BoSoma
Dance Company

Presents

"Stories in Motion"

BoSoma Dance Company
Hamilton, MA
www.bosoma.org

WHAT IS DANCE?

Dance is any type of movement of the body, usually to music and in a given space, for the purpose of expressing an idea or emotion, releasing energy, or simply taking delight in the movement itself. There are countless styles of dance, but below are some of the most common forms.

Styles of Dance:

Ballet: An artistic dance form that uses precise and highly formalized steps and gestures. Classical ballet, which originated in Renaissance Italy and established its present form during the 19th century, is characterized by light, graceful, fluid movements often with the use of pointe shoes. A balance of strength and grace are required to perform ballet technique.

Modern: Modern dance is often considered to have emerged as a rejection of, or rebellion against, classical ballet. It is a broad genre of western concert and theatrical dance, and employs different techniques for developing the use of the entire body in movements that are expressive of abstract ideas.

Contemporary: Contemporary dance is a genre of dance performance that developed during the mid-twentieth century and has since grown to become one of the most dominant genres. Due to its technical similarities, it is often perceived to be closely related to modern dance, ballet, and other classical concert dance styles. It is an eclectic blend of many different dance styles.

Jazz: Jazz dance is a technique and style that first emerged in the United States in the early twentieth century, and was originally performed to jazz music that was popular at the time. Today, jazz is usually characterized by fast upbeat movements, popular music, and strong emphasis on rhythm and showmanship.

Hip Hop: Hip-hop dance refers to street dance styles primarily performed to hip-hop music or that have evolved as part of hip-hop culture. It includes a wide range of styles that is constantly evolving with the times, but originated in the 1970s. It is a very rhythmic and music based style.

Dance Vocabulary/Terms:

Dance: a performing art form consisting of purposefully selected sequences of human movement.

Choreography: a sequence of steps and movements performed by dancers throughout a given space.

Choreographer: a person who creates dance compositions, and plans and arranges sequences of dance steps.

Expression: the process of communicating your thoughts or feelings through movement.

Abstract Expression: conveys attitudes and emotions through nontraditional and usually nonrepresentational means.

Literal Expression: conveys attitudes and emotions through concrete, exact, and representational means, which could include gesture or pantomime.

Theme: a unifying or dominant idea in a movement pattern or sequence from which variations may be developed.

Motif: any recurring element that has symbolic significance and reference to the theme.

Tone: the overall feeling, character, or general attitude of a dance piece.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections : Storytelling & Dance

Writing a story and choreographing a dance involve the same process.

- What are important parts of a written story?
    - Clear beginning, middle & end
    - Theme - a unifying or dominant idea in a movement pattern or sequence
    - Motif - a recurring image, idea, or symbol that develops or explains a theme
    - Tone/Mood - Any emotion that humans can feel can be an example of **tone** in literature

Like a written story, a choreographer uses these tools to craft a visual dance.
- Choreographers use music, themes or ideas as inspiration to create a dance.
- Using movement, the choreographer crafts a dance with a beginning, middle and end, meant to tell a story or convey a message.
- Choreographers may develop a motif that appears throughout the dance. This may be a particular movement, position, or even through the use of costumes or props.
- Choreographers develop the tone or mood of the dance in many ways: music choices, lighting choices, timing or quality of dancer's movements, emotional expression from dancers faces.

Abstract vs. Literal Thinking & Expression

- Dances may tell a story or express an idea in a literal way or an abstract way.
- Literal expression would involve obvious gestures and pantomime. Dances that are more literal may have clear characters, costumes and storyline.
- Abstract expression involves performing or creating movements that give the idea or essence of a theme, that suggest meaning through the shapes created or emotion behind them. Abstract dances allow the audience to form their own interpretation of the dance they are seeing on stage, much like when viewing a piece of art in a museum.

Principles of Choreography

A choreographer uses music and spatial design as an added layer to tell their story. Important choreographic elements used in all choreographic works are listed below.

Space: Thinking about how the dancers will move through the space in terms of: use of general and personal space, negative and positive space, air pathways and floors pathways, use of levels (high & low), directions (forward, backward, side to side)

Time / Tempo of Music: Thinking about how the choreographer will design movement in relation to the tempo/timing of the music in terms of: pulse/heartbeat of the piece, moving in time with or against the rhythm, moving fast vs. moving slow, adding stillness that contrasts the music.

