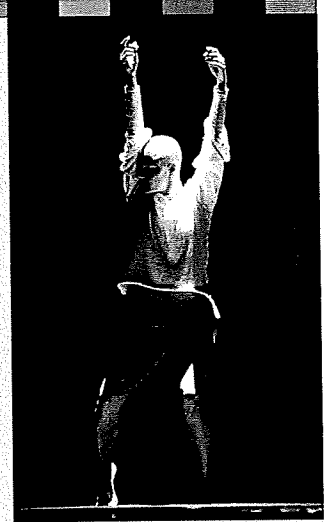




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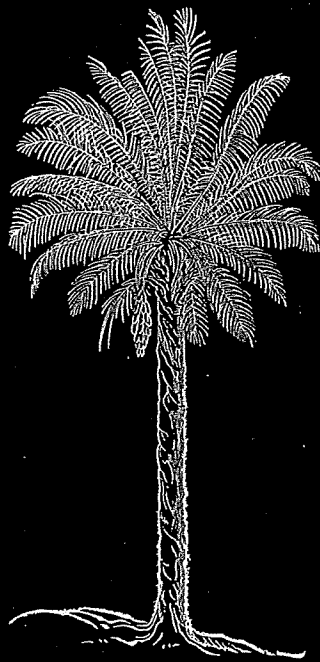


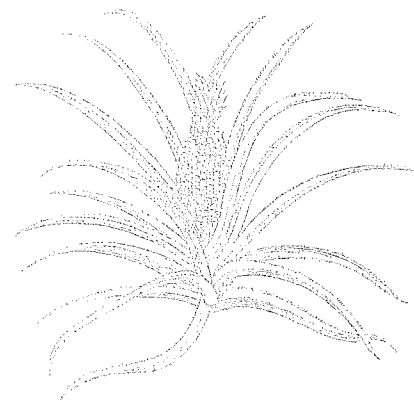
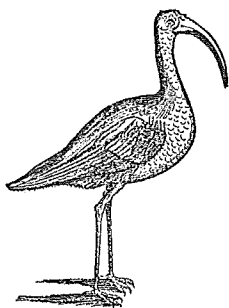
TEACHERS' RESOURCE GUIDE

Grades 6-12th



QUASAR DANCE COMPANY





WELCOME!

THIS TEACHERS' RESOURCE GUIDE HAS BEEN CREATED FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TO USE BEFORE AND AFTER SEEING **QUASAR DANCE COMPANY**. THIS GUIDE IS A RESOURCE FOR YOU TO PREPARE YOUR STUDENTS FOR THE PERFORMANCE AND PROVIDES YOU WITH IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES ON RELATED TOPICS. WE ARE VERY PLEASED THAT YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS WILL BE ATTENDING THIS PERFORMANCE AND HOPE THE EXPERIENCE WILL ENRICH YOUR CLASSROOM.

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THE ARTS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF A CHILD'S EDUCATION, WE HAVE PREPARED THIS GUIDE WITH THE TEACHER IN MIND. WE UNDERSTAND THAT TEACHERS ARE PRESSURED TO MEET STANDARDS AND TO DEMONSTRATE EXPERTISE IN MANY AREAS. TO THIS END, THIS ALL-INCLUSIVE GUIDE WILL PROVIDE BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE PERFORMANCE, INFORMATION ON BRAZILIAN CULTURE, AND ACTIVITIES FOR BEFORE AND AFTER THE SHOW. THE SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES ARE LINKED TO NATIONAL STANDARDS IN THE **ARTS, ENGLISH, AND SOCIAL STUDIES**; HOWEVER, YOU MAY FEEL FREE TO ADAPT THE ACTIVITIES TO FIT YOUR CLASSROOM, YOUR GROUP'S READINESS, AND YOUR STATE'S STANDARDS.

About Quasar Dance Company

Quasar Dance Company was formed in 1988 by dancer Vera Bicalho and choreographer Henrique Rodovalho. As a contemporary Brazilian dance company, Quasar's story is unique in many ways. Quasar was born, "grew up," and developed in Goiás, a state in Brazil's interior, far from the cultural capitals of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. This geographical isolation created initial challenges for the young company. In some ways, it gave Quasar's members the freedom to explore their own artistic vision and define themselves as a company. In its early years, however, the company found it hard to gain national recognition because they were not in the mainstream Brazilian dance scene. Over time, Quasar built a strong and loyal local community in its home city of Goiânia (including bringing dance classes to underserved children). But it was only after Quasar received international recognition at a dance festival in Israel that they began to garner national attention. Today, they tour extensively and are recognized both inside and outside of Brazil as one of the freshest voices emerging from the contemporary dance scene. Quasar has performed in Europe,

the United States, Israel, and various countries in Latin America. The dance performance you are about to see is especially exciting in that it marks Quasar's fifteenth anniversary.

