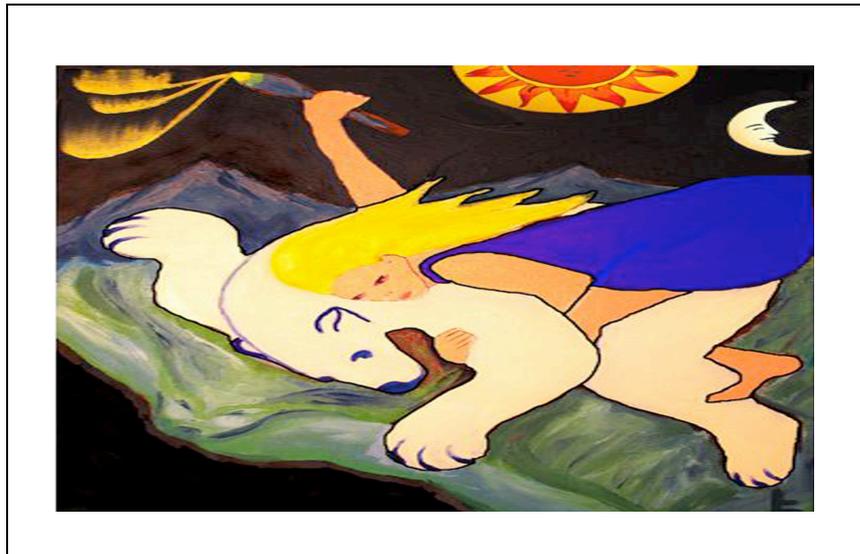


MOTUS O Dance Theatre Company
Presents

East of the Sun, West of the Moon



Study Guide

Background ☀ Classroom Activities ☀ Resources

About MOTUS O

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, that diversity has become the essence of MOTUS O. 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 several full-length 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.

About EAST OF THE SUN WEST OF THE MOON

MOTUS O was approached by playwright Eleanor Albanese from Thunder Bay, Ontario to collaborate on a new show for young audiences. We were very intrigued with Eleanor's idea to adapt the Norwegian Folk Tale, *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*.

Eleanor has spent her life immersed in the arts with a focus in arts education, theatre arts and visual arts. Her plays for young audiences have toured nationally from coast to coast. Her fantastical adaptation of *Pinocchio* (first produced by Toronto's Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People) toured with Theatre New Brunswick the winter of 2005.

Eleanor has also developed plays for general audiences including *The Novena Sisters*, a radio drama, which recently aired with CBC's Little Italies Series. Her full-length drama *The Two Rooms of Grace*, which was included in the 1999 International Women's Playwrights Festival in Ireland.

Eleanor continues to work with countless residencies and programs with Learning Through the Arts, Lakehead University Dept. of Lifelong Learning, Magnus Theatre, Playwrights Guild of Canada, Nunavut Arctic Teacher's College and Kiviliq School of Operations.

Synopsis of Story



Nana tells a story to her granddaughter Simone, who is trying to come to terms with the fact that her mother is very ill with cancer. In the Scandinavian story Nana tells of Lillie, a young girl from a very poor family who agrees to live with a White Bear in exchange for financial provision to buy medicine, food and clothing for her father, mother and sister Primrose.

Unbeknownst to Lillie, the Bear is really a Prince who has been placed under a spell by Gulumpa, an evil Troll. He is a Bear by day and a Prince by night. What Lillie doesn't realize is that if she stays with the Bear for 100 nights without looking upon the face of the Prince, the spell will be broken.

One day out of homesickness, Lillie goes back for a short visit to her family, who are now rich and healthy. When Lillie returns to the Bear's home, she takes her mother's ill-fated advice, lights a candle in the night and looks upon the Prince's face, thus losing her opportunity to break the spell. The Prince is whisked away against his will to the land of *East of the Sun, West of the Moon* where he is now destined to marry the ugly Troll.

