

Dear Educators,

Thanks for your reservation to attend the UW World Series free matinee presentation of the **Limón Dance Company**. It is our belief that arts education is crucial in the development of students as creative problem-solvers and culturally-aware community members.

We've created this teacher guide to help you integrate the field trip to the University of Washington's Meany Theater into classroom curriculum.

The activities found in this guide can be used as starting points for full lesson plans, or as preparation and debrief activities. A short activity or discussion can go a long way toward helping students be purposeful and attentive audience members. For those short on time, check the table of contents for pages marked with an asterisk.

By now you should have received via email: directions, parking information and your **voucher for entrance. Please bring the voucher with you to Meany Theater.** We hope you enjoy the performance!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Cole Duffell

Director of Education
UW World Series

EALRs in this guide

Arts 2.1 Apply a creative responding process in the arts.

Arts 2.2 Apply a performance process in the arts

Arts 2.3 Apply a responding process to an arts presentation.

Arts 3.1 Use the arts to express and present ideas and feelings

Arts 3.2 Use the arts to communicate for a specific purpose

Arts 4.2 Demonstrate and analyze the connections between the arts and other content areas

Dancing

Dance is a creative means of expression. To dance is to make movements, often in time with music. Since the earliest humans, people have used dance to tell stories, celebrate social occasions, entertain others and express emotions.



Martha Graham Dance Company

What is Modern Dance?

In the early 1900s, artists, musicians and dancers began a movement toward more experimental styles. Modern dance began as a reaction to the formal rules that governed classical ballet. Where ballet focused on exact poses and specific steps, with dancers laced into stiff toe shoes and corseted dresses, modern dancers championed personal expression and freedom of movement, with dancers in loose clothing and bare feet.

Three main elements of modern dance include:

Individuality: We each have many characteristics that distinguish us from other people – our colors (hair, eyes, skin), height, gender, age, culture, and education level are just a few. We also have very individual ways of moving, and of expressing emotion. Modern dance celebrates this – the freedom to design movement is only limited by the choreographer’s imagination. Modern dance companies were also the first to accept performers who didn’t fit the typical tall-and-thin dance body type.

Naturalism: Isadora Duncan (1878 – 1927), a pioneer of modern dance, introduced the idea of movement in harmony with nature and our natural instincts. Her style drew on natural imagery such a swaying tree or rolling wave. Modern dancers move with their entire bodies and feel the floor on their bare feet.

Gravity: While ballerinas aim to seem weightless, modern dancers play with gravity, using the weight of their limbs into the earth for greater expression. The release of the body into a controlled fall and the suspen-

What about you?

Do you dance?

Does your family dance?

Why do you dance? For exercise? Special occasions?

How do people dance differently in different parts of the world?

What kind of music do you dance to?

What clothing and footwear is appropriate for your favorite kind of dancing?

“Movement never lies. It is a barometer telling the state of the soul’s weather to all who can read it.”

–Martha Graham

ARTS 1.1

ARTS 3.2

ARTS 4.2

The Limón Dance Company

About the Limón Dance Company:

Acclaimed for its dramatic expression, technical mastery and expansive, yet nuanced movement, the Limón Dance Company illustrates the timelessness of José Limón's work and vision. Founded in 1946 by José Limón and Doris Humphrey, the Company is now led by Carla Maxwell, who worked closely with Limón before becoming Artistic Director in 1978. The Company's repertory, which balances classic works with commissions from contemporary choreographers, is of an unparalleled breadth, creating unique experiences for audiences around the world.

Who is José Limón:

The founder of the Limón Dance Company, José Arcadio Limón, was born in Culiacan, Mexico, on January 12th 1908. At the age of 7 Limón and his family move to the United States. In 1929 Limón sees his first dance performance and is so inspired, he switches his career interest from visual arts and enrolls in the Humphrey-Weidman School. As World War II continues Limón is drafted into the army in 1943 and choreographs several works for the Special Services. He is discharged in 1945. In 1947 the José Limón Dance Company has its debut performance at New York's Belasco Theater. The *New York Times* hails Limón as "the finest male dancer of his time". As the dance company continues to perform Limón takes a position at the Julliard School in New York, where he teaches choreography until his death in 1972.

