

Overture Center
FOR THE ARTS

RESOURCE GUIDE

2010/11 Season

OVERTURE ONSTAGE

A Performing Arts Series for Students



Parsons Dance with East Village Opera Company | WED, FEB 23, 2011



Overture Center FOR THE ARTS

ABOUT OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Overture Center for the Arts fills a city block in downtown Madison with world-class venues for the performing and visual arts. Made possible by an extraordinary gift from Madison businessman W. Jerome Frautschi, the center presents the highest-quality arts and entertainment programming in a wide variety of disciplines for diverse audiences. Offerings include performances by acclaimed classical, jazz, pop, and folk performers; touring Broadway musicals; quality children's entertainment; and world-class ballet, modern and jazz dance. Overture Center's extensive outreach and educational programs serve thousands of Madison-area residents annually, including youth, older adults, people with limited financial resources and people with disabilities. The center is also home to ten independent resident organizations.

RESIDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society
Children's Theater of Madison
Kanopy Dance Company
Li Chiao-Ping Dance Company
Madison Ballet
Madison Museum of Contemporary Art
Madison Opera
Madison Symphony Orchestra
Wisconsin Academy's
James Watrous Gallery
Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra

Internationally renowned architect Cesar Pelli designed the center to provide the best possible environment for artists and audiences, as well as to complement Madison's urban environment. Performance spaces range from the spectacular 2,250-seat Overture Hall to the casual and intimate Rotunda Stage. The renovated Capitol Theater seats approximately 1,110, and The Playhouse seats 350. In addition, three multi-purpose spaces provide flexible performance, meeting and rehearsal facilities. Overture Center also features several art exhibit spaces. Overture Galleries I, II and III display works by Dane County artists. The Playhouse Gallery features regional artists with an emphasis on collaborations with local organizations. The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters' Watrous Gallery displays works by Wisconsin artists, and the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art offers works by national and international artists.

RESOURCE GUIDE CREDITS

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Portions provided by Parsons Dance and East Village Opera Company

“REMEMBER ME” PARSONS DANCE AND EAST VILLAGE OPERA COMPANY

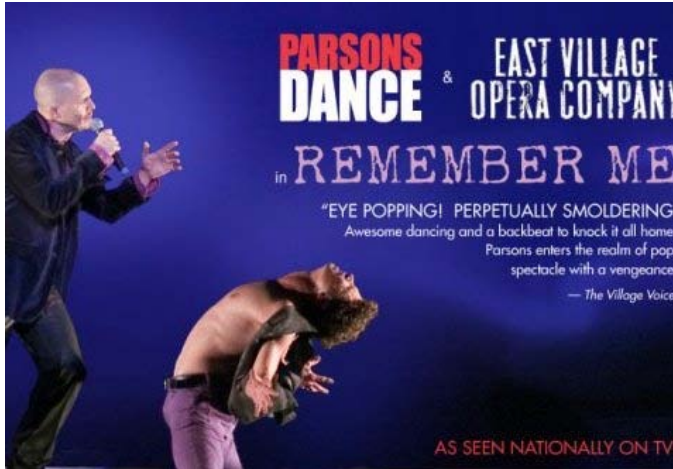


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Dear Teachers

This Spotlight on Learning: Educator's Resource Guide for Parsons Dance and East Village Opera Company's *Remember Me* OnStage performance is designed to:

- Maximize students' enjoyment and appreciation of the performance;
- Extend the impact of the performance by providing discussion ideas, activities, and further reading that promote learning across the curriculum;
- Promote arts literacy by expanding students' knowledge of music, storytelling and theater;
- Illustrate that the arts are a legacy reflecting the values, customs, beliefs, expressions, and reflections of a culture;
- Use the arts to teach about the cultures of other people and to celebrate students' own heritage through self-reflection.

In this Resource Guide, you will find valuable information and suggestions for activities that can help prepare students to see this performance, ideas for follow-up activities and resources you can access on the web. We've also included Wisconsin Academic Standards for each activity in order to align the experience with your curriculum requirements.

We Want Your Feedback!