How Did Quasar Get Its Name?

Originally named "Energy Group," the troupe changed its name after a popular science magazine came out with a cover story on quasars. "Quasar" is the astronomical term for "an immense point of concentration of energy in the universe; where the stars are born." The troupe felt that this name captured their energy, newness, and vision—you can see the tremendous energy in their dance!

ACTIVITY:

Science through Dance

Have your students research what a quasar is and do a short report, drawing, or story about quasars.

NA-D.5-9.7 MAKING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN DANCE AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

Meet the Choreographer

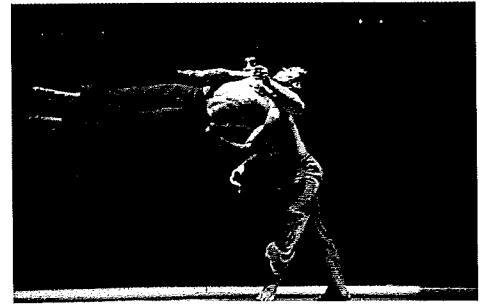
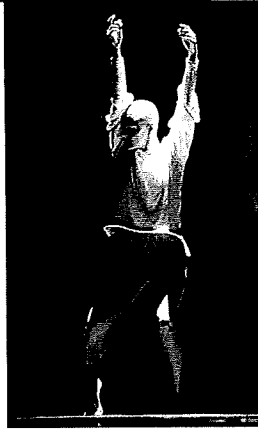
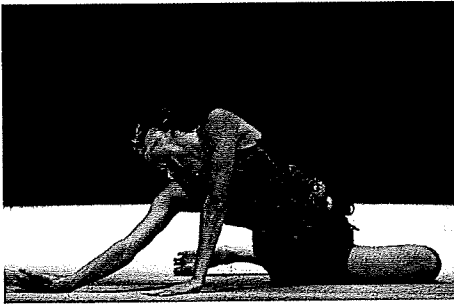
Henrique Rodovalho is a choreographer who has worked to invent his own dance vocabulary.

For Rodovalho, all "languages" are instruments and sources of information that can be used in dance. His work is a collage/mixture of various elements.

Trained in physical education and martial arts, Rodovalho discovered his love for dance in his mid-twenties. In order to increase his training, Rodovalho spent two years studying dance in Rio de Janeiro, where he also participated in theater and worked as a video producer. He was, and continues to be, fascinated by cinema and the power of video images. Rodovalho cites the films of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton as being influential on his work. The physical comedy of these performers is reflected in his choreography. Rodovalho incorporates elements of film, video, theater, and humor in his work and is recognized for his unique blending of these various media and sources.

In 1988, Rodovalho returned to Goiás to become the choreographer for Quasar. Says Rodovalho, "My influences have always been outside of the forms of dance: I trained in physical education and martial arts, and so I had to invent my own language of dance in order to incorporate these influences. My shows have a mixture of sports, theater, dance, gymnastics. . . . In the beginning, no one knew what to call it, and they said it had a little bit of everything, except dance. Today, the characteristics of our work are primarily related to the question of the language of dance. How do we use outside influences to inform our dance? How does daily life translate into the body and movement? I am concerned with the languages of the body. Of rhythms. Of dances."





ALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE: Quasar.

He adds, "At the very heart of it, our work looks to communicate something that is ours, but at the same time make it accessible to others. In the past, going to see a dance performance was like going to another planet. We want to break down the distance between the 'planets' of the audience and the performers. We started to bring elements into our dance that would also bring in the audience—street clothes, themes that have to do with people's everyday lives. However, our work is not about popular entertainment in the sense of parades or street parties; it's a work of reflection that we try to bring to other places so that people have greater access to culture. We want to explore who we are, how we are as human beings, and as individuals. The creative process of Quasar is an exploration of these questions."

