

Teacher Guide

**Grades
K-12**



Steps Around the World

The **Footworks Percussive Dance Ensemble** presents an energetic program about movement, rhythm and the history of folk dance in the United States. In this 45-minute program, dancers talk about Irish and English dancing, African Boot Dancing, Native American Dances and many others, showing how they met in the U.S. and gave way to folk dances such as clogging, tap, the ham bone, circle dancing and buck dancing. The performances of these different dances serve as an excellent forum for discussing multiculturalism in America, as well as national history and cultural studies of the Appalachian regions right around Pittsburgh. The lively dancers and musicians in Footworks offer young audiences the experience of making rhythm, singing and dancing for fun and self expression. By the time they exit the auditorium, many young toes will be tapping!

2 Before the Program

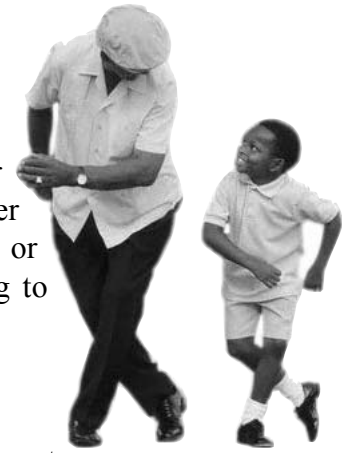
3 After the Program

5 Program Objectives,
Standards, and
Further Exploration

Before the Program

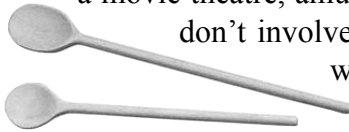
SELF-TAUGHT STEPPING

Traditional dance is about spirit, not techniques. Many dancers are self-taught, or techniques are passed down from generation to generation at family gatherings rather than in a dance studio. Think about something that you learned from your parents or grandparents. Where do you think they learned it? How would you pass it along to someone else?



FOLK INSTRUMENTS

Many of these folk traditions developed in isolated parts of the country, when the closest town was days away. For entertainment, people would have to use the things around them, rather than travel to a movie theatre, amusement park or shopping mall. Think of the things in your kitchen or bathroom that don't involve electricity. How could you use them to make rhythm (pots and pans, cookie tins, water in glasses)? Are there any that you could incorporate into a dance, like the Rapper Sword Dance (the Wooden Spoon Dance, or the Towel Dance)?



TERMS FROM THE PROGRAM:



African Boot Dance: A dance created by slaves while working in the diamond mines of Africa, where they wore heavy work boots. This dance includes traditional movements and rhythms from Africa's Zulu nation.

Big Circle Dances: Folk dance that is seen in many cultures, and is prominent in American folk dances. In America, pairs of dancers form a circle, and make certain figures as decided by a caller, who yells the patterns out to the dancers.

Bluegrass: An American born tradition of music that involves, stylized, heavily ornamented melodies played on string instruments or "fiddles."

Buckdancing: A simple dance for one person, created in Appalachia where the dancer improvises his choreography and often only steps with the balls of his feet.

African Boot Dance

Call-and-Response: a structure common to African music where the time, text and pitch of a song is sung and changed by a caller, then repeated by a chorus of "responders."

Caller: The leader of a pattern dance (like a square dance), who calls out the different patterns in advance, which the dancers then follow. It is the caller's responsibility to select the patterns and the music.

Choreographer: The person who creates dances by designing steps into patterns. The choreographer teaches the steps to the patrons, who then rehearse them until they are ready to perform.

Clogging: A style of dance practiced in the Appalachian region since the 1700s where dancers stamp their feet in a rhythmic pattern with or without taps on their shoes. Clogging features high kicks and many fancy steps, all performed with the foot firm and flat when it lands on the ground.



*famous clog dancer
Kalia Kliban*

Flatfooting: a style of dance stepping (used in clogging) where dancers let their heels touch the floor when they step.

Hambone: a style of dance where the whole body is used as a rhythm instrument.

Hot Dog Line: A contemporary term cloggers use to describe a line of dancers in which, one by one, each dancer steps forward from the line and performs a solo dance (“hot dogging” is another way to say “showing your stuff”).



