For over 130 years Regions has been proud to be a part of the Middle Tennessee community, growing and thriving as our area has. From the opening of our doors on September 1, 1883, we have committed to this community and our customers.

One area that we are strongly committed to is the education of our students. We are proud to support TPAC’s Humanities Outreach in Tennessee Program. What an important sponsorship this is – reaching over 25,000 students and teachers – some students would never see a performing arts production without this program. Regions continues to reinforce its commitment to the communities it serves and in addition to supporting programs such as HOT, we have close to 200 associates teaching financial literacy in classrooms this year.

Thank you, teachers, for giving your students this wonderful opportunity. They will certainly enjoy the experience. You are creating memories of a lifetime, and Regions is proud to be able to help make this opportunity possible.

Jim Schmitz  
Executive Vice President, Area Executive  
Middle Tennessee Area
Dear Teachers,

Thank you for choosing to bring your students to Cas Public’s GOLD at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center. Contemporary dance is a language, much like English and Spanish and music and visual arts are languages. Exposure to high-quality dance works of art will help your students become more fluent in understanding this flexible language, and for some, perhaps even speaking it. Because the communication of dance transcends all forms of verbal dialect, engaging with a performance is a pathway to tap into a universal form of communication. GOLD, by Montreal-based Cas Public, shows that responding to one’s environment with curiosity and playfulness is universal, no matter what your cultural background.

In our story-driven culture, it is important to keep in mind that abstract performing arts may have a theme and mood but not a specific narrative. Letting students know they do not have to discover a story within this performance may free them to notice the dynamics and beauty of the choreography and music rather than trying to figure out what exactly is happening and why. This type of viewing also frees audiences to develop broader, more diverse interpretations, as well as a sense of wonder about the work of art they are experiencing.

--TPAC Education
Cas Public
Choreography by Hélène Blackburn and Pierre Lecours with Johann Sebastian Bach's Goldberg Variations, recorded by Glenn Gould

Cas Public’s GOLD combines familiar childhood objects with abstract contemporary dance set to classical music.

Description
Inspired by Bach’s “Goldberg Variations” and Glenn Gould’s signature recording of this score, GOLD begins with dancers moving slowly about the stage as large white panels glide back and forth. Later in production, these panels become projection screens for animation, video of Gould playing piano, and short films. A shift in tempo makes way for a playful quartet in which dancers integrate red rubber balls into their movement. From there the production is a series of vignettes that include ensemble, duets, trios and solos performed with expert physicality and artistry, highlighting the contrast of precise and fluid choreography.

Throughout the dance, dancers respond to variations in the music, including superimposed sounds of ringing phones, as well as to variations in their environment. Rapidly changing lighting in the shape of piano keys on the stage floor allows the performers to dance the choreography of the music. Constantly shifting pairings and grouping of dancers as well as props such as chairs, benches, rubber balls and even robotic bugs create dynamic environments in which the performers playfully explore possibilities and parameters through dance.

This dance is a collaboration between Cas Public artistic director Hélène Blackburn and her long-time colleague Pierre Lecours, with contributions from the five dancers who perform it.

Goldberg Variations
Johan Sebastian Bach’s “Goldberg Variations” was first published in 1741 as Clavierübung (Keyboard Practice), written for harpsichord. Consisting of an Aria and 30 Variations, it is considered the best of the Baroque era variations and one of the iconic works of classical Western music. Described as “a Rubik’s Cube of invention and architecture” with “a labyrinth’s structure” by music producer and NPR reporter Tom Huizenga, the composition’s polyphonic designs and complex arrangement written for the two-keyboard harpsichord requires expert musical skills to play, particularly on piano. Unlike much of Bach’s work, which was published posthumously, “Goldberg Variations” was published nearly 10 years before the German composer’s death in 1750. Its common name is derived from a young student of Bach’s, Johann Gottlieb Goldberg, a virtuoso who is believed to be the first performer of the work.

The title page of the first edition of the music notes it was “Composed for Music Lovers, to Refresh their Spirits.”
Glenn Gould

Glenn Gould’s two recordings of “Goldberg Variations”, one in 1955 and one in 1981 a year before his death, are widely considered unparalleled recordings of this music and the pinnacles of Gould’s musical career. Born in Toronto in 1932, Gould became a professional pianist at age 15 and was known for his intense, idiosyncratic playing and eccentric personality. Gould played with his face close to the keyboard, seated on a special folding wooden chair with shortened legs which he took everywhere, and which now resides on display at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Ontario.

