. I often find that if something has ignited my imagination i.e. the sound of a heel in the darkness, then this will lead me into the next idea and the next, this is what we call an organic process as things naturally evolve.



Blood Wedding

What is involved in your process?

Different approaches depending on the style of the piece, for example, [Wall Talks](#) in 2007 was a site specific piece created in The Tobacco Warehouses @ The Stanley Dock, Liverpool and the process for this was dictated by and led by the site and its demands, as well as the stories that it had to tell. However, my creation process is always the same and involves a lot of research, gathering of images, songs, music, stories, films around the subject matter of the text. The next step is the preparation work with the set designer for this I will tell them my vision (which is usually fragmented and includes all of the above!) to this they will add their ideas and begin their own process of gathering and shaping their design, once we have an agreed outline of the basic design I will bring in the lighting designer and they will begin their process and so it goes on ...

Working with the composer/ musician follows a similar process of gathering, sharing and filtering ideas as we go. For *Blood Wedding* we have the great opportunity to work with the master of flamenco guitar, Juan Martin which is a dream come true, Juan who was born in [Andalucia](#) possess a sensitivity and profoundly deep understanding and connection with the world that Lorca portrays in *Blood Wedding*. Juan will share this with us in the rehearsal room and it will inform all the rhythms of the play not only in the music and the dancing but also in the transitions, the exchanges and the text.

As a director I will work out the mechanics of each scene and then pass that on to the actors who will then 'play' and usually discover even better ways of telling the story. The following are also included in the creative process for *Blood Wedding*:

Script read through

Flamenco workshops everyday with choreographer

Mask and character work (finding the physicality of the character)

Developing the chorus – choral work

Developing the character

Improvising – telling the truth of the story



Blood Wedding

What research have you undergone in preparation for the show?

As I mentioned earlier I went in search of Lorca to Granada and Madrid. Lorca was born and lived until he was 9 years old in Fuente Vaqueros a little village on the outskirts of Granada and the house where he was born is still stands as it was when the Lorca family lived there. It was here as a child that Lorca would hear the ballads, flamenco lyrics and love songs that were his introduction to poetry, and he later used the medium of poetry to recall them. Olivia, the designer, came with me on this trip and together we were able to use all that we were experiencing, learning and seeing to inform and shape the set and costume design for the production

We also went to

Huerte de San Vicente (the house in Granada where Lorca lived)

Caves of [Sacromonte](#)

The [Alhambra](#)

Gypsy flamenco shows

Performances by young experimentalist flamenco musicians and dancers

Arabic Baths

[Granada Cathedral](#)

Catholic mass in Granada

Surrounding villages

We brought back lots of images and even a pomegranate from a tree in Lorca's garden. Granada means pomegranate, an image whose poetic implications were not lost on Lorca. The fruit, he would write, is hard and skull-like on the outside, but inside it contains the "blood of the wounded earth"

Olivia took over 500 photographs and I took video footage for reference, documentation and archive. We also brought back lots of postcards, leaflets, prints, and CD's

The director [Carlos Saura](#) has made 3 films *Bodas de Sangre* (*Blood Wedding*), *Carmen* and *Flamenco* and these have been part of mine and Olivia's research, as well as the actors.

In Madrid I went to the Lorca Fundacion and met with Lorca's niece Laura Lorca who is the president of the foundation. The foundation is based in the institution that Salvador Dali, Luis [Bunuel](#), Pablo [Picasso](#) and Lorca would have stayed at in Madrid. Here I discovered a more intimate portrait of Lorca told through his families eyes as well as gaining an understanding of the impact of his work throughout the world.



"The Wounded Earth"



Gypsy Caves



Blood Wedding

The Stage Design for Blood Wedding - Olivia du Monceau

Where do you begin designing a show such as 'Blood Wedding'?

The text is the primary source for developing ideas but in this case I used a large amount of biographical research as well. I also generally concentrate on understanding the style and interpretation that the director wishes to undertake with their production.

What is involved in your process?