ACTIVITY:

Thinking About the Way We Move

As a choreographer, Rodovalho asks himself: How does daily life translate into movement? Ask your students to reflect on the following themes: How do they use their bodies everyday? What are some movements — sitting, brushing their teeth, lying down — that they perform everyday? How might they take these "everyday" movements and incorporate them into a dance? How might they change them so that the movement doesn't look like it does in the "everyday"? In small groups, have them invent a dance "move" that represents something they do everyday and teach it to the rest of the class.

NA-D.5-8.1 IDENTIFYING AND DEMONSTRATING ELEMENTS AND SKILLS IN PERFORMING DANCE

ACTIVITY:

Analyzing a Specific Style of Movement

Bring in a Charlie Chaplin movie for your students to watch. After viewing the film, ask them to analyze the movement styles they saw in the film. Ask them to

create a silent scene imitating the style and comedy of Charlie Chaplin's physical movements.

NA-D.9-12.4 APPLYING AND DEMONSTRATING CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS IN DANCE



THE WORLD OF DANCE

Why See a Dance Performance?

All people dance. Dance is something that is unique to human beings. It is one of the ways we tell our stories and express who we are. Dance is common in all societies, though the dances of one culture may look different from the dances of another.

Dance is a language. When we speak, we arrange words, phrases, and sentences in endlessly varying ways to express different ideas or feelings. In the same way, each choreographer may take elements of any of the movement styles

she or he chooses to create a unique statement.

Professional dancers are people who spend much of their lives training and studying dance techniques in order to be able to perform choreography (patterns of dance made up to tell a story) for an audience. In seeing a dance performance, you can learn more about other cultures, different styles of dance, and the amazing ways in which humans can use their bodies to express something.

Dance can...

- Erupt spontaneously for fun
- Express feelings
- Tell a story
- Be a means of education
- Mark certain ritual moments, both religious and social
- Reaffirm a community's sense of identity

ACTIVITY:

Reflecting on Dance

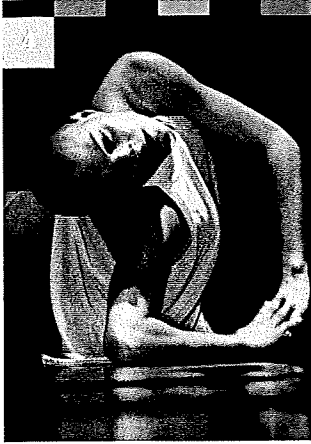
Ask your students to think about the types of dance they have seen — in their homes, on television, in their community. Have them recount the times and places where they may have danced. Ask them to reflect specifically on: How did you move your body? Was it different from the way you move in everyday life? How did it make you feel? What was the occasion for which you were dancing?

NA-D.5-12.1 IDENTIFYING AND DEMONSTRATING MOVEMENT ELEMENTS AND SKILLS IN PERFORMING DANCE

Watching a Dance Performance

Many people have not had the experience of watching a professional dance troupe. One way you can help your students become more involved in the performance is to give them some questions to think about beforehand. As they watch the dancers, ask them to consider:

- Are the movements quick or slow?
- Are the movements close to the ground or high in the air?



FAR LEFT: Quasar.
MIDDLE: Capoeira
angola orchestra,
near Salvador.
LEFT: Quasar.
RIGHT: Brazil flag.
BELOW: Quasar.



- What do the movements of the dancers tell you about what is going on in the story?
- What is the mood of each dance piece?
- What are the clues that tell you something about the mood?
- Are there distinct characters portrayed?
- Is the dancing done in couples?
- What kinds of musical instruments do you recognize as you listen and watch the dancing?
- Is the music quiet and soothing?
Or loud and exciting?
- What other types of sounds add to the performance?
- Notice the costumes the dancers are wearing.
- Do they say anything about the dance?

NA-D.5-12.3 UNDERSTANDING DANCE AS A WAY TO CREATE AND COMMUNICATE MEANING

Defining the Different Types of Dance

Ballet: Born in Europe, a classical dance form demanding grace and precision and employing conventional steps and gestures in intricate, flowing patterns.

Modern Dance: Sometimes based on ballet positions and steps, but freer and looser than ballet, as well as more 'rooted' on the floor. It incorporates everyday movements and gestures.

Jazz Dance: Like jazz music, grew out of African forms and flourished in 20th-century America. Its music is percussive and polyrhythmic (using several rhythmic beats). Dancers move different parts of their bodies in isolation, or independently of each other.

Traditional Dance: Springs from everyday life and from the rituals people create to mark special occasions and ceremonies. Sometimes called Folkloric Dance.

