HEC-TV Live! Presents
Inside the Artist's Studio: The Little Dancer

Original Air Date: March 15, 2011
Grade Level: Morning Program grades 3-8, Afternoon program grades 6-12

Abstract:
Enter the fabulous world of dance as you meet choreographers and dancers responsible for Ballet Eclectica’s “The Little Dancer.” See performances from the original production that enacts the tale of Degas’ famous statuette as she comes to life and finds herself in various scenes depicted in famous works of American art.

Program Description:
Join us from the theater at the Center of Creative Arts (COCA) in St. Louis for excerpts performed from Ballet Eclectica’s “The Little Dancer.” This original story ballet features an artist who would like to fulfill the dream of Degas’ model for The Little Dancer, aged fourteen. The actual model, Marie, was never able to reach her dream to become a famous ballerina and perform all over the world. The artist in our story gives Marie the chance to accomplish her goal by painting her as a dancer into other art masterpieces from America – letting her “dance within” these works of art. The ensemble dancers are arranged by the Painter into a single unified work of art- bringing together harmoniously the forms of dance, art, and music.

When your students see the ballet dancers perform, it will be easy for them to respond to the ballet moves—the particular movements and contortions, the music, the art the dancers portray, and other elements of the show. Questions asking how a particular dance story was done are absolutely worth exploring, as are discussions about the relationship of one dance story to the next, or the music to the art, or so on. This is also a great opportunity to teach art appreciation with the works featured in this performance.

Have your students experience the thrill of live dance performance in many styles including traditional ballet as well as modern and contemporary dance. Let them see American works of art come to life through dance. Learn from the dancers and choreographers. Find out what it’s like to be a student of dance.

PLEASE NOTE: The morning program is targeted to students in grades 3-8 while the afternoon program is targeted to students in grades 6-12. The morning program is designed to give students an appreciation for dance and the artistic works displayed, to see the thrill of dance and the integration of the arts, to pique their curiosity about dance, and learn more about the satisfaction of reaching a goal through the hard work that goes into such a performance. The afternoon program will continue the above ideas and also give students an opportunity to explore the type of dance utilized in the program and the concept of choreography. We’ll also explore the concept of “story” to see how it is created through art, music and dance.
About the Dance Company

Ballet Eclectica, is one of two companies that train and rehearse at COCA. Founded in August 2005, its mission is to augment the educational opportunities and expand training to include public performances for ballet students at COCA. More information about COCA and Ballet Eclectica can be found at [http://www.cocastl.org/](http://www.cocastl.org/).

Program Objectives:
1. The participant will explore the nature of dance and what it means to be a dancer and/or choreographer.
2. The participant will engage in a discussion about what it means to be an “ensemble” and how to best create a successful ensemble when performing in dance.
3. The participant will interact with students of dance and professional choreographers, see performances of dance, and engage in critical evaluation of the pieces and performances.
4. The participant will explore the concept of story and how a story is told through the integration of dance, art, and music.
5. The participant will gain an enhanced appreciation for dance and art.

Pre-Viewing Activity Suggestions:

For the morning program of students grades 3-8:
1. Some of the dances seen during the performance will include elements of ballet, tango, as well as contemporary dance. Share short video excerpts of each of these three types of dance and have students share what they thought about each kind of dance. What did they like? What did they dislike? What emotions were displayed through the different dances? How did the movement differ in each of the dances? Which kind of dance would they find most fun to do? Etc.

2. Have students view an image of Degas’ statuette, “Little Dancer of Fourteen Years.” What do they think about it as a piece of sculpture? What do they like or not like about it? What do they think the little girl might have been like who posed for it?

For the afternoon program of students grades 6-12:
1. Consider utilizing elements from any of the pre-program activities listed for younger students and modifying them to fit the knowledge, skill and intellectual level of your students.

2. Have students look at some of the works of art that are part of the performance of “The Little Dancer.” Examples include Jackson Pollock’s *Number 3 (1948)*, Martin Johnson Heade’s *Magnolia (1885-1895)*, Brice Marden’s *Uxmal*, Chihuly’s *Wine Chandelier*, and Josef Albers *Homage to the Square: Wandering*. What is student reaction to each of these paintings? What do they like or dislike about each? How would they go about choreographing a dance work to bring out the ideas, emotions, and colors of the piece? What style of dance would they use? What type of music would accompany the dance? What kind of story does the art inspire that they would like to tell through
dance? Have students bring their answers to these questions with them to the program to help them compare their ideas to what they see performed.

