



DANCE EDUCATION ON THE MOVE

April 2010 Volume 3 No 4

Interesting Dance quotes:

“I believe that dance communicates man’s deepest, highest and most truly spiritual thoughts and emotions far better than works, spoken or written.” —Ted Shawn

“Dance is the art of expressing emotion by means of rhythmic body movements.” — Emile Jaques Dalcroze

“The arts, perhaps more than any other subject, help students to understand themselves and others, whether they lived in the past or are living in the present.” —Former Secretary of Education Rod Paige

FEATURED DANCE LESSON

Title: Chasing Degas

Submitted by Joanne Carey

Contact Joanne at: joanne.carey@att.net for more information

This year's annual school Spring Performance is focused on the book "Chasing Degas." All the classes, from the 3-year old children through to the teens, were assigned a piece of artwork that had been selected by their teacher. The art was the inspiration to create movements that expressed their interpretation of the art. The teachers visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art, viewed Degas work, and then selected which piece they wanted to use in the classes they taught. Teachers also selected music and costumes that would best represent the period of art work.

Eva Montanari, (2009) *Chasing Degas* Harry Abrams, Inc.

Recommended for ages 4-8. 32 pages. Contact Amazon or Barnes and Noble to review reviews and information about the author.

For more information on the author and illustrator, Eva Montanari, check her site at www.evamontanari.com

Story Summary

As she searches the streets of Paris, the ballerina encounters many other Impressionist painters, who are in the process of painting some of their great works. Monet, Renoir, Caillebotte, and Cassatt help the ballerina until she is reunited, at last, with Degas. The book features the original Impressionist paintings that inspired this picture book of historical fiction, along with an author's note about Impressionism and this vibrant period in Paris, *Chasing Degas* will delight young lovers of art and ballet.

Creative Process used with the students to respond to the artwork using dance movements.

1. The text and illustrations of *Chasing Degas* were shared with the students. The teacher read the story and showed the art included in the book.

2. A discussion followed about how dancers are also artists and through movement the paintings are brought to life for both the dancers and the audience.
3. A picture of the selected art work was shown to the students. In addition they heard the selected music for the dance and viewed the costumes. Each class used a different piece of Impressionist art.
4. Information was presented about Degas and the other artists, their life, style, and the creative process they used to select content and create through painting their view on the landscapes and people.
5. After showing a picture of the artwork, the students offered words that represented their reactions, thoughts, and feelings in response to the art.
6. Each word was transformed into an action that represented their feelings and reactions. For example, the word **colorful** became **energetic**, which in turn became lots of **skips and jumps**. When a ballet class was doing this lesson, they applied the appropriate dance terminology to the selected action word. For example, skips which became passé sautés, turns became pirouettes and grapevine steps became bourrees.
7. The explored movements were organized into a choreographic form. Through this process, the students learned how individual movements and phrases are arranged to evolve into a piece of choreography.

A Final note from Joanne: The possibilities are endless. The students enjoyed being a part of creating their dance for the stage. They have increased their ability to express themselves through movement and have gained an understanding of how movements express feelings and ideas. The dancers also experimented with what works and what doesn't and discovered ways to make changes and collaborate together. They have learned that as dancers they have a responsibility to communicate their interpretation clearly to the audience.

Each activity was suited for age group and level and adjusted where needed. All students have responded amazingly!!! Without a doubt of course! The students are so excited about the dances that many of them purchased the book *Chasing Degas*. They come to class and share their experiences about a trip to the museum to see the art. And finally, they were eager to create artwork for the playbill cover contest that accompanies the dance performance.

Dance Resources on Video and DVD

Insight Media

2162 Broadway, NY, NY 10024-0621

Phone: 800 233 9910 or 212 721 6316

Email: custser@insight-media.com

Website: www.insight-media.com

The company has an extensive listing of video and DVD's on African American Dance, Ballet, Dance for the Camera, Choreography, Dance Training, Disability and Dance, History of Dance, Jazz and Tap Dance, Lighting and Costume Design, Modern Dance, Contemporary Dance, Performance Art, Musical Dance and World Dance.

Interesting Website for Music Sources

Do you know the #1 song the day you were born?

Go to <http://www.joshosler.biz/> and look up the number one song for your birth date.