Welcome to the 2015-2016 Student Matinee Season!

Today’s scholars and researchers say creativity is the top skill our kids will need when they enter the work force of the future, so we salute YOU for valuing the educational and inspirational power of live performance. By using this study guide you are taking an even greater step toward implementing the arts as a vital and inspiring educational tool.

We hope you find this guide useful. If you have any suggestions for content or format of this guide, please contact sms@flynncenter.org.

Enjoy the show! -Education Staff

The arts are an essential element of education, just like reading, writing, and arithmetic...music, dance, painting, and theater are all keys that unlock profound human understanding and accomplishment.

-William Bennett

It is the supreme art of the teacher to AWAKEN JOY in creative expression and knowledge.

We appreciate and value your feedback.

- Click here for an evaluation of our study guides.
- Click here for Teacher Feedback Forms for the performance.
- Click here for Student Feedback Forms for the performance.
- Click here for Parent Forms to help parents engage with their children around the show.

This guide was written & compiled by the Education Department at the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts with inspiration from the Y2D study guide and the Tennessee Performing Arts study guide.

Permission is granted for teachers, parents, and students who are coming to Flynn shows to copy & distribute this guide for educational purposes only.
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Common Core Standards
The Common Core broadens the definition of a “text,” viewing performance as a form of text, so your students are experiencing and interacting with a text when they attend a Flynn show. Seeing live performance provides rich opportunities to write reflections, narratives, arguments, and more. By writing responses and/or using the Flynn Study Guides, all performances can be linked to Common Core:

**CC ELA: W 1-10**
You can use this performance and study guide to address the following Common Core Standards (additional standards listed by specific activities):

**CC ELA: RL 1-10, RF 1-4, SL2, L 3-4**

An Immense Thank You!

Thank you to the 2015-2016 Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center Matinee Sponsors:

Champlain Investment Partners, the UPS Store, the Kimmich Family, and the Duke Family.
The Production

LEO is surprise and magic. It challenges our perceptions and makes us move beyond disbelief, move past practical, and move into something innovative, exploratory, challenging, and invigorating. LEO asks us to bend, to take chances, and to shift our ideas to accept something new.

To maintain the power of this experience, prepare with students, but don’t over prepare. Allow them the element of surprise, allow them to immerse themselves in what they’re seeing.

LEO puts one performer onstage in a small room that seems to be tipped over onto its side. Next to the empty room is a video projection, displaying all that occurs in the box, except rotated 90 degrees. At different times during the show, each side will feel realistic or baffling. A variety of music selections accompany LEO’s mind-bending physical theatre. Clever animation brings the bare set to life. This is an experience unlike any other, and that will be different for each person witnessing this simply brilliant spectacle.

Before you see the show:

- Imagine you are alone in a room. There is nothing in the room, no furniture, no electronics, no games or books. If you were in this room, what would you do? How would you entertain yourself? How would you interact within this space?
- People often use the phrase, “think outside the box.” What does that mean? What does the box represent? Can it represent different things? How can you think outside of the box when you’re in the box?

As you watch the show:

- What does Leo discover throughout the performance? Do these discoveries give you clues to his purpose?
- What role does music have in this performance? How does it enhance the visual elements of the performance?
- How compellingly do the performer’s physical movements tell a story and portray emotions?

After you watch the show:

- Did you focus more on the actual performer or the video projection? Why do you think your focus was drawn here?
- What boundaries does Leo face during the performance? Do these boundaries enhance his creativity or limit it?
- Do you feel like there is an overall message or statement about the human experience conveyed by the performance? Is this message universal or might the performance mean very different things to different people?

The Company: Y2D Productions

Y2D Productions Inc. is a Montréal-based production company whose principal focus is the creation and touring of original, innovative, entertaining shows. Led by Gregg Parks, the company specializes in working with a broad spectrum of creative talent to develop sophisticated show concepts that combine various artistic forms into a single artistic work. Blending music, acrobatics, dance and theatre into a unique form of art and entertainment, these shows draw on the creative talents of renowned directors, choreographers, lighting, set and costume designers, composers and performers, and are often created in collaboration with other internationally known production companies.
What is Physical Theatre?

