

Ballet for Martha: MAKING APPALACHIAN SPRING

A RIF GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY COORDINATORS

Themes: Dance, Collaboration, Community

Book Brief: This book tells the story of three people who worked together to create the ballet *Appalachian Spring*. Take a behind-the-scenes look at how this ballet went from an idea to an American classic.

Authors:

Jan Greenberg
and Sandra Jordan

Illustrator:

Brian Floca



TIME TO READ!

Before reading: Discuss what children think goes into making a music video. Dance choreography? Music? Set design? This book is about a famous American ballet that was created before music videos were popular. What kind of dancing is ballet?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

SETTING THE STAGE (AGES 8-12)

Materials: scrap materials around the center, glue or tape, scissors, paper

Martha Graham wanted a simple set that showed “a new town.” If you were making your own dance show, where would you set it? What do you need to think about when you choose a set? How does the set affect the rest of the show? Use scrap materials to build a model of your set like Isamu Noguchi did, or draw a picture of your set.

APPALACHIAN REMIX (AGES 5-12)

The Shakers are a Christian religious group that believes in hard work and simplicity. Aaron Copland was inspired by one of their hymns. Listen to the original (www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0TkI3HGZHM) and Copland’s version (www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDRWdNn_nLk). How are they similar? Different? Let children work in groups to take a simple song (e.g., *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*) and transform it into

something new. Have them perform their “remixes.” Which group was most creative?

STORYBOOK DANCING (AGES 5-12)

Dance is often used to tell a story. Have each child think of a popular fairy tale or children’s book. How would they tell that story through a dance? Let kids take turns dancing out different stories for the group. Be sure they keep the stories secret and let the rest of the group try to “read” the dances!

TECHNOLOGY LINKS

Visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmgaKGSxQVw to watch Martha dance her famous ballet. Explore other kinds of dance at www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/multimedia.aspx (search for “dance”).



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

OTHER BOOKS BY THESE AUTHORS

Action Jackson (2007)

The Mad Potter: George E. Ohr, Eccentric Genius (2013)

Vincent van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist (2003)



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