AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO’S LANDMARK STAGE EST. 1889
THE THEATRE FOR THE PEOPLE

2017-18 SEASON
CLASSROOM COMPANION

Ensemble Español
Alvin Alley

Too Hot to Handel
We are so excited to welcome you and your students to our National Historic Landmark theatre in downtown Chicago for a memorable performance experience. Before you walk through our doors, we invite you to use this Classroom Companion to prepare for the show.

In the pages that follow, you will find ways to encourage and guide your students as they ENGAGE with the performance, activities that CONNECT the performance to the learning happening in your classroom, and ways to inspire students to CREATE their own unique art!

We hope that this experience does not stop after the performance, but that it actively inspires your students to immerse themselves in artistic culture and to extend themselves for the greater good.
**WHAT IS DANCE?**

Dance (n): To move one’s body rhythmically, usually to music; Creative expression of an idea or of oneself through movement sequences; An art form involving body, mind, and spirit.

### Body: A dancer’s instrument
- **Movement Quality**: How our instrument uniquely moves
- **Health/Nutrition**: Taking care of our instrument

### Lived Experience
- **How the events you’ve experienced have shaped you as a person**

### Personality
- **How your unique energy shows through movement**

### Spirit: A dancer’s inspiration
- **Storytelling**: What are you working to achieve through your movement?
- **Critique**: How do you watch and respond to dance performance?
- **Choreographic Process**: How do you use your inspiration and instrument to create dance?

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**As you watch the performance, try to...**

**CAPTURE**
The journey that dance takes you on can be different for each person. Everyone responds to and interprets the movement that they see on stage differently. Have your students pay attention to how they are feeling throughout the performance, and use their responses as an opportunity to ask the student questions about these feelings. Have the students pay attention to the physical effort and strength that the dancers are using during the performance. Identify what muscles are being used and what movement sequences are happening. Ask them questions about the movements that stood out to them and why. Did they prefer it when the dancers moved slowly or quickly? When did it seem like the dancers had to exert the most energy?

**CONNECT**
Ask students to consider the following: While you are watching the show, think about whether any of the songs or movements connect to anything in your lived experience. Maybe the dancers are using a very aggressive movement and you are reading a book with a character that is very aggressive. How does the way the character expresses their aggressive nature different the way the dancer demonstrates their aggressive nature? How does the music or soundscape make you feel? Is this sad music? Cheerful?

Ask the students if the movement or music reminded them of something else they have seen or heard before. What emotions did the music bring out in them? Try to encourage the students to connect their cultures and their emotions happening in the show to their own.
Exploring the Company

Alvin Ailey had a strong desire to create new and expressive modern dance works based on African American culture and heritage. This stemmed from growing up in Texas, where he was raised by his mom, and attending African American church services. With these ideas in mind, he started Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1958. Ailey’s training and work was inspired by three major modern choreographers and dancers of the time: Lester Horton, Katherine Dunham, and Martha Graham. As word spread about the diversity of choreography and athleticism of Ailey’s dancers, a broad range of people came to enjoy their performances. Today, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is known as “America’s Cultural Ambassador to the world,” and the company travels the globe sharing their uniquely American style and stories.

A brief history of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

1958
Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is created.

1960
Alvin Ailey choreographs Relevations.

1967
Ailey goes on 10 country tour of Africa for the State Department that is in a televised dance special.

1962
They are chosen to go on tour to the Far East, Southeast Asia under President John F. Kennedy’s “President’s Special International Program for Cultural Presentations”.

1969
Ailey establishes a school and Auditorium Theatre becomes Ailey’s Chicago home.

1982
Alvin Ailey receives the United Nations Peace Medal.

1989
Alvin Ailey dies and Judith Jamison becomes Artistic Director.

1992
The company is called “recession-proof” because of its strong financial status and sold out performances.

1996
The company performs at the Atlanta Olympics.

2005
The National Black Sports and Entertainment Hall of Fame inducts Alvin Ailey.

2010
The Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History adds one of Judith Jamison’s costumes to the permanent collection.