Social Dance: Usually occurs in more formal, often urban and indoor settings, such as a ballroom or nightclub. The waltz, tango, swing, and salsa are examples of social dances.

Contemporary Dance: May combine ele-

ments of all of the types of dance listed above. More than a specific type of movement, contemporary dance reflects issues in society today, drawing on elements from the past and present, and may even incorporate elements of popular culture (such as hip-hop!).



ACTIVITY:

The Origins of Dances

Research a specific dance style and the society and time period it grew out of (e.g., the jazz movement, salsa, dances that accompany hip-hop).

NA-D9-12.5 DEMONSTRATING AND UNDERSTANDING DANCE IN VARIOUS CULTURES AND HISTORICAL PERIODS

Children and Dance: Quasar's "Kids Dance"

Quasar believes that dance should not be an "elite" pursuit; it should be accessible to all people. One of the ways in which Quasar contributes to its local community in the city of Goiânia is through a project called *Criança Dança* (Kids Dance). For three years, the company, in partnership with the city government of Goiânia, has offered dance classes and workshops for children and teenagers from poor local communities. Kids Dance is committed to bringing education and cultural initiatives to underserved children. The

only criteria for the children who attend is that they must remain in school in order to participate in the project. Quasar believes that dance can be a means through which kids discover their potential, raise their self-esteem, remain committed to regular schooling, and develop a sense of community pride. Though their goal is not that all of the children will become professional dancers, they also want children to know that being an artist is a valid career option.

"We don't want the language of our art to be elite... Like with kids, why shouldn't they want to dance? We want to show them that art is an option, that it is an important part of society."

—Henrique Rodovalho

Quasar and Collage: 'Mistura,' A Very Brazilian Concept

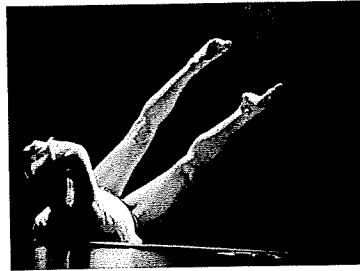
The United States has frequently been referred to as a melting pot because various cultures and people from all over the world make up the U.S. landscape. Each of these cultures contributes in its own way to U.S. culture. Similarly, most of Latin America is a mosaic of cultures and influences—sharing commonalities from histories of colonialization, immigration, and mixing of cultures. Brazil is no exception. A very common theme in Brazil is the idea of *mistura*, or mixture. In 1922, a very important movement began in Brazil during the Week of Modern Art. Brazilian writers called for Brazilian artists to ingest the influences often imposed on them by outside forces, digest them, and use them to create art that, while melding these influences, was uniquely Brazilian.

ACTIVITY:

Expressing Yourself through Collage

Have your students make a collage, using different media, about their local community or around a given theme.

NL-ENG.K-12.5 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND SKILLS



FAR LEFT: Quasar.
LEFT: Quasar.
RIGHT: Graffiti wall, São Paulo.



The Elements of Quasar's Dance: What to Look for in the Performance

Dance can use movement, music, costumes, and sometimes text as its vocabulary. Rodovalho expands this vocabulary to include a mixture of elements in his choreography. What are the elements of this vocabulary?

Capoeira: A martial arts dance created by Brazilian slaves. Prohibited from fighting, slaves used *capoeira* as a means of training for self-defense and insurrection under the watchful eye of the slave owners, who thought they were "just dancing." Because the slaves' hands were often bound (when they weren't working), *capoeira* movements involve much of the lower body—low

street). This brings a certain sense of the "real world" into the performance.

Interviews in the Community: Many of Quasar's dance pieces were developed from research done by interviewing people in their community. Often these interviews make up part of the soundscape that the dancers dance to, or videos of the people interviewed may appear as part of the performance.

Live Interactions: In one of their performances, a dancer orders a pizza while onstage, and the delivery person unsuspectingly delivers it in the middle of the performance, onstage! The dancers then proceed to eat the pizza while dancing. (This is not in the performance you will see, but have your students keep an eye out for

A SHORT HISTORY OF BRAZIL AND OF QUASAR

- 1500** – Portuguese navigator Pedro Álvares Cabral discovers Brazil.
- 1530** – First colonists arrive; beginning of the sugar era.
- 1763** – Capital moved from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro.
- 1822** – Independence: Dom Pedro I becomes emperor of Brazil.
- 1888** – Slavery abolished.
- 1889** – Independent republic proclaimed.
- 1922** – Week of Modern Art in São Paulo.