Physical theatre is an umbrella term used to describe various modes of theatrical performance that pursue storytelling through primarily physical means. There are several distinct traditions that fall under the category of physical theatre including:

• Theatrical Acrobatics
• Clowning
• Contemporary Dance
• Mime
• Puppetry

What sets these forms of expression apart is their focus on narrative, character and storytelling through movement. Take for instance, an acrobatic performance. The show can be eye-catching and awe-inspiring, but if the acrobats perform physical feats without weaving them together with a narrative thread, the performance would not be considered physical theatre. What makes physical theatre is the story the performers tell us with their faces, bodies and gestures.

A back-handspring is a series of impressive physical movements, but that alone is not physical theatre. A performer doing a back-handspring toward his fellow performer and then presenting her with a flower – that would be considered a moment of physical theatre. Without words, he has told you something about his character and how he relates to another character. You begin to see a story emerge. And that is where theatre resides.

Modern physical theatre has grown from a variety of origins. Mime and theatrical clowning schools such as L'Ecole Jaques Lecoq in Paris have had significant influence on many modern expressions of physical theatre. Famous performers like Steven Berkoff, Jos Houben and John Wright received training at such institutions. Eastern European performers have also had a strong influence on modern physical theatre. Vsevolod Meyerhold and Jerzy Grotowski are regarded by many as the fathers of modern physical theatre. Contemporary dance also has played an important role in what we regard as physical theatre, due in part to the fact that most physical theatre requires a level of muscular control and flexibility rarely found in those who do not have a background in dance. Modern physical theatre also has strong roots in more ancient traditions such as Commedia dell'arte, and some suggest links to the ancient Greek theatre, particularly the theatre of Aristophanes.

From LEO Educator Research and Study Guide, Source: http://www.blackfishacademy.com/physical.htm
**Movement Phrases**

**Learning goals:** Determine importance; synthesize; think abstractly.

**Performing goals:** Combine locomotor and non-locomotor movements with structural form.

Choose a story or process with a clear beginning, middle and end and have students create 3 movements to express each part. Select a movement expressing the beginning from one of the students and lead the whole group to repeat it. Repeat the process for the middle and end, connecting the three sections so they flow from one to another. Tell the students that they have just created a movement phrase!

To extend this, ask each student to generate shapes representing three related concepts: boredom/imagination/discovery. After they each choose their shapes, instruct them to link the shapes together so that one flows smoothly to the next. Tell the students to change from one shape to another as you call out the words. Divide the class into small groups, asking each student to show his/her own movement phrase, all at the same time, to the other groups.

**Creating Movement Performances**

**Learning goals:** Express a complete idea; synthesize.

**Performing goals:** Adjust and reproduce movement sequences of locomotor and non-locomotor movements with consistency.

Once movement phrases have been created, ask students to add a starting and ending to their phrase. Have them decide where in the space the performers should be at the beginning and end of their performance and have them create ways to get from one to the other. Share the resulting movement pieces with the other students.

- Perform the phrases with the performers in different spatial relationships – e.g. close together, in small groups, or spread apart – and decide which is most effective. In each case, decide on a way to enter and exit the space. Also encourage students to explore playing with levels and orientations. Students can perform movements leaning against a wall, lying on the floor, suspended lying back on a chair. How do the same movements change when the orientation changes?

- Use contrasting pieces of music to accompany the performance and see how they change its feel. Adjust the choreography to fit both selections.

After the activity, come together as a class and explore the following questions:

- How effectively do you feel your phrases and movement pieces told a story?
- Could your story be interpreted in many ways or just one?
- How did it feel to tell a story without using words, and only using your bodies?
Tell Us Your Version of the Story!

LEO is by nature, a bit baffling and ambiguous, and we each bring our own unique perspective to being an audience member. Have students write an analysis or reflection on how they understood the performance. Did they experience a distinct storyline? Did they think the show was more abstract with the intention to evoke certain emotions or feelings?

Surrealistically Explore a Space

Give each student a blank sheet of paper, and ask them to draw a simple line drawing of a room. The room should contain some simple realistic objects that would normally be found in a room: furniture, pictures, etc. Students can choose to include a person in their drawing if they want but don’t have to. Give students five minutes to complete this; the drawing should be simple, stick figures are absolutely fine. Once they’ve finished, ask them to think about what happens in this room, what purpose does this room serve?