2011
Robert Battle becomes artistic director.
Revelations

One of the Ailey company’s most well known pieces is Revelations, which was choreographed by Ailey himself in 1960 using spirituals, gospel songs, and blues to explore African American cultural heritage. Ailey gathered the ideas for this piece from the “blood memories” of his childhood in a Texas Baptist Church.

Since its premiere in 1960, the piece has transcended barriers of faith and nationality, and is frequently performed around the globe. It is becoming the most widely-seen modern dance work in the world.

The Story Behind the Music
When looking at a choreographer’s choice of music, you can see that it has a strong impact on the message that is communicated to the audience. For Revelations, Ailey chose a variety of spirituals to transport the audience to another place and time, but what exactly are spirituals?

Spiritual songs
Folk songs describing personal religious experiences. Spirituals grew from the chants, rhythms, and harmonies of African tribes, members of which were brought to the United States as slaves. American slaves combined this traditional musicality with themes from Christianity to create what we now know as spirituals.

Two kinds of spirituals
- Sorrow songs — Sung slowly and sadly, these songs tell of the heavy burden of slavery and the belief that better days will be coming.
- Jubilees — These upbeat, faster songs are based on Bible stories celebrating victory and joy.

Inside Look

One of the popular songs used in Revelations is called “Wade in the Water.” It was claimed that this song gave instructions to fugitive slaves on how to avoid capture and make their way to freedom. You can learn more about the history of this song, and other “secrets, signs, and symbols” of the Underground Railroad at http://pathways.thinkport.org/secrets/music2.cfm.

Discussion Opportunity!

Ask your students questions such as:
- What songs make you sad?
- What songs make you happy?
- What songs have lyrics that impact you?

Compare students’ answers, pointing out commonalities or differences. Can we find connections between the songs that make each of us happy, or is it unique to each individual? Can the students point to specific aspects of their selected songs that bring them joy or make them feel sorrow, or is it just the overarching feeling that the song elicits?

Body, Mind, SPIRIT!

The spirit part of dancing really comes into play when you are portraying a message, like the ones Alvin Ailey included in Revelations, through the music and the message. This not only affects the spirit of the dancers but the spirit of the audience as well.
When discussing the definition of dance, we discussed body, mind, and spirit. All of these are crucial to any athlete, artist, and even to a teacher or a student! Having a conversation with your students about these aspects can really impact the way they look at dance and the way they look at their own life.

**Body**

**Nutrition**
For athletes and dancers alike, food is **FUEL**. Thinking about food as fuel for your body can help you make more health-conscious decisions when choosing what you fuel it with! Dancers need to fuel their body with enough calories to make it through a full day of rehearsal, which can range from 5-10 hours a day (depending on how close they are to a show) plus a full two-hour performance. It is recommended that dancers balance their intake of carbs, proteins, fats, and adequate fluids throughout the day. **HYDRATION** is also key when you are doing that much activity. Ask students what they normally eat when they bring lunch. What do they get served in the cafeteria? What is one portion of the food pyramid they aren’t getting enough of? Do they feel fueled?

**Training/Exercise**
Getting an adequate amount of exercise is important for athletes, dancers, and, of course, YOU! Dancers spend hours in rehearsal building the muscle memory and strength they need in order to execute dance movements. Dancers are also required to execute a lot of cross-training, including cardio, strength, flexibility, and injury prevention. It’s important for dancers to continue to work on their bodies and protect it from injury because it is their instrument. What kind of things do your students do to stay active? Do they play any sports? If so, what kind of training is required to stay physically safe for their sport? What are their favorite activities in their Physical Education classes?

**Sleep**
After a long day of rehearsal or following a performance, a dancer’s body needs to refuel and recuperate. Your body needs the same thing after a long day of school! Most Ailey dancers aim for 7-8 hours. How much sleep do your students get the night before school? How much do they think they should be getting?