The Limón Legacy:

During the course of his career, Limón created what is now known as the "Limón technique". According to the Limón Institute, the technique "emphasizes the natural rhythms of fall and recovery and the interplay between weight and weightlessness to provide dancers with an organic approach to movement that easily adapts to a range of choreographic styles. The Limón style can still be seen in performances today as dance companies continue to teach Limón's style of dancing. The Limón Dance Company itself is still active, with the express purpose of maintaining the Limón technique and repertory.

Check out <http://www.limon.org/wordpress/> for more information and images.

Images Courtesy of Limón Dance Company

Observing Dance Purposefully

There is so much to do when watching dance! Part of being an audience member is watching actively and being aware of your immediate responses to the dance based on what you see, hear and feel. One way to appreciate dance is to follow a response process like this one:

Engage → Describe → Analyze → Interpret → Evaluate

Before the Performance

You can **Engage** by looking for some of the elements that make up dance:

- ◆ Shapes (symmetrical and asymmetrical)
- ◆ Movements (sharp and smooth)
- ◆ Patterns
- ◆ Sets, lights, props, and costumes
- ◆ Characters (plants and animals)

After the Performance

Describe what you saw and/or heard with others in your class.

- ◆ What shapes did you see? Were they symmetrical?
- ◆ How did the dancers move to show that they were plants or animals? When did you see sharp movement? Smooth movement?
- ◆ Describe any patterns or repetition you observed.
- ◆ What props were used and how? How did the lighting and costumes change during the performance?

Analyze how the elements are arranged and organized.

Were the shapes you saw symmetrical shapes?
What about geometric shapes?

How do these dancers use their props differently than an actor in a play might?

How do these dancers relate to each other ?

Interpret based on descriptive properties.

What is the theme of this dance?

Does the dance tell a story?

What mood does the music create? How do the costumes, props, and lighting help create the mood?

Evaluate using supportive evidence and criteria.

What do you think the choreographer's goal was?

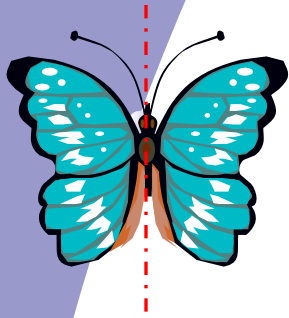
Was the performance successful in reaching that goal? Why?

What are your criteria for a good performance? Do we all have the same criteria?

What would you have done differently if you were directing?

ARTS 1.4

ARTS 2.3



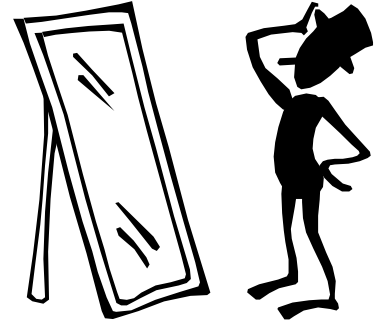
Symmetry is exact similarity between two parts or halves, as if one were the mirror image of the other.

You can tell if something is symmetrical if you can draw a **line of symmetry** through the middle and the two sides are the same.

“An artist’s job in not to be perfect. An artist’s job is to be clear.” -Eric Johnson, Arts Impact Artist Mentor

Choreography – the art of planning and arranging dance movements into a meaningful whole

Symmetry Activities



Mirroring

First, help students brainstorm some symmetrical and asymmetrical objects in nature and in the classroom.

Next, divide into pairs and practice:

1. making symmetrical shapes with a partner’s guidance
2. making symmetrical shapes together
3. facing your partner and following her movement as if you were a mirror. Where is the line of symmetry?

Symmetry and Words

From Anne Green Gilbert’s *Creative Dance for All Ages* (p 243)

Words: “I will say a word and you form a shape that describes that word. Is it symmetrical or asymmetrical? Now describe the word through movement. What kind of movement are you doing?” Try words such as anger, peace, fear, love, comfort, hate, etc. OR have the dancers create symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes and then think of words to match the shapes.

Symmetrical Choreography

What are choreographers? Choreographers create dances the way composers write music.

Part 1: students break into groups of 4 or 5. Decide together on three symmetrical shapes and one asymmetrical shape and practice them together. Are you being clear? Can your audience see whether your shapes are symmetrical? What would be the most interesting order to perform these shapes? Decide on an order and practice with your group.

Part 2: divide the class in half and have the groups in each half perform their shapes dance for the other. Talk to each audience group about their job: to watch quietly and look for shapes. After each performance, ask the audience to comment on what the performers did to make their shapes especially clear.