- 1950s** – Brazilian jazz movement, Bossa Nova, takes the world by storm.
- 1960** – New capital founded in Brasília.
- 1964** – Military overthrows civilian government.
- 1985-89** – Redemocratization: First democratic elections held in more than 20 years.
- 1988** – Henrique Rodovalho invited to be the resident choreographer of newly formed Quasar Dance Company.
- 1996** – Quasar performs in Europe.

- 1997** – Quasar is awarded prizes as "Best of the Year" in categories "company," "performance," "choreographer," and "budding dancers" in a competition promoted by the Brazilian Ministry of Culture.
- 1999** – Quasar performs at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and is praised by the *New York Times*.
- 2003** – Quasar begins its first tour of the United States, debuting a new piece entitled *Lend Me Your Eyes*.

sweeping movements close to the ground and kicks. In addition, players dance inside of a *roda* (or circle) while other players chant, sing, and play percussion and the *berimbau* (an instrument made of a gourd and metal string on a long bow).

Gymnastics: Since Rodovalho trained as a physical educator, and many of his dancers have training in gymnastics, the company's dance style is highly physical and gymnastic. Have your students watch for this. Does this type of dancing seem "easy" to them, or hard?

Video: Often in Rodovalho's pieces live dancers dance against a backdrop of video images (either pretaped or live images from the

the unexpected!)

Humor: Rodovalho uses a lot of humor in his work. Things might be funny one moment, and not in another. Instruct your students: Take note of what you find amusing and entertaining. Ask yourself what was it that struck you as funny. Is this humor intended just for entertainment or as commentary?

Theater: Given that much of Quasar's work is organized in short skits and scenes, there are elements of the performances that seem closer to "theater" than what some people associate with dance. Some have described Quasar's work as "dance-verging-on-drama."

ACTIVITY:

Using Observation Skills

Before seeing the performance, discuss with your students the elements mentioned above. Ask them to pay attention for these elements in the performance and see how many they can identify. When you come back from the performance ask the students to review together: What elements did they see?

NA-T.5-8.5 EVALUATION STRATEGIES

ACTIVITY:

Research in the Community

Have your students identify a topic they find interesting and interview members of a community about this topic. They could conduct this research project over time and in connection with a theme

you are studying in another subject. Then, in smaller groups, have them create a collage based on the things they learned from their interviews and research. The collage may be two-dimensional and visual, or it may involve the use of video, sound, student performances, and other media.

NL-ENG.K-12.3 COMPARING AND CONNECTING ART FORMS

More about Brazil

When most Americans think of Brazil, they think of soccer, samba, and carnival. But Brazil, like the United States, is a complex mosaic of peoples, landscapes, and cultural traditions.

Brazil's history, like ours, is a tapestry woven of many threads—immigrants, indigenous peoples, slavery, agriculture and industry, courage and idealism, opportunity and oppression. The only Portuguese colony in the Americas, Brazil shares historical traits of a colonial beginning yet differs quite markedly from its Spanish-speaking neighbors. When studying Brazil, it is important to understand its place as an economic leader among the nations of South America and its long recognized potential as a world leader.

Start by asking your students what they know about Brazil: Where is it located? What language do Brazilians speak? What are some of the elements of its culture? Use the opportunity to create research projects so that, when they watch Quasar's dance performance, students have a better understanding of the country from which these dancers come and how it influences their work.

ACTIVITY:

Learning about Brazil

Ask the students to locate Brazil on a world map.

Ask them to do web research on one aspect of Brazilian culture: agriculture, government, foods, culture, and so on. You may suggest specific topics (e.g., the coffee industry, *Lula*, *feijoada*, *capoeira*, in that order as they relate to the larger categories).

NSS.GK-12.2 PLACES AND REGIONS

The State of Goiás: Housed in a Unique Ecosystem

Quasar has its home in the city of Goiânia, a relatively young city (est. pop. 1,000,000) in the state of Goiás, in Brazil's interior.

Settlements boomed and population expanded in central Brazil in the 1960s; the construction of Brazil's ultra-modern capital, Brasília, also in the state of Goiás, spurred much of this growth.

