



“From Fair & Wide, O Canada!”

-by-

Motus O Dance Theatre



A

TEACHERS STUDY GUIDE

Teacher Resources - Discussion Topics, Classroom Activities

Collated and Written by Motus O Dance Theatre and Ben Embiricos



From Fair & Wide, O Canada!

“From Fair and Wide, O Canada” is a show by visiting artists Motus O dance theatre performed through spoken word, song and dance. It is about Canada *“our fair-filled, festive land!”*

Join us as we celebrate how Fairs and Festivals right across Canada bring us together for fun, learning and to meet one another, to explore this wonderful country we call home!

Fairs, Festivals and Community Celebrations helped create Canada! The Settlers brought Fair Traditions to Canada from Europe but they quickly changed to become something newly Canadian. The Indigenous People in Canada also have celebrations of their own from long before the Settlers and the creation of Canada.¹

Today Agricultural Fairs remain a link to real farming, reminding us in an increasingly urban Canada that we all need our Canadian grown food!

And in Canada we are so lucky to have many seasonal Festivals to mark the passing of the seasons - Maple Syrup Festivals, Winterlude, the Calgary Stampede, Strawberry Festivals, the list is endless!

The show blends a poetic script full of word play and rhyming with the physical dance theatre style that has made Motus O a favorite of both theatre critics and school students around Canada and the world for over 28 years!

Join us as we celebrate!

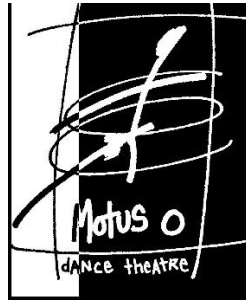
¹ Teacher’s note - this show and the guide are Arts Curricula pieces and for your convenience we have included in the Teacher’s Resource Section information on Sensitivities around representing the culture of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the approach we have taken as artists. We have made great efforts to be sensitive and to observe current perspectives as at 2018 - see Teacher’s Resource Section. We come from a position of utmost respect.

Overview of Curriculum Connections

The following major Curriculum Themes can be extended by watching the show, participating in discussions and carrying out some of the activities/worksheets in this Guide.

- Drama and Dance - Critical Analysis and Response.
- Drama and Dance - Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts.
- Music- analysis and response to the music in the show.
- Visual Arts - worksheets and art works responding to the show.
- Language- written responses to the show and to the lyrical script.
- Character/Guidance.

About Motus O dance theatre



It is strange to think how an American gymnast, an Australian sheep shearer and a Canadian figure skater could have their paths meet and eventually become Co-Artistic Directors of a dance theatre company in Canada.

Yet, as it turns out, those varied backgrounds have defined MOTUS O's unique approach. The Artistic Directors of MOTUS O, Cynthia Croker, James Croker and Jack Langenhuizen, have all been trained in several artistic disciplines with decades of performing experience. Since their formation in 1990, MOTUS O has created numerous productions for both family and adult audiences. The troupe continues to tour nationally and internationally bringing with them their innovative and highly visual works to both small and large communities alike.

A Brief history of Canadian Fairs and Festivals

The Festivals of the Indigenous Peoples in Canada

Whilst the Indigenous Peoples in Canada traded with the early Settlers they had their own traditions and festivals which long predated the arrival of the Settlers. Some of these traditions include the potlatch which was practised by many First Nations groups in the Pacific Northwest.

The potlatch “was a highly regulated and elaborate gift-giving feast....held on the occasion of important social events such as marriages, births and funerals”². The ceremonies had an important political and social function, dealing for example with the establishment of rank and diplomatic connections between groups. Unfortunately the ceremony was not well understood by the Federal Government which tried to ban it. They were impressive and important social events that were not understood. See Teacher’s Resource Section for more details and sources of information.

European Fairs and Markets

French and English Settlers from the earliest times of settlement of course brought all kinds of traditions and ideas with them.

In England, by about the Eight to Ninth Century AD markets grew up around church holidays with traders simply showing up at certain churches on special occasions to sell whatever wares they had.

Over time the markets grew and they began to be controlled by the King. Around the Markets it became common for showmen and entertainers to join until they became a bigger part of the draw. At the same time the King and the Church would try to use the Market/Fairs for fund raising purposes of their own and would grant charters or exclusive rights to hold Fairs to Towns as a means of getting political favor!

The Bartholomew Fair appears to have become particularly large! It ran with Royal Blessing and control from 1133 to 1855. It became hugely important economically because of the volume of trade, the money it raised for church construction and.....for acrobats, boxers, musicians, side shows, puppets, wild animals and all forms of fun – some less pure than others! It was the rowdiness that seems to have led to its end in 1855!