ARTS 1.1, 1.2, 1.4

ARTS 2.1, 2.2, 2.3

ARTS 3.2

Math 1.3

"The Moor's Pavane"

A dance based on Shakespeare's "Othello"

One of choreographer Jose Limon's most revered work is a dance piece based on Shakespeare's tragedy "Othello", titled "The Moor's Pavane". Created in 1949 "The Moor's Pavane" remains one of the classics of American modern dance and the enduring masterpiece of its choreographer. Limon realized that Shakespeare's "Othello," a play as messy in its emotions as any tragedy, could be distilled with a pungent simplicity of form. He chose a dance form - the pavane - as a poetic conceit, to symbolize his human drama. When the pavane's formal patterns break sharply apart onstage, we sense the disastrous crisis among the characters. And when we see the four main characters dancing in their symmetrical and formal patterns, we know that the societal facade merely conceals the swirling passions underneath. Filled with decadent costumes and an interesting story line "The Moor's Pavane" incorporates storytelling and drama into modern dance.

Glossary:

Moor - one of the Arab and Berber conquerors of Spain

Othello - A play by Shakespeare. One of the main characters, Desdemona, the young daughter of a powerful citizen of Venice, marries Othello, an older Moorish commander. Doomed from the start, Othello and Desdemona become embroiled in a terrible plot of jealousy and revenge that results in tragedy on a grand scale.

Pavane - a stately court dance by couples that was introduced from southern Europe into England in the 16th century



Arts and Dance Resources

Internet

www.uworldseries.org – find out what’s happening with the UW World Series and link to series artist webpages.

<http://www.linesballet.org/> - Alonzo King’s LINES Ballet website

http://www.linesballet.org/lines/sfseason/shaolin/sha_art_vision.htm—Additional background information on Shaolin

<http://www.k12.wa.us/curriculumInstruct/Arts/>

Washington’s Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

From here you can access the Arts Essential Academic Learning Requirements.

<http://www.sdhs.org/resources/res-misc.html> - Lists online resources for dance from all over the world.

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/> - The Kennedy Center’s wonderful collection of integrated arts education resources for K-12.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_dance - History of modern dance

<http://www.arts-impact.org/> - Arts Impact is a UWWS partner organization that trains classroom teachers in visual and performing arts teaching.

http://www.ums.org/s_education_community/online_resources.asp- A directory of online education resources.

www.deawa.com—Dance Educators Association of Washington

Books

Creative Dance for All Ages: a Conceptual Approach by Anne Green Gilbert (1992) – an excellent resource for teaching creative dance in the classroom. www.creativedance.org

Elementary Dance Curriculum Model, Debbie Gilbert et al., Washington Alliance for Better Schools, contact: Dr. Jonelle Adams, jadams@nsd.org

Brain-Compatible Dance Education by Anne Green Gilbert (2006). www.creativedance.org

Videos

Teaching Creative Dance with Anne Green Gilbert, www.creativedance.org

BrainDance, Anne Green Gilbert, www.creativedance.org

Live Performance and the Audience



Watching a live performance is different than watching TV!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ◆ Can you think of a time when you have performed? How did it make you feel? How did you want your audience to act?
- ◆ In what ways is an audience member a participant in a live show? What are some examples of inappropriate participation?
- ◆ Can you think of examples of live performances that people attend? (plays, music concerts, rock concerts, sports events)
- ◆ What are some ways live performances are different from recorded ones or ones you see on TV?
- ◆ Can a live performance ever be repeated exactly? Why or why not?
- ◆ What is the audience member's role? (show courtesy to fellow audience members, applaud the performers to show appreciation.)

AUDIENCE GUIDELINES:

- ◆ If you need to use the restroom, do so before the performance. Make sure you return to your seat before the performance begins.
- ◆ After you're seated, it is appropriate to talk quietly to the person next to you until the performance begins. Once the performance starts, give the performers your full attention.
- ◆ When there is a break in the dance, make sure the performance has ended before applauding. There are sometimes pauses or "freezes" of position that are part of the dance which can mislead the audience into thinking the performance is over. The performance is over when the dancers come forward and bow.
- ◆ Applaud at the end of the performance. The dancers have worked hard, and the applause lets them know how much you appreciate their effort.