

REPERTORY
DANCE
THEATRE



EARTH TONE Matinee Study Guide

All landscapes have a history, much the same as people exist within cultures, even tribes. There are distinct voices, languages that belong to particular areas. There are voices inside rocks, shallow washes, shifting skies; they are not silent.

And there is movement, not always the violent motion of earthquakes associated with the earth's motion or the steady unseen swirl through the heavens, but other motion, subtle, unseen, like breathing. A motion, a sound, that if you allow your inner workings to stop long enough, moves into the place inside you that mirrors a similar landscape; you too can see it, feel it, hear it, know it.

--- JOY HARJO, *Secrets from the Center of the World*

University of Arizona

We live in a country like no other. As Americans, the landscape we call home has always been part of our continuing story. ***Earth Tone*** is a concert that invites the audience to think about and discuss how we relate to the land and to the precious elements that sustain it. Since the early 1990's, RDT has been commissioning works that celebrate and examine our human connection to land and water, critical issues here in America's Mountain and Southwest regions.

The truth is that many of the things that we depend on are in jeopardy. The beauty of the natural world, climate stability, healthy ecosystems and biodiversity are threatened. Each of us must help answer the most important question facing humankind today. How are we going to protect and sustain the earth? What landscapes do we value or hold sacred?

The choreography in *Earth Tone* focuses on diverse landscapes that are mysterious and powerful. Each dance invites the audience to experience the movement, the images, the sounds and the energy that was inspired by unique environments of our world.

Castor and Pollux (1958)



Choreography: Elizabeth Waters

Music: Harry Partch

Program Note: Castor and Pollux are the twin stars of good luck. The immortal soul appears as substance and the mortal soul as reality. Then the two travel together as of one experience. Elizabeth Waters merges the theories and movements of the Hanya Holm dance technique with movement qualities inspired by Pueblo Indian rituals. The dancers shape and define the space in which they move while conveying the attitudes of Pueblo ceremonial dancers.

Elizabeth Waters former featured dancer with the Hanya Holm Company founded the dance program at the University of New Mexico in 1946 and continued to direct the program until 1973. Born in Salem, Oregon in 1910, Ms Waters made her way to New York City and a career in vaudeville in the early 1930's. She won a scholarship to the Wigman/Holm School and danced as a soloist in Holm's company, performing solo roles in the masterwork, TREND, as well as many other major works. In the early 1940's, Ms Waters moved to the Southwest and lived for a time at the Zuni Pueblo, studying their dance and watching the preparations for the great Shalako ceremony. She spoke of going out into the desert to improvise and develop her own philosophy of movement as the essence of life. She created many works that show her response to the Native American, Hispanic and also Hindu and Maori cultures. She created more than fifty dances and left an impression on dancers and students over a span of fifty year until her death in 1993.



Harry Partch (1901-1974) was an American composer, philosopher, inventor, instrument builder, and much more.

Partch was born in Oakland, California, on June 24, 1901, and spent much of his early years in the American Southwest, where he was exposed to music and sound from a variety of cultures. He enrolled at the University of Southern California to study composition, but was dissatisfied and ultimately left to work on his own. After discovering the work of Hermann von Helmholtz, Partch began to explore just intonation, and ultimately settled on this system for his compositional needs.

While his early work was met with some support and small grants, the Great Depression forced Harry to spend many years as a transient, and only rarely was he able to continue his artistic work. After the Great Depression ended, Harry again found success with small grants and support from the Guggenheim Foundation. In the period from 1941 - 1956, he composed and rewrote over a dozen works, invented and built over a dozen instruments, arranged several performances and recordings of his works.

He composed using scales of unequal intervals and was one of the first 20th-century composers in the West to work systematically with [microtonal](#) scales. He built [custom-made instruments](#) in these tunings on which to play his compositions. Partch built [many unique instruments](#), with such names as the Chromelodeon, the Quadrangularis Reversum, and the Zymo-Xyl. [Ancient Greek theatre](#) and Japanese [Noh](#) and [kabuki](#) heavily influenced his music theatre.