**Mind/Spirit**

**Mindfulness/Emotional Health**
Every performance a dancer does can take a lot out of them not just physically, but mentally. A dancer is putting all of their emotion and soul into a performance. The dancers need to make sure that they are preparing their bodies for this experience, as well as taking care of themselves first and foremost. Many dancers will use something such as yoga, meditation, journaling, or spending time with friends and family. Ask your students how they make sure they are staying happy and keeping a good spirit. Is it through drawing and coloring? Or through hanging out with friends?

**Discussion Opportunity!**

Which of these areas do you think you succeed at the most?

Which area could you improve?

Make a place for improvement and put it into action today so you’re coming to school fully prepared in body, mind, and spirit!
Follow the five Ps:

PREPARE, PRESENT, PERCEIVE, PROVIDE, PRODUCE

Prepare
As a teacher, take a moment to watch a clip of the Ailey company (many are available on YouTube) or study pictures of Ailey dancers. Take notice of what your first reactions are, because your students’ reactions may be similar. Think about whether it reminds you of something else or something you are teaching in your current curriculum.

Present
Prepare the students to see the show by giving them a few pieces of background knowledge. Explain what kind of performance they are going to see and present the company and its background. Ask your students if they have any background knowledge of the company or the piece itself.

Perceive
After the students have seen the performance, ask questions to kick off conversations. Be careful not to ask them leading questions or add your own personal opinion into it. Ask questions like:

• What did you notice about the performance?
• What stood out to you the most?
• What did you SEE on stage or HEAR?
• What did the performance make you think of?
• What was your initial emotion during and after the piece?
• What message do you think the choreographer was trying to get across?

Provide Connections
Help your students draw connections from their initial reactions to other parts of their lives. Ask questions like:

• Did you see/hear anything that reminds you of something you’ve seen/heard in the past?
• Did anything in the performance connect to your own experience?
• What was left unclear about the performance?
• What questions do you have about the performance?
• What questions do you have about the dancers and the company?

Produce
Now that your students have made connections, help them turn these connections into something creative! Give the students a chance to create their own art out of the connections they made.

Examples:

• K-2: Have students pick five colors that they identify with the performance. Have them draw a picture with these colors. Discuss themes they noticed in the performance, and see if you can find modern songs that connect with these themes. If you’re up for a challenge, ask students to work together to come up with a “frozen body picture” that reflects each theme. Link these frozen images together into a “dance.” Freeze in the image for eight counts, dance around the room for eight counts, then freeze in the next image!
• 3-6: Have students create haikus about a connection they made. Then challenge them to work in a small group to create a dance to show their Haiku through movement. Students can choose their own song to accompany the piece.
• 7-12: Give students a chance to use a form of technology to express a connection they made. Ask them to take five minutes to journal a reflection of the performance. What stood out? What did they love and what did they not like? Ask them to circle three words in their reflection and create a meme or a short music video that illustrates their experience.
As discussed earlier in the guide, some of Alvin Ailey’s most known pieces are set to spirituals and songs that create emotion. It’s important for students in this age group to be able to realize what kinds of emotions they are having and why they are having them. This activity is based around helping children with this while utilizing dance and music.

**Preparation**
To begin the activity, pick 10-15 children’s songs that all express different emotions. Maybe think about choosing a song from a popular film that the kids would know. Make sure to choose songs with a range of emotions and themes like happy, sad, angry, disappointed, excited, friendship, family, etc.

**With your students**
Start by making room in the classroom for moving around. Make sure to establish boundaries for the dance space. Tell the students you are going to play a song and you want them to move however the song makes them feel. If it makes them feel happy, they should dance like they are happy! When you are ready for them to stop dancing, stop the music and ask students to freeze in an image that reflects how the song made them feel. Observe, out loud, the images that they freeze in. Do you notice low or high levels? What are the facial expressions you see? Then move on to the next song!