There are a small number of Fairs that continue the tradition in England such as Nottingham Goose Green, most based around a market and midway but usually with less trouble!

² The Potlatch; To Give by Daniel Francis see Teacher Resource Section For Full Reference

A well-known French tradition in Canada brought over from Europe that is still celebrated is St Jean the Baptiste Day. French and English Settlers were military rivals fighting for control in the earliest days. The Festival of St Jean Baptiste, although Christian was more commonly celebrated by French speaking Catholic countries and it appears that it was quickly adopted by French Canada partly as a way of differentiating themselves from the British Canadians.

It is believed that it was first celebrated in Canada by French settlers in 1606. A celebration is also recorded as having happened on the banks of the St Lawrence on the night of June 23 1636 with a bonfire and five cannon shots! The Festival is still very popular in Quebec and whilst perhaps celebrated less aggressively it is an expression typically of Quebec identity! But Canada today is a bilingual, Federal country so the modern St Jean Baptiste can be a point of celebration and pride for all Canadians in this peaceful land.

The beginning of Canadian Fairs and Markets

It is thought that the Canada's Agricultural Fairs that still play such a big part of the Spring, Summer and Fall weekends in farming areas of Canada took their inspiration from England and Scotland but became more important, shifting from markets to become "competitive showplaces for livestock and produce and setting for the display of new agricultural technology, as well as social events". It is thought that Hants County Exhibition in Windsor Nova Scotia is North America's longest running Fair having been held every year since 1765!

Fairs across Canada continue to provide fun and education and to drive agricultural improvements for all Canadians.

A midway is now part of most Canadian Fairs and the food, gathering of people, the dancing are all very much part of the experience. There are a huge number of Agricultural Fairs in Canada - you can see the directory in the Resource section to see details of some of the Agricultural Fairs nearest to you.

Seasonal Festivals

Canada's changes in season produce festivals of harvest and abundance. Maple Syrup Festivals in the spring which are celebrated all around the Great Lakes of Canada and in Quebec.

Many towns in Canada have Summer Fairs to celebrate local strawberry picking time!

The Calgary Stampede is a famous Fair and rodeo which is held in Calgary, Alberta every summer. There are demonstrations by cattle farmers as well as a rodeo show and other fun things to do like a midway.

There are many Fall Fairs which celebrate the harvest. Many crops are harvested in the fall which makes it a good time to feast and to have competitions for best vegetables or crops or even homemade jams!

The Winterlude Festival in Ottawa features skating on the Rideau Canal and Ice Sculpture Competitions.

All the way up in Whitehorse, Yukon there is a weeklong carnival called the Rendezvous, Sourdough festival. There are dog sled competitions, snow carving competitions and sourdough pancakes!

In Quebec City there is Quebec Winter Carnival every year. Its history goes back to 1894. Its aim is to "warm hearts during the cold season!"³ That mission fits with their mascot the cheerful snowman named Bonhomme Carnaval in his red toque!

³ See the Carnaval de Quebec website! - <https://carnaval.qc.ca/carnaval/our-history>

Pre- Show Information and Activities

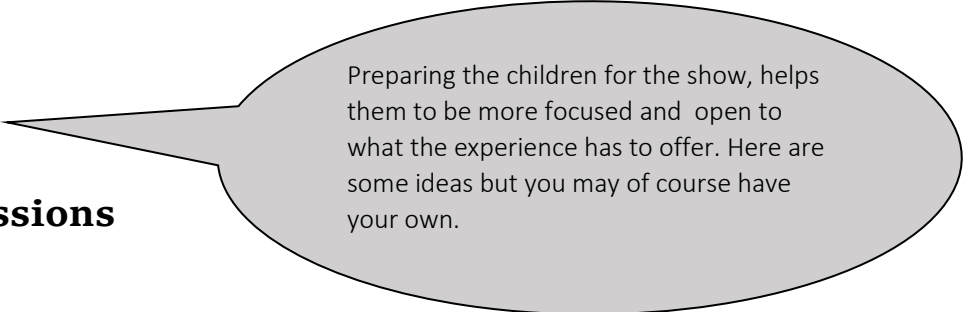
Themes/Issues Explored in the Show

The Arts – Dance, Music, Drama, Costume.

Language Arts – Narrative Accounts, rhyming and word play.

Social Studies – Fairs and Festivals of Canadians and of the Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Guidance – Empathy and Respect - remembering the many things we *all* have in common as people and celebrating the things that are different too.