He spent the last twelve years of his life in various locations near the California Coastline. These years would see more creative work, major productions of his total-theater pieces. Harry Partch died in San Diego, California, on September 3, 1974.

REPERTORY DANCE THEATRE LESSON PLAN to prepare students for Castor and Pollux based on HANYA HOLM TECHNIQUE: EXPLORING SPACE

Written by Linda C Smith

GOAL: Help students understand their relationship to space by exploring a circle and a cylinder.

PREPARATION and VISUALIZATION

Ask students to:

1. Imagine you are molding a lump of clay as a potter would. Imagine shaping a round smooth form into a circle. Feel the outer edges of the clay with the palms of the hands. Imagine that the volume is getting increasingly larger and larger.

2.a. Draw a circle around yourself with a piece of imaginary chalk. You will be standing in the center of the circle.

b. Imagine you are standing with both feet in the center of a clock that is as big as the circle you drew. Keeping the left foot in the center of the clock, place the right foot on 12 o'clock, then on 3 o'clock, then on 6 o'clock. Repeat the idea on the other side and put the left foot on 12 o'clock, 9 o'clock, 6 o'clock.

c. Now put both feet on 12 o'clock and face front while walking around the circle clockwise in 10 counts. Begin on right foot. Repeat in counter-clockwise direction starting with the left foot.

d. Put both feet on 12 o'clock and begin to walk clockwise around the edge of the clock and face the direction you are walking. Point to the center of the circle on the floor with their right hand. Increase the tempo of the walk getting faster and faster. Observe what happens to the body to compensate for the centrifugal force. Repeat going the other direction.

e. Now, imagine you are on the OUTSIDE of a clay cylinder and walk forward in the same path but feel the outer edge of the cylinder with the back of the hand. Repeat going in the other direction.

e. Now imagine you are INSIDE the cylinder. Walk backward, counterclockwise, and feel the inside of the volume with the left hip . Repeat going clockwise feeling the inside of the volume with the right hip.

f. Now try and embrace the cylinder with your arms. Without moving your feet try and reach around the cylinder with one arm then rock back in the opposite direction and reach around to the other side as far as you can.

LOCOMOTOR PATTERNS

Bend the knees and lean into the curves or away from the curve as appropriate. Feel the smooth flow of the action and the weight of the body. Visualize the space and the volume. Perform the patterns with a sense of ritual. The movement is sensuous. Use the feet to feel the floor and be sensitive to the earth.

Use a drum to establish the pulse.

SERPENTINES SIX COUNT

1. Traveling **forward** across the floor with a **6 count serpentine** pattern:

Begin on stage right. Imagine you are feeling the outer edge of a cylinder that is cut in half, a "C" shape. Travel forward counter-clockwise. Imagine you are feeling the outer wall of the cylinder with the back of the left hand.

Begin with the foot nearest the cylinder, the "inside" foot, the left foot and feel the surface with the back of the same hand. Take 5 steps then on count 6 draw the feet together, straighten the knees, come to half toe and prepare the other hand and foot (the right hand and foot) to repeat the action on the other side.

Repeat:

NOTICE:

You have just walked in a path resembling the letter "S"

If you repeat this process, you will travel in a serpentine path.

REMEMBER: Lean into the center of the circle slightly. Walk with knees slightly bend. Walk smoothly. On count 6 come to half toe, straighten the knees and lift the torso.

2. **FORWARD FIVE COUNT SERPENTINE:** Travel with a **5 count serpentine** pattern. Use the concepts described above, but eliminate count 6 and change the direction of the curve on one count...count 1. Stay in plie, low and gliding.

SCALLOPS 6,5,6,5

Begin on stage right.

1. Travel FORWARD across the floor using the concepts learned in the above exercises.

Begin stepping on the left foot, curving down stage in a counter-clockwise direction. Make a 6 count half circle feeling the outer wall of the cylinder with the back of the left hand. Now step on the right foot and travel BACKWARD with a 5 count pattern feeling the outer wall with the back of your right hand. Repeat the 6,5 pattern and it will make a scallop.

