

Study Guide For Teachers

DANCE CHINA NEW YORK

In

China Patterns

presented by
Young Audiences

(866) 500-9265

www.yanj.org

www.yaep.org



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

China Patterns weaves together language lessons, historical details, onstage demonstrations, and audience interaction. Through dance narration, the program involves students and teachers in identifying traits, customs, and patterns of life that are illustrated in Chinese dances and songs. Hands-on audience participation segments include all ages and demonstrates that the dances, though Chinese in origin, can be universal.

Audience Limit: 250
Intended for grades K-12

LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

- Be introduced to the culture and dance heritage of China
- Appreciate the skill and technique involved in the creation of traditional Chinese dance
- Gain a greater appreciation for diverse historical traditions

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Dance China New York takes audiences on a tour of the culture, customs and dance heritage of the People's Republic of China. The diversity of dance selections, authentic costumes, music, props, and background information makes this an excellent introduction to Chinese culture.

Students will witness sword/water sleeve dances that demonstrate the contrast between strength and softness; joyful folk dances; theatrical dances deeply rooted in Chinese drama, folklore, martial arts, and philosophy; delicate classical court dances; and the *Red Ribbon Dance* — a regular feature of holidays and celebrations across China.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

1. Have students do a bit of research in small groups on the People's Republic of China before the performance is to take place. Then, groups can teach each other about what they learned. Some topics to explore include: geography, history, population, culture and lifestyle, as well as government. Students may want to focus on how these characteristics compare with those of the United States, then share the research information.

2. As a class, discuss how information and traditions are exchanged and passed on within a family or culture. Ask students to share stories, songs or special traditions particular to their own families and culture. Explore how important these traditions are for students. Some possible questions to explore include: Does it matter if students are recent immigrants, or if their families have been in the United States for a long time? Why might this be the case?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

1. Review and discuss each of the dances seen during the performance in terms of origin and style and how each dance differed from each other. Also consider the area in which each dance originated. Discuss how people of all cultures express creativity in different ways and incorporate objects common to their own culture.

2. In China, the color red is a symbol of celebration and good luck. What do specific colors symbolize in our culture? Consider the following:

- Red, white, and blue for patriotism
- Red roses, white roses
- To call someone "yellow"
- To be "green" with envy
- To say someone has a "black" heart
- Wearing white for a wedding, or black for a funeral

Where did these color symbols come from? Are they still relevant to students today?

3. Have students create dance props inspired by the ones they saw in the China Patterns performance. Make ribbons so that your students can do a "ribbon dance." For each ribbon, you'll need: 3 yards of thin rayon fabric/lining material in a 45" width. Cut it into 3 strips, each 15 inches wide by 36 inches long. These are your ribbons. Get inexpensive wooden dowels about 5/8 of an inch in diameter from a hardware store. Have them cut to 15 inches. Get about 2 feet of duct tape also.

How to: Gather ribbons at one end of the dowel. With a small piece of tape secure the material on the tip of the dowel. Wrap the rest of the dowel with the remaining tape. To prevent fraying of the material, put a seam at the end of the ribbon either by hand, with tape, or by machine.

VOCABULARY WORDS

CUSTOM: A usual way of doing something.

CULTURE: The customs, the methods of self-expression, and the beliefs of a group. Generally used to describe a large group of people, but every group has its own kind of culture, including families and friends.

DYNASTY: A family that rules a country or empire, with one generation receiving the responsibility of ruling from another.

ARTIST INFORMATION

Dance China NY (DCNY), resident dance company of the New York Chinese Cultural Center, is comprised of award-winning professional dancers from performance stages and academies throughout China and the United States. The company brings the richness of traditional folk dance, Peking Opera and acrobatics to audiences through its education-based assembly programs. Noted for their powerful grace and contained elegance, DCNY performs regularly for audiences of all ages and has toured to hundreds of cities across 26 states. Each year, DCNY presents live performances and workshops to over 150,000 people, bringing the movements and rhythms of China to communities large and small.

RESOURCES

Grades K-3

So, Sungwan. C is for China. Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2004.

Young, Ed. Monkey King. Harper Collins, 2001.

Grades 3 and up

Carpenter, Frances. Tales of a Chinese Grandmother: 30 Traditional Tales from China. Tuttle Publishing, 2001.

Cotteral, Arthur. Ancient China. Dorling Kindersly, 2001.

Sebag-Montefiore, Hugh. China. DK Children, 2007.

Simonds, Nina and Swartz, Leslie. Moonbeams, Dumplings and Dragon Boats: A Treasury of Chinese Holiday Tales, Activities, and Recipes. Harcourt Children's Books, 2002.

Suggested Web Resources

Asia Society Kids: <http://kids.asiasociety.org/>

The British Museum, Ancient China:

<http://www.ancientchina.co.uk/menu.html>

China Institute: <http://www.chinainstitute.org/>

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Chinese Art on the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History:

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hi/te_index.asp?i=9

Museum of Chinese in America:

<http://www.mocanyc.org/>