Then, give students a clear plastic transparency and a dry erase marker. Tell them that they are going to play with adding surreal elements to their realistic environment. These elements should feel dreamlike or strange, and shouldn’t typically be present in this room. Have them add layers that reimagine the space, and create a new experience in the room. An example would be drawing an underwater environment, filling the space with sea creatures and coral, and putting a snorkel on the person in the room. Have students try out various different layers, exploring wild environments, adding items that don’t make sense and change the story of the space. Students can also turn their room at different angles to create different perspectives. If possible, take pictures of different versions of each person’s room and create a collage showing all the adaptations.

Create Visual Interpretations

- Use markers, pen and ink, pencils, paint, pastels, collage, found and recycled materials or video to create a visual interpretation of the performance.
- Give each student an index card, and have them write down a one sentence story prompt. Collect the cards and pass them out randomly to your students. Using the materials listed above, have students create their own visual interpretation of the prompt without using any words. Tell them they are trying to communicate both the details of the story and the feel of the story prompt. When everyone’s completed their interpretation, display each one around the room, with blank index cards and writing utensils next to them. Have each student visit each picture and write their own one-sentence story inspired by the art work. The hope is that people have a wide variety of interpretations. Once everyone has written their sentence, have students read them aloud to the class.

- Have students imagine their own very short story, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. The story should contain some form of conflict. Have students create a 6-12 panel comic strip that wordlessly tells their story. Encourage them to plan which moments will be important to include, and which can be left out. How can they get the overall idea of the story across without including words or every single detail of what happens? Discuss how people will make their own meaning between images, and that’s ok, they just have to give people enough clues to follow.
**Observation Improvisations**

Either independently or in small groups, have students go to different areas of the school where they can observe someone who’s working or engaging in an activity. Have students observe this person for 10-15 minutes, taking notes or sketching to remember certain movements associated with this person and their activity. Have students record as much as they can: equipment or materials the person interacts with, clothing specific to their task, pace of movement, repetition, etc. Once they’ve done this, have everyone return to the classroom to create a character inspired by what they’ve observed. The character should incorporate elements of their observation, but does not have to be an exact imitation of the person.

Divide the class in two, and have everyone in the first group find their own spot in the room, with enough space to move about without knocking into anyone. The second group will serve as the audience, and will observe the choices made by the performing groups. Groups will switch roles after. Play some relaxed music and instruct students to slowly begin miming in character. After a few moments, count down 3, 2, 1...freeze, and have students hold their pose. Ask the audience group what they observe about the poses. What do they find compelling about the choices their peers are making? Do they feel like they have guesses about the people and activities being portrayed? Instruct students to begin moving in character again. Have them freeze again a few more times. Then switch groups and repeat the process.

Once this has been completed, pair students up, and have them create a short improvised silent scene combining their two characters. They should try to incorporate some of their original movements, but should also respond to their scene partners and the task at hand. Give the pairs 5 minutes to explore their scene, figuring out how their characters relate, where they are, what they’re doing. Ask pairs to perform their short scenes for the class. The audience can offer their best guess for what task the pairs are performing and who the characters are. Continue until each group has performed their scene.

**Imagining a New Anti-Gravitational Reality**

Have students close their eyes, and lead them through the following visualization. It’s a day like any other day. You walk into the classroom and things are a bit different. The laws of gravity have shifted. The classroom looks a bit strange. Items in the classroom seem to be floating, suspended in midair. Your desks are hovering off the ground; papers are swirling loosely above your head. Pencils and pens float aimlessly. Imagine yourself moving through this space, and slowly, your own gravitational force releases a bit and your feet aren’t solidly on the ground. How would you move about this room? How would this impact the way you function in the room? Look around the room. What other changes do you notice? What else feels odd or different?

Ask students to open their eyes and bring their focus back into the room. Ask students to share some of the things they imagined, some of the things they think would happen in this scenario. What would be fun and exciting about this type of environment? What would be frustrating? How would they have to adapt everyday activities and practices to use this space with its new gravitational rules?