Whilst reading the text I might have some initial visual responses but the focus is more on the story, the feel and the characters. I try to experience it, as an audience will for the first time. Next I will re-read and annotate the script breaking it down into units creating my own thorough synopsis of the play. I will generate a thematic breakdown noting music, nature, family, mood and imagery and a practical breakdown noting locations, furniture, big props, Character insights, small props, costumes and any technical references e.g. "the walls start to bleed". In my copy of the script I also highlight other details such as time lines, and family trees of the characters involved.

All of the above gives me plenty of scope to start the visual researching using a wide range of resources including libraries, Internet, books, magazines, museums, films etc... Sketchbooks get filled with ideas, mood boards and images. I find it useful to create a collage storyboard of the play containing the above elements to illustrate a coherent visual style and pace as reference for myself and as a tool to communicate with the Director; I can see the colours, shapes, textures and images that they are also drawn to. This process is combined with further research such as the trip to Granada. (The specific research I undertook is explained further in a later question)

Alongside this research I undertake a technical exploration of the performance space detailing practical considerations relating to capabilities such as flying traps, sightlines etc...

I then start sketching set ideas looking into how the space will evolve throughout the piece. From these I build a 3D 1:25 scale model of the theatre and the entire set design combining it with storyboards and costume sketches to present a final design to the Director. Eventually when the design is agreed I start the Technical drawings and meetings with the production team. The focus is on budget, construction, practical considerations and scheduling which all inform the continued modification of the design.



Olivia in the garden at Huerta de San Vicente



Blood Wedding

How does your role as designer work with that of the Artistic Director?

The ways that artistic directors work vary, as do most projects. As a designer you try to interpret how they wish to work with you on this particular collaboration. Some directors will already have some strong visual ideas: your role becomes that of facilitator, adapting the ideas practically and aesthetically. At the other end of the scale an Artistic Director might be more focused on other elements of the production and leave the responsibility for creating the whole visual concept to the designer. With Jen Heyes the creative collaboration is more synchronised as she brings images that she is drawn to and we bounce off ideas. With Blood Wedding most of the initial design realisation was done during the trip to Granada, which proved really useful. Normally with a Director you would have meetings sporadically during the design process but because of this focused period of time we were able to discuss ideas daily. Together we could dissect and evolve the concepts very quickly and effectively.

What kind of research have you completed to prepare your ideas for the show?

As a piece firmly rooted in a particular time a lot of research goes into the specific era from interiors, the furniture, hairstyles, clothes, jewellery and so on. In the Sacromonte caves in Granada we experienced and studied the preserved homes of the gypsies, as they would have been 100 years ago. We could photograph and study the type of furniture, stables, dressings, weaving at first hand. Other research includes a cultural study into Spain, its climate, topographies, rural traditions, history and people. I undertook a lot of reading on rural Spain, the moors, the Iberian conquest, flamenco, duende and in particular writings on Lorca. This includes biographies, other plays, his artwork and footage of the Barraca.