OnStage performances can be evaluated online! Evaluations are vital to the future and funding of this program. Your feedback educates us about the ways the program is utilized and we often implement your suggestions. [CLICK HERE](#) to fill out an online evaluation. We look forward to hearing from you.

Enjoy the show!

Overture Education Team

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



The [East Village Opera Company](#) — a powerhouse rock band, string quartet, and two phenomenal vocalists — brings the towering emotion and timeless musicality of opera into the 21st century with its inventive, hard-hitting arrangements of some of opera's greatest hits.

"We have a profound love and respect for the opera," founder, arranger/multi-instrumentalist, Peter Kiesewalter insists. "But it's so dramatic, so over the top by today's standards, that it cannot be delivered with a straight face. You need a little bit of irreverence in it." Tyley Ross, co-founder and lead singer, adds, "With modern recording technology and a wide variety of musical styles at our disposal, our goal has been to approach these songs the way we feel the composers would were they alive today."

[Parsons Dance](#) is an internationally renowned contemporary dance company under the artistic direction of dancer/choreographer David Parsons. Committed to building new audiences for contemporary dance by creating American works of extraordinary artistry, Parsons Dance performance are both engaging and uplifting to audiences throughout the world.

In addition to choreography and performance, Parsons Dance is committed to audience development and arts education for participants of all ages and by all levels of artistic experience, regularly offering outreach opportunities, including post-show discussions, master classes, open rehearsals, and studio showcases.



The rock dance opera, *Remember Me*, features Parsons Dance and the lead vocalists and music of East Village Opera Company. All-new costumes by *Project Runway* designer Austin Scarlett and dramatic new lighting by Tony Award-winning lighting designer Howell Binkley turn up the passion and embolden David Parsons' electrifying dance.

- Visit [Parsons Dance](#) and [East Village Opera Company](#) online
- [View video](#) of a *Remember Me* performance

MUSIC VOCABULARY

The following terms can help students connect with this Overture *OnStage* musical experience. Use these words in some of the following activities:

- Post the words around the room.
- Assign each student a word. Have the student act out the word. After having all the students guess the meaning, tell them the word. Give students a list of the terms and see if they can select the term that is acted out.
- Have students work with a partner to define as many of the following terms as they can. Then put two pairs together, allowing students to add more definitions from the group knowledge base.

A cappella.....	Singing without accompaniment
Accent.....	Emphasis on a note, word, or phrase
Acoustics.....	Study of the making, travel and reception of sound waves
Balance.....	A sense of equilibrium or satisfying proportions of sounds
Chord.....	Two or more pitches sounding together
Contrast.....	Use of different sound qualities to produce musical effects
Diction.....	Correct and clear pronunciation of consonants
Dynamics.....	Varying loudness or softness to create specific effects
Gesture.....	The act of moving the limbs or body as an expression of thought or emphasis
Harmony.....	The combination of notes considered pleasing to the ear
Instrumentation....	The arrangement or composition of music for instruments (band or orchestra)
Melody.....	Pitches in sequence that form a pattern
Meter.....	The division of time into units
Mood.....	A feeling/emotion induced by a particular atmosphere (entertainment, solace, diversion)
Phrase.....	Notes played or sung in one breath
Pitch.....	The highness or lowness of sound measured in Hz
Posture.....	Sitting/standing correctly and efficiently
Pulse.....	Feeling where the beat is
Repetition.....	Repeat a pattern of melody to help achieve thematic unity
Rhythm.....	How a sound is placed in time
Tempo.....	The speed at which a regular pulse is repeated
Texture.....	The relations or combinations between layers of sound that are heard at one time
Tone /Timbre.....	The relative brightness or darkness of a sound
Unison.....	Everyone on the same pitch
Visualization.....	Imagery generated by and synchronized with the music that is being played

You Compose It

Go to the [Virtual Piano](#) website. Compose a simple melody using both the white and black keys and any rhythmic accompaniments you wish. Write down the letters of the notes you choose in order to practice your melodies and then play them for the class. *Optional: Write your own lyrics!*

DANCE FUNDAMENTALS

CENTERING is fundamental to a dancer's ability to perform well. "Centering" means to maintain a sense of the body's center of gravity that holds a dancer together as he/she moves. It allows a dancer to move gracefully and freely. The natural base is approximately just below the navel. Learning to move from the center will also make movements easier to control.

