



Young Audiences of Massachusetts

Educational Materials

Please forward to teachers

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

Tara Ahmeda: *Taal Tales*

Grade levels: 6-12

With elements of storytelling, rhythmic footwork and athletic grace, Kuchipudi relays vivid stories from Hindu mythology. TAAL TALES offers both a history of classical South Indian dance and performances of lively dance pieces. In this highly interactive program, participants are constantly engaged by watching and participating in dance sequences, and asking and answering questions.

LEARNING GOALS:

1. To observe and engage with South Asian Hindu culture through classical dance.
2. To understand the uniqueness of dance as an athletic, cultural, and artistic practice.
3. To examine one's own cultural art forms and their purpose and function in society.

PRE-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *Creating Myths*

Discuss Hindu mythology and the pantheon of gods. Have the students create their own deities and draw a picture or write a paragraph. In small groups, create a story.

POST-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *Dance in Society*

Discuss different kinds of dance and the commonalities between them. Talk about the importance and purpose of art in different societies.

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Asian Studies, Dance, Multicultural Studies, Music, Physical Education, History, Social Sciences, Foreign Languages, Theatre

PRE-ACTIVITY: Creating Myths

LEARNING GOAL:

To become acquainted with the role of deities and those popular in Hindu mythology.

MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Books on Hindu mythology

TIME:

40 minutes

STEP 1:

Talk about Hindu mythology and the personalities and attributes of the different gods. Discuss what distinguishes the gods from humans and what commonalities they have with humans.

STEP 2:

Ask the students to each create their own deity, which also shares most physical attributes with humans but has certain powers and abilities. Draw a picture of the deity and give it a name.

STEP 3:

Split the students into groups of four and have the students create a short mythology about their characters, indicating the specific personalities, abilities and relationships of each deity.

POST-ACTIVITY: Dance in Society

LEARNING GOAL:

To incorporate the students' knowledge of Indian dance and culture and compare/contrast to other forms of dance they have seen.

TIME:

40 MINUTES

STEP 1:

Have students brainstorm together to form a list of all the kinds of dance they have seen or experienced (in school, at theaters, in dance classes, at parties, on t.v., on the street, at home). Discuss which dance forms are most appealing to them and why.

STEP 2:

Discuss classical Indian dance and if it was or wasn't what they expected to see. Ask what they learned about it and India. What other dance forms tell stories? How?

STEP 3:

Pose the following questions: How does dance function in society? Why is art important? How does it serve individuals and communities? What art forms do you like to practice and why? Do certain art forms bring out more or different emotions/sensations than others?

VOCABULARY:

Kuchipudi – A classical dance style from the state of Andhra Pradesh. This dance form began as a theater art (involving song, acting and dance) which celebrated Krishna. It is about 1,500 years old and was nurtured in the village of Kuchelapuram.

Bharat Natyam* – A classical dance style/ technique from the state of Tamil Nadu, which has origins from 4,000 years ago. It began in the temples as a means of worship.

Namaskar – A bow or salutation to respect the lord of dance, the guru (teacher) and the audience, and to apologize to Mother Earth for stamping on her, and receive her blessings.

Mudras (also known as hastas) – Hand shapes that show emotions, gods, humans, animals, nature, actions.

Aramandi – The basic bent leg position, much like the plié in ballet.

Adavus – Basic dance steps

Nritta - Pure rhythmic movement

Nritya - Abstract or emotional element of dance

Abhinaya – Facial expression

Devasdasis – Temple dancers who danced as a means of worship

Natya Shastra- an ancient treatise on theater and dance

RESOURCES:

Grau, Dr. Andree. (2000). *Dance* (Eyewitness Books). New York: Dorling Kindersley. 64 pages, 0789466252, \$19.99. An excellent resource for learning a little about dances from all over the world, including a section on classical Indian dance, Bharat Natyam.

<http://www.kanakasabha.com/hastas/index.html>

http://www.nadanam.com/general/g_index.htm

<http://www.vimoksha.com/kuchipudi/kuchipudi.html>

http://www.chandrakantha.com/articles/indian_music/nritya.html

http://www.4to40.com/discoverindia/music/index.asp?article=discoverindia_music_kuchipudi

http://www.asiasource.org/news/at_mp_02.cfm?newsid=49956

<http://surdhwani.org.uk/asp/3-2-1.asp>

<http://www.indianfolkdances.com/kuchipudi-classical-dance-of-india.html>

<http://www.culturalindia.net/indian-dance/classical/kuchipudi.html>

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS:

Tara Ahmed is a classical Indian dancer who has performed or taught in Colombia, Brazil, Turkey, India and the U.S. She performed in the Bank of America Celebrity Series, dancing the title role in the critically acclaimed "Chitra." Her television appearances include WGBH's DanceFest and Greater Boston Arts. Tara was a selected performer at the 2003 New England Art & Education Conference. She has taught and lectured for organizations including the Solomon Schechter Middle School, Holly Cross College, Boston Ballet and New Hampshire Humanities Council. "Ahmed was a captivating presence..." - Boston Globe; "A very talented dancer and an extraordinary teacher..." - Newton Creative Arts & Sciences Committee. Tara loves dance because it exercises her mind, body and spirit.

ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:

Young Audiences of Massachusetts (YA) is the oldest, largest and most utilized arts-in-education organization in the state and one of the largest in a national network of 33 chapters. For over 45 years, YA has distinguished itself as the vital link between Massachusetts schoolchildren (K-12) and more than 95 of the region's most accomplished actors, dancers, singers, musicians, and storytellers. Its 36 ensembles offer 57 interactive arts programs that represent a range of cultures, historical periods and artistic disciplines. YA is unique in its flexibility to offer interactive performances, tailor-made residencies, workshops, teacher-training, curriculum planning and multi-year projects. All programs include educational materials and satisfy local, state and/or federal arts education standards.

MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS CONNECTIONS

<i>Arts-Dance 1</i>	Movement Elements and Dance Skills...identify and demonstrate movement elements and dance skills.
<i>Arts- Dance 3</i>	Dance as Expression... demonstrate an understanding of dance as a way to express and communicate meaning.
<i>Arts-Dance 4</i>	Performance in Dance... rehearse...dance works.
<i>Arts-Dance 8</i>	Concepts of Style, Stylistic Influence, and Stylistic Change... demonstrate understanding of styles, influence, change by identifying when and where art works were created, and by analyzing characteristic features of art works from various historical periods, cultures, and genres.
<i>English Language Arts 1</i>	Students will use agreed-upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups.
<i>English Language Arts 8</i>	Students will identify the basic facts and main ideas in a text and use them as the basis for interpretation.
<i>English Language Arts 9</i>	Students will deepen their understanding of a literary or non-literary work by relating it to its contemporary context or historical background.
<i>English Language Arts 16</i>	Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the themes, structure, and elements of myths, traditional narratives, and classical literature and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.
<i>Foreign Languages 4</i>	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the traditions, perspectives, practices, and products of the culture studied, including human commonalities as reflected in history, literature, and the visual and performing arts.