Olivia and the Gypsy

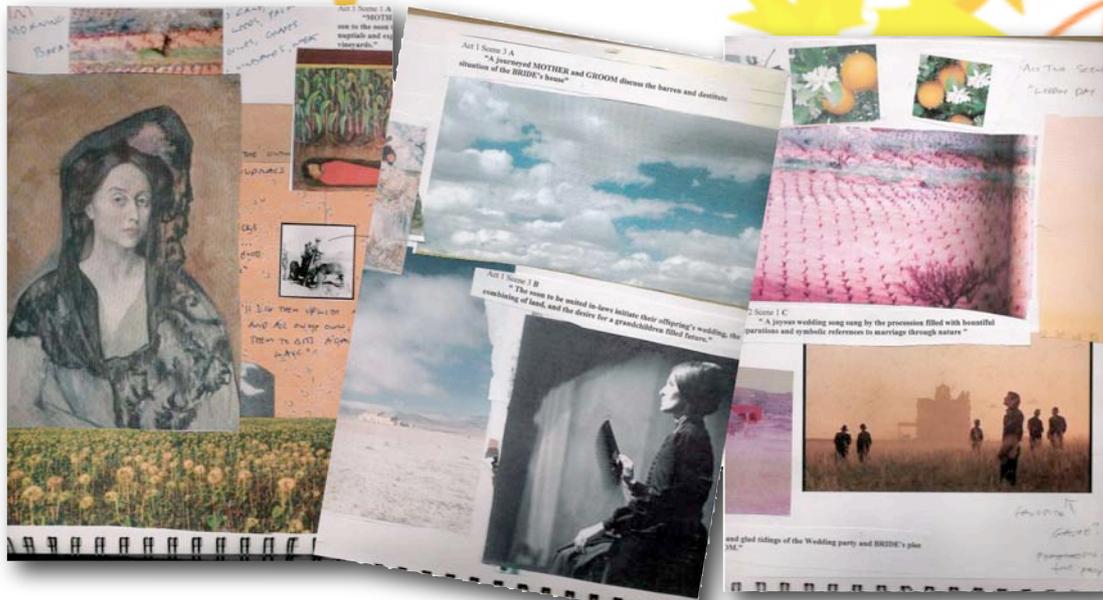
Most specifically the influences of death, nature and the surrealist movement are important to gain an insight into the visual themes and symbolism he has incorporated into the text.

What made you want to get into theatre design?

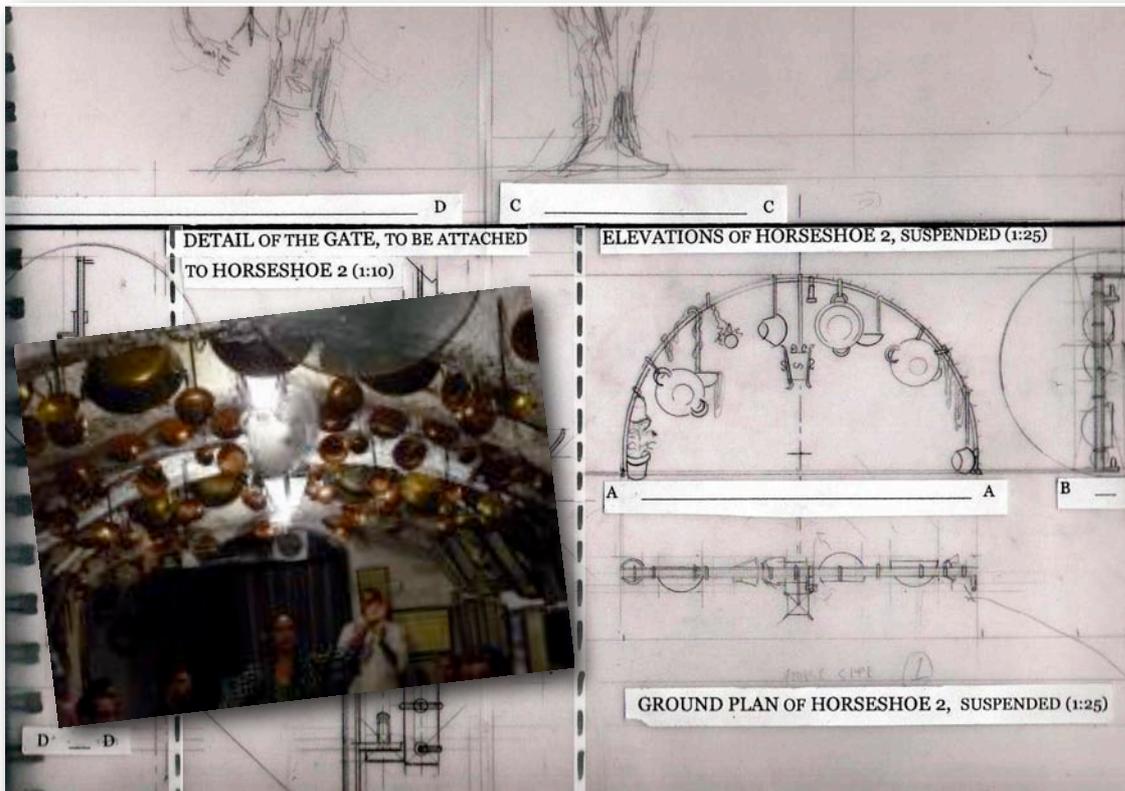
As a creative personality I always had strong artistic abilities and spent the majority of my childhood in my imagination inventing worlds around me. The choice of theatre design seemed an appropriate outlet for my natural instincts. I think that if I was a pure artist I would find creating art for arts- sake with boundless avenues of expression futile. At the same time I would not want to be restricted by a specific medium such as a graphic design purely doing graphics. Theatre design requires a variety and adaptability from illustration, interior design, photography through to sculpture. Not only is the function of a designer adaptable, the medium of theatre itself is also flexible. *Blood Wedding* being set at the Liverpool Playhouse, a traditional Proscenium stage, varies greatly from working as associate designer on *One Step Forward One Step Back* in 2008, which was a promenade, non-text based production. Both these projects differ again to the nature of designing site-specifically in the Tobacco Warehouses on *Wall Talks* in 2007. I find this variety of theatre design is exciting as it allows me to be constantly learning and creating.