Brazil's central region, while a mosaic of vegetation, soils, climates, and topographical features, houses the unique and fragile Cerrado ecosystem. The Cerrado is characterized as a "tropical savanna," with grassfields and low-lying trees and is the second largest biome in Brazil, exceeded only by the Amazon. The headwaters of the three largest river basins in South



America—the Tocantins, São Francisco, and Plate rivers—are located in the Cerrado. The Cerrado is a place of amazingly rich biodiversity, and Brazilians are concerned with the conservation of this ecosystem. In recent years, mining, farming, cattle ranching, and the expansion of towns and cities have posed a significant threat. Quasar is concerned about the natural heritage of their state. It is one of the reasons they love living there!

ACTIVITY:

Learning about a Specific Biome

Brazil has a number of ecosystems of great significance. Have your students look up the characteristics of a tropical rainforest (like the Amazon), a tropical savanna (like the Cerrado), or a tropical wetland (like the Pantanal).

NSS-G.K-12.3 PHYSICAL SYSTEMS

More about Brazil

Fast Facts

Brazil's name comes from the *pau brasil* (brazilwood), a tree discovered in abundance by the early explorers and settlers.

Architects **Lúcio Costa** and **Oscar Niemeyer** collaborated to create the modern capital city of Brasília, designed in the shape of an airplane.

The **Amazon River** (which begins in the Andes and crosses through northern Brazil) is the second largest river in the world. One-fifth of the freshwater that enters the world's oceans flows from the mouth of the Amazon, and the force of the river propels fresh water more than 100 miles into the Atlantic Ocean.

The **Cristo Redentor** (Christ the Redeemer) statue, whose outstretched arms measure 92 feet across, was built in 1931. It sits atop Corcovado Mountain, at 2,330 feet, in Rio de Janeiro.

Brazil produces about one-fifth of the world's coffee.

In 2002, Brazil won its 5th **World Cup soccer** championship, making it one of the greatest nations in international soccer.

In 2002, a steel worker and union organizer named **Inácio Lula da Silva**, popularly known as Lula, was elected president in his fourth bid for the presidential seat.



LEFT: Amazon River
RIGHT: Christ the Redeemer statue, Rio de Janeiro. FAR RIGHT: Rio de Janeiro city view. BELOW, RIGHT: Capoeira angola "roda," near Salvador.



Guidelines for Your Students

Arrive:

Arrive at the theater early. You can read the program or stop by the lobby display, if there is one, which will help you to enjoy the production.

Order tickets ahead of time if possible. Then you won't have to worry if there are seats left.

Take your seat at least 5 minutes before the performance begins. This allows you to get situated so you can fully enjoy the production.

When the lights go out at the top of the show, relax and applaud. The show is about to begin.

Feel free to applaud whenever you feel moved by the production. Good places to applaud: when a dancer completes an amazing jump, at the end of a dance, or at the end of a solo piece.

Do not leave the auditorium until intermission.

Discuss your reactions with friends during intermission or after the show.

If you truly enjoyed the performance, feel free to give a standing ovation at the end of the production!

5-12.4 APPLYING AND DEMONSTRATING CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS IN DANCE

ACTIVITY:

Before the show...

- Learn everything you can about the company and choreographer
- Read articles from the newspaper
- Read the program at the performance
- Research the culture and/or country of the company

During the show...

- Notice all the different aspects that make up a dance piece:
- Contrasting or complementary colors
 - Quick, sharp, slow, or smooth movements
 - Consistent or varied styles

- Upbeat, big, quiet, or small expressions
 - Loud, slow, soft, or fast music
 - Costumes changes and colors
 - Group or individual dances
- Enjoy the show!
- Relax and allow yourself to enjoy what is most interesting to you.
- There isn't one right way to interpret or enjoy a dance, so you do it your way!

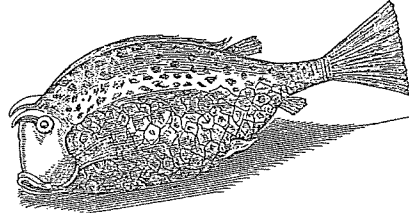
After the show...

Now is the time to talk to your friends or teachers who saw the dance piece and to engage in activities to extend your learning about dance. Notice the similarities and differences in

- Your reactions
- Your interpretations
- Your enjoyment level

NA.5-12.7 EVALUATING MUSIC AND MUSIC PERFORMANCES

NL-ENG.K-12.4 COMMUNICATION SKILLS



For More Information

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Embassy of Brazil in Washington, D.C.: <http://brasilemb.org>

Brazil Page on the Latin American Network Information Center (LANIC): <http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/brazil>

Credits

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LatinFocus.com
Page 2: Amazon River photo by Ricardo Funari.

