

SOUL STEPS
March 6-7, 2017
10 AM & 12 PM





Dear Teachers,

Welcome to another exciting season for the Peace Outreach Program Youth Performance Series!

Every show presented for our 2016 - 2017 season is curriculum-based and designed to be both educational and entertaining. In order to get the most rewarding experience from the performance, it is important to prepare students for the show and reflect on what they learned following the performance. The resources and activities presented in this guide are designed to help you make the most of your visit to the Peace Center. As always, our goal is to help you create the most arts-enriching and educational experience for your students!

If you have any questions regarding your performance or the many educational opportunities available through the Peace Outreach Program, please feel free to contact Jennifer Parnell by email at jparnell@peacecenter.org or by phone at 864.679.9207.

We appreciate your dedication to bringing the very best of opportunities to your students through the arts!

We look forward to seeing you and your students at the Peace Center!

POP Youth Performance Series sponsored by:



ABOUT SOUL STEPS

Founded in 2005 by dancer, choreographer, and producer, Maxine Lyle, we are based in the New York City area and showcase the African-American dance tradition known as "stepping" (not to be confused with Irish step dance!). Our mission is to expand the presence of stepping throughout the world while creating avenues for cultural exchange and awareness among diverse communities. For over a century, step dancers have used their bodies as percussive instruments to create a new physical language that inspires, celebrates and forges community. Soul Steps brings this explosive art form to the stage in a high-energy performance that combines percussive movement, hip-hop rhythms, and call and response. Our performances, residencies, and educational programming are suitable for all ages.

We bring step everywhere! From school workshops in Brooklyn, to partnerships with U.S. Embassies throughout the world, to Paris Fashion Week, to a cameo in an indie rock band video, we embrace every opportunity to expose diverse communities to the magnetism and dynamic power of step. Our credits include a feature in the Diesel Jogg Jeans promotional video, "The A-Z of Dance;" the historical Rick Owens runway show during Paris Fashion Week 2013; 2012 Abok I Ngoma International Dance Festival (U.S. Embassy sponsored trip to Cameroon); Joyce SoHo, Every Little Step, a collaborative piece performed with Dance Theatre of Ireland (New York); Stepping in Remembrance, a U.S. Embassy commissioned September 11th commemorative piece, (Dublin); the Skena Up International Film and Theater Festival (U.S. Embassy sponsored trip to Kosovo), the New York Musical Theatre Festival (2007 and 2011), the Jacob's Pillow Inside/Out Series; and a nationally aired MTVU promotional video. Soul Steps was named the 2010 Association for the Promotion of Campus Activities Cultural Artist of the year and was described in the New York Times as giving a performance that "excels in cross rhythms" (November 23, 2011, Joyce SoHo).

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

The contents of this guide are for the purpose of preparing you and your students for your POP! performance. We ask that you share not only the Theatre Etiquette Guidelines with your students, but that you also integrate the following or similar activities into your classroom in anticipation of attending the show.

Theatre Etiquette Guidelines

Greetings future theater-goer!

It would seem a congratulations is in order! You are about to embark on a wondrous journey. Where are you heading? Well, that depends on the show. The theater is capable of teleporting audiences almost anywhere... However, it is a delicate device that only works if all audience members are on board...

Below is a list of things to keep in mind when you enter the theater, so the show can go off without a hitch!

1. Follow the Golden Rule and treat others how you would like to be treated once inside.

BUT WHY?

You're watching your favorite TV show. It's the series finale and you're about to find out why mild mannered Gordon Belksby has been acting so suspicious all season. That's when a couple in front of you starts to talk obnoxiously about their post-show plans, causing you to miss major plot points and taking you out of the story.

When you're seeing a show, keep in mind that everyone around you is seeing it too. Think of how you like to be treated when watching something you love and give your fellow audience members (and the artists) that same respect.

2. Bottled water is okay, but please dispose of any food, drinks or chewing gum before you enter.

BUT WHY?

Picture this, machete in hand, you trudge through the tangled foliage of an exotic jungle towards an ancient, golden relic. As you approach the statuette, the ground begins to shake violently. Is it an earthquake? Did you trigger some sort of trap? Without thought, you reach your hand out to stabilize yourself and... SPLAT. It lands in old chewing gum that someone left on the arm of your chair.

Keeping food out of the theater ensures seats stay clean and audience members can pay attention to what matters. The show.

3. Turn off cellphones, cameras or any other noisy or bright devices before the show starts.

BUT WHY?

Because more often than not, technology can ruin a performance. It's distracting to the artists, those around you, and it doesn't belong in most shows. If Romeo had been able to text Juliet, things wouldn't have ended so unfortunately. Which would have been unfortunate.

