

**COIS
CÉIM
DANCE**

BROADREACH



CREATIVE DANCE TALES

**DANCE ACTIVITIES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN
IN PARALLEL WITH COISCÉIM'S FRANCIS FOOTWORK**



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CREATIVE DANCE TALES

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES | FRANCIS FOOTWORK

INTRODUCTION

Before coming to see CoisCéim Dance Theatre's FRANCIS FOOTWORK by David Bolger– here are a few PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES in which the children can take part. Guided by the teacher, they are designed to help children's awareness of dance – and give them an understanding of the story and main characters.

FRANCIS FOOTWORK is a story about freedom of expression and individuality. A cast of colourful characters, led by the fantastically rhythmic Francis Footwork, takes on the tyranny of King Two Lefties and Colonel Head Banger in a fast paced dance adventure with live music.

Now Francis Footwork is no ordinary girl – she is an extraordinary dancer. When kind-hearted King Two Lefties ascends to the throne, he is tricked by trusted adviser Colonel Headbanger to rule the land with an iron fist. He wants to end all dancing. So Francis teaches him a dance lesson he will never forget!

ACTIVITY 1. DISCUSS TOGETHER

Talk about the show you are going to see, and how the dancers will play different 'characters' and tell a story through actions, movements and shapes they make with their bodies.

Ask the children if they have seen a dance show before and/or been to a theatre. What other things are used to make a show – such as lights, costumes, music etc. Discuss the different elements and what they might see. Ask them to remember a specific aspect such as what colour shoes FRANCIS FOOTWORK wears etc.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS to prompt DISCUSSION:

- *Have you seen a dance show before, ever been to a theatre?*
- *What other things are used to make a show? Lights, costumes, music?*
- *What do you think you might see when you're there?*

ACTIVITY 2. MAKE BODY SHAPES TO MUSIC!

MUSIC | Upbeat music of any kind

OPTIONAL RESOURCE MATERIAL | Musical instruments, drum or percussion

WARM-UP

First we have to warm-up to be ready to dance! The warm-up is guided by teacher demonstration. Children spread out and face front towards the teacher.

- CLAP to the beat. 4 high – 4 low, 4 right, 4 left, 4 behind, 4 in front.
- TAP beat on parts of body from head to toe: 8 head, 8 shoulders continue on arms, stomach, back, hips, legs, knees – name parts of body as you go.
- JOG on spot, turning clockwise / anti-clockwise etc. Repeat – jumping, marching, hopping, until everyone is warm.

Repeat and practise to the music. Encourage individuality and compliment imaginative/expressive abilities.

FREEZE AND SHAPE

Now everyone is warmed up, we can start to make shapes. What do you think Francis Footwork will do – do you think she might stretch into a WIDE, TALL, TWISTED or SMALL shape?

Demonstrate and break down each action slowly:

- Can you make 4 different SHAPES? Stretch on different levels – low, medium or high.
- Use different parts of body to support (hand, back, knee etc) Encourage everyone to FREEZE!
- Set to music. Ask the children to FREEZE in each SHAPE for 16 beats, then change to another etc. Repeat for 8 beats – encourage children to change levels/directions.

MIRROR SHAPES

Let's dance in partners!

Invite children to MIRROR each other (explain the meaning of opposite.) To maximize understanding, this task may be guided by the teacher using a volunteer group first. Ask the children to get into partners and assign "Partner A" and "Partner B."

- Each partner selects 2 SHAPES (ie. Partner A: TALL & TWISTED, Partner B: WIDE & SMALL).
- Face 'opposite' each other: Partner B copies A. Ensure they look in detail at their partner, then practice MIRRORING their SHAPE.
- Repeat and swap over.
- Practice transition from one SHAPE to another, set to music of choice.

COOL DOWN

Stand in a circle and ask the children to quietly curl slowly down, starting from their head to touching their toes and uncurl back to standing – repeat 3 times.

CREATIVE DANCE TALES | VISUAL MATERIALS

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES | FRANCIS FOOTWORK



Ivonne Kalter as FRANCIS in CoisCéim Dance Theatre's FRANCIS FOOTWORK by David Bolger. Photo by Hugo Glendinning.

CREATIVE DANCE TALES

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES | FRANCIS FOOTWORK

ACTIVITY 1. DISCUSS AND REFLECT

Do you remember the story and listening to the music?

When you saw the performance of FRANCIS FOOTWORK...

- What did you see and hear? Did you enjoy the performance?
- Can you describe what happened to FRANCIS?
- Who else was in the story?
- Was any part strange, scary, funny or surprising?
- How did it make you feel?

ACTIVITY 2. WRITE, DRAW AND DESIGN

MATERIALS | individual sheets of A4 paper + one large sheet of paper for all to share + drawing materials (crayons, pencils, etc)

In words, WRITE:

- Your favourite memory of FRANCIS FOOTWORK.
- A specific character in FRANCIS FOOTWORK – what were they wearing, how did they move?
- Your own imaginary story with FRANCIS FOOTWORK as the main character – what happened next?