Preparing the children for the show, helps them to be more focused and open to what the experience has to offer. Here are some ideas but you may of course have your own.

Pre-Show Discussions

Primary

Option # 1 – Talking About Fairs and Festivals!

- Ask the children about Fairs or Festivals that they may have been to in Canada or heard of – it could be local Agricultural Fairs, Celebratory Gatherings special to their Heritage, maple syrup festivals.
- Ask about their favorite parts of the Festivals or Gatherings that they have been to.
- You could tell them that Fairs and Festivals are fun ways to celebrate together. They are also important for all kinds of other reasons - through sharing food or helping each other. Or for farmers selling farm animals or tools. Fairs and Festivals can be important for many reasons.

Option #2: Talking about the Drama and Dance

- Ask the children if they take dance lessons. What kind? (e.g. Hip Hop, Ballet, Folk, Cultural, Tap, Jazz,).
- Do they know any dances that tell a story? (e.g. South Asian Classical Dance, First Nations Dance, or a Ballet such as the Nut Cracker)

- Ask how dance can tell a story. Have them demonstrate how to express various emotions with their bodies. (E.g. stamp a foot, use hands to say “go away”, “come here” etc.)
- Tell the children that they are going to see a Dance/Drama, in which the story will be told through song, and spoken word aided by costumes, a set and props.

Junior/Intermediate:

Option #1: Talking About Fairs and Festivals

- Ask the children about Fairs or Festivals that they may have been to in Canada or heard of – it could be local Agricultural Fairs, Celebratory Gatherings special to their Heritage, maple syrup festivals.
- Tell the children that Fairs are important for fun and spending time together but also for other reasons like bringing whole communities together.
- Talk about the fact that there are some things that are common to Fairs and Festivals held in most cultures: Like feasting on treats! Fun! Bringing people together. Music and dancing. Sharing and sometimes buying, selling or trading things. Can the students think of anything else that may be the same at many different kinds of Fairs and Festivals?
- There are also things that are different about Fairs and Festivals. The Indigenous People in Canada celebrated many distinct cultural ceremonies and festivals before the Settlers came. Some of these celebrations are still celebrated today but some have changed⁴.
- You could ask the children if they have ever been to a Fair or Festival that felt different to them. What did they like about it?

⁴ See Sensitivity Note in Teachers Resource Section for more details.

Junior/Intermediate Option#2: The Dance

- Ask the children if they take dance lessons. What kind? (e.g. Hip Hop, Ballet, Folk, Cultural, Tap, Jazz,).
- Do they know any dances that tell a story? (e.g. South Asian Classical Dance, First Nations Dance, or a Ballet such as the Nut Cracker)
- Ask how dance can tell a story. Have them demonstrate how to express various emotions with their bodies. (E.g. stamp a foot, use hands to say “go away”, “come here” etc.)
- Tell the children that they are going to see a Dance/Drama, in which the story will be told through song, and spoken word aided by costumes and a set and props.

What to Watch and Listen for During the Performance



Having points to look for can help with active listening during the show and in shaping Post Show Activities!

Primary:

- The names of some of the people, places and Festivals.
- The different kinds of dancing in the show.
- The different types of music.
- The different costumes that they see.

Junior/Intermediate:

- Some of the First Nations groups and their Celebrations.
- Some of the places in Canada that are mentioned?
- What kinds of dances are in the show?
- When are the actors and dancers using dance to tell the story and when is it literal- like a folk dance or jig - how could you tell?
- How do the dancers change from one character to another?
- How do the designer and the choreographer use music, props and costumes to create characters, setting and mood?



For the Teacher

The show can be a starting point for activities based on the cultures, the art forms, or the issues. It could include reading, writing, performing, and art making activities.

Post Show Discussions

Primary:

Ask the children what they saw in the show.

Q. What props did they use in the show (i.e. sticks that became canoe paddles, and majorette batons, wheat sheaves, umbrella flowers, fire flags, Canadian flag, parachute, etc.).

