Teacher Guidebook

2015-16 Season for Young People

PILOBOLUS

Sponsored by Regions
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 Pilobolus. This performance will introduce them to one of the most successful and influential modern dance companies in the world. The company’s unique style of transforming the human body into fantastical shapes through innovative, acrobatic partnering and use of production elements is blended with narratives that enlighten and entertain. Incorporating wit with athleticism and strikingly beautiful dance theater makes Pilobolus’ performances accessible, entertaining and breathtaking.

The collaborative and discovery-based nature of Pilobolus’ process in creating dances is a great model for experiential learning and small group work in the classroom. Known for collaborations with guest choreographers and artists of diverse disciplines, the company also heavily incorporates dancers’ input when creating and re-staging works. Pilobolus is committed to not only modeling their collaborative and playful creative process in educational outreach, but also encouraging students, teachers and theatergoers to harness their creative potential in any type of exploration.

Please be aware that Pilobolus has an extensive repertory, and many images and videos can be found online. The company also has a penchant for “the revealed human body” in performance, as dancer Shawn Fitzgerald Ahern describes it. Rest assured that the TPAC Education student performance has appropriate body coverage and dance content. And though some of the dances on the program can also be found online, we recommend that you do not show videos to students prior to performance. Part of the wonder of Pilobolus is the surprise of the live performance journey.

--TPAC Education

Image from LICKS | Photo: Grant Halverson, courtesy ADF
PILOBOLUS

Named after a fungus with the unique ability to explode spore-containing capsules at high speeds at a great distance, Pilobolus was founded in 1971 by seven students at Dartmouth College who had no prior dance training. Original founder, Robby Barnett, remains as one of several artistic directors, and founding member Moses Pendleton went on to found the popular contemporary dance company MOMIX. Though the company has evolved over the decades, the deeply collaborative and discovery-based nature of their choreographic process has remained a constant. Pilobolus has grown from humble beginnings with a handful of untrained students to a professional dance company touring internationally with a vibrant education division as well as a commercial company working on projects for television, film and corporations. Based in the small town of Washington Depot, Connecticut, Pilobolus has performed in 65 countries before hundreds of thousands of audience members, and has appeared on the 19th Grammy Awards, Oprah, The Tonight Show, The Today Show and more.

The Mission of Pilobolus is to:
Create, perform, and preserve dances, applying the collaborative creative methods of Pilobolus Dance Theater. Expand and diversify audiences through projects of all types and scales in live performance, film, and digital media, characterized by the qualities of our namesake fungus—adventurous, adaptive, athletic, surprising and revealing of beauty in unexpected places. Teach dancers, non-dancers, and organizations how to harness the creative potential of groups using Pilobolus’ methods.

All is Not Lost video shot (YouTube)
INTRODUCTION

Pilobolus is known for collaborating with various choreographers and artists as well as their company dancers. Before attending the performance, discuss how this creative process style affects their work, their rehearsals, and their audiences. **ASK YOUR STUDENTS** to compare and contrast specific examples when they have experienced a collaborative (or not) process as learners, or creators. What was the result?

Pilobolus will perform four dance works, interspersed with four short films featuring different styles of animation and videography. The program includes a Q&A with the full cast – be prepared to chat!

See dance and video descriptions on the next page...
DANCE DESCRIPTIONS

“Automaton” is a collaboration between Pilobolus and Sidi Larbi Cherkaouï, an award-winning choreographer from Belgium. This dance explores the relationship between humans and machines as dancers morph between larger-than-life cyborgs created from multiple bodies, to very human movements of connection. Beginning with sharp, mechanical movements and sounds, it transitions to organic, fluid movements that are individualized and personal. As choreographer Cherkaouï notes, it poses the question: Are we more machine or human? On the process of creating “Automaton”: https://youtu.be/LYr7terQ9-M

“All Is Not Lost” is a collaboration with alternative rock band OK GO and choreographer Trish Si. Originally developed as a music video with kaleidoscopic effects on multiple split screens, the live version features a clear-top platform with camera underneath and a live feed to an upright screen. Dancers move across the platform playfully, often seeming to defy gravity or transform body parts into symmetrical shapes on the screen. The split focus allows the audience to see the camera’s view, projecting at a 90 degree angle from its position on the stage floor, as well as the “behind the scene” live dance on, under and around the platform.

