

## Elements of Live Theater: a lesson for middle and high school students

This lesson will prepare your students for attending a performance at the Performing Arts and Event Center (PAEC) and help them understand the elements of a live show.

### Learning Target

- I can develop, select, and interpret the elements of live theater.

### Success Criteria

- I used pictures and discussion to analyze elements of live theater.
- I developed a scene using the elements of live theater.
- I watched a live theater performance with one or more elements in mind.
- I discussed and wrote about my learning.

### 1. What do you know about live theater?

Have students do a quickwrite or talk to a partner about a live show they've seen or want to see. (This could include school performances). They should describe:

- What was interesting or not
- What they noticed
- What they think went into putting on the show
- The impression the show made on them
- Why they wanted or would want to see a certain show
- What they expect from live theater

They should also note any questions they have about creating or watching live theater.

### 2. What are the elements of live theater?

Put the students in small groups or partners. Assign one or two of the included images (below) of a performance to each group. Have students examine the image in terms of its represented element of live theater. (Sets, costumes, makeup, props, lights, expression, sound effects/music).

Students can take notes as they discuss in their groups. If time allows, have the groups switch images. You may wish to have them stick their image to a large sheet of paper and jot notes and descriptions around it.

- What do they notice?
- How does the element help create the scene, tell the story, define the character, set the mood, show the theme, and/or share the culture? (For sound effects/music have the students describe what sounds and types of music they would use to create and enhance the scene).
  - What clues make you say that?
  - How do the elements function as part of a whole?

- What elements of live theater are you interested in seeing when you come to the PAEC?
  - You may wish to have students pick a certain element to pay particular attention to, then share with the class or write about after the performance. They should the details and how they affected the show. A bubble map may be a useful organizer.

### 3. How would you use the elements of live theater?

In partners or small groups, have students choose a scene from a story or a historical event. Ask them how they would represent the scene in terms of sets, costumes, makeup, props, lights, expression, and sound effects/music. They should write and illustrate their ideas and have clear reasoning for their choices.

Questions to consider:

- Where does this scene take place? What is the time of year and weather?
- What needs to happen in this scene? What is the problem in this scene?
- Who are the characters in this scene? What are their personalities? What do they do?
- Will the characters pick anything up or sit down? How will they move around the space?

You may choose to have students present their work via a poster gallery walk or digital slideshow.

### 4. What did you see at the PAEC? (After your visit)

Refer back to the initial discussion questions from part 1. What can the students answer more completely now? What do they understand better? What have they learned about the theater? You may wish to have students discuss in pairs, their groups from part 3, as a whole class, and/or do a quickwrite about their impressions and questions.

- Describe the sets, costumes, makeup, props, lights, expression, and sound effects/music in the performance they saw. What effect did they have on the show?
- Would they change anything about the performance?
- Would they now change anything in their scene plan from part 3?

## Aligned Washington State Learning Standards

Common Core English Language Arts Standards: Anchor Standards

- Key Ideas and Details
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Comprehension and Collaboration

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

#### Common Core English Language Arts Standards: History/Social Studies

- Key Ideas and Details
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source.
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7: Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

#### The Arts Learning Standards: Theater: Anchor Standards

- Creating
  1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
  2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Performing
  4. Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
  6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- Responding
  7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.
  8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
  9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.
- Connecting
  10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
  11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Thank you and we hope you enjoyed experiencing the arts with us!



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Sets: Everything on the stage that helps create the setting. Some parts may be painted to represent a setting.



Tacoma City Ballet, *Cinderella*

Sets: Everything on the stage that helps create the setting. Some parts may be painted to represent a setting.



*Rain, a Tribute to the Beatles Image* ©Matt Christine Photography

Costumes: What the actors wear to help create their character.



Tacoma City Ballet, *The Nutcracker and the Tale of the Hard Nut*

Costumes: What the actors wear to help create their character.



*Rain, a Tribute to the Beatles* Image ©RichardLovrich

Makeup: Makes the actor's facial expressions stand out and can help create their character.



Celtic Nights, *Oceans of Hope*

Makeup: Makes the actor's facial expressions stand out and can help create their character.



Golden Dragon Acrobats

Props: the items the actors hold or use to tell the story, create expression, or enhance the scene.



Golden Dragon Acrobats

Props: the items the actors hold or use to tell the story, create expression, or enhance the scene.