Q. What dance styles did you see in the show (i.e. Medieval Court Dance, Jazz, Contemporary, Jig, Jive)

Q. What type of music was used in the show (i.e. opera, blues, electronic, sound effects, etc.)

Junior/Intermediate:

Q. Which regions of Canada were mentioned in connection with First Nations Celebrations?

A. the Pacific Northwest, the Plains and the St Lawrence River⁵

Q. Which First Nations Celebrations were mentioned?

A. The Potlatch (Northwest Coast) the Powwow (Plains) and Ojibwa Thanksgiving (Eastern Woodlands/St Lawrence).

Q. Where did the Settlers come from?

A. England and France, both countries in Europe.

⁵ Teachers Note – The many distinct cultures of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada are sometimes grouped into Six Culture Areas (these include Northwest Coast, Plains and Eastern Woodland- which includes the St Lawrence) see Teachers Resources section of this Guide for more information. Also this link <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people/>

Q. What Festivals did the Settlers bring?

A. Markets, Carnivals and Fairs and religious celebrations.

Q. In what ways were the Settlers celebrations similar to the First Nations Celebrations?

A. Most of them included religious or spiritual beliefs, feasting, and celebrating events or people that were special to the whole community or group.

Q. Which French Canadian Festival is mentioned?

A. St-Jean-Baptiste Day. It is celebrated on June 24 in Quebec and is declared a national holiday in that province.

Q. What is the name and where is the first recorded agricultural fair we have in Canada?

A. Windsor in Nova Scotia seems to have always had fun and education in mind! It is the oldest Agricultural Fair in North America and combines fun with farm education. The fair still runs every year and has a midway and farming competitions.

Q. How are the Fairs and Festivals of the Different Cultures the Same?

A. The line toward the end of the show says it well!

*“We need ways to celebrate
Whether simple or fancy, eating or dancing
Powwows and Potlucks, and midway game chancing”*

In other words we all need ways to come together as a community and celebrate! This is common to all peoples and all communities in Canada and around the world!

Q. How are they Different?

A. Every Fair or Festival has some differences. These differences are fun to learn about. When the children learn more or talk about some of them individually they will see and enjoy learning about the special history, and traditions both old and new that go with each. The differences are fun!

Post Show Activities



Dance and Drama

Primary

You can ask the children to respond to and analyze the show, both by talking and writing about their experience of it. You could talk about how the dancer-actors used costumes, movement, acting, and voice to move from one character or event to another.

You could talk about the props used – like the big sea gulls and also the sound effects. How did the props and the sounds make the students feel? How did they help explain what the show was about or where the scenes were taking place?

Junior/Intermediate

You could ask the students how they could tell when a dance in the show was literal (conventional dancing like a jig) and when it was abstract (that is communicating a story or narrative through dance movement).

You could have the students in groups create their own drama or dance scene inspired by the show. It could be based on a Fair or Festival that they have been to or one mentioned in the show. They could use narration, dialogue and movement to create the scene.

DANCE STYLES USED IN THE SHOW

The following are examples of dance styles in the Show:

- ❖ **CONTACT IMPROVISATION:** A style of dance with roots in the martial arts. It is always done with a partner. Its main focus is sharing of body weight with lifts, throws and counter balancing.
- ❖ **MODERN:** A Technique where the movement is instigated from the spine into the limbs.
- ❖ **JAZZ:** A technique with strong changes in dynamic (speed) with a strong focus on isolations; i.e.: moving just the shoulders.
- ❖ **FOLK:** Various Folk Dance forms particular to early Quebec.

MATERIAL USED AS PROP, SET OR COSTUME

- Flower Umbrellas during the Season Scenes
- Seagulls made from choro foam attached to fishing rods
- Parachute
- Fire flags
- Poles used as canoes, majorette batons when marching

STEAMPUNK COSTUMES

Steampunk is a subgenre of science fiction that incorporates technology and aesthetic designs inspired by 19th-century industrial steam-powered machinery. Costumes of this nature are often quite eclectic with interesting pieces of machinery sewn into wearable costumes.

Post Show Activities

Music

The Show is performed to a sound track containing a wide variety of musical styles.

Primary

Can the students describe the music from the show? How did the music make them feel? Did the music affect the way they felt about what was going on in the show at the time?

See the Teacher's Resource Section for a list of the music and styles that appeared in the show and for ideas on further extending the experience for the students.

Junior/Intermediate

What were the student's favorite passages of music?

See the Teacher's Resource Section for a list of the music and styles that appeared in the show and for ideas on further extending the experience for the students.

How did the music make them feel as they watched the show? Did the music give a feeling of history or being in a certain place at a time?

For the Junior Intermediates a broader discussion of the music could take place – see Teacher Resource Section for more details on Early Canadian Folk Music if you would like to pursue that.

Post Show Activities

Empathy Character

How are the Fairs and Festivals of the different cultures the same?

The line toward the end of the show says it well!

*“We need ways to celebrate
Whether simple or fancy, eating or dancing
Powwows and Potlucks, and midway game chancing”*

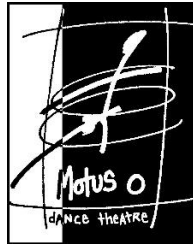
In other words we all need ways to come together as a community and celebrate! This is common to all peoples and all communities in Canada and around the world!