CREATE: Ask students to create their own pattern using the concepts explored above.

PERFORM: Combine some of the new patterns and perform them together.

DISCUSS: Discuss the effect of the resultant rhythms and use of space



Dancing The Bears Ears (World Premiere Oct 2017)

Choreography: Zvi Gotheiner with the dancers

Music: Scott Killian (RDT commission)

Dancing The Bears Ears is a new work inspired by our memories and encounters with the land and its people, a work animated with fragments of stories and laced with the spirit of ancient inhabitants. It is not a representational work meant to imitate or impersonate Native American people or culture. It is a dance about how this incredible sacred landscape healed us, and brought us into a harmonious place. The dance is a “new ritual” to raise consciousness about the significance of this extraordinary area.



Zvi Gotheiner was born and raised in Israel in 1952. He began his artistic career as a gifted violinist with the Young Kibbutzim Orchestra, where he attained the rank of soloist and Concertmaster at age 15. He began dancing at 17, and soon after formed his first performance group. He first came to New York in 1978 on a dance scholarship from the American-Israeli Cultural Foundation, and went on to dance with the Joyce Trisler Dance Company, Feld Ballets/NY, and the Bat-Sheva Dance Company. After directing Tamar Ramle, and the Jerusalem Tamar Dance Companies, in Israel and the Israeli Chamber Dance Company in New York, he founded ZviDance in 1989. The company's performances have received critical acclaim in New York City at The Kitchen, The Joyce Theater, Joyce Soho, The Fiorello Festival, Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors, and Central Park's SummerStage as well as a variety of experimental venues. Zvi is a recipient of two New York Foundation for the Arts Choreography Fellowships and The National Arts Club Weiselberg Award, and has received commissions from Zurich Tanz Theater, Utah's Repertory Dance Theatre, Colloquium Dance Exchange, the American Dance Festival and three films by The Joyce Theater's Altogether Different Series. Zvi has earned an exceptional reputation as a teacher across the country, in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. Gotheiner uses dance as a language to communicate his vision of human experience, particularly in exploring the relationship between individuals, and their environments. In NY, he serves as company teacher for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and teaches regularly at City Center.



SCOTT KILLIAN (Composer) has composed works for such major American companies as Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Hubbard Street DanceChicago,

Nikolais/Louis Dance, and the José Limon Dance Company. Zoom marks his 14th work with Zvi. Mr. Killian created over 20 works with long-time collaborators Danny Shapiro and Joanie Smith, as well as numerous works with Cherylyn Lavagnino, Johannes Wieland, and others. As a composer/sound designer for theatre, Mr. Killian has served as Resident Composer for the Berkshire Theatre Festival since 1997. Among the many other theatrical venues are the Manhattan Theatre Club, New York Theatre Workshop, Public Theater, Women’s Project, The Acting Company, Rattlestick Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre of Washington D.C., Shakespeare & Co., Seattle Rep, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, George Street Playhouse, Baltimore’s Center Stage, Boston’s Huntington Theatre, GEVA Theatre, Theatre Calgary and the Vancouver Playhouse. Music for film includes Witnessing, a documentary film which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and aired on MSNBC, the film Undetectable: the Changing Face of AIDS (premiered on PBS and the NOW Film Festival/NYC) and Swan Lake, Minnesota an award-winning video adaptation of the classic ballet.

About the Bears Ears Project

RDT has had an artistic association with New York City-based Zvi Gotheiner since the early 1990s, During the 2017-18 season we commissioned him to create a new work through an ambitious project that involved bringing his company, [ZviDance](#), to Utah to join RDT at the newly-proclaimed Bears Ears National Monument. The two dance companies were eager to experience firsthand the energy and spirit of Bears Ears and we embarked on a mission to gather information and inspiration for a new work. As artists, we wanted to allow the history, the sights and sounds of a landscape to literally “move us.”