ACTIVITY 1 | CLAP YOUR NAME

Soul Steps uses their bodies to create music while they are dancing. Have your students practice creating music with their bodies.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS | Dance, Music

TIME | 25 minutes

YOU WILL NEED

- Open space
1. Warm your class up by clapping patterns and having them repeat. Start with short patterns and then make them longer.
 2. Explain to your students that consonants are claps and vowels are slaps on their thighs. Give an example by using your name. Now ask students to practice with their own names. Give them a minute to try it out. Have your students try to not insert pauses in the middle of their names.
 - a. For a student with a “Y” in their name, let your student decide if it is a consonant or vowel.
 3. Now that your students have practiced with their names, have them try to play their name three times in a row without pausing at the end of their name. (For example, M-a-r-i-a-M-a-r-i-a-M-a-r-i-a.) Have your students try to put an accent on the capital letter in their name. Try not to pound, it is easier to create an accent when the other letters are played softer.
 4. Have your students get into pairs and practice playing their names together at the same time. (For example, Maria will be playing her name while Will is playing his name.) Make sure the students are going at the same speed and are listening to others, but are not relying on each other.
 5. Bring your students together and have them perform their names together in their pairs. It is alright if students struggle to perform this correctly on the first try. Once groups have performed ask them about what they noticed when they were performing together. Did they notice anything about the rhythms that were being created between the two partners? What role did the accent play? Do your students see how they were using their bodies as an instrument?

EXTENSION

Have your students create a dance using their clapped names. Each student comes up with a personal movement. Have your students return to their pairs and teach the other member their personal movement. Have your students decide which movement will be the consonant and vowel in their group. Once your students have decided on their movements have them practicing dancing their names. For example, a step can be a consonant and a kick can be a vowel, so Maria would be, “step-kick-step-kick-kick.” Allow your students to be creative in their movements, but make sure the movements are manageable for both members of the groups. Have your students perform their dances for the class.

ACTIVITY 2 | GUMBOOT DANCING

Step dancing was born out of gumboot dancing which was developed in South African during the late 1800’s as a form of communication among mine workers.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS | Dance, History

TIME | 30 minutes

YOU WILL NEED

- Space for dancing
 - Shoes with thick rubber soles (like rain boots) (optional)
1. Share with your students the rich history of gumboot dancing.
 - a. Gumboot dancing was developed in South Africa in the late 1800’s as a form of communication within the mines. They were not allowed to verbally speak in the mines

and so they had to develop another form of communication, thus gumboot dancing was born. Gumboots look like rain boots. They have thick rubber soles meant to protect the feet of mine workers. For dancing, the soles of these boots are hit on the ground or on walls to create different sounds.

2. Divide your students into groups of three or four. Have each group begin by stomping out a specific rhythm, then have the groups begin to move back and forth in the space of your classroom. Finally, have them add claps and see if they can go faster.
3. Now that your students understand the basics of gumboot dancing, have them work in their groups to come up with their own choreography to share with the rest of the class.

ACTIVITY 3 | RHYTHMS EVERYWHERE

Rhythm is the driving force behind African dance; Soul Steps seamlessly incorporates the traditions of African drumming with the traditions of dance. In this activity, work with your students to discover the ubiquitous nature of rhythm in our everyday lives!

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS | Music, Multi-Cultural Studies

TIME | 45 minutes

YOU WILL NEED

- Computer with Internet access and ability to play sound
- Student paper and writing implements

1. To begin the discussion, play the following video with audio only for the class to hear: [Ghana Postal Workers](#). Do not indicate to the class what the recording represents. Allow students to offer suggestions as to what they believe they are hearing in the recording.
2. Inform students that the recording is a field recording that was made by James Koetting in 1975. The music was created by postal workers canceling stamps in the University of Ghana post office in Ghana. Discuss how this type of music represents sounds of everyday life for Ghanaians.

RECORDING BACKGROUND INFORMATION The whistled part is from the hymn "Bompata." This type of music is created daily as a normal part of life for Africans in Ghana. This recording was never intended for performance. In fact, those participating likely did not consider their creation as music. They created it for themselves as a work song to help pass the time and control the mood of the workplace.

3. Guide a class conversation about various ways in which students hear rhythms on a daily basis in their own lives, either in a music-related setting or not (a marching band at a football game, a jackhammer at a construction site, etc.). As needed, incorporate the following music terms into your class discussion:
 - Beat: the basic pulse in music, like what you might tap your foot to
 - Meter: a division of a measure into beats
 - Rhythm: Rhythm is the result of a pattern of sounds that follows a steady beat
 - Tempo: the speed or pace of a piece of music
4. Have students make a list of at least 5 places where a steady beat or a rhythm can be heard as they go throughout their day. These can be beats/rhythms that they hear around them or some that they know of from other experiences. Here are some examples to think about:
 - The ticking of a clock
 - The pattern of a turn signal blinking on a car
 - The beating of a human heart

- A song on the radio
- The sound a printer makes when printing a page

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

After the performance at the Peace Center, students feel a new level of excitement and are open to greater response to the content of the show. It is after viewing the performance that some of the greatest opportunities for learning can take place! Take advantage of this enthusiasm and receptiveness to learning by incorporating reflection on the performance through some of the following activities back in the classroom.

