

# Spector Dance

## The Heritage Project and Educational Programs



*Common Ground*



*Maize, the Golden Thread*



*Opus XVII*



*The Myth Project*



*Opus XVII*



*The Red Pony*



*Ocean, Bird, Sky*

all photos by William Roden/New Dawn Studios

# SpectorDance

## THE HERITAGE PROJECT

*The Heritage Project* is a compilation of SpectorDance's signature multimedia works inspired by, and relevant to, our region. These works have received significant national acknowledgement and awards for "excellence in the performing arts" (from the National Endowment for the Arts - The Big Read and Ovations TV). These works are available for presentation at schools, community centers or onsite at SpectorDance studio.

SpectorDance is eager to bring our award winning works to schools and community centers and will adapt our programs to individual needs. SpectorDance aims to both teach and inspire. Our goal is to bring contemporary dance into schools and to make live performance more accessible. Creative experiences stimulate new ways of learning in each child and provide an entry point into subjects that have brought global recognition to our community.

Although each educational experience is tailor-made, a typical format for a SpectorDance Educational Program might include four sessions:

1. a pre-show academic instruction session;
2. a movement class with a SpectorDance Company dancer;
3. a live performance in a theater, and;
4. a follow-up discussion and writing exercise.

The various instruction sessions prepare each child for the experience of live performance and provide background on themes that will be explored.

### ***The Red Pony***

Based on John Steinbeck's *The Red Pony*, this poignant and classic story set in the 1930's on a farm in the Salinas Valley is a timeless tale about a child's love of his pony and the feelings of loss that are an inevitable part of life experience.

#### **Educational Opportunities:**

- Connect to the National Steinbeck Center's Young Author's Program
- Study movement, creating characters with movement and music
- Explore coming-of-age, learning responsibility and love/loss for an animal or pet
- Learn about the harsh realities and hard work of farming in the 1930's and acceptance of adult imperfection

*Target Age: Middle school, grades 6-8*



*SpectorDance School*

### ***Figures in the Dust***

*Figures in the Dust* is inspired by John Steinbeck's Pulitzer-prize winning novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*. The novel takes place in California in the 1930's and describes the Dust Bowl Era and the Great Depression. This dance/media piece explores the despair over loss of land and loss of identity, the profound necessity for meaningful work, the power of community, and the human capacity to overcome obstacles, create change and survive.

#### **Educational Opportunities:**

- Explore importance of work to a person's identity and well-being
- Explore love of the land, respect for the earth, individual stewardship
- Look at The Great Depression and how it compares with the current economic hardships; comparison and contrast between the struggles of Depression-era families and families today. How would the movement be different? The same?
- Explore the importance of children, their fears, their hopes, how parents sacrifice for the future of their children
- Explore how movement and music reflect the attitudes of society? Does history play a role in current dance, music, literature, media? How?

*Target Age: Middle-High School, grades 6-12*



Alexandra Gardner, Laurel Nelson, Kelsey Forbush; *The Red Pony*



Rosannah Riess; *Figures in the Dust*

## Common Ground

*Common Ground* is a dance/media project celebrating the poetry and politics of agriculture. This work explores current issues in agriculture, including immigration, land development, environmental issues, and new realities of competing in a world market. Beyond the conflicts and divergent perspectives, *Common Ground* also focuses on the shared values of the earth including the universal passion for farming, the fundamental need to prosper and provide, and the importance of respecting the earth and one another. *Common Ground* aims to expand perceptions and possibilities, and to acknowledge the beauty and abundance of our local harvests.

### Educational Opportunities:

- Invite young audiences to develop a greater understanding about the history and importance of agriculture in our community
- Stimulate discussion on controversial topics of immigration, globalization, and organic versus commercial farming
- Explore the physical process of how food gets from the farm to the table  
*Target Age: Middle-High School, grades 6-12*



Brendan Barthel, Luke Stockton, Dennis Nagtalon;  
*Common Ground*

## Ocean, Bird, Sky

Inspired by the poetry of Robinson Jeffers, this dance media work looks at the natural beauty of the Monterey coastline.

### Educational Opportunities:

- Invites young audiences to develop a greater understanding of the natural beauty and its importance to our environment
- Heighten awareness of the poetry of Robinson Jeffers, award-winning Carmel poet and makes it more accessible
- Explore the symbolism and imagery of the poetry about the beauty of the Monterey Bay coastline
- Develop the capacity to express through movement and to explore personal creative voice
- May be used to explore writing, art, sociology, human psychology - high school/college level  
*Target Age: Middle-High School-College, grades 5 and up*



Alexandra Gardner, Pamela Keindl, Kelsey Forbush;  
*Ocean, Bird, Sky*

## OTHER WORKS

*Sweet Thursday* inspired by Steinbeck's novel about the characters residing on Cannery Row.

*The Violence Project* with recorded interviews by teens from the Boys and Girls Club of Seaside about their experience with violence.

*The Myth Project* explores myths that draw upon the wonder and mystery of nature and the miracle of life. It captures the magic of childlike curiosity while offering timeless wisdom for life's journey. *Stag*, is based on a Scandinavian myth about how fire comes into the world. *The Magic Drum*, is an Inuit myth about the joining of male and female to create the wholeness of universal love.