Rhythm: a strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound

Something to think about: Many audience members will ask the choreographer which came first, the music, the choreography or the concept. After seeing each piece, what do you think?

<u>**BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE:**</u>

Below are descriptions of the dance pieces that will be performed in the show. We recommend that students read through these summaries to prepare for the performance.

The following tasks could be done *during* the performance, or *after* as a reflective exercise.

For each dance:

- Can you identify the **theme**?

- What story do you think the choreographer is trying to tell?

- Did you see a **motif** in the dance?

- What was the **tone/mood** of the dance?

- Is this dance more literal or abstract?

- Look for the choreographic principles of spatial design and music choices

- Which do you think came first, the music, the choreography or the concept?

Parachute

Parachute is a powerful display of explosive movement, spatial design, and 'skirtography' of the brilliantly colored costumes made of lightweight parachute fabric. This *abstract* piece evokes feelings of whirling & floating, weightlessness & free fall.

Keys in Black & White

Keys in Black and White, reveals a pianist transforming into the keys of the instrument. It is an abstract, "Fantasia-like" story of how a pianist's movements and choices bring to life the energy, movement and timing of the piano keys. As the piece builds, the pianist becomes absorbed by the keys, exposing the energy from her soul through her music. The costumes assist with helping the audience enter the world of black and white reflection, pattern and texture.

Train Stop Shuffle

Train Stop Shuffle transports the audience to the 1960's age of aviation, where flight attendant uniforms were as sophisticated as their place in history. This piece exposes a dream-like sequence in the minds of the crew while waiting for the train to get to their next flight in the 'friendly skies'.

Power

Power is a jazz-inspired piece performed by three individuals who find power in numbers and strength through music and dance. The piece includes the addition of props - 3 chairs that the dancers lift, rearrange, and dance with throughout the dance, adding a dynamic visual element.

Tapestry: A Sonata in Three Movements

Tapestry: A Sonata in Three Movements is a journey that leads to a celebration of dance and life, emphasized by the stunning "wearable art" costumes by designer Jen Greeke. Audiences will experience three major shifts in energy and style of movement - from abstract and linear, to fluid and emotional, to full-bodied and celebratory. Conceptually, when an image is zoomed in and pixelated, it is grainy and unclear. Only as you step back further do you begin to see clarity and understand the bigger picture. We hope that audiences will reflect on this idea while being mesmerized by the costumes and extraordinary movement of the BoSoma dancers.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE:

Immediately following the performance BoSoma Dance Company Director & Dancers will be available to lead an interactive discussion with students. They will also be available for a Q&A to answer any questions students have regarding the performance or life as professional dancers.

TEACHER RESOURCES:

BoSoma Dance Company website: www.bosoma.org

BDC Vimeo Page (Videos to Reference): https://vimeo.com/bosoma

ABOUT BOSOMA DANCE COMPANY (BDC):

Established in 2003 by Irada Djelassi and Katherine Hooper, BoSoma Dance Company is a North Shore-based contemporary dance company combining vibrant, energetic movement with athletic performance quality. The company's mission is to make dance captivating and accessible through dynamic performance and community education.

Under the artistic direction of award-winning dancer, choreographer and educator Katherine Hooper, BoSoma is recognized for its daring contemporary programming encompassing both vibrant energetic movement with athletic performance quality. In 15 seasons, BoSoma has premiered over 30 original works by Hooper and performed commissions from outstanding organizations such as Chorus pro Musica of Boston, the Patricia Kenny Dance Collection of New York, the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, MA.

Recognized by the Boston Globe for their "vigorously athletic and artistically sculptural" performances and on WCVB-TV's Chronicle for their community outreach, BoSoma has stepped up its mission to harness the power of dance and physical movement to unlock a passion for greater learning in our schools. In partnership with New England Arts for Literacy Project, BoSoma has created K-12 programs that support core curricula learning, including a landmark program, "Mathematics and Science," designed to introduce children to how choreographers use numbers and music mathematically to create choreography and movement patterns. Science topics also integrate and teach the importance of knowing human anatomy and gravity, which allows dancers to be able to move through space. BDC is the resident professional dance company of BoSoma School of Dance.