GRAVITY is the force that holds a person to the earth. It is a force a dancer must master because it constantly inhibits movement. Dancers must be aware of the gravitational pulls in their own body. They must learn which points of the body feel the most weight.

BALANCE is concerned with more than, for example, balancing on one leg. A dancer's goal is to achieve and constantly maintain an inner balance of the whole body. It is the tension of mutual support among all parts of the body that brings the whole body together in a new way. It is not something that is achieved once in awhile; it is constant.

GESTURE is how the dancer uses his or her body as an expressive instrument to communicate feelings and ideas in patterns of movement. With subtle gestures and postural attitudes, a dancer can show cooperation, express confidence or display aggression. Arms crossed over the chest create a protective wall. Hands on hips mean "show me." Placing fists on hips is even more challenging. Anger patterns are depicted very differently from joy or sadness. Raised shoulders are a gesture of not knowing or caring. Shoulders forward express pain. Tapping a foot signals boredom. It is important for students to recognize what the body is saying.

RHYTHM is something everybody possesses, though some people are more aware of it and/or sensitive to it. Discovering rhythm is largely a matter of paying attention to the music of the body as well as to any musical accompaniment. Everyone's heart beats to a rhythm; one's lungs breathe to another. Rhythm is essential for a dancer. A dancer has to anticipate musical beats. They must feel as if they are making the beat with their body, as well as hearing it. It is the rhythm and the beat of the dance that forms the "threads" of the dance.

MOVING in SPACE requires a dancer to be aware of more than just his or her own body and movement. Dancers have to move with care and awareness, gauging the space that surrounds them. Space is not just empty air but a tangible element that dancers move through. Each movement through space can be thought of as an accomplishment.

POSTURE is achieved when dancers change their perception of the body. Dancers work all their lives to develop their posture, also called alignment. It is the key to balance and movement. Posture reveals feelings. Good posture actually makes a person feel brighter and more aware.

BREATHING is crucial to dance. Not only does it bring oxygen to the body but it also creates movement that is fluid and harmonious. It is an expressive tool. Calm, slow breathing suggests a certain degree of self-control. A phrase without breath looks stiff and mechanical. A phrase with breath creates a more emotional, organic look. A dancer must learn to breathe deeply, expanding the ribs at the back of the body rather than from the front.

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

LOOK, LISTEN, THINK AND FEEL

Attending a performance of *Remember Me* is a chance for you to look, listen, think and feel.

Look

- What movements did you see the artists do that created a playful atmosphere?
- Did the costumes remind you of something? Did you think the costumes helped the performance? How would you dress the dancers and the vocalist?
- How did the dances include sets, props, lighting and the movement itself?
- What did you see develop in each performance? Who were the characters and the roles that the dancers and vocalist played?



Listen

- How did the music add to or work with the visual and bodily elements of the dance?
- Did the music help change the mood of each section? How so?
- Did you hear any culturally specific music or themes in any of the pieces?

Think and Feel

- Did you feel the music in your body?
- What do you think the dances were about? What themes and images did you see within the performances?
- What kinds of stories did the dances depict? What do you think happened in this story? Were there any clues that led you through the story?

The Arts

The arts are a way for people to tell their stories, share their thoughts and express their feelings. Think of artistic forms, such as art, music, theater, dance and movies that you are familiar with.

- What can you learn about people by experiencing the art that they create?
- How do these different art forms help people to express their emotions? Tell their stories?



DANCE ACTIVITIES

Dance is for everyone, but it could mean very different things to individual people. In many cultures, dance is not separated from everyday life. Pretty much any activity that a person participates in requires them to move in different ways, interact with different objects and even wear specific clothing items. People around the world “dance” to their own rhythms, everyday, whether at work, at home, while doing every day activities, or in celebration.

Observing a World of Movement

Dance and movement are a part of everyday life. Spend 5-10 minutes observing someone performing a specific task. What items is that person holding? What are they wearing? How are they moving? Write down everything you see.

- Create a character from these descriptions.
- Perform a short mimed scene featuring that character.
- Explore abstract movements with the body and build the character’s story through dance.
- Have classmates guess who the character might be.