In pictures, DRAW:

- Lay out a large sheet of paper on the floor and invite the children to design and draw a full length, colourful 'storyboard of images' from FRANCIS FOOTWORK, starting from the beginning of the story – through to the end.
- What SHAPES did the characters make? Were they curved, straight or angular?

ACTIVITY 3. TRAVELLING 'MOVES' & CREATING DANCES TO MUSIC

MUSIC | TRACKS YOU MAY LIKE TO USE: MR SCRUFF's album *Trouser Jazz*, Tracks: *Giffin, Ug* and *Sweet Smoke*. GOTYE FEAT. KIMBRA's album *Now That's What I Call Music 81!* Track: *Somebody That I Used to Know*. SONGS OF WATER's album *The Sea Has Spoken*, Track: *The Sea Has Spoken*

WARM UP

- CLAP to the beat. 4 high – 4 low, 4 right, 4 left, 4 behind, 4 in front.
- TAP beat on parts of body from head to toe: 8 head, 8 shoulders continue on arms, stomach, back, hips, legs, knees – name parts of body as you go.
- JOG on spot, turning clockwise / anti-clockwise etc.
- Repeat – jumping, marching, hopping, until everyone is warm.

TRAVELLING 'MOVES'

Now let's explore how FRANCIS travels across the space.

Invite children to demonstrate any of the following TRAVEL MOVES; these can be practised by travelling from one side of the room to the other or around the room. The Teacher may have to demonstrate and 'name' the steps or the moves first:

- LEAP | Leap from one foot to the other to cover a distance, stretch legs and arms when in mid-air
- SKIP | Step on right foot and hop lightly, change to left foot. Repeat starting on left foot
- JUMP (2 feet to 2 feet)
- ROLL, CRAWL, any others that you can think of?

In groups of 3-5 children - invite them to explore and practice some of the TRAVEL MOVES. Swap groups and repeat.

- Select a fast up-tempo music track. What TRAVEL MOVES might work best? Practice in groups.
- Select a slow, lyrical music track. Choose a different TRAVEL MOVES and practice together.

CREATING DANCES TO MUSIC

Let's work in partners!

Invite the children to create a DANCE involving 2 different TRAVEL MOVES and 2 different FREEZE SHAPES. Select a piece of music and listen together before beginning. What is the music like – is it fast, slow, soft or sharp? Ask the children to get into partners and find a place in the room. Ensure that everyone has enough space to practice. In their partners, encourage them to be inventive, and to focus on moving to the music with control and coordination.

Give time for all the children to explore, practice and perfect their DANCES to music.

- Divide the class in 2 groups: invite 1 group to observe and the other to present. Swap over.
- Encourage feedback, discussion and positive comments between everyone: What shapes, actions or travel moves did you like and why?

COOL DOWN

Stand in a circle and ask the children to quietly curl slowly down, starting from their head to touching their toes and uncurl back to standing – repeat 3 times.

CREATIVE DANCE TALES

STORYTELLING THROUGH DANCE

These dance activities for primary school children are a part of CREATIVE DANCE TALES, a Broadreach programme designed to link with the Primary School Physical Education (Creative Dance) and Visual Arts Curriculum through 'looking at and responding to art', with the aim of encouraging 'additional ways of learning for children and enable them to record real or imagined ideas and feelings' (Arts Curriculum, NCCA; 1999). It began as a pilot workshop series supported by The Ireland Funds in 2015.

As part of CREATIVE DANCE TALES, Broadreach continues to offer in-school workshops led by professional dance teachers and also a Digital Resource Pack - a tool box which can promote integrated learning. The Digital Resource was designed with the Physical Education Unit School of Arts Education and Movement at DCU to promote creative dance as part of the physical education curriculum, to inform and encourage a cross curricular approach to learning, and contribute to developing varied pedagogical practices in dance. It is available for download through the Arts in Education Portal.

WWW.COISCEIM.COM/DIGITAL-RESOURCE/

COISCÉIM BROADREACH

CREATIVITY, PARTICIPATION, ACCESS

Founded on the principle that dance is a performing art, CoisCéim BROADREACH's activities are pioneering, targeting all sections of the population in an exciting and innovative manner to create a genuine curiosity in dance. Every year, CoisCéim BROADREACH touches the lives of thousands of people, through classes, workshops, residencies and dance performance participation projects.

WWW.COISCEIM.COM/ABOUT-BROADREACH/

COISCÉIM DANCE THEATRE

CoisCéim Dance Theatre is one of Ireland's leading dance companies. For over 20 years, the company has presented highly original work world-wide to audiences large and small, onstage and on film. Led by David Bolger, other recent credits include *The Wolf and Peter* and the Irish Times Theatre Award-winning co-production *These Rooms*. Internationally, its work has been presented at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and Peak Performances in USA, 14-18 NOW, LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre), Spring Loaded (The Place) and the Brighton Festival in the UK, Ten Days on the Island, Tasmania, Arts Centre Melbourne and Sydney Opera House, Australia and the Venice Biennale. CoisCéim has received many awards and is widely acclaimed for its "*excellent... exhilarating... astounding performances*" (The Guardian).

CoisCéim is proud to be funded by the Arts Council of Ireland and supported by Dublin City Council and Culture Ireland.

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