*Maize, the Golden Thread* is a dance media project that celebrates indigenous rituals and legends centered on corn. This work was inspired by travels to an Ecuadorian farming village. Alongside each humble home there is a field of corn. The women carefully prepare and divide the corn for various uses that include nourishment for people, animals, the earth, and spirits. *Maize, The Golden Thread* celebrates the indigenous culture that reflects a deep understanding of sustainability and respect for the earth.



Katie Grove, Pamela Keindl, Barbara Guisti,  
Jerene Aldinger, Kelsey Forbush;  
*Maize, The Golden Thread*

## SpectorDance Children's Programs

SpectorDance Children's Programs offer a variety of dance works based on classic literature. These works are performed by SpectorDance Youth Company and can be restaged to include rehearsals and performances with other community level dancers.

### *Peter and the Wolf*

This unforgettable story told through music, invites children of all ages to embark on an adventure into the forest with Peter and his animal friends. This piece grabs the attention of young and old alike, using the familiar music and wonderful costumes to make magic on the stage.

Each character in the story has a particular instrument and a musical theme, or leitmotif:

*Bird*: flute

*Duck*: oboe

*Cat*: clarinet

*Grandfather*: bassoon

*Wolf*: 3 horns

*Hunters*: woodwind theme, with gunshots on timpani and bass drum

*Peter*: string instruments



Marissa Hernandez; *Peter and the Wolf*

#### **Educational Opportunities:**

- Explore how each character is developed through movement and music
- How would you make other types of animals or people move? Horse, squirrel, dog, rabbit, a little girl, a little boy, an old woman/man, police officer, someone in a hurry, someone excited, etc.
- Use your imagination to think of a different ending to the story. How would it look? Would it be happy or sad or funny? Would there be new characters introduced? What would their movement look like? What kind of instrument or music would represent them?

### *Alice in Wonderland*

Inspired by the beloved classic by Lewis Carroll, this fantastical, nonsensical tale of a little girl on a bizarre adventure has been enjoyed by generations of children and adults alike. Trailing after the White Rabbit, Alice tries to navigate through a world that is far from sane, and make sense of the cast of misfit characters she meets along the way. Alice learns to rely on her inner strength, stand up to evil, and triumph over the craziness that is Wonderland.

#### **Educational Opportunities:**

- Discuss the movement of each character. How does the movement bring life to each character?
- How did Alice get herself into the predicament? What is she trying to do? Who is helping her? Who is working against her?
- Do you ever have to deal with someone like the Queen of Hearts?



*Alice in Wonderland*

## King Arthur's Tales

King Arthur is one of the great mythic figures of English literature. Dozens of legends and romantic images have grown up around him: the Knights of the Round Table, Merlin the wizard, and the Holy Grail, to name a few. According to the main Arthurian legends, the king wielded a magical sword, Excalibur; lived in a glorious kingdom called Camelot; was helped by the wizard Mordred; and was married to the beautiful Queen Guinevere (who in many legends falls for Arthur's knight Sir Lancelot). *King Arthur's Tale* is a dance piece that uses a variety of Renaissance music from the 12th to the 17th centuries and text from the recorded story. This piece provides an introduction to this classic tale. He leads his followers to a deeper understanding of true love, a life of service to the betterment of humanity, and the struggle against evil.



King Arthur's Tales

### Educational Opportunities:

- Explore history around the time of King Arthur. How is this culture reflected in the dance? In the music?
- How does the movement tell the story?
- What other "tales" could be told through dance: a battle scene, a sad goodbye, a noble procession, a lively masquerade ball, a sinister plan to overthrow the king, etc.

## The Elephant's Child

Based on the classic story by Rudyard Kipling, *The Elephant's Child* teaches us to be true to our own inner nature and to follow our natural curiosities wherever they may lead. The music is also an important part of the piece. Bobby McFerrin uses his unique voice in a totally original way. His voice is unexpected and an expression of an artist who follows his own inner nature. Therefore, it is the perfect accompaniment for this delightful story.

Much to the dismay of his parents, aunts, and uncles, the Elephant's Child has a "satiated curiosity" that can't be discouraged. This wonderful "Just So" story with an unforgettable cast of characters teaches life lessons about determination and adventure, and how sometimes our most challenging obstacles and harrowing experiences can help us develop inner strength and find hidden talent.



Kelsey Forbush: *Elephant's Child*

### Educational Opportunities:

- How does each character move? How does the movement relate to the animal in the wild?
- Why is the Elephant's Child so determined? Is this a good attribute?
- How does the Elephant's Child's curiosity help him? How does it hurt him?
- Was the price of "knowing" what the crocodile eats worth the cost?
- Compare this story to real life. Do you know anyone like the Elephant's Child? Are you curious? Have you ever discovered a hidden talent?

## Holiday Programs

*'Twas the Night before Christmas* based on the poem by Major Henry Livingston Jr., is a charming holiday classic.

*Little Match Girl* is a dance work inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's poignant story of a little girl on the eve of the New Year, whose vivid imagination along with a book of matches carries her from a cold, dark world, to a happier place, where there is warmth, peace, and love. Using a blend of traditional dance, classical music, and storytelling, this piece will touch the heart and the soul.



Alexa Stevens: *The Little Match Girl*