Communicating Without Words

Does a story have to be told in words? How can we communicate without using words? Gestures make up a large part of our day and are connected to our emotions. As a class, pick 5 to 8 gestures and explore what meanings are attached to those gestures.

- Put the gestures together sequentially and create a “movement phrase”
- Try to change the order of the gestures and change their meaning
- Add a walking pattern to the movement phrase

Feel the Rhythm

In this performance of *Remember Me*, the communication between the vocalist and the dancer is passionate and emotionally charged, often telling a story or communicating a feeling. Rhythms are an essential part of this communication.

- In small groups, create a rhythmic pattern that tells a story which includes a beginning, middle and end. Use your bodies by clapping, stomping, or snapping fingers; or, use found objects such as pencils.
- Experiment with the sounds and patterning of your rhythm. After developing a rhythm, have your group share with the class.

Use the following questions in discussion.

- How did the tempo of the rhythm affect what you felt as a performer or as an observer?
- How did the dynamics (loudness or softness) of the sound affect you?
- What feeling did the rhythm convey?
- What story did the rhythm tell?

DANCE ACTIVITIES

There are many ways to be inspired to create a dance. Look at this image from a *Remember Me* performance. Brainstorm ideas, words or phrases that fall into these three categories.

Images

What colors/shapes do you see? How are the dancers bodies positioned?

Feelings

How does this image make you feel? What stories do these characters tell? What emotions are they communicating?

Movements

Using verbs, describe this “snapshot” of the dance in action. What happened just before? What will happen immediately after this image?



Your Turn to Interpret The Dance

- Thinking about the themes and ideas you imagined in the above image, find your own space in the room and find a beginning position (the starting point of your story and dance).
- When your teacher begins playing [“La Donna” \(Remember Me\)](#) start moving your body in whatever way feels comfortable to you.
- After a little while, your teacher will ask you to interact with a fellow student. Without using physical contact, move to the music and allow it (along with the previous brainstorm about the image) to inform how you move with your partner.
- Once you have been interacting for a short time, your teacher will ask you to join with another pair and continue to interact as a group.
- After you have experienced various interpretations of this dance, settle on one movement that you feel represents your interpretation of the image. Repeat this movement continuously, until it feels fluid and focused.
- Finally, once you have your movement, teach it to the rest of the group.
- Present all four movements as a dance phrase to the rest of the class, using the following guidelines:
 - Each group member must be involved.
 - All four movements should be represented.
 - There should be three parts of the dance, beginning, middle and end.

As a class, discuss each group’s performance. What shapes and images were seen during each group’s performance? What emotions were present in any of the dance phrases? What interpretation of the image appeared to inspire each group’s performance?

DANCE DESIGN AND AESTHETICS

The design elements in dance play a vital role in the choreographer's artistic vision. As dancers are generally silent performers, props, sets, costumes and lighting are relied upon to help inform their performance. These aesthetics work with the choreography to create the final product seen by the audience.

Prop it Up

Can a prop have a life of its own? Choose any object and think about how it could be used to symbolically represent a dance theme. Move with and explore the physical nature of the object.

- How does it move? What does the object mean to you? Does it have any symbolic meaning?
- What could you change about the object to make it more relevant, such as a color or shape?
- Does the object make a sound, or do you associate a sound with the object?
- Using the object, create a performance that emphasizes your theme.

As a class, discuss how different props can take on different meanings depending on the context. For example, a suitcase could represent travel, immigration, or "baggage," as in an emotional or psychological burden from the past. How successful was each person incorporating their props into their theme? Does the class see how the original theme is translated into the object? Have you examined all possibilities for how your object can be used on stage?

The Clothes Make the Character

Another important design element in dancing is the costuming. Costume designers dress their performers according to the symbolic details of their characters or the story they are trying to tell.



What types of clothing would be necessary to emphasize a dance theme?

- Using old magazines, newspapers, print ads create collages of clothes that you think will help achieve the mission of your theme.
- Share the completed collages with the class.