Program Format:
As noted earlier, the morning program is targeted to students in grades 3-8 while the afternoon program is targeted to students in grades 6-12. The morning program is designed to give students an appreciation for dance and the artistic works displayed, to see the thrill of dance and the integration of the arts, to pique their curiosity about dance, and learn more about the satisfaction of reaching a goal through the hard work that goes into such a performance. The afternoon program continues the above ideas and also give students an opportunity to explore the type of dance utilized in the program and the concept of choreography. We also explore the concept of “story” to see how it is created through art, music and dance. The pace of the program, inclusion of student questions, and level of discussion is targeted to the grade levels of each program. In both the morning and afternoon programs, the following elements will be included:

1. Welcome and Introduction—Welcome student groups, introduce guests and give background information on the story behind “The Little Dancer.” Students are asked for their reaction to Degas’ statuette.

2. Dance, Discussion and Questions—The program will then proceed through both live performances of excerpts from “The Little Dancer” as well as excerpts taped from a performance at the theater in December. Those segments are:
   - Waltz (pre-taped excerpt)
   - Magnolia Piece (live performance during the program)
   - Yellow and Green Squares (pre-taped excerpt)
   - The Tango (live performance during the program)
   - Stomp (live performance during the program)
   - Chihuly (pre-taped excerpt)

Students have the opportunity to share their thoughts about what they saw in each performance and ask questions of the dancers and choreographers.

3. Closing Segment--Including summary of topics discussed and final questions from students.

Post-Viewing Activity Suggestions:

For the morning program of students grades 3-8:
1. Have students compare their previous understanding of and views on dance to what they think now as a result of participating in the program. What surprised them the most? What reinforced what they already believed? What new insights did they gain into the world of dance? Have students share their thoughts in class discussion, journal entries, or written reports.
2. If you did not have an opportunity to do all of the pre-program activities with students, consider having individual students or the entire class do some of them now.

3. Have students discuss what they noticed about the stories told through dance. Did they think the dance and music and painting for each story went together well? Why or why not? What kind of work do they think was necessary to put such a performance together? What kind of effort did it take? What kind of teamwork would be necessary to create a successful performance?

**For the afternoon program of students grades 6-12:**
1. Have students compare their previous understanding of and views on dance to what they think now as a result of participating in the program. What surprised them the most? What reinforced what they already believed? What new insights did they gain into the world of dance? Have students share their thoughts in class discussion, journal entries, or written reports.

2. If you did not have an opportunity to do all of the pre-program activities with students, consider having individual students or the entire class do some of them now.

**Featured National Standards:**

**National Dance Standards**
1. Content Standard: Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance
2. Content Standard: Understanding the choreographic principles, processes, and structures
3. Content Standard: Understanding dance as a way to create and communicate meaning
4. Content Standard: Applying and demonstrating critical and creative thinking skills in dance
7. Content Standard: Making connections between dance and other disciplines

**National Visual Arts Standards**
4. Understanding visual arts in relation to history and culture
6. Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

**Featured State Standards (Missouri):**
Schools from across the country are invited to join in the program. Missouri state standards are provided for Missouri schools since partial funding for this program comes from Missouri organizations. Partial funding for this program comes from Missouri Arts Council.

**Communication Arts 5.** Comprehending and evaluating the content and artistic aspects of oral and visual presentations (such as story-telling, debates, lectures, multimedia productions)

**Communication Arts 6.** Participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas
Social Studies 6. Knowledge of the relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions

Fine Arts 1. Knowledge of processes and techniques for the production, exhibition or performance of one or more of the visual or performed arts

Fine Arts 3. Knowledge of the vocabulary to explain perceptions about and evaluations of works in dance, music, theater and visual arts

Fine Arts 4. Knowledge of interrelationships of visual and performing arts and the relationships of the arts to other disciplines

Fine Arts 5. Knowledge of the visual and performing arts in historical context

Supplemental Resources:
For further research on ballet and visual arts for students and teachers:

Books
- The Little Ballerina: H. L. Ross
- Degas and the Little Dancer: Laurence Anholt
- Usborne Children’s Book of Art: Rosie Dickens

Internet
- http://www.impressionism.org/ - web site on major works of Impressionism. Great for grades 1-8!
- http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/arts/artarch.html - Includes sample lesson plans on art history, along with resources.
- http://www.alifetimeofcolor.com/ - age-appropriate site that teaches art and art history to children.