

**Story Tapestries,  
United Legacy LLC and Les Racines Danse**

Present

**A Dance Across Cultures**

Around the world in 45 minutes: an entertaining, international, dynamic program that weaves the power of capoeira, dance, theatre, music and storytelling together. As the berimbau and pandeiro sound, open up your imagination and prepare to embark on a magical journey. Travel back in time and across the world, landing in a place where animals could talk and some people could understand them! Dance through the streets of Salvador, Brazil, climb the banana trees, and swing on the vines of the Amazon. Listen to folk tales, songs and personal stories about a culture that is filled with energy and passion for life. Leave the show singing songs in Portuguese and dancing like a local.

**AGE GROUP**

- Pre K- 5th grade

**OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM**

1. To develop their listening skills
2. To foster the desire to read and write stories .
3. To encourage children to think creatively
4. To cultivate their ability to work as a community
5. To understand the structure of a story
6. To expand their knowledge of other cultures
7. To respect other cultures and their traditions
8. To teach them a Portuguese
9. To promote an interest in the theatrical arts, dance, and capoeira

**CONTENTS OF THE PROGRAM**

*Opening:* The show begins back in time with the roots of Brazilian dance leading into an introduction of the Narrator, The Tree of Life. The students will come to know an ancient tree as the Narrator. She is knows stories of the past, present and can imagine the future. The audience helps her to tell stories throughout the show beginning with an ancient tale of a young, sassy tree and her mentor.

*Body:* The audience then transitions from the ancient tale where trees and animals can speak into the story of Capoeira, complete with songs, dance and martial arts. At the heart of Capoeira Angola is a quote by Mestre Pastinha. He said, “ Capoeira Angola can only be taught without force, but naturally...Each owns their own way to play and no-one plays like me. In my students lies the wisdom of what I know, I can see it in them. Each one is his own.”

*Finale:* Moving from the story of capoeira, we travel to the Amazon to hear about how a community of monkeys solves a problem. Finally, we ask them to participate from their seats and inviting a few students on stage to join the Roda and Samba de Roda. They will sing and move like the performer on stage. They will leave the room filled the energy of the shows and with an understanding of cultures they have perhaps not experienced before.

## **PRE-PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE**

### **Performance Etiquette**

In many African traditions, the audience is considered to be part of the performance. While the dancers, storytellers and musicians are performing, the audience is encouraged to sing, clap, cheer, interact, sing and enjoy along with the performers. However, when performers are speaking directly to the audience, talking and whispering are inappropriate and distracting to both audience members and to the performers.

### **A Description of Capoeira Angola for Students**

CAPOEIRA ANGOLA is an African-Brazilian martial art that combines acrobatics, dance and fight movements, music, history and philosophy. Enslaved Africans brought the movements of Capoeira Angola to Brazil during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, disguising the martial elements by adding music and singing. After the abolition of slavery, Capoeira Angola continued to grow as a tool for freedom and resisting injustice. Today, Capoeira Angola groups flourish across Brazil and around the world.

### **Vocabulary:**

#### **Capoeira Angola:**

1. A martial arts tradition that began in Central Africa and perfected in Brazil by enslaved descendants of Africa.
2. Capoeira Angola is an African-Brazilian folk art that combines dance, play, music, theater, and martial arts into a unique experience.

**Rites of Passage:** a series of special lessons, experiences and/or tests that prepare children for adulthood. Every society has some form of coming-of-age rites to introduce its youth to adulthood.

**Roda:** the circular formation where participants perform several Afro-Brazilian dance art forms, such as capoeira, samba.

**Samba:** A Brazilian dance of African Origin

**Ancestor:** A person from whom one is descended, often one generation before a grandparent

**Furious:** Extremely Angry and upset

**Ecstatic:** Incredibly thrilled and excited

**Geography:**

- Where is Brazil? Where is Salvador, Brazil? Where is the Amazon Rainforest? Where is Angola, Africa? Find these places on a globe. Ask the Children how many hours would it take to fly there. Could you get there by boat?
- What different kinds of weather do you have in a country like Brazil?
- How many languages do people Brazil speak? Identify the many languages are spoken in the United States

**Culture:**

- Read a book of folk tales from this country to your students.
- Read about Afro-Brazilian Dance and watch videos online to show you the different types of dance.
- Read and watch videos of Capoeira Angola
- Look at pictures and draw a picture of what you think life Brazil would be like now.
- Listen to a tape of Brazilian music.