EXTENDED ACTIVITY

Chose the same, or similar, themes to create a short (2-3 minute) piece incorporating your costume collages and props. Brainstorm different ways to demonstrate that theme to the class. Will you create a scene? A dance? A short story? A poem?

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES



Music in Your Life

As a class, discuss the following questions. What do today's music and dance styles reflect about our society? What attitudes about the world are conveyed through these types of artistic expression? Think about the importance of music and dance in your life. What is your favorite music and dance style? Why?

Review the Performance

Write a review of the *Remember Me* performance. Start by writing down everything you remember from the show. What kinds of dances did they perform? Who were your favorite dancers? Why? What did you think of the music in the performance? Who were your favorite vocalists? What was the "best part" of the performance? Did you have a least favorite part of the performance? Why? Were there any additional aspects of the show that stood out to you (e.g. sets, lighting, costumes and/or a specific dance sequence)? What did you like most about those aspects of the show? How did the performance make you feel?

- Give the performance a rating, out of five stars.
- For each positive star, discuss one thing you liked about the performance. (Example, for a five-star rating, describe five things you liked and why you liked them.)
- For each star under five, discuss one thing you did not enjoy about the performance. (Example, for a three-star rating, list three things you liked and two things you did not enjoy.)

Draw or Paint Your Impression of the Performance

Draw or paint a picture or impression that expresses how the dancers or vocalists made you feel. Use shapes, lines, colors, patterns and other elements from your imagination that convey qualities of the performance.

Performance Feedback

We love to hear from you. Send your performance reviews and/or drawings to:

**Education Department
Overture Center for the Arts
201 State Street, Madison, WI 53703**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

MUSIC

[Kidzone](#)

Visit the New York Philharmonic's Kidzone for many musical activities and topics from the viewpoint of other disciplines.

[Play Music](#)

A young person's interactive guide to the orchestra

[Create Music](#)

Explore writing music, changing tempo and dynamics. Play with musical phrases and melodies using a mouse.

DANCE

[Dance Vocabulary](#)

[Basic Dance Steps for Beginners](#)

Mastering the basic dance steps will prepare you to try more complicated dancing. Once you learn these dance steps, you can apply them to many different dances. You'll also hear these terms used commonly by dance instructors.

[How to Dance Freestyle: Rock Step](#)

Want to explore the freestyle? You have come to the right place then. Come and learn this basic step following the instructions of two music lovers like you and me. You will have the opportunity to discover the secrets of how to make it funky.

WISCONSIN ACADEMIC STANDARDS

DANCE

Motor Learning

- A.1 Explore and integrate the three elements of dance (space, time, and force) and focus on the relationships of body parts to each other, dancers to each other, and dancers to objects
- A.2 Begin using the following movement skills and explain their underlying principles: alignment, balance, initiation of movement, isolation of body parts, weight shift, elevation and landing, and fall and recovery
- A.3 Discover increasingly complex combinations of locomotor and nonlocomotor movements emphasizing the elements of space, time, and force
- A.4 Respond to rhythmic patterns with accuracy
- A.5 Identify, demonstrate, and combine the basic effort actions
- A.6 Demonstrate increasing kinesthetic awareness, concentration, and focus in performing movement skills
- A.7 Continue to observe and describe movement elements in creative dance studies using appropriate movement/dance vocabulary

Improvisation

- C.1 Use improvisation to explore, discover, and invent movement and to solve movement problems
- C.2 Improvise spontaneous dances that range from free-form to structured studies
- C.3 Respond to various motivational resources such as music, props, costumes, and scenic elements through improvisation

Choreography

- D.1 Create a sequence with a beginning, middle, and an end, with and without rhythmic accompaniment
- D.2 Create a dance phrase, repeat it, and vary it (making changes in the space, time, and/or force or energy)
- D.3 Demonstrate the following skills: leading, following, echoing, and mirroring
- D.4 Integrate the basic compositional elements of unity, contrast, repetition, and variety into dances
- D.5 Demonstrate the ability to work effectively alone, cooperatively with a partner, and in small groups

Critical Thinking

- E.2 Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior while watching dance performances, and discuss their opinions about the dances with their peers in a supportive and constructive way
- E.4 Identify possible criteria for evaluating dance (such as skill of performers, originality, visual and/or emotional impact, variety, and contrast)
- E.5 Create a dance project that reveals increased understanding of a concept or idea