Lillie feels compelled to find this faraway place and rescue the Prince. With the help of the winds, the troll's servant, magical objects, and her own strength and cunning, Lillie thwarts the Troll, breaks the spell, and brings the Prince safely home.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Lillie, The Prince, White Bear, Lillie's Father, East Wind
Simone, Primrose, The Northern Lights, North Wind, Gulumpa's Servant
Simone's Nana, Lillie's Mother, A Two-Headed Hag, West Wind, Gulumpa the Troll

Pre-Show Information and Activities

Themes/Issues Explored in the Show

The Arts: Dance, Mask, Set and Costume Design

Language Arts: Storytelling, Folktales, Adventure and Quest Tales

Guidance: Responsibility, Striving to reach a goal, Loyalty,
Hope

Pre-show Discussion

Primary

Option #1: The Story

- Ask the children about folktales that they know
- Talk about the kinds of characters in these stories
- Ask what it means to go on an adventure. Have they been on an adventure? Do they know stories about adventures?
- Tell them that they are going to see a show about a girl who goes on an adventure, and that this show will use dance to tell the story.
- Give a brief summary of the story, without giving away the ending.

Option #2: The Dance

- Ask the children if they take dance lessons. What kind? (Ballet, Tap, Jazz, Ethnic)
- Do they know any dances that tell a story? (Nutcracker, Swan Lake, Indian Classical Dance, First Nations Dance.)
- 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 dance and storytelling, aided by costumes, set, and props. (give definitions of each of these)
- Give a brief summary of the story, without giving away the ending.

For the Teacher

Preparing the children for the show, helps them to be more focused and open to what the experience has to offer.

The following are some suggestions for introducing this show. You may choose the one best suited to the interests of you and your class.

Junior:

Option #1: The Issues of Responsibility, Loyalty and Hope

- Have they or any one close to them, suffered a major illness or injury. What was it like for the ill person and for the other members of the family? What kept them hopeful that they or the other person would get better?
- What responsibilities do they have to members of their family? Their community?
- What is meant by loyalty? To whom do they owe loyalty?
- Tell them that they will see a show about two young girls who are dealing with these issues. One is a modern day person and the other is from a Folktale.
- Give them a brief synopsis of the story, without giving away the ending.

Option #2: The Quest Story

- Ask what it means to Strive for a goal. Do they have any goals that they are striving toward? How do they hope to reach them?
- Do they know any stories of Quest, from their medieval studies or other sources? (books, movies, video games)
- What are some of the elements of these kinds of stories? (heroic characters, a goal, a journey, obstacles, tests, villains etc.)
- Do they know any stories where the person on the quest is female?
- Introduce the story of East of the Sun, West of the Moon, and explain that it is the story of a young girl who must go on a quest to fulfill a promise and rescue a friend.

Option #3: The Dance

- Ask the children if they take dance lessons. What kind? (Ballet, Tap, Jazz, Ethnic)
- Do they know any dances that tell a story? (Nutcracker, Swan Lake, Indian Classical Dance, First Nations Dance.)
- Explain how dance can tell part of the story, express an emotion, or create a specific mood or atmosphere. (ask for some examples)
- Tell the students that they are going to see a Folktale that has been adapted to dance. Ask them what artists might have worked on the show. (Choreographer, designers, playwright, directors, dancers, etc.)
- Make a chart of these roles, to be added to after the performance.
- Give a brief synopsis of the story, without giving away the ending.



What to watch for during the performance

Primary:

- Watch for a person who is going on an adventure
- Who helps her along the way?
- The different kinds of dancing in the show
- The different costumes that they see

Junior:

- The kind of dances are in the show? When the dance is literal, telling the story, or when it is abstract, expressing emotion or creating atmosphere.
- How do the dancers change from one character to another?
- How do the designer and the choreographer use material to create characters, setting, mood etc?