ACTIVITY 1 | BE THE CRITIC

Give your students the opportunity to respond to this production!

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS | Dance, Language Arts

TIME | 20 minutes

YOU WILL NEED

- Student paper and writing implements
1. Have your students give the performance a rating of 1 to 5 stars. Then ask your students to write a paragraph in which they write their review of the performance and provide specific examples that support their star rating.
 2. On a separate sheet of paper, have students respond to some or all of the following questions. You may wish to discuss the questions as a class in lieu of a written assignment.
 - What happened in the show?
 - What was their favorite moment? Least favorite moment?
 - What was different from what they expected?
 - Would they recommend this performance to a friend? Why or why not?
 - Do you have a new appreciating for step dancing?

ACTIVITY 2 | MARKETING SOUL STEPS

Now that you have seen Soul Steps, your students will get to design their own advertisement for the group.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS | Dance, Visual Arts, Advertising, Language Arts

TIME | 30 minutes

YOU WILL NEED

- Paper (white and different colors)
 - Colored pencils/markers/crayons
 - Post-its
1. Have your students think about advertisements. What makes a good advertisement? Create a brainstorm chart with all of the elements that make a good advertisement.
 2. Have your students create a social media advertisement for Soul Steps (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook). Make sure your students design a picture as well as a caption to go with the picture.
 3. Give your students time to design their advertisement and then let them hang-up their advertisements around the room. Let other students make comments (like on social media) on

Post-its about the advertisement. Remind your students that the comments need to be constructive and cannot be mean.

EXTENSION

Have your students develop their advertisements digitally and have them post them on student blogs. Students can then add comments directly on the blogs.

NOTE: None of these advertisements should be posted on social media. This is an activity just for school.

ACTIVITY 3 | POETRY OF ORIGIN

Like the miners of South African, your students have a story. Have your students create a praise poem about their origin to tell their story.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS | Creative Writing

TIME | 60+ minutes (can be done over multiple days)

YOU WILL NEED

- Student notebooks or paper

1. In Africa, Praise Poetry has served as a form of oral documentation. Professional poets carry and recall the narratives detailing the history of the people, the great leaders, and their outstanding achievement. Your students will be creating their own praise poems as a way of documenting their personal history.
2. Share with your students an example of a praise poem (on next page). Tell them their poem does not have to be like this poem, but it is a good jumping off point for them to begin to think about what praise poems are.
3. Each praise poem has six parts, write each part on a whiteboard so that students can refer back to them:
 - a. Heritage – family background
 - b. Height in inches or metaphorically related to it
 - c. Color – refer to actual skin color and/or color of your personality
 - d. Animal – compare yourself to an animal(s)
 - e. Nature – compare yourself to something in nature for example: a Redwood tree or a river
 - f. How you walk in the world (literally and metaphorically)
4. Begin to brainstorm about words that can be used in the praise poems. Write these words on a whiteboard so that students can refer back to them as they write their poem. Ask your students questions such as:
 - a. What are different ways to denote skin tone without saying the colors black, white, or brown?
 - b. What are some landmarks of the state in which you live?
 - c. What is the country from which your ancestors came? Name landmarks of that country. You might consider brainstorming about each student's ancestry.
5. The answers to these questions should be written on a board or a piece of paper so that students can use these words or short phrases in their poems. Let students be as specific and creative as they want to be.

6. Encourage students to respond to the prompts (step 3) freely, not necessarily in the order they are listed in step 3. They can start the poem with “I Am...,” then free-write, coming back to check to see if they have all of the 6 items.
7. Have your students share their poems with the class and receive constructive comments about how to make their poems better.

I am strong like a Mockingbird
Singing my sweet songs,
Big like a player that blocks off the other team,
And kicking in the goal
My height is 4’9” but my family is
The highest in the sky
My ancestors come from a place where
Big Ben calls the first hour of the day
The place across the vast ocean
Where the Beetle was made
Where the Dreidle spins round and round
And where the bagpipes
Play loud and louder.
This is where the four-leaf clover
Comes in big, green lines.
This is me inside and out.

Logan Emmons
Grade 4

I am a Palomino Horse
galloping through the beautiful foothills
from which I come.
I am tall and graceful,
racing through the
emerald fields of life.
I am a creamy white
blur through the
day thundering with
the diamond river beside me.
I grow with the Sapphire flowers
of the day.

Carissa J
Age 8



PEACE OUTREACH

A PEACE CENTER PROGRAM

Interested in more enriching educational programming for your students? Be sure to explore the many initiatives of the Peace Outreach Program, from master classes to workshops and more, at peacecenter.org!