Blood Wedding



Stage Design: Sketchbook collages for *Blood Wedding*

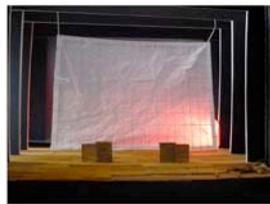


Stage Design: Section of technical drawing for *Blood Wedding*



Blood Wedding

Stage Design:
Storyboard Sketchbook and
Model Box





Blood Wedding

Ted Hughes



Cut to the Chase Productions are using the Ted Hughes adaptation of *Blood Wedding*.

For more information regarding Ted Hughes visit [here](#) and [this website](#).

Contact Us:

Cut to the Chase Productions

By Mail: Parr Street Studios, 33- 45 Parr Street, Liverpool, L1 4JN

By email: info@cuttothechaseproductions.co.uk

Cut to the Chase Productions website is [here](#).





*"They were deceiving themselves,
but the blood couldn't be denied"*

Federico Garcia Lorca's

BLOOD WEDDING

Adapted by Ted Hughes Directed by Jen Heyes

*Music composed and played live by
Juan Martín*

25-29 Nov 2008

Box Office 0151 709 4776

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BLOOD WEDDING

Cut to the Chase Productions brings you one of the most innovative and powerful plays of the 20th century.

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Potent and poetic, Blood Wedding is human passion the top 5 guitarists in the world set after. Powerful imagery, US Immersive Guitar Player) in choreography and live music this highly physical production from the master of flamenco from Cut to the Chase.



Federico Garcia Lorca

CAST



The Mother
Sabina Granados



The Bridegroom
Clás Hannon



The Bride
Tereasa Beldarrain



The Father
Brian Doolan



Leonardo
Siobhan Deamrath



The Wife
Jo Mackley



The
Mother-in-law
Gillian Cully



The Maid
Amanda
Perry-Smith

Adapted by
Ted Hughes

Directed by
Jen Heynes



Designer
Olivia da Mota

Lighting
Piñal Saunders

Music composed and played live by
Juan Martin

TICKET PRICES

£9.50 to £20.00
(Concessions and standby tickets available)

DATES

Tuesday 25 to Saturday 29 November

PERFORMANCE TIMES

Evenings: Tuesday - Saturday 7.30pm
Mornings: Thursday 1.30pm, Sat 2.00pm

Preview Prices

Tuesday and Wednesday all seats £9.00

Aftershow Discussion
Thursday 27 November (Eve)

Page to Stage Workshop
Thursday 27 November 10.30am - 12.15pm
Suitable 12+

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the Heirs of Federico Garcia Lorca and the Heirs of Ted Hughes.

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