Gould has been called a maverick for the unconventional liberties he took while playing. Los Angeles Times critic Kenneth Turan referred to Gould as “a cultural figure every bit as iconic as Jim Morrison or James Dean” and novelist Thomas Bernhard proclaimed him “the greatest pianist of all time”. Some who knew Gould believe this musical genius had Asperger’s Syndrome, but this was never diagnosed while he was alive. Bach and Schoenberg were his favorite composers, and Gould much preferred recording to live performances. Shortly before his death from a stroke at age 50, Gould had made plans to retire from recording and compose.

A contemporary dance show?

This is not a story that has a beginning, a middle and an end.

Rather, it is a series of pictures and paintings that express an idea, an emotion, a feeling, a universe.

This is not a work we need to understand

It is an invitation to let yourselves go and gaze through pictures, as if we were lying on the grass watching the clouds pass.

This is not a coded language, such as ballet or French.

It is a world where every choreographer invents his own gesture, her own language.

This is not only one correct interpretation.

It is that each viewer and spectatorimagines his or her own story as he or she feels and the ability to forget the real and let the mind travel. Like a dream.

Source: Cas Public Educator’s Guide
Introduction

Your students’ enjoyment and understanding of the performance by Cas Public will be greatly enhanced with introductory activities and reflections that will help them make personal connections to the performance.

In the final segment of GOLD, dancers clap various rhythms in unison while moving. These rhythms are somewhat polyrhythmic, or in other words, they seem in contrast to the rhythm of the music.

Short Activity: Experiencing Polyrhythms and Movement

If you have 15 minutes to prepare your students for this performance, try this:

Have students stand in a circle and play a piece of upbeat classical music. While it is playing, ask for volunteers to clap a short, repeatable rhythm over the music which is in contrast to or different than the music’s rhythm. Once you have found a suitable rhythm, have everyone follow along, trying to be as unison as possible. If it is a slow rhythm that is very easy after a few repeats, you may ask the students to double-time it.

While still clapping the rhythm, ask students to attempt to walk to a different area of the room. If they can easily accomplish this, ask them to walk in different floor patterns if there is enough room – zig-zags, circles, straight lines, sideways, backwards – without losing the clapping. While they are moving and clapping, tell them to form groups of two to four. Without talking and while continuing to clap, ask the small groups to move in unison, or everyone moving the same way at the same time.

To expand the activity, invite students within the group to create variations on the rhythm by changing the timing and/or amount of claps.

Topics to Investigate and Discuss

The following discussion topics are also addressed in the lessons suggested in this guidebook.

- Invite students to notice MOOD of the dance and music, and changes of DYNAMIC or timing rather than looking for a story.
- Ask students to notice how dancers are PAIRED and GROUPED. What is their relationship to each other and does it change throughout the piece?
- Think about the ways in which choreographers and composers use PATTERNS in dance and music, for example, floor patterns and repetition. Look for examples in the performance.
- Ask students to notice how THEME and VARIATION are not only represented in the music, but in the structure of the many dance vignettes.
- Share the thoughts about contemporary dance (inset box on p. 3) with students. Discuss: how is dance a language? What is communicated non-verbally through movement and music? Compare ideas to abstract visual art.
After the Performance

Reflection Questions

- In what ways did the dance reflect the music? (mood, structure, tempo). In what ways were the music and the dance different?
- What characteristic did the props have in common, and why do you think the choreographers chose this? (Note to teachers: the props were childhood items; balls, child-sized chairs, toy bugs)
- What do you think was the significance of the video on the screens? (Note to teachers: the piano player video was Glenn Gould playing “Goldberg Variations” for the 1981 studio recording).
- How did the dancers and choreographers modernize a piece of classical music through their performance, and how did this affect how you listened to it?
- What kinds of roles did lighting design and interjected sounds play in the performance?

Writing Assignment: Support a Point of View

Give students a choice of one of the following topics for an essay in which they support a point of view based on their observations of GOLD:

- Dance is a universal language that can be understood and interpreted, no matter what language you speak.
- Abstract dance, such as Cas Public’s GOLD, can be interpreted in multiple ways. Therefore, it requires more curiosity and wonder from the audience than a production in which the story or narrative is explicitly stated.
- It is clear that GOLD was inspired by Bach’s “Goldberg Variations” because the dance is like a mirror image of the music.