Irish step dancer

Rapper Sword Dance: A dance performed by five dancers, each with flexible swords. The movements were inspired by movements miners made when scraping the mud off their ponies.

Step Dance: A dance form rooted in the history of the Celts in the British Isles. Step dancers move on the balls of their feet and keep their arms and upper bodies rigid and straight.



Members of The Newcastle Kingsmen perform the rapper sword dance

After the Program

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Locate the following places on a world map. Each is a spot where a dance from “Steps Around the World” originated.

South Africa
Appalachia
England

Quebec, Canada
Ireland



WHAT KINDS OF SHOES?

The Footworks dancers need different kinds of shoes to get the different sounds and styles of their dances just right. Here are a few you might remember from the performance:

tap shoes: leather shoes with metal plates on the bottom

hard shoes: leather shoes with leather bottoms – great for stomping!

clogs: wooden shoes with thick soles



tap shoes

How would you describe the different sounds that each type of footwear produced? Which do you think would be the easiest to dance in? Which would be the most difficult? Why?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Think of a topic that means something to your class (homework, recess, baseball, cafeteria food). Make up a call-and-response song as a group about this topic. Decide on a rhythm and go around the circle so that every person gets one line of the song as a caller. Whatever the caller says, the whole class must repeat it!

Meet the Artists

Footworks Percussive Dance Ensemble is a full-time music and dance troupe that has been performing for audiences of different ages and cultures since 1979. They have played not only in the U.S., but also Japan, Canada and the United Kingdom. Artistic Director Eileen Carson was honored with a two-year Choreography fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1994. The mission of the company strives to make every student feel good about participating in dance and understanding new multicultural content. This is Footworks' third year with Gateway to the Arts.

Program Objectives

Students will identify the historical forms of dance that contributed to the creation of American folk dance, will differentiate between different musical concepts such as rhythm, tempo and phrase and will draw specific relationships between percussion, rhythm, dance and cultural expression.

Curriculum Connections & Standards for grades K-12

This program may be used to address PDE Academic Standards in the following curriculum areas:

- Arts and Humanities: 9.1-9.4
- Geography: 7.3
- Health, Safety and PE: 10.4, 10.5
- History: 8.3, 8.4

National Content Standards for Music: Understanding music in relation to history and culture: Students demonstrate audience behavior appropriate for the context and style of music performed. The attached “Q’s for Our Audience” sheet will guide you in discussing audience behavior with your students.

Further Exploration

***Note to Teachers:** the Music and Art Department at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh has an extensive collection of CDs, LPs, images and DVDs, many of which may be sent out to your local library branch for your convenience. Call the Music and Art Department at **412-622-3105** and the staff will assist you in researching materials appropriate for your grade and curriculum. You may also search for materials on-line at <http://catalog.einetwork.net/search>.

BOOKS

Breathnach, Breandan. *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland*. Ossian Publications Ltd., 1971.

Emery, Lynne F. *Black Dance in the United States: 1619-1970*. National Press, 1972.

Heth, Charlotte, ed. *Native American Dance: Ceremonies and Social Traditions*. Smithsonian Museum and Fulcrum Publishing, 1992.

Milligan, Jean C. *101 Scottish Dances*. Collins, 1963.

Seeger, Mike. *Talking Feet: Buck, Flatfoot and Tap*. North Atlantic Books, 1992.

Smith, Frank H. *The Appalachian Square Dance*. Berea College, 1955.

ON THE WEB

artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teaching_materials/curricula/curriculum – Kennedy Center’s full lesson plan on Native American dance and expressive movement, connecting traditions of Amerindian music and culture to an in-class dance lesson.

artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teaching_materials/curricula/curriculum.cfm?curriculum_id=453&mode=overview – “Shaping Patterns and Dancing Shapes,” Kennedy Center lesson plan for grades 1-3 involving movement and geometry. Great connection to square, circle and line dancing.

www.folkdancing.org/about_american.html#Web%20Sites – Includes researched and documented articles on folk and country dance in North America.