On the process of creating “All Is Not Lost” (the music video): https://youtu.be/WdfLhueuaVg

“The Transformation” is an excerpt of the evening-length “Shadowland”, a dance that transfigures the human shadow and explores perspective to wondrous effect. Behind a screen and seen as a shadow, the figure of a girl is transformed into a dog by a huge hand from above, and then back to a girl, but with a dog’s head. With amazing articulation and body language, dancer’s body parts transform into expressive animal parts as the girl learns to adapt, react, and explore her new world.

“Licks” was created in collaboration with choreographer Trish Si, and is a playful, energetic exploration of the many possibilities of dancing with ropes. Dancers skillfully manipulate long ropes to embody sound waves of music travelling across the stage, and employ shorter ropes to extend their range of motion and transform, transport, capture and connect to each other. Music by Nortec Collective Presents: Bostich+Fussible. On the process of creating “Licks”: https://youtu.be/xQjjRtBN7T0

VIDEOGRAPHY

Films interspersed throughout the performance functions as stand-alone art while simultaneously providing time for dancers’ costume changes. These include:

“Pilobolus is a Fungus” introduces the audience to the fungus with unique qualities from which the company draws its name.

“Cirrus” by animator Cyriak employs source video footage of daily life in the 1950s in a progressively complex layering, looping to create a surreal mechanical world of stunning intricacy.

“Fresh Guacamole” by PES is a playful look at creating a bowl of guacamole using stop action, board game pieces and other familiar objects as the ingredients. Also by PES, “The Deep” employs similar stop action and imagination to create an underwater scene of sea creatures made from rustic hand tools, silverware and items one might find in your grandfather’s workshop.

“Kitachi” is a stop motion film utilizing paper rather than clay in a continuous journey through geometric shapes, movement of human figures and simple landscapes set to the upbeat music of Shugo Tokumaru.
LESSONS

OVERVIEW
In addition to pre and post-performance discussions, participating in experiential activities will greatly increase students’ understanding and enjoyment of Pilobolus. Three approaches are offered in the following pages:

1) BODY TRANSFORMATION USING HANDS is intended to create a successful experience in a non-dance class environment, and is adaptable to a wide range of grade levels. If you can only do one lesson or have limited time before the performance, try this one!

2) DANCING HUMANS and ROBOTS is recommended for HS dance and theater classrooms because this activity gets everyone “on their feet” in a creative process to explore the movement and themes in Automaton.

3) INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY and DANCE involves upper middle and HS students in using video recording technology (smartphones) to record shape formations and movement, inspired by Pilobolus’ piece All is Not Lost.

Body Transformation Using Hands
Grades 5-12

Pilobolus is known for arranging and combining human bodies to create new fanciful shapes or creatures so compelling that their human features nearly disappear. Their dancers’ close physical contact and physicality, along with expressive body language, is a hallmark of their work.

This lesson will allow students to explore body transformation, but with the comfort and safety of using only hands.

Objectives:
- Students will explore creating movement and shapes with their hands
- Students will work together in small groups to explore the collaborative process of creating a short movement phrase
- Students will gain insight as to how the multiple bodies might be layered and put together to give the illusion of transforming into something new

Time: 45 minutes

Students may be seated for the beginning of the lesson, with room to stand and move to open areas in different sections of the room. These sections should be big enough for groups of 4 to 5 to stand and do some limited movement. Prior to lesson, determine if you prefer that students self-select groups of 4-5 for the activity, or if you will assign them. Music often helps students feel more comfortable with explorations, so consider using instrumental music as background.
Brainstorm and Discussion: (10 minutes)
Capture responses for all to see.

What are some examples of symmetrical shapes in nature?
Where do we see examples of animals or insects transforming or camouflaging themselves?
What are some examples of mythical or imaginary creatures?
What animals or objects can be personified (anthropomorphized)?
How might several humans work together to imitate a single animal or creature?