For the Teacher

Giving the students one or two specific things to watch for during the performance encourages active listening and watching. It also provides a starting place for follow-up discussion and activities

Post Show Discussions and Activities

Discussion

Primary

- Ask the children content questions from the play, to review the story. (plot, character, setting)
- With the students, make a list of the obstacles that Lillie meets on her adventure. Beside each one, tell how she overcame the obstacles.
- Find out if they can name the characters played by each of the dancers. (E.g. One dancer played the bear, and the prince. Another played the Northern Lights, the West Wind)
- Discuss how the dancers moved and danced when they were feeling various emotions. (happy-quick, light: sad-slow, heavy etc.)
- Recall how the dancers changed from one character to another (costume, voice, body language).
- Review the story and the characters

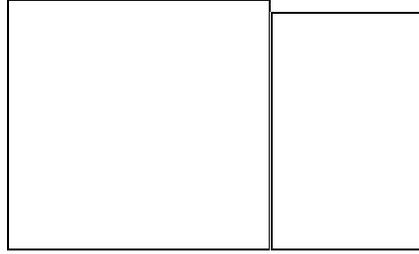
Junior

- Discuss the elements of a quest that are present in the story. (going on a journey, a goal to be reached, obstacles to overcome, riddles to solve etc)
- What are the qualities of a hero/heroine? List them and decide who in the story fits the criteria.
- Discuss Lillie as a heroine, in the way she helps her family, attempts to rescue the prince, and overcomes obstacles.
- Talk about how the dancers used costume, body language, voice, to change from one character to another
- Discuss how the style of dance changed depending on the characters and the plot.
- Review times when the dance is literal and when abstract.
- Discuss the use of fabric, to create setting, props, etc.
- Recall how the music was used to create mood, introduce specific characters etc.

For the Teacher

In following up on the performance, teachers can choose from activities based on the story, the art forms, or the issues. These activities may include reading, writing, performing, and art making activities.

Language Arts Activities



Primary

Create a Big Book

- Have each student draw a picture of their favorite character. Write the character's name and some descriptive words under the picture. Combine the pictures to create a Big Book.

Create a Folktale

- Make a chart of the elements of a folktale with the following headings: good and bad characters, obstacles, magic objects, spells, settings (in the woods, in a castle, by the sea etc.)
- Ask the children to give examples from familiar stories, for each of the headings. Add them to the chart
- Have children combine the elements from the chart to create new stories, and write and illustrate their stories.
- Choose a folktale book from the library and tell the class about it.

Junior

Create a Quest

- Make a chart of the elements of a quest story
- Have the students fill in the chart, using the story of *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*.
- Repeat the exercise using other familiar quest stories. (Be sure to look at Quest Programs on the computer or video game systems, and compare them to the quest in *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*)
- In small groups, have them choose and combine elements from the chart to create their own quest story.
- Write and illustrate their stories

Write-In-Role

- Write in role as characters from the story (e.g. Lillie writing home, the sisters writing to Lillie; a newspaper interview with bear/prince after the event.)



The Arts

Primary

- Have the children move to different music selections, based on how the music makes them feel
- Have children move as if they are characters from the play, feeling different emotions, and in various circumstances. (in the wind, when happy, afraid etc.)
- Ask the children to draw in the air, to the music, as Lillie did with her special paint brush. Repeat the exercise as they paint or draw on paper.
- Have children draw and cut out pictures of one of the characters from the play, *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*. Attach the picture to a stick, ruler, or straw.

Use these stick puppets to perform scenes from the play, in groups of three.

Junior

Dance a Scene

- In small groups, choose a scene from *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*, and make a list of the characters involved.
- For each of the characters, decide how that character will move. (fast/slow, heavy/light, direct/indirect)
- Use movement and narration to act out the scene.
- Make masks to represent the various characters
- Use bits of fabrics to create costumes, props, and sets for the scene. (e.g. blue cloth for river)
- Rehearse and perform the scene through dance and storytelling, for the rest of the class

Create a Board Game

- In small groups, create a Board Game, based on *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*. Create the board, the playing pieces, and the activity cards. Write the rules of the game, and exchange with other groups to play. **Note:** this could be a computer activity, depending on equipment and skill level.

Specific Curriculum Expectations

The following are some of the Curricular Expectations relevant to the performance and follow-up activities.