Communication and Expression

- F.1 Differentiate between functional and expressive movement
- F.2 Use gesture as a tool to enhance the expressive nature of movement
- F.3 Present dances and discuss how movement choices can convey multiple meanings
- F.4 Use and explain how different accompaniments (such as sound, music, and spoken text) can affect the meaning of a dance
- F.5 Demonstrate and/or explain how lighting and costuming can contribute to the meaning of a dance

WISCONSIN ACADEMIC STANDARDS

LANGUAGE ARTS

Writing

- B.1 Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes--
- Write nonfiction and technical pieces (summaries, informational essays, simple reports) that convey essential details and facts and provide accurate representations of events and sequences
 - Write expressive pieces in response to reading, viewing, and life experiences (narratives, reflections, and letters) employing descriptive detail and a personal voice
 - Write a persuasive piece (such as a letter to a specific person) that includes a clear position, a discernible tone, and a coherent argument with reliable evidence

MUSIC

Improvisation

- C.2 Improvise simple rhythmic and melodic accompaniments
- C.3 Improvise simple rhythmic variations and melodic embellishments on given melodies
- C.4 Improvise short songs and instrumental pieces, using a variety of sound sources, including traditional sounds, sounds available in the classroom, body sounds, and sounds produced by electronic means

Evaluation

- G.1 Devise criteria for evaluating performances and compositions
- G.2 Explain, using appropriate music terminology, personal preferences for specific musical works and styles
- G.3 Evaluate the quality of their own and others' performances and offer constructive suggestions for improvement

THEATER ETIQUETTE AND EXPERIENCES

We have a wonderful opportunity at this performance to help youth learn about attending live performances.

Please discuss the following with your students:

1. Sometimes young people do not realize how a live performance differs from watching a movie or television show. A live presentation has not been pre-recorded with the mistakes edited out. This makes it riskier for the performer and more exciting for the audience. It also means the audience has a real contribution to make to the overall event. Each audience member affects those around him/her as well as the performer. Concentrate to help the performers. The audience gives energy to the performer who uses that energy to give life to the performance.
2. An usher will show you where to sit. Walk slowly and talk quietly as you enter the theater.
3. For safety's sake, do not lean over or sit on the balcony railings or box ledges. Please be careful on the stairs. Avoid horseplay and running throughout the building.
4. If necessary, use the restroom before the performance begins. Adults need to accompany young students.
5. You may talk quietly to the people next to you until the performance begins.
6. When the lights in the theater begin to dim, it is the signal that the performance is about to begin. Stop talking and turn your attention to the stage.
7. Stay in your seat throughout the entire performance.
8. During the performance, listen quietly and watch closely. Talking during the performance will distract other audience members and performers. Try not to wiggle too much and don't kick the seat in front of you. These disruptions make it hard for others around you to concentrate on the show.
9. Sometimes during a performance you may respond by laughing, crying, or sighing. By all means feel free to do so! **LAUGHING IS APPROPRIATE.** (Teachers, please do not hush the students while they are laughing.) If something is funny, it's good to laugh. If you like something a lot, applaud. This will let the performers know that you are enjoying the show.
10. At the end of the show, applaud to say thank you to the performers. The performers will bow to acknowledge your appreciation and thank you for coming.
11. When the lights get brighter in the theater, the show is over. Stay in your seats until the OnStage Coordinator dismisses your school.
12. Please remember:
 - Taking photographs or using recording devices is strictly prohibited.
 - Beverages and food, including gum and candy are not allowed in the theater.
 - You are only one person among several hundred in the audience.
 - Please respect the performers and your fellow audience members.

Please inform your adult chaperones that ushers will be available throughout the performance if there are any difficulties.

AMERICAN GIRL'S FUND FOR CHILDREN

Funding for this resource guide and the OnStage Performing Arts Series for Students is provided by a generous grant from American Girl's Fund for Children, a philanthropic foundation created to support programs and services for school-age children in Dane County. Since its founding in 1992, American Girl's Fund for Children has supported programs in the arts, culture, and environment.

OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

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