Warm up: (5-10 minutes)
While seated, invite students to explore how much movement they can get out of their two hands. Give the following prompts for expanding movement and building vocabulary, one or two at a time, with a moment to explore each prompt:

• Shapes: curved, sharp
• Relationships: mirror, opposite, synchronized, consecutive
• Movement qualities: float, swing, explode, thrust, fluid, angular
• Prompting Verbs: stretch, clench, wiggle, shake, rotate, flick, fold, unfold

Instructions:
• Try at least three different ways of lacing your fingers together
• Create at least three different symmetrical shapes with your hands
• Create a small creature -- real or imaginary -- with your hands
• Find a variety of ways your creature can move. Does it crawl? Slither? Walk? Fly? Jump?
• Pick two contrasting emotions for your animal and show that through how it moves (i.e. scared/friendly, angry/happy, sad/)

Activity: (20-25 minutes)
Have students stand and move into groups of 4-5 per group.
Part One: Art Making (15 minutes)
Each new instruction is given as students complete the previous task:

1. With a partner in your group (or one trio for groups with odd numbers), find at least three different ways to greet each other with using hands touching (example: hand shake, high five, fist bump).
2. Working as a group, explore several different ways to create symmetrical shapes using all the hands in the group. Create at least three.
3. Have students take turns to quickly show the group the hand creatures created individually.
4. As a group, create a new creature made up of all the hands in your group. Give this creature a name and agree on two emotions it will express through movement. The goal is to create a creature made of many hands that can move, and for it to be so well created that you don’t notice it is made out of hands.
5. Create a short movement phrase that includes two different symmetrical shapes made with all the hands in the group, and a transition to the group hand creature with movement and emotions.

Sharing: (5-10 minutes)
The nature of this activity will likely result in students standing in a circle and thus it may be difficult to share their creations with the entire class. Consider having groups pair share with another group who can stand close enough to view, then select one group whose work can be viewed by the entire class.

Reflection: 5 minutes
Discuss how this exploration used only the hands, but that Pilobolus dancers use their entire body. What kind of challenges do you think that poses? How would it be less limiting than just using hands? How would this be different if you were creating this behind a shadow screen?
Dancing Humans and Robots

For high school dance and theater

This lesson is based on the dance "Automaton", which uses multiple dancer bodies to create giant robots, which eventually transform to humans. Collaborating choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui explained the contrasting movements in the different segments of the dance as "mechanical" and "organic."

This lesson will need open space for movement. Instrumental music during warm ups and activity is recommended. The soundtrack for this dance is "You Don't Know Me" by Apparat.

Objectives:

- Students will learn or review the fundamentals of choreography and partnering
- Students will reflect on characteristics of robots and humans and incorporate these into movement
- Students will use choreographic and partnering fundamentals to create a small group dance that expresses qualities of both robots/machines and humans.

Discussion: (5 minutes)

Create two T-Charts where all can see, for ROBOT and for HUMAN to record responses to the following:

- What qualities do we associate with robots or machines? What qualities do we associate with humans?
- If we translated these qualities to movements, what kind of movement do we associate with each?

Warm Up: (10 minutes)

Begin with a quick exploratory introduction or review of the basics of choreography. Students begin walking around the space and are instructed to explore different energy (free/bound, fluid/staccato. Add any good words that emerged in reflection), space (levels, proximity to each other, directions) and time (fast, slow, pause).

Have students find a partner with whom to explore the progression to weight bearing/weight sharing. Scaffold these instructions:

- touch -- start with hands if the students are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with partnering
- press -- pressing touching body parts toward each other, usually with hands, arms or backs
- drape -- an arm over another arm for students with little partnering experience, then you can progress to a torso over a back. Provide time for students to switch roles.

weight bearing/weight sharing -- explore safe ways to give some of your weight to your partner, switching roles from time to time

- Have students explore weight bearing/weight sharing in a manner that is very robotic, and then in a manner that is very human. Have each pair join with another pair. Challenge each group to create a shape with all the bodies that is one robot, and then create a shape with all the bodies moving in unison (all at the same time) in a way that is very human and in contrast to the robotic movement.

(Continue to next page)
Activity: (30 minutes)

Have students form groups of five or six.

- Invite students to explore creating one giant robot together in a stationary pose, then adding robotic/mechanical movement in place. What kind of sounds would your robot make? Feel free to add those.
- How can you make your robot travel (move across the floor).
- How can you use weight bearing and weight sharing to change levels? Be daring.
- If you have one person who is the “head robot” with others being arms, etc., explore having that role change.

Pause to reset intention. You may wish to call attention to the list of words that describe human characteristics and movement.

- Ask students to explore movement that is very human, very organic. How can you move as a group but also as individuals expressing human characteristics?
- Recall your robot creation, how can you show the robot transformed into many humans. How do you show where the movement quality changes, and the human relationship changes?