We formed a partnership with the Utah Diné Bikéyah, to learn more about this incredible area from Native Americans who consider Bears Ears as “sacred land.” The UDB is a nonprofit organization that works toward the healing of people and the Earth by supporting indigenous communities in protecting their culturally significant, ancestral lands. Diné Bikéyah means “people’s sacred lands” in the Navajo language.

RDT petitioned the NEA for funding to enable us to explore the region and to create a dance in response to its high mountain peaks; deep canyons; long, broken mesas; astounding arches and stately red-rock cliffs. The project was not created to be political. We wanted to find a personal connection to the land and to deepen our understanding of “sense of place.”

Guided by three Diné elders, our group of 18 artists spend a week hiking, exploring, listening, contemplating and improvising. As we traveled throughout the region, we began to open our eyes, hearts and minds to the breathtaking landscape. We soon realized that our sense of time was changing. There was little cell phone coverage and although we had an itinerary, we reacted with spontaneity. Everything became an adventure. The dancers gathered inspiration for the daily improvisation sessions. The

things they saw, heard, sensed and experienced were going to be translated into movement.

We listened to the concerns of native people who see the area as a place for healing. Bears figure prominently in the mythology of nearly every Native American tribe. In most Native cultures, Bear is considered a medicine being with impressive magical powers, and plays a major role in many religious ceremonies. Bears are symbols of strength and wisdom to many Native Americans, and are often associated with healing and medicine. When we returned to Salt Lake City to work on the choreography, we felt that the experience had somehow “changed” us.

Dancing The Bears Ears is a work filled with our memories, filled with fragments of stories and laced with the spirit of ancient inhabitants. But mostly, it is a dance about how this incredible landscape affected us, healed us, and brought us into a harmonious place. The dance is a “new ritual” to raise consciousness about the importance of this amazing area.

Bears Ears Composition Lesson Plan by Lauren Curley

Before creating ‘Dancing the Bears Ears’ choreographer Zvi Gothiener travelled to Bears Ears National Monument with his company Zvi Dance and Repertory Dance Theatre. For one week the dancers travelled to different parts of the monument, learning about the history of the land and the people for whom it is sacred. The dancers would spend time at each site improvising with one another, and later used those Improvisations to help create material for the piece you see onstage.

Task: Use your own landscape to create a phrase

Go into your yard or to a park and find a spot with enough space to move in. Look at the materials around you. Is there grass or dirt under your feet? Is it soft or hard? Are there any trees? Can you hear birds or squirrels? Do you hear the sound of cars passing by, or is it quiet? Do you smell anything? Using the textures, sights, and sounds of your landscape as inspiration start to explore different ways of moving. Maybe you can try playing in the grass, feeling the texture as you roll around. Perhaps there is a tree for you to climb, or someplace where you can dig. Don't be afraid to let it be more playful than “danced”. You can stay in one spot, or try exploring new places to move.

Write down some of the things you most enjoyed about being outside. What textures interested you the most? Did any specific plants or animals catch your eye? How were you inspired to use the land around you? Use your answers to create a movement phrase that reflects your experience. Memorize it.

Record your phrase, either outdoors or indoors. You can share it with your classmates, and see the different ways each person is inspired to use their own landscape to move. How are they alike? How are they different?

Explore Further:

Using a computer, research the history of the land you live on. Did a specific tribe of indigenous people once call your land home? What about a specific breed of animals? Or was there a native type of plant that was commonly found in your area?

Create a new phrase all about the history of your landscape. If a tribe inhabited it in the past (or still does!), research some of their traditions and find ways to express them through movement. Was there a time that wild animals roamed near your home? How did they move, and how can that shape your movement? If there are any plants native to your area, what texture are they? Do they grow large or small?

Combine your phrases about your current landscape and the history of your landscape to make one larger phrase. Share it with your classmates and celebrate the history and beauty of the places you each call home!



