

# Shalhevet International Dance Ensemble & Young Audiences

## Artists in residency at Smith Elementary School

*Shalhevet International Dance Ensemble is a folk dance ensemble that has been in existence for 30 years. Alice Stratton has been a member of Shalhevet for 8 years. Alice was part of a weeklong residency with Smith Elementary in Berea, Ohio during April 1997. The ideas and hints in this report reflect Alice's experiences.*

### Are certain folk dances age appropriate and why?

Yes. The folk dances were chosen according to the child's motor skill development. For example I have found that until 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, most children cannot do a grapevine, skip, or gallop. Therefore the dance ensemble prepared different folk dances for grades K-2, and 3-5. For grades K-2 the key was to pick dances with a lot of imagery and no complicated footwork. These children worked on translating mental imagery into movement. An example of this is the *Japanese coal miners dance*. The children learned the similarities between this Japanese folk dance and disco dance by changing the music to "Work'in in a CoalMine". The music also inspired their participation.

### What were your basic teaching approaches?

I would let the children choreograph the last part or at least a part of the dance. Then they feel ownership of the dance. Also by the third grade most children are able to jump, skip, gallop, and grapevine. The ones who can't just continue to try. The third grade group did *Pata Pata* really well. The fifth grade was not able to master theirs in the time allowed.

### How much time did you have?

Only one week with three forty-five minute sessions (about 20 kids to a class). There was a performance at the end of the week. Preparing for the performance really helped the children to focus. The challenge is always to find something that doesn't make them anxious or bored.

### Did the parents come to the performance?

Yes, some did. -And to the assembly where the Dance Ensemble performed. We also invited the parents to an evening of folk dancing with the teachers. Not one parent showed up, but a few teachers did. We think it was because it is too difficult to arrange baby-sitters and make dinner etc.

### Did the children wear costumes during the performance?

Yes. The art teacher at the school had them do art projects pertaining to the folk dance they learned. They made Japanese fans, African masks, babushkas, yamakas, and peace wreaths. I actually approached the art teacher about this beforehand. I gave her an art project book that made Japanese paper decorations. She took it from there.

### **Do you have any teaching hints?**

Yes. I usually teach the dances in pieces. For example:

1. I chunk the dance into sections
2. I put 2 chunks together, and then practice
3. If there is a complex chunk, I put it in the beginning of class where attention span is better. I also go from more difficult to easier.
4. Putting the sequence on the board was also very helpful. That way they can look at the board if they get lost.
5. I also break movement down. Like a skip is just a step with a hop.
6. Another hint is, it helps having the teacher there with the class. There was no bad behavior. It also helped to have a very enthusiastic committee of staff at the school. They gave us a lot of support. They were much better than a PTA.

### **What types of imagery did you associate with the dances?**

I already told you about the Japanese coal-miners dance. Because these are folk dances we use symbolic movement and the movement can be shown like gestures done in a culture. Their work, play, hunting, admiring an animal, just day to day activities

### **Are there basic folk dance segments you teach?**

We used a lot of skips, grapevines, reaches, and the cultural gestures. The kindergarten did La Raspa very well. Another group did their version of Riverdance. They called it Road to the Isles

### **Why did you choose a particular dance for particular grade? How did you decide?**

I thought the dances were fun and I really enjoyed the music. The music is very important. Also I kept in mind the choreography and what I believed each age group could do developmentally.

### **What would your ideal workshop be like?**

Two weeks would be the ideal. -With the 45 minute sessions, three-five days a week. But we did as much time as they could allow. Smith elementary had a grant, but it is a limited budget. Really you just want the children to get a sense of mastery. It will feed into their being, and they'll be more perseverant in everything they try.

# Smith Elementary Folk Dance Workshop

*Kindergarten – Second Grade*

## **PEACE DANCE**

A children's dance from Israel. Uses contemporary music. Includes both fighting and peaceful movements. Children choreograph last 4 phrases.

## **SWEDISH TRAIN**

Typical Swedish Hambo music. Children in circle, one child starts in center. Leader must listen for musical cues and then picks up a friend from the circle to form a train. Leaders change and train gets longer.

## **TANKO BUSH/COAL MINER'S DANCE**

Japanese dance imitating work movements of coal miners. The dance is traditionally performed at the Festival of the Dead—souls of the dead are welcomed back to their earthly abodes for a visit. Later we pair these movements to a contemporary American rock and roll song —*Work'in in a Coal Mine*.

## **YESH LI GLEEDA**

Israeli children's dance meaning, "I have ice cream". Children stand in circle. One to two children in center begin skipping with pretend ice cream cone. Using musical cues, they pass the cone on to a child standing in the circle. New cone bearer now begins skipping.

## **LA RASPA/PARACHUTE(Kindergarten)**

Commonly known as the Mexican Hat Dance (although this is not correct). Requires partners performing a hook –arm turn. After dancing with partners, all children perform the dance with a parachute!

## **HIGHLIFE**

West African dance from Ghana. Drums and bells are the only instruments. Dance imitates work, hunting and bird movements. Highlife is a mix of African folk and European colonizer's social dance. (Could also be used for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade)

# Smith Elementary Folk Dance Workshop

*Third – Fifth Grade*

## **STEP-IN OUT** (fourth – fifth)

An American “soft shoe” line dance. Music gradually fades away, students continue the dance using their own internal rhythm. Music reappears and if all has gone well, students will be right in synch!