Have each student write (or draw for younger kids) a short story inspired by this newly imagined reality. Encourage them to stretch their imagination, using the visualization and conversation as a jumping off point.
Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center in Stowe

In 2013, Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center and the Flynn Center joined forces to expand the live performance experiences available to young audiences in Vermont. Now, our partnership opens up live these experiences to a more diverse geographical Vermont community, and allows us to present inspiring shows geared towards a more intimate performance space like the stage in Stowe.

Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center opened December 27, 2010. Since that grand opening celebration, the community has benefitted from performances and residencies by exceptional artists. “Peak Experiences” occur every Saturday evening and sometimes in between. Series’ include Peak Family artists whose work is exciting to kids, parents and grandparents alike; Peak VTartists featuring music, dance and theatre of the Vermont community; Peak Students events during school time; Peak Films that are special, spectacular events captured live; Peak Classics featuring art that has stood the test of time; and the Peak Pop series of big events in comedy and music.

For more information about the center and other performances coming up at SPPAC, visit: www.SprucePeakArts.org

Etiquette for Live Performances

The Essentials

- Listen, experience, imagine, discover, learn!
- Give your energy and attention to the performers.
- At the end of the show, clap for the performers’ time and energy.
- Eating, drinking, and chewing gum are not okay.
- Talk only before and after the performance.
- Turn off wireless devices. No photos, videos, texting, or listening to music.

Why is Etiquette Important?

A good live performance is a powerful communication between audience and performer. The more the audience gives to the performer, the more the performer can give back to the audience. The performer hears the audience laughing, senses its sympathy, and delights in the enthusiasm of its applause. Furthermore, each audience member affects those sitting near him or her, in addition to the performers onstage. Technological devices (cameras, phones, etc.) have become so prevalent in our daily lives, but using these devices is distracting to the performers onstage and other audience members trying to watch the show. Even the light from checking the time, or the buzz of a phone on vibrate can pull the people around you out of the experience.

Cell phone frequencies can even interfere with the microphones in the production, and taking photos can be unsafe for performers. Additionally, an artist has the right to decide what photos and videos go out into the world. Phones keep you from being present and fully engaged with the show. Thank you for turning devices completely off!

DISCUSS BEING A MINDFUL AUDIENCE MEMBER:

How is going to see a live theatre performance different from seeing a movie, going to a concert, or watching TV?

In small groups, come up with a list of positive audience behaviors, and behaviors that would be disruptive to performers and other audience members.

Come together and create a master list.
We can’t wait to see you at the theater!

Teachers, a few reminders:

- Fill out the Seating and Travel Survey, so we can best accommodate your group’s needs in regards to dismissal, bussing, students with different needs, etc.
- Share your experience with us! Use the feedback links, or share your students’ artwork, writing, responses. We love to hear how experiences at the Flynn impact our audiences.
- Explore other student matinees at the Flynn this season. We’ve still got seats in some shows and we’d love to help you or other teachers at your school enliven learning with an engaging arts experience!

We have some new initiatives to deepen student connection and experience!

**Pre or Post-Show Video Chats:** Help students build enthusiasm or process their experience with a free, 5-10 minute video chat before or after the show! We can set up Skype/Facetime/Google Hangouts with your class to answer questions about the content, art form, and experience. Contact Kat, kredniss@flynncenter.org to set up your chat!

**Autism and Sensory-Friendly Accommodations:** The Flynn Center has been working diligently to break down barriers for audience members with disabilities, with a particular focus on those with sensory-sensitivities. Social stories, break spaces, sensory friendly materials, and more are available for all student matinees. Feel free to let us know ahead of time if any of these would be useful, or ask an usher at the show!

**Make your field trip the most meaningful learning experience it can be with a preparatory Companion Workshop in your classroom!**

An engaging Flynn Teaching Artist can come to your school to deepen students’ understanding of both content and form with an interactive workshop, enriching kids’ matinee experiences. Funding support is often available.

To learn more, check out this [link](#). To book a workshop, click [here](#).

Questions?
Contact Sasha: schoolprograms@flynncenter.org or (802)652-4508