Internet Resources

- Cas Public Website: www.caspublic.org/english
- Video tutorial on Theme and Variation in Music: http://youtu.be/raqOYw5kRdc
- Glenn Gould’s 1981 video recording of playing “Goldberg Variations” for studio session: http://youtu.be/N2YMSt3yfko (warning: there are ads throughout)
- Glenn Gould website: www.glenngould.com
- Free Plays of “Goldberg Variations”: http://www.opengoldbergvariations.org
Lesson 1  (50 minutes)

Variations on a Theme in Music and Movement

IN THIS LESSON, STUDENTS WILL
✓ Understand and explore variations on a theme in music and translate this concept into movement.
✓ Create movement sequences individually and as a group using props.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT NEEDED
- 1 hand-sized rubber ball per participant, or something that can be easily and safely tossed, such as dense wads of paper.
- Music Resource: Rue’s whistle from The Hunger Games (hear on youtube) or another similar, familiar, simple music theme
- Optional introduction: To view an excellent 6:40 minute video which demonstrates theme and variation in music, see http://youtu.be/raqOYw5kRdc.
- Open space for students to move

Music Warm-up: 10 minutes
Discuss theme and variations in music. Select and share (hum) a familiar tune, such as Rue’s whistle from The Hunger Games. Everyone practices or learns the chosen theme and then students are invited to create variations on it by changing the tempo, pitch, repeating notes, sustaining note, etc.

Movement Warm Up: 10 minutes
1. Introduce balls or paper props, along with any needed parameters on how they may be used. One ball per person.
2. Ask students to individually explore how many different ways they can make that prop move around their body, as well as how the body can move while they are moving the prop. Encourage changing of levels (high, medium and low to the floor) and speed to create more dynamic movement.
3. After exploration, tell each student to use the prop and create a short movement phrase of 4 to 8 counts that could be repeated.
4. Give students time to practice their phrase and introduce the vocabulary word motif, a term used in dance and music, similar to theme.

Art-Making Activity: 20 minutes
1. In groups of three or four, ask each student to quickly share his/her movement phrase or motif, and the rest of the group to repeat it. Once everyone has shared, the group picks one student’s motif to work with one that everyone can do, or they may quickly combine two or more to create a new motif. Give students a couple of minutes to practice this motif together.
2. Remind students how they varied the musical theme at the beginning of the lesson, then ask “What are some ways we can vary a motif or theme in dance?” Going around the circle in the small groups, invite students to create variations on their motif – changing the speed, direction, level or repeating a move.
3. Instruct each group to sequence three to four of their variations in a longer movement phrase and practice.

Sharing and Reflection: 10 minutes
1. Each group shares their piece while the rest of the class observes.
2. Discuss the variations and process: How did the variations on the motif affect the dynamic of this dance? In what ways were the props limiting? What movement was made more interesting with the props?
3. As a quick closing group reflection: Compare and Contrast varying a theme in music and varying a motif in movement.

Bach’s “Goldberg Variations” is one of the best examples of variations on a theme in music. In the choreography for GOLD, dancers echo the ideas of variations on a theme through dancing with various props, and often varying how they dance with those props. This lesson illuminates a portion of the dance in which the dancers move with red rubber balls, and provides students an opportunity to experiment with the idea of variations on a theme.
Lesson 2 (50 minutes)

Responding to Changing Environments in Dance

**IN THIS LESSON, STUDENTS WILL**
- Explore how choreographers create floor patterns for groups
- Experience “traveling” as a dancer
- Use positive and negative space on and around chairs to create a movement pattern

**MATERIALS NEEDED**
- Small sturdy chairs which can be easily moved and a large open space.
- Bach’s “Goldberg Variations”, which can be downloaded free or accessed at this website: [www.opengoldbergvariations.org](http://www.opengoldbergvariations.org)

**Discussion Warm Up:** 5 minutes

What are some games kids play in elementary school during recess? What are some games young kids play that involve the floor, or avoidance of the floor? What are some games kids do when walking on a sidewalk or street? This lesson will explore moving through and avoiding defined spaces, somewhat like those games.

**Warm Up/Inquiry:** 10 minutes

1. Play Bach’s “Goldberg Variations” in background during the rest of this lesson.

2. Instruct students to begin walking around the room, not touching anyone or anything. Encourage them to really cover all the space available, increasing the speed at which they walk, and sometimes slowing their speed. Emphasize traveling, a dance term for moving through space. Invite students to explore walking in different floor patterns, moving individually in zig zag lines, or curved lines, spirals and straight lines. Instruct students to redirect, or change the direction they are traveling, when they approach a person or an obstacle.

3. As they are moving throughout the space, begin to place chairs in the area in which students are moving, forcing them to redirect more frequently to avoid the chairs. Then, instructing that students are not to stack or tip over the chairs, invite students to move the chairs to a different area of the room, while continuing to move themselves. Depending on your students’ responsibility level, you may invite them to sit or stand on the chairs as they continue moving through the space.

4. As they continue to move, invite students to use the chairs to make corridors or other shapes through which others can move. You may assign roles; for instance, ask girls to move the chairs and boys to move through them, and then switch. Encourage students moving the chairs to move them continually, so that the pathways for the students without chairs are continually changing.