How are they Different?

Every Fair or Festival has some differences. These differences are fun to learn about. When the children learn more or talk about some of them individually they will see and enjoy learning about the special history, and traditions both old and new that go with each. The differences are fun!

Teacher Resources

THE ARTISTS RESPECT/SENSITIVITY TO THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CULTURES IN CANADA



Fair and Wide O Canada is an artwork not a historical record but Motus O dance theatre fully respects the sensitivities of the Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the rapidly changing dialogue in the arts and education.

The Government of Canada has called the French, British and Aboriginal Peoples the “three founding peoples” of Canada⁶. But this is a view not universally accepted by the Indigenous People in Canada. The Government of Canada is actively working to reorder itself to work better with the Indigenous People in Canada.

“Indigenous Peoples” now seems to be the most widely preferred collective name for the Metis, Inuit and six hundred and thirty four First Nations whom comprise the group and this name now has begun appearing in the names of Federal Government Departments, but the collective name Aboriginal Peoples still appears as the change is so recent and it is still contained in the Canadian Constitution⁷.

This Guide uses the term Indigenous Peoples in Canada which name is increasingly being incorporated into the language and names of the Federal Government of Canada Departments. The word “Aboriginal Peoples” appears still in many documents including the Canadian Constitution.

For a very practical guide on respectful use of names in connection with Indigenous Peoples see *Indigenous or Aboriginal Which is Correct?* by Bob

⁶ *Discover Canada- The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship*, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2012), accessible at <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/discover.pdf>

⁷ For a full discussion see <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-or-aboriginal-which-is-correct>

Joseph⁸. Mr. Joseph is a Gwawaenuk Nation member from British Columbia whom is also a consultant and author on Indigenous relations.

He points out that it should be Indigenous Peoples IN Canada not OF Canada, as the latter suggests possession or belonging. Ultimately of course we all wish to be free to define ourselves as individuals.

Ultimately it is a question for the individuals themselves how they wish to be known or identified – it is a personal choice we all should have and may choose to change in a given situation or context. This is reflected by the words of *A Tribe Called Red* from their official website “*indigenous people need to define their identity on their own terms.*”⁹

“Indigenous peoples” is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants”¹⁰. In Canada these three peoples are sometimes described as three groups – the Metis, Inuit and First Nations. These three groupings though are very diverse. There are 634 First Nations in Canada speaking more than 50 distinct languages¹¹.

The move from the term Aboriginal to Indigenous is not just about respect it also signals a legal and political shift as part of Canada’s engagement with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was endorsed with conditions by former Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

⁸ <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-or-aboriginal-which-is-correct>

⁹ <http://atribecalledred.com/bio/>

¹⁰ See Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada website <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100013785/1304467449155>

¹¹ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/first-nations/tribe> called red

Indigenous Perspectives

A Tribe Called Red Official Website <http://atribecalledred.com>

Aboriginal Perspectives A Guide to the Teacher's Toolkit- Teaching Resources and Strategies for Elementary and Secondary Classrooms Ontario Ministry of Education 2009

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/Guide_Toolkit2009.pdf

Indigenous Peoples in Canada by Zach Parrott

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people/>

Northwest Coast Indigenous Peoples in Canada

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people-northwest-coast/>

The Potlatch

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/potlatch/>

Music Resources

Some of the musical pieces/styles that appear in the show:

A musical passage by the Producer and DJ Crew *A Tribe Called Red*. This group of Indigenous artists combines different musical influences including modern hip hop and electronic music with traditional powwow drums and vocal¹².

Marching Band Music from England and France.

Early Canadian Folk music¹³.

Bluegrass -A type of Country Music based on American and Canadian adaptations of early Celtic-European Folk Music.

The 12 Bar Blues (played to “Bring out your sheep!”).

The Flower Duet from Giacomo Puccini’s Opera *Madam Butterfly*.

The Canadian National Anthem – “O Canada”.

Further Links and Resources on Fairs and Festivals

Canadian Agricultural Exhibitions

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/agricultural-exhibitions/>

Check out this list from the Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions (CAFÉ) <http://www.canadian-fairs.ca/en/calendar-of-fairs/>

St Jean- Baptiste Day (Fete Nationales du Quebec Day)

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/la-fete-nationale-du-quebec-saint-jean-baptiste-day/>

¹² See Teacher’s Resources for more information and links.

¹³ See Teachers Resource for more information and link.