## **JESUCITA EN CHIHUAHUA** (fifth)

A vigorous partner polka from Northern Mexico. Featuring mambo, merengue, and polka steps. Jesucita reflects the German stamp left on Northern Mexican music and dance.

## **ALUNELU** (fourth – fifth)

A Romanian dance meaning “Little Hazelnut”. Includes a lot of foot stomping sequences. Traditionally starts out slowly but speeds up at the end. Students enjoy the challenge of keeping up with the increase in tempo.

## **BANGRA** (fourth – fifth)

Choreographed in England to provide Indian teenagers living there with their own musical identity within the existing disco culture. The movements are derived from a Punjab, free-style farmer’s dance. I hear they’re dancing it in the flats of Cleveland!

## **TROIKA** (third – fifth)

A Russian dance for groups of threes. You will see us teach this in our performance. Two children are horses pulling a third “cart”. Fun Russian mixer.

## **GRAND MARCH** (third – fifth)

The Grand March has long been a part of American dance tradition. It is a means to begin or end ceremonial occasions and balls. With impressive patterns it stimulates group feeling and moving together.

**ANDROS (third – fifth)**

Basically a warm-up. Originated in Brittany, France. Wonderful music. The music sounds like it has Irish influences but is sung in French. Again, a fun feeling of communal movement.

**YESH (third – fifth)**

An “Israeli Virginia Reel”. The Israelis borrowed from the Scottish to create a modified reel. Great way to introduce the concept of a reel. (Second grade could do this also).

**JITTERBUG (fifth)**

Name used by Cab Calloway when he referred to Lindy Hoppers as “Jitterbuggers”. Basically the Swing, Lindy Hop, Jive, and Jitterbug are all variations on a theme. We think it would be fun to teach the fifth graders, but it does require partners and that can be threatening to 11-12 year old. Teachers, what do you think?

**ROAD TO THE ISLES (third – fifth)**

Scotch/Irish dance that Carolyn would like to modify for this group. Homage to Riverdance. Great music.

**PATA PATA (third)**

South African line dance.



# SMITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## ARTIST IN THE SCHOOLS WEEK SCHEDULE

Week of April 20-24, 1998

**\*\*Each Classroom Sign Up Once on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday\*\***

**\*\*Each Grade Level Sign Up on Thursday\*\***

**Avoid Signing Up on Your TAG Day if Possible**

| MONDAY   | TUESDAY   | WEDNESDAY   | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY  |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>9:45 AM</b><br/><b>Kickoff Assembly</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>10:15-11:00 AM</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>11:00 - 11:45 AM</b><br/><b>Miss Hanzwl (2nd)</b><br/><b>Israel</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1:15-2:00 PM</b><br/><b>Mrs. Brickley (3rd)</b><br/><b>South Africa</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2:00-2:45 PM</b><br/><b>Mrs. Nimon (4th)</b><br/><b>Scotland/Ireland</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2:45-3:30 PM</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>9:30-10:15 AM</b><br/><b>Mrs. Mastic (1st)</b><br/><b>Japan</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>10:15-11:00 AM</b><br/><b>Mrs. Mandato (K)</b><br/><b>Mexico</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>11:00-11:45 AM</b><br/><b>Mrs. Sipl (4th)</b><br/><b>Scotland/Ireland/Jitterbug</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1:15-2:00 PM</b><br/><b>Mrs. Dolan (2nd)</b><br/><b>Israel</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2:00-2:45 PM</b><br/><b>Mr. Strauss (5th)</b><br/><b>Mexico/Russia/Jitterbug</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2:45-3:30 PM</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mrs. Miller (2nd)</b><br/><b>Israel</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>9:30-10:15 AM</b><br/><b>Mrs. Stajcar (1st)</b><br/><b>Japan</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>10:15-11:00 AM</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>11:00-11:45 AM</b><br/><b>Mrs. O'Brian (5th)</b><br/><b>Jesuitta/Jitterbug/Troika</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1:15-2:00 PM</b><br/><b>Mrs. Carlson (K)</b><br/><b>Mexico</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2:00-2:45 PM</b><br/><b>Mrs. Neiner (3rd)</b><br/><b>Pata Pata</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2:45-3:30 PM</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mr. Bender (3rd)</b><br/><b>South Africa</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dress Rehearsal Day</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>9:30 AM</b><br/>Kindergarten (AM)<br/>Mexico</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>10:00 AM</b><br/>Fifth Grade<br/>Grand March</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>10:30 AM</b><br/>First Grade</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Japan</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>11:00 AM</b><br/>Second Grade<br/>Israel</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1:30 PM</b><br/>Third Grade</p> <p style="text-align: center;">South Africa</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2:00 PM</b><br/>Fourth Grade<br/>Scotland/Ireland/Step. Out</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2:30 PM</b><br/>Kindergarten (PM)<br/>Mexico</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>7:00-8:30 PM</b><br/>Adult Folk Dance Night<br/>For Staff and Parents</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1:45 PM</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>*All School Assembly*</b></p> |