Pose questions to the students as they are moving to help encourage them. What could the movement look like down low? What if the only used their arms? What different speeds could you do that movement at? Continue this with all the songs you have picked out for them, going through several different emotions.
When watching dance, there are many shapes that students will notice on stage. There are obvious shapes in the scenery on stage, but the bodies of the dancers also make shapes, and there are even shapes that can be found in the empty space around their bodies! In this activity, your students will be focusing on space. How do they want to use it? What kind of shapes do they want to make?

1. To introduce this activity, you can make a slideshow or print out pictures of different shapes. Shapes with hard angles, shapes that are more flowy, bigger shapes, smaller shapes. Project one of these on the screen and have the students move around the room the way the shape motivates them to. While this is happening, you can give cues and feedback to help your students make the most out of this activity, such as...

2. Does the shape have straight lines or curved? How can your movement show this?

3. How big is the shape?

4. What kind of emotions does this shape make you think of? Can you add these to your movement?

5. After this activity, have the students pick one of those shapes, or another shape that maybe you didn’t show that they thought of on their own. Once they have chosen a shape, have them create five poses that remind them of this shape. Have them continue to make the poses so that they memorize them. If it helps them, have the students write them down to better remember them.

6. Now ask students to create a movement after each frozen pose that moves from one part of the room to another. These movements should still remind them of the shape and will connect their poses into a dance! Have the students memorize these.

7. Time to perform! Put on some music and ask students to share their movement creations.
Often in concert dance, you don’t see music with a lot of lyrics. This is so the audience can receive the message through the dancing and not be distracted by a vocalist. With Alvin Ailey’s *Revelations*, the accompanying spirituals DO have lyrics because of the impact those words had on the overall story.

1. Ask your students to read the lyrics of two of the songs that are in *Revelations*, “Wade in the Water” and “Sinner Man.”

2. What do they think these songs mean? How do they connect to what was happening to African American people at the time? How did the movement they saw Alvin Ailey perform compare to this? What emotions do you think the person writing and/or singing this song had?

3. Have students choose a song that means something to them. Have them write a paragraph about why this song means something to them. Have them identify a few lyrics that impact them. Ask what was happening in their life when they first heard this song? Assure the students that no one else will see this information and it is just for their own journaling.

4. Now have the students create a movement phrase with movements that match the emotions they feel when listening to this song or reading the lyrics. Provide the following guidelines:
   - Select a certain verse or chorus from the song to accompany your movements.
   - Create at least 10 movement phrases that last eight counts each. This means to count out loud (or in your head) to eight as you dance, creating one phrase. Movement phrases can travel across the whole room or stay in place. Sometimes, movement phrases are powerfully still, with only the movement of a finger or head, and sometimes they use the full body.
   - Create a clear beginning and end. How do they want the emotions to change throughout the dance? How does the audience know you’ve started dancing and how will they know you’ve ended?
   - Consider what emotion they want the audience to be feeling while they are watching the dance.
   - If students get to a point where they are stuck, tell them to just dance and see what parts of their free dance they like the most.

5. After they are done making their dance, have the students journal about their creative experience. Ask them, “What was the hardest part? What part did you enjoy the most? If you could change a part of the final product, what would it be? Did the process you went through differ from what you thought it would be like to create a dance?” Have them imagine what it would be like to do this for a full-length piece like the one they saw Ailey perform.

6. After giving the students time to practice, have them share their movement with the class. Don’t force them to share what the dance is about or why they connect with the song. If they want to, though, give them the chance. After the student performs, give the students watching a chance to share how the piece made them feel or what it reminded them of. Maybe it was the message that the student who was dancing was going for, but maybe it was entirely different. Both are valid! As dancers, we don’t always have control over what the audience sees in our movement and that’s okay!
**Language Arts**
Dance often pulls inspiration from literary arts. A lot of ballets come from stories or books. Have your students explore this literature and see why it was susceptible to be turned into a dance. What books would they like to see turned into dance?

**Social Studies**
As the students just saw in Alvin Ailey’s *Revelations*, movement played a big part in African American culture. This continued into the Harlem Renaissance, American jazz music, and hip hop culture. Many cultures have their own dance forms that come from religion and other parts of their heritage. What are some examples of types of dancing they have seen that connects to a certain heritage?

