

NOVEMBER 2016

BRIO Study Guide and Program Information



Since the mid 1980's, RDT has collaborated with the Shapiro & Smith Dance Company by presenting their witty and energetic dances inspired by the spirit of friendly competition, ownership and territory, and classic children's games and nursery rhymes.

BRIO will feature crowd favorites like *Bolero*, *Turf*, *A Dance with Two Army Blankets*, *Jack* and our latest acquisition, *Pat-A-Cake*. This pre-holiday family-friendly show is filled with humor and athleticism that will have audiences gasping for breath, during unexpected and thrilling moments on the edge of chaos.

JOIN US FOR A TEACHER WORKSHOP ON JANUARY 7, 2017!

Presented by Repertory Dance Theatre and Ririe Woodbury

See our website for details—www.rdtutah.org

About the Choreographers and Pieces



Shapiro & Smith Dance has a reputation for performing tales of beauty and biting wit that run the gamut from searingly provocative to absurdly hilarious. Dancing with breathtaking physicality and emotional depth they have earned an international reputation for virtuosity, substance, craft, and pure abandonment.

Founded in 1985, the Company began as a collaboration between Danial Shapiro and Joanie Smith. After meeting in the companies of Murray Louis and Alwin Nikolais, they went on to create their first choreography during a Fulbright Lectureship in Helsinki, Finland. Since then Shapiro and Smith's blend of contemporary dance and dramatic theater has elicited enthusiastic receptions across the U.S., Europe, Asia and Canada. The Company has been presented by major festivals and venues including the Joyce Theater, Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors, Dance Theater Workshop, St. Mark's DanSpace Project, PS 122, Festival di Milano, Teatro de Danza in Mexico City, Recklinghausen RuhrFestSpiele, and the Korean International Festival.

Danial Shapiro died of complications from prostate cancer in 2006 and now Joanie Smith continues as sole Artistic Director.



Joanie Smith & Danial Shapiro
photo: Nan Melville

A wonderful quote about the two and the way they work by Kathleen Shorr

"They are highly attuned to each other's choreographic process and like many artists who marry each other, they also edit each other. Danny calls it "choreography by kvetch," but in addition, each of them has learned to recognize when the other enters that "place where you can't do anything wrong—a state of flow—The Zone." Joannie says "You can see it when the light goes on and then you just get out of the way."

Bolero (2010)

Choreography: Joanie Smith

Music: Maurice Ravel

Cast: Justin Bass, Efren Corado, Lauren Curley, Dan Higgins, Jaclyn Brown, Ursula Perry, and Tyler Orcutt

Bolero is a thrill ride of a dance about the dynamic tensions that define the human experience...a dance about community and the power of teamwork. The work explores the endless nature of physical struggle, from war to personal ordeal. It is a dance that demands much of those who perform it which tests the limits of physicality. Bolero is explosive, with the dancers and momentum never letting up until after the final note.

Turf (RDT Commission 1997)

Choreography: Shapiro & Smtih

Music: RDT Commissioned Score by Scott Killian

Cast: Justin Bass, Tyler Orcutt, Lacie Scott, Dan Higgins, Jaclyn Brown, Lauren Curley, Ursula Perry and Efren Corado

Turf makes an energetic and a witty statement about the spirit of friendly competition, ownership and territory. It was created as part of a series of Millennium Commissions leading up to the 2002 Winter Olympics which encouraged a way of living based on the joy found in effort. RDT's Olympic presentations celebrated the spirit of human excellence, human effort and human creativity.



DANCE FOR TWO ARMY BLANKETS (1992)

Choreography: Shapiro & Smith

Music: Toby Twining

Cast: Lacie Scott, Lauren Curley, Dan Higgins, Justin Bass, Tyler Orcutt

Dance with Two Army Blankets uses a most unusual prop, an army blanket. The dancers use this everyday object to toss, swoop, wrap and support one another in this high energy, athletic piece. This dance requires an extraordinary amount of cooperation, trust and physical daring from the performers.

JACK (2012)

Choreography: Joanie Smith

Text Created and Performed by: Brian Sostek

Cast: Tyler Orcutt/Justin Bass OR Efren Corado/Dan Higgins

Choreographer, Joanie Smith, and musician/performance artist, Brian Sostek, used all children's rhymes/stories with the name "Jack" in them to create a new spin on the classic tales.





PAT-A-CAKE (2011) Utah Premiere
Choreography: Joanie Smith
Cast: Ursula Perry/Jaclyn Brown OR Lacie Scott/Lauren Curley

A duet for two women, *Pat-A-Cake* uses the spoken word of well-known nursery rhymes and children's games in the choreography.





Lesson Plan—Small Area Choreography

In *Turf* and *Jack*, much of the choreography takes place in a small, defined space. In *Jack*, sitting or standing on a chair and in *Turf*, on small, large or rectangular rugs. To choreograph in small, defined spaces is a wonderful skill to develop and can lead to very innovative movement vocabulary.