**Animals:**

- What animals live in these countries?
- Draw a picture of one of these animals.
- What kind of food do they eat?
- How do animals communicate? Write a story as a class about a conversation between a Monkey and a little girl or boy.

**DURING THE PROGRAM THE STUDENTS SHOULD NOTICE**

What country is the story about?

What happens to the Tree of Life?

What kinds of dances do they get to experience?

How many different artistic elements have been merged together to form this show?

How does Pastinha overcome his bully and become a strong teacher?

How does the community work together to solve their problems?

What happens in the beginning, middle and the end of the performance?

What lessons does the story teach?

Why is the story important to listen to?

What other stories can we think of where the hero learns a lesson?

**POST-QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES****The Stories:**

- Who are the main characters of the different stories? What kind of voices would they have? Ask your students to walk around the room as the different characters in story. How would they walk when they are happy, sad, or angry?
- Draw a picture of the different animals and people in the story.
- Draw a picture of the environment the story was set in.
- As a class re-tell the story acting out the many different parts. How would the story change if it were set in the Mountains verses the Amazon? As a class or in small groups change the setting, the type of animals, and the ending of the story and examine how the story would change.

- Write your own mythical story.
- Attempt to mimic some of the basic dance movements seen in the performance. Read and write about the different types of dance moves that the show presented from African dance to Samba.
- Search Youtube for videos and Google for images of “Capoeira Angola”
- Writing prompts: Do you feel what you saw today when Pastinha was playing Capoeira was a dance, a game, or a fight? How can you tell? Write a paragraph to support your conclusion from what you observed.

### **The Community We Live in:**

- Draw a picture of the different people and cultures that live in your community.
- Talk about why it is important to respect everyone
- What would you do if you met someone different than you? How would you treat them? What do you do if you see someone who is bullying another individual? Write a story about this situation.
- Can you name any of the countries you have been to or read about? Draw a picture and get together with a few other students to act out a story you remember from that country.
- Talk to someone older than you like a grandparent and ask him/her to tell you a folk tale from his/her childhood. Share the folk tale with the class.

### **RESOURCES**

#### ***Capoeira Music***

CD Title: “Capoeira Angola from Salvador, Brazil.” Grupo de Capoeira Angola Pelourinho with Smithsonian Folkways. code SFW40465

CD liner notes from “Capoeira Angola from Salvador, Brazil.”

[http://media.smithsonianfolkways.org/liner\\_notes/smithsonian\\_folkways/SFW40465.pdf](http://media.smithsonianfolkways.org/liner_notes/smithsonian_folkways/SFW40465.pdf)

#### ***Reference Books for Teachers:***

Holt, David and Bill Mooney, Editors. Ready-to-tell Tales: Sure-fire stories from America’s Favorite Storytellers. Little Rock: August Hose Publishers, 1994.

Jones, Lynda. Kids Around the World Celebrate! The Best Feasts and Festivals from Many Lands. John Wiley & Sons: New York, 2000.

2005. Learning Capoeira: Lessons in Cunning from an Afro-Brazilian Art. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lima, Carolyn W. and John A. Lima. A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children’s Picture Books. London: Bowker-Greenwood, 2001.

MacDonald, Margaret Read. 101 Creative Themes to Share With Young Children. North Haven: Library Professional Publications, 1995.

Macdonald, Margaret Read. Earth Care: World Folktales to Talk About. North Haven: Linnet Books, 1999.

Milford, Susan. Tales Alive Ten Multicultural Folktales with Activities. Williamson Publishing: Charlotte, 1995

Terzian, Alexandra M. The Kids Multicultural Art Book, Art and Craft Experiences from Around the World. Williamson Publishing: Charlotte, 1993.