**Math**
To see math in dance, you have to explore the way that dancers count. They commonly count in sets of eight, but it all depends on the music they are dancing to. It could be a range of other counts.

**Science**
Human bodies moving through space the way they do in dance can be explained by physics! There is plenty of great content on YouTube that you can show your students that explains the physics in dance!
WELCOME TO THE AUDITORIUM THEATRE’S 2017-18 STUDENT MATINEE SERIES!

What to expect when you come to the show!

Be on time!
Be prompt as walking in late is distracting and takes away from your theatre experience!

Say no to cell phones!
When in the theatre, it is important to devote your entire attention to the performance. Taking pictures or using social media during a show is distracting to you and to those around you! Remember, you’ve come for the performance — let yourself get lost in the experience.

Don’t be afraid to show your reactions:
One of the unique things about live performance is that the dancers, actors, and musicians are there in the same room with you! They pick up on your energy and it feeds their performance. So if you are enjoying something, don’t be afraid to applaud! If you think something’s funny, it’s okay to laugh! And it’s even okay to dance in your seat a bit, so long as you stay seated and don’t bother the folks sitting next to you!

But don’t talk during the show
Save your thoughts for post performance discussions!
Because talking during the performance disturbs fellow audience members, having conversations afterwards are highly encouraged. Take note of all of your personal comments and share them with your friends after the show!

Stay calm and sit still!
Avoid leaving in the middle of the performance — this is considered very disrespectful! Use the restrooms during an intermission or before the show begins. Of course, If it’s an emergency, ask your teacher or chaperone!

Keep the Auditorium clean!
The Auditorium Theatre is 128 years old! We must ensure that this historic landmark is taken care of — food and drink can damage the theatre. Instead of eating during the show, enjoy a pre/post performance meal!

Why do people come to the theatre?
Entertainment  
Social Change  
Education  
Enjoyment

Why are you coming to the theatre today?
Alvin Ailey Website
• https://www.alvinailey.org/
• Click on the ABOUT tab to find out more history and history of the pieces.

Alvin Ailey Official Youtube Page
• https://www.youtube.com/user/AileyOrganization
• Use this website as a resource for yourself as a teacher first. Look here to get a better idea of the pieces your students will be seeing.
• A good video to show your class before going to see the show from this site would be this one that helps introduce your students to what Revelations means:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6xgBtH0pul

Information on African American Spirituals from The Library of Congress:
• https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200197495/

How to discuss dance with your students:
• http://www.lubovitch.org/Educate/Resources/Enjoy_the_Show/enjoy_the_show.html

Music to use as background for the 3-6 grade activities:
• This is a website with a great selection of free music you can use in the background as the children explore dancing like the shapes. This will help them to feel more fluid.
• https://www.soundformovement.com/quiet

Example of what a dancer’s balanced diet looks like at different times in their schedule:
• Share some of this with your students to show them that dancers have to eat just like an athlete to perform at their full potential.
Comprehension and Collaboration

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1
• Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2
• Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Key Ideas and Details Focus on the performance as a “Text”

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1
• Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

P21 Partnership for 21st Learning Skills

Learning and Innovation Skills: A focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration
• Think creatively
• Work creatively with others
• Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution

Life and Career Skills
• Be Flexible: Incorporate feedback effectively, dealing positively with praise, setbacks and criticism. Understand and negotiate diverse views to reach workable solutions.
• Be self-directed learners: All programming challenges students to explore and expand their own learning in the connected areas
• Interact effectively with others: Both the teamwork and the attendance at the performance teach students to know when it is appropriate to listen and to speak, and to conduct themselves in a professional manner

National Core Dance Anchor Standards Addressed
• Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
  Essential Question: Where do choreographers get ideas for dances?

• Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.
  Essential Question: How is a dance understood?

• Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
  Essential Question: How is dance interpreted?

• Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
  Essential Question: How does dance deepen our understanding of ourselves, other knowledge, and events around us?
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