

Young Audiences of Atlanta, Inc.
Study Guide for Teachers

STOREOGRAPHY

Grades: K-4; 5-8; 9-12 Audience Limit: 300 Length 45- 60 min

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

STOREOGRAPHY connects dance and language arts in an exciting and accessible way. The structure and the meaning of story is revealed through clues such as costumes, music, props and the emotions and actions of characters. Concepts common to both dance and language arts such as: plot, character development, subtext etc. are demonstrated in a progression of funny and physical dances. Students will have a chance to collaborate with the performers on an impromptu visual story.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Performers: Connecticut

Adam Battelstein is an actor, dancer, choreographer extraordinaire noted by the New York Times for his "comic genius" and called "a master clown disguised as a dancer." He has toured nationally and internationally with companies such as Pilobolus and Momix. He is a master teaching artist for the state of Connecticut and has been involved in educational outreach around the United States for many years.

Ananda Wilson...

Performers: Atlanta

Emily and Matt Kent have had extraordinary careers working with Pilobolus and, dancing their way around the world, performing on television and dancing live for thousands of young people. They have made their own childrens' shows and are founding members of the Pickleshoes performance group.

Choreographer:

Adam Battelstein continues to create dances that celebrate the physical and the theatrical. He has collaborated with Pilobolus on dozens of dances and has made work on students and professionals around the US and abroad. His recent projects include The Planetarium Club and Peter and the Wolf in collaboration with Matt and Emily Kent and Ras Mikey C.

Program Description

Storeography is three versions (K-4, 5-8, 9-12) of a Lec-Dem connecting dance and language arts. The program will include four complete dances, each with an introduction before and short discussion afterwards. The tools and ideas necessary to fully appreciate the dances such as plot, character development, subtext are emphasized. There will also be an audience participation section in which the students help to build an impromptu movement story. In so doing, they will get a sense of how both the narrative and the kinetic elements come together to form a dance.

Students will be asked to make inferences about the characters, setting, and general meaning of the story. They will be reassured that using their imagination to fill in gaps is not only allowed, but an essential part of their contribution to and appreciation of the arts.

Learning Objectives

- To recognize elements common to all narratives
- To apply previous knowledge of story structure to decipher dances.
- To make inferences about character, intentions and general meaning.
- To reinforce language arts vocabulary and introduce dance vocabulary.
- To give hands-on understanding of the architecture of story through participation in an impromptu dance
- To encourage viewers to engage a work of art with their imaginations and thereby transform it into something personal.

Vocabulary Sample (Vocabulary is grade appropriate and varies for the three versions of this show)

Who, Where

What and When-(K-4)

Character, place, action and plot and time

Resolution- (5-8)

How the loose ends are tied up after the climax and how the story ends.

Subtext- (5-12)	What a character is thinking or feeling while dancing or speaking. Sometimes it is different from what the words are saying.
Setting-	The “where” of any story including dances, poems etc.
Abstract-	(v.)To change something (to a lesser or greater degree) from the literal without losing the essence of the original.
Transformation-	The changes a character might undergo from the beginning of a story to the end.
Irony	Events, actions or behavior bring about unexpected or opposite to a character’s intended results
Props-	Short for properties, describes any object used by the performers in a play, dance, opera etc.
Visual Metaphor	A choreographers movement version of a comparison e.g. a gliding move that suggests ice-skating without using mime.

Background:

Modern Dance is an American original just like Jazz music. Both use improvisation as way of generating material. The emphasis in Modern is on invention and expression. There are many different styles including the more abstract, the theatrical and the acrobatic. In STOREOGRAPHY, we present some of all three. While abstract dances are more challenging for novice viewers, with the right tools and some practice, they can tell beautiful stories. Dance is a visual medium that also exist within a time frame and is physical and theatrical; it can tell stories in a way that is unique among all the art-forms.

Pre Performance Activities:

1. [9-12] Have students write a short description of a movement-moment (a moment of behavior or gesture without words) in a dance, play, movie or novel (this could be something previously or currently assigned to the class) which provoked in them a strong emotion. Have them include as much detail as possible.

1.cont. Ask them to distill this description into a poem by keeping the most essential words and ordering them into lines and stanzas.

2. [5-8] Have students choose a static, literal gesture such as praying hands or a frozen wave, peace sign etc. Ask each student to display these gestures for the class to interpret.

Then ask the students to abstract the gestures by turning them sideways or upside down, making them very big or very small.

Ask each student to display the abstracted gestures for the class to interpret.

Discuss what changes in the interpretations occurred. Was there a change in the number of possible interpretations?

2cont. Have the students choose three literal gestures, abstract them and then connect them together into a seamless short dance. Add music.

Post Performance

1. [5-8] Take a story, poem, dance or play and identify what the character wants or seems to want and all the obstacles or difficulties that are in the character's path.
2. Option#1
[K-4] Create a short obstacle course in the room using desks, chairs and whatever else may be at hand. Ask students to figure out their own creative ways to pass through, over or around these obstacles. Have them memorize their movements. Take away the obstacles and have students repeat their movements as though the obstacles remained. Add music. This can be looked at as a short dance in itself or could be the starting place to make a longer dance.

Option#2

[5-12] Have students write a story in which a character must face obstacles and invent ingenious ways to surmount them in order to achieve his or her goal.

Relevant Curriculum Standards:

Dance
Language Arts
Theater Arts
Physical Education
Music

Resources

Web-Sites

www.adambattelstein.com

www.storeography.com

www.pickleshoes.org

www.pilobolus.org

www.momix.com

Books

Twisted Yoga by Pilobolus

Breaking Bounds (or other books) by Lois Greenfield

Feeling and Form by Suzanne Langer

Activities for Curriculum Connections

Dancing a Story: This activity can be used for any subject in all disciplines!

stage 1 Have students brainstorm a list of 6- 10 action words around a particular subject. Push them to come up with the most interesting or powerful words they can think of. For example if students are studying ocean currents and their effects in science, some words might be: Flowing, Inversion, Swirling, Blowing, Circumnavigate.

Move the chairs etc. out of the way and have students spread out in the room. When you say “go” they must come up with a movement for the first word on the list. This is a non-verbal activity and they should not speak or make loud noises. They keep repeating their movements until you say “freeze.” Go through the list, stopping to discuss what aspect of your chosen subject moves in this way and why. For example: After the students do “swirling” ask them what exactly has that motion, when does it happen, why and what are the effects.

stage 2

Keep your eye out for a student who has an especially creative or accomplished movement version of the current word. Freeze the class and then ask that student to demonstrate. Have everyone in the class learn Peter’s version of “Flowing.” Do this for 3 or 4 words choosing different students each time. Practice a few times until all students can do a reasonable version of these 3 or 4 movements.

Divide the students into small groups. Ask them to choose an order: beginning, middle and ending for their 3 or 4 movements and then to collaborate on tying them together into a dance. (They can elaborate with other movements or repeat movements as they are inspired) Give them ten to fifteen minutes. Add music (any music will do) and have each group perform their dance for the rest of the class.

Discuss how these dances worked as dances and how the students think they relate to their original subject. Can they use their imaginations to make sense of the dances as stories?