The following instructions can be given at one time rather than scaffolded. Consider also having a written version available to all for reference:

- There should be a distinct difference between the two, with transitional movement in between. Include weight sharing/weight bearing, and segments in which many bodies are used to create one being. Feel free to incorporate sounds, and some kind of resolution. (How do you make this robot-to-human story end?) Refer to the T-chart movement descriptions.

Sharing and Reflection: 10 minutes

Each group shares their work. Ask students what they noticed about each piece, and ask students how a particular group used transitions, or space, or curved or angular movement based on what you perceive as strong or dynamic in each group sharing. Encourage students to be specific in their observations.

Reflection and Closure: (5 minutes)

- Return to lists created at the beginning. What do we want to add now that we’ve put this in our bodies?
- In today’s world, how does technology affect our humanity?
Integrating Technology and Dance

7th – 12th grade, Dance, PE, Technology-Video Production related classes

The dance “All Is Not Lost” was originally a music video for the band OK GO, and this collaboration was adapted to a more technologically simplified live performance. It features a camera placed on the stage floor pointing up, and a live feed projected on an upright screen at a 90-degree angle from the floor of the stage. The original video features body parts making kaleidoscopic shapes, as well as the illusion of defying gravity.

This lesson integrates technology and movement in a playful exploration.

Objectives:
- Students will explore making kaleidoscopic shapes with body parts
- Students will use technology (Smartphone or iPad) to create a dance

Time: 45 minutes

Needs:
- Smartphone or iPad (ideally one per group of four students)
- Space for movement
- Computer screen or live-feed capability for watching videos created
- Upbeat background music for warm up and activities. To be very specific to the dance, you may consider using OK Go’s “All is Not Lost”
- Students should be wearing pants or shorts for this lesson (no skirts)

NOTE: There is a wealth of filters and apps that can be applied to selfie videos. If you prefer and are technologically adept, you are welcome to integrate this into this lesson, but it is recommended to instruct students to not use filters or apps when creating videos during the activity portion.

Reflection: (5 minutes)

What is a symmetrical shape?
What is a kaleidoscopic shape?
What are some examples of kaleidoscopic shapes or patterns in nature?

Warm Up: (5 minutes)

Invite students to make five different symmetrical shapes with their own two hands.
Invite students to try to make a kaleidoscopic shape with their own two hands.

Divide students into groups of four.

Instructions, given one at time:
- Make a kaleidoscopic shape with all the hands in the group.
- Make another, different shape using all hands.
- Make a kaleidoscopic shape using a different body part, such as an arm, or feet.
- Make another shape with a different body part.
- Make a kaleidoscopic shape that can move up and down or rotate.

Activity: (30 minutes total; 20 minutes exploration and creation, 10 minutes sharing)
Each group should have a Smartphone or an iPad.

**Exploring Instructions:**
Put the device on video and selfie mode but not yet on record, and place it on the floor in the middle of the group.
- Explore creating kaleidoscopic shapes with different body parts that can fit on the screen.
- Explore ways of making “entrances and exits” of body parts onto the screen. I.e., begin with arms not on camera, and find interesting ways for them to be moved toward the center and into the camera’s view.

**Activity Instructions:**
Each group is to create a short dance (30 to 90 seconds). It should include:
- Entrances and exists from the screen
- Multiple kaleidoscopic and symmetrical shapes
- Some shapes should move, and there should be transitional movement between the shapes that make it all flow together.
- A clear beginning, middle, and end.

If some groups finish earlier than others, give them the additional instruction of adding a segment that gives the illusion of defying gravity when viewed on the screen.

After groups have a beginning, middle and end with transitional movement and have practiced it, have them record it. If you are using music, you may want to do this all at once.

(Advanced) Alternatively, if you have the ability to connect devices or one stationary iPad to a live feed on an Elmo or other device, you can have students share their creations live with the rest of the class. Otherwise, allow time to connect the devices to a computer or overhead projector and view them as a group.

**Reflection:** (5 minutes)
What was challenging?
How did the limitations of the screen size affect your choices?
How can limitations be creatively freeing?
What could you create to give yourself more screen area and yet still allow the camera to be on the floor?

**Exit ticket:** If you had a short uplifting message to the world – your personal motto-- in five words or less, what would it be?

**To expand the lesson:**
Allow students to play with filters or apps to create various effects: color changes, multiple frames on the screen at the same time, etc. If you have additional time and equipment or could assign as homework, students could create their own short music video using the footage filmed during this exercise with looping effects, layers and other graphic design tricks. Encourage play and experimentation.
NOTES for TEACHERS

Please Note  Many videos and images of Pilobolus can be found online. Many of these are not material for student performances and may not be appropriate for students. Also, we ask you not to show videos of dances prior to the performance, as this may take much of the surprise and joy from experiencing them live.