Language Arts:

Primary

- communicate ideas (thoughts, feelings, experiences) for specific purposes
- listen and react to stories and recount personal experiences;
- retell stories, demonstrating an understanding of basic story structure and including information about characters, action, and story ending;

Junior

- write materials that show a growing ability to express their points of view and to reflect on their own experiences
- produce pieces of writing using a variety of forms (letters, newspaper articles etc.)
- Read and respond to folktales from a variety of cultures.
- ask questions on a variety of topics and respond appropriately to the questions of others;
- communicate a main idea about a topic and describe a short sequence of events;

The Arts: Dance

Primary

- demonstrate an understanding of a character's point of view through writing and speaking in role, and through using body movement in role
- explain the importance of symbols used in specific stories and dances;
- create works of drama and dance, using appropriate elements

Junior

- create, rehearse, and present drama and dance works to communicate the meaning of poems, stories, paintings, myths, and other source material
- identify the significance of symbols in dance explorations, and use various props appropriately.
- evaluate drama and dance performances, with reference to their own experiences in daily life



Additional Curriculum Connections

Geography

Research the countries of Scandinavia, where the story takes place.
Find out about the history and geography, and how this compares to the Canadian North

Map Lillie's journey, adding legend, terrain, stops along the way.

Science

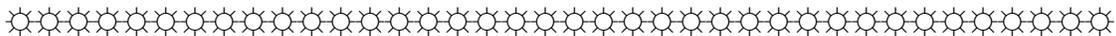
Learn about Polar Bears and their habitat

Research the Northern Light- what are they? When do they appear?

Guidance

Explore:

- Family responsibilities
- Loyalty and keeping promises
- Striving for goals in spite of obstacles



RESOURCES

Print: all books available from Amazon.ca

Apples from Heaven: Multiculture Folktales About Stories and Storytellers
by [Naomi Baltuck](#) 1997

Straw into Gold: Books and Activities About Folktales/Grades Prek-3
by [Jan Irving](#) (Author), [Robin Currie](#) (Author), [Susie Kropa](#) (Illustrator)

[Peace Tales: World Folktales to Talk about](#)
by Margaret Read MacDonald (Author) (Paperback - December 31, 1992)

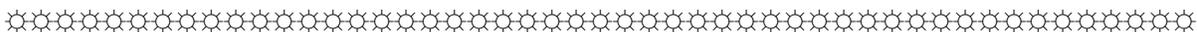
Annotated Classic Fairy Tales
by [Maria Tatar](#) (Author): contains tales from Scandinavia

Additional Information for the Teacher

DANCE STYLES

The following are examples of dance styles and when they are seen in *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*:

- ❖ **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. **Characters that demonstrate this style: Lillie with the White Bear**
- ❖ **MODERN:** A Technique where the movement is instigated from the spine into the limbs. **Characters that demonstrate this style: North, East and West Wind, The Northern Lights, White Bear and Lillie.**
- ❖ **JAZZ:** A technique with strong changes in dynamic (speed) with a strong focus on isolations; i.e.: moving just the shoulders. **Characters that demonstrate this style: Simone and Gulumpa**
- ❖ **BREAK DANCE:** A funky dance technique born from "urban street dance" of the 21st century. **All characters in "Washing the Wedding Shirt Dance."**

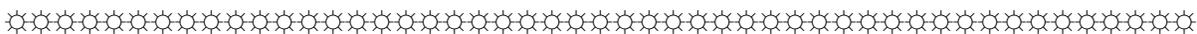


MATERIAL USED AS PROP, SET, OR, COSTUME

PARACHUTE: This is used as a prop. Sheets for Lillie's bed that transform and magically transport the Prince to another place when manipulated by the Northern Light characters.

Multi-colored chiffon fabric attached to poles: This prop represents the Northern Lights. It is used by the dancers to make the sky look like it is shimmering. It aids the dancers to fill the stage with movement. It adds height and wonder to the dance.

Large triangle shaped pieces of stretchy fabric: This fabric is a prop used to bring more colour and dynamic to the East and West Wind. It is also used to toss the character Lillie around the stage.



**EAST OF THE SUN
WEST OF THE MOON**



COLOUR ME

GULUMPA



COLOUR ME