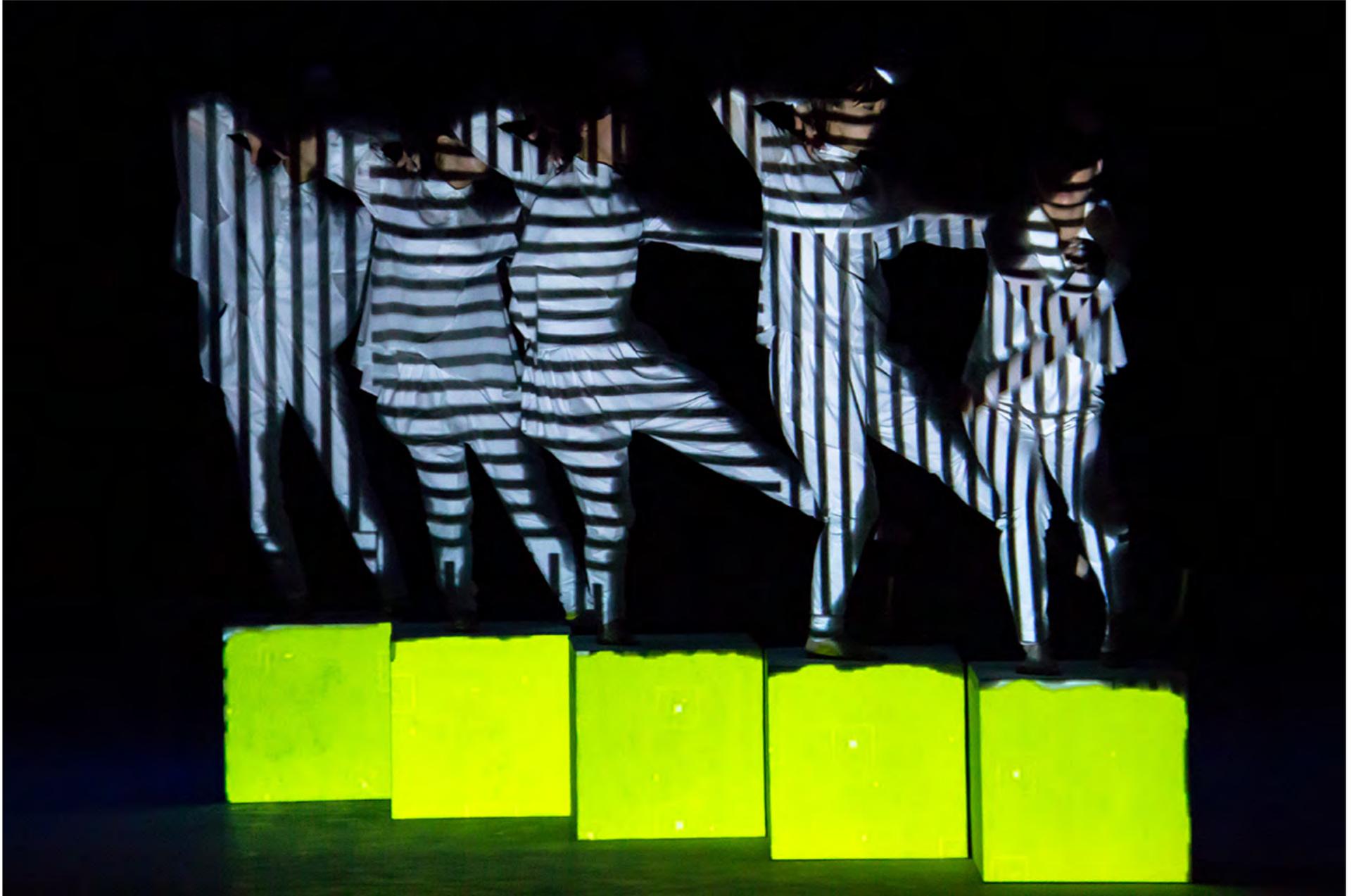
ElevenPlay

Lights: Used not just to light the stage, but also to create the setting and the mood or for special effects.



Golden Dragon Acrobats

Lights: Used not just to light the stage, but also to create the setting and the mood or for special effects.



Elevenplay

Expression: The style in which the actors convey their character. They can use facial expressions, gestures, and style of speaking.



Ambiguous Dance Company, *Rhythm of Human*

Expression: The style in which the actors convey their character. They can use facial expressions, gestures, and style of speaking.



Pushcart Players, *The Velveteen Rabbit Reborn*

Sound Effects and Music: Used to create the setting, enhance the scene, set the mood, or tell the story. Describe what sounds and types of music you would use to create and enhance this scene.



Shadow Theater Verba

Sound Effects and Music: Used to create the setting, enhance the scene, set the mood, or tell the story. Describe what sounds and types of music you would use to create and enhance this scene.



Elevenplay