Pilobolus website: www.pilobolus.org

“What is Pilobolus?”: https://vimeo.com/59453664

Pilobolus Auditions and Callbacks, excerpts: https://vimeo.com/58444403

All is Not Lost music video: https://youtu.be/ur-y7oOto14

On the process of creating “All Is Not Lost” (the music video): https://youtu.be/WdfLhueuaVg

On the process of creating “Automaton”: https://youtu.be/LYr7terQ9-M

On the process of creating “Licks”: https://youtu.be/xQjjRtBN7T0

POST PERFORMANCE

Discussion Questions

- In what ways was play and discovery present in the dances?
- What connections did you notice between the videos and the dance?
- What did you perceive as the message of the dance “Automaton”?
- In what ways do you think Pilobolus’ collaborative process of creating dances with input from the dancers was evident in the performance?
- The music video version of “All Is Not Lost” has several short messages. What is your message to the world, in five words or less? You can create this message in Pilobolus feet using the interactive site: http://www.allisnotlo.st/
SPECIAL THANKS

TPAC’s mission is to lead with excellence in the performing arts and arts education, creating meaningful and relevant experiences to enrich lives, strengthen communities, and support economic vitality. TPAC Education is funded solely by generous contributions, sponsorships, and in-kind gifts from our partners.

Anonymous
511 Group, Inc.
Adams & Reese LLP
Aladdin Industries Foundation, Inc.
Julie and Dale Allen
Altria Companies Employee Community Fund
AT&T
Athens Distributing Company
The Atticus Trust
Bank of America
Baulch Family Foundation
Best Brands, Inc.
BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee
Bonnaroo Works Fund
Mr. and Mrs. Jack O. Bovender Jr.
Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations, LLC
Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund
The Broadway League
Brown-Forman
Butler Snow
CapStar Bank
Anita and Larry Cash
Caterpillar Financial Services Corporation
CMA Foundation
Coca-Cola Bottling Company Consolidated
Eva-Lena and John Cody
The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee
Community Health Systems
Corrections Corporation of America
Creative Artists Agency
Delek U.S. Holdings
Delta Dental of Tennessee
Dollar General Corporation
Dollar General Literacy Foundation
Earl Swenson Associates, Inc.
East Tennessee Foundation
Enterprise Holdings Foundation
Ernest and Selma Rosenblum Fund for the Performing Arts
Ernst & Young LLP
Ezell Foundation
Samuel M. Fleming Foundation
ForceX, Inc.
Gannett Foundation
Joel C. Gordon & Bernice W. Gordon Family Foundation
Grand Avenue
Grand Central Barter
Green Door Gourmet
Landis B. Gullett Charitable Lead Annuity Trust
HCA — Caring for the Community
HCA Foundation on behalf of HCA and the TriStar Family of Hospitals
Martha R. Ingram
Ingram Industries
Ironhorse Farms
JohnsonPoss
Kraft CPAs
Liberty Party Rental
MEDHOST
The Memorial Foundation
Crispin and John Menefee
Metro Nashville Arts Commission
Middle Tennessee Performing Arts
H.O.T. Support Fund
Minuteman Press
Monell’s Dining and Catering
Nashville Convention and Visitors Corporation
Nashville Predators Foundation
National Endowment for the Arts
The NewsChannel 5 Network
Nissan North America, Inc.
NovaCopy
OnSombre
Patricia C. & Thomas F. Frist Designated Fund*
Premiere Properties Group, LLC
Premiere Speakers Bureau, Inc.
Publix Super Markets Charities, Inc.
Mary C. Ragland Foundation
Raymond James
The Rechter Family Fund*
Regions Bank
Ryman Hospitality Properties Foundation
Sargent’s Fine Catering
Irvin and Beverly Small Foundation
South Arts
SunTrust Bank, Nashville
The Tennessean
Tennessee Arts Commission
Travelink, American Express Travel
Vanderbilt University
Waller
Washington Foundation
Woodmont Investment Counsel, LLC
XMi Commercial Real Estate
Yaara and Uzi Yemin

* A fund of the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee

ADDITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This performance is presented through arrangements made by IMG Artists.