**Art-Making Activity:** 15 minutes

1. Form an even number of groups with 4-5 students per group. Each group gets one less chair than the number of people in their group.

2. Each group chooses one person to be a soloist.

The rest of the group members, the ensemble, will use the chairs to create spaces in, on or away from which the soloist will move.

Throughout GOLD, dancers respond to changing environments. This lesson is inspired by a segment of GOLD in which two dancers create pathways for a soloist by continuously moving child-sized chairs, creating corridors and patterns for a soloist to follow. The dancer must avoid, and sometimes step on, the chairs just after they have been placed.

(continued...)
3. Give each group five minutes to explore and research different ways to arrange and move the chairs, and for soloists to explore different ways of moving on or around them before giving instructions below. This should be a less chaotic version of what was just done in the group warm up.

4. Instruct groups to create a short travelling dance in which moving chairs dictate where and perhaps how the soloist will move.
   - The soloist can move inside or outside of the space defined by the chairs, and if you are willing to allow, they may also move on the chairs.
   - Groups should consider creating floor patterns for the soloist to follow and variations of those patterns.
   - The dance should be less than one minute long and should have a clear beginning and ending point.

Revision and Reflection: 10 minutes
Have each group share their dance with one other group. Observers give feedback on strengths and areas for improvement. Incorporating this feedback if possible, students decide how to perform the two group pieces as one piece. This might mean performing the two dances simultaneously, sequenced or learning each other’s movements so that all students are in both dances.

Sharing and Reflection: 10 minutes
Each group (comprised now of two smaller groups) shares responses to the following questions:
1. How was the defining of space with the chairs limiting for the soloist? How was it freeing?
2. How did the music affect choreographic choices?
3. Where was your focus in observing this dance, and why?
4. How did the dancers use space in this piece?

Scene from GOLD, by Cas Public.
Photo credit: Damian Siqueiros
Lesson 3  (40 minutes)

Compare and Contrast Music – Visually, Verbally and Physically

IN THIS LESSON, STUDENTS WILL
✓ Students will respond to and describe music visually, linguistically and bodily
✓ Students will compare and contrast mood and structure of two segments of classical music

MATERIALS
• 2 or more sheets of blank paper and a marker or pen for each student
• Bach’s “Goldberg Variations” (see resources for music access)

Drawing and Describing Music Activity: 20 minutes
1. Play all or part of the beginning of Bach’s “Goldberg Variations”: the Aria. Invite students to notice theme, or the basic melody and/or chord progression and how that theme is varied.

2. Give each student two large pieces of blank paper and a marker or pen.

3. Play the Aria again, and instruct students to “draw” the music while listening. Make sure students understand you are not asking them to draw the actual notes or a recognizable picture, but rather capture the flow and mood of the music in abstract lines and shapes.

4. With the music continuing to play a third time, ask students to generate a list of words, individually or as a group, which describes the music and the mood of it. It will be important later to make sure not all of the words are specifically about the structure of the music, but do include the mood.

5. Repeat this process with a more upbeat segment of “Goldberg Variations”, such as Variation 3 or 4, which are both less than one minute.

Embodiment Activity: 15 minutes
1. Divide the class into four groups and number the groups 1 to 4. Without letting groups 3 and 4 know, assign group 1 to the Aria, and group 2 to the second piece of music you chose to share earlier. Individually, students in groups 1 and 2 are to silently choose a word from the lists generated in the previous exercise which corresponds to their assigned piece of music. This will be a word they will embody.

2. Instruct the students in groups 1 and 2 to stand in front of the class, mixed up so the groups are not defined. Tell them that on the count of three, they are to all make a full-body pose that expresses the word they chose from the list. Count to three, have students create their pose all at the same time and ask them to hold it.

3. Invite the rest of the class to observe and express what they notice. Then have students try to guess which piece of music each posing student is representing, and why. As guesses are made, posing students can come out of their pose and be grouped on two sides of the room, according to which music the observers think they are representing. Once all are separated into one side or the other, ask students to create their poses again, and have observing students notice the difference in the two groups.

(continued)
4. If you have time, this process can be repeated switching roles of the four groups, or it may suffice as is.

**Group Discussion:** 5 minutes

Using the music drawings, the generated list of words to describe the music and the information from the embodiment of the music, invite students to notice similarities and differences in how the two pieces of music were interpreted.

**Homework or Research Project**

Students can create a Venn diagram or compose an essay to compare and contrast the two pieces of music and their moods. Additionally, they can compare and contrast different methods used to describe or respond to the music: visual art, descriptive words and body language.
THANK-YOU

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