- Tape off a 2 X 4 area on the dance floor. Create as many as you can use for the number of students you have in your class, students can work in pairs or alone. Restrict the students movement creation to the space inside the tape. **First Instruction:** Create 8 gestures (a wave of the hand, a shrug of the shoulders, etc.) on various levels (high, medium and low) in the space. **Second Instruction:** Create 4 movements (a turn, a reach, a twist, etc.) facing different directions in the small space area. **Third Instruction:** Combine gestures and movements to create a phrase. **Fourth Instruction:** Show phrases to one another for feedback. Ask students watching what images came to mind while they were observing and also what type of sound might accompany the movement sequence. Students could then take some time to further develop their small space studies with the suggested imagery and music ideas. The same ideas could also be explored on a chair, in a big box, on a bench, etc.

Lesson Plan—Props and Dance

In the BRIO Concert, most of the dances use a prop. These props are quite ordinary and are objects found in your home and that you use every day, blankets, chairs, and rugs. Using a prop in dance choreography can be challenging and unpredictable, but also can create wonderful movement vocabulary and images.

- Ask the students to bring an object from home into class, something they use everyday. One of the wonderful thing about props in creative dance is that we, as, innovative creative thinkers can play and discover amazing new ways to use the prop other than the way it was intended. **First Instruction:** Talk with the students about the normal use of the prop and discourage them from “acting out” the normal uses of the object, but encourage them to think outside the box and create innovative and challenging

...ways to use the prop. Have them work on creating 4 unique ideas with their prop. If they would like to be in partners or groups to create, that is great. Allow each student time to create with their prop in the group, then switch to the next student to ensure all get creative work time. Once each student has 4 ideas with their prop, show to the class and give feedback. **Second Instruction:** Using the feedback with their 4 ideas, have students begin to develop movement phrases around their prop incorporating the innovations they already created and link them into a short movement/prop study. Ask them further questions, for instance: How is your prop introduced? What is it's purpose? How does the movement relate to the prop? , to advance their studies even more.

Lesson Plan—Children's Rhymes

In *Jack* and *Pat-a-Cake*, children's nursery rhymes and games are used as the inspiration and accompaniment for both pieces. This is an interesting way to construct a piece using words, concepts and movements that are familiar to a large majority of our population. As in most universal experiences, rhymes and words such as the ones in Jack and Pat-a-Cake will mean different things to different people.

- Ask the students to select a nursery rhyme that is special to them from their childhood. Have them do a little research to discover if there are variations to the rhyme, different wording, order, etc. Using the text as a basis, have the students begin to develop movement motifs that represent the words of the rhyme. Once again, not "acting out" the rhyme, but taking the words and creating innovative movement from the meaning of the words. Try either, the mover reciting the rhyme as she/he is moving or another dancer reciting as the other moves. Show to the group.

Joanie was in Salt Lake City setting *Jack* on RDT in the summer of 2015. We interviewed her about her work, please take a moment to watch and listen in to the choreographer's thoughts...

<https://vimeo.com/133605904>



Why Use Dance in the Classroom?

Dance is the oldest language. Dance is a total experience involving the physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and aesthetic dimensions of an individual which helps us perceive and communicate who we are and what we aspire to become. Dance is a great resource for teaching and opening minds and imaginations. Dance is a form of non-verbal communication, a powerful language that everyone can understand. Dance allows all children to explore their own physical and creative potential in a non-competitive environment.

Standards for Arts Education: Utah Core Curriculum

- **Moving:** Increasing strength, flexibility and endurance
- **Investigating:** Discovering the elements of dance: time, space energy and the body
- **Creating:** Exploring the creative process
- **Connecting:** Appreciating dance, its historical, cultural and personal origins

The Elements of Dance

There are four elements of dance: **time, space, energy (force and flow) and the body.**

The **body** is the instrument of dance. It is the vehicle of communication, based upon the dancer's kinesthetic sense.

Dance exists in both time and space. **Time** can be rhythmic and based upon meter, or body rhythms and breath rhythms.

Space is concerned with the visual design of dance. It consists of body shape, levels, floor patterns, group relationships and volume.

Energy relates to the force with which the movement is released. Another term for energy is dynamics and may be described by specific qualities such as: percussive, staccato, sustained, swinging, suspended, vibratory and collapse. A variety of energy levels make a dance more interesting and create texture within the movement.



How to Prepare for the Dance Performance

Turn off and put away all cell phones, mp3 players and any other device which may cause distraction, and remove any chewing gum. Clear your mind of other thoughts (general or personal). Open your mind and spirit to the moment; concentrate and raise your awareness to the immediate environment. As the lights lower and/or the music begins, take a deep breath and relax in your seat. You are beginning to watch motion, movement, shape, line, rhythm, tempo, color, space, time, energy...dance.

Allow yourself to release the notion that you already know what dance means, or has to mean, or that you have to figure something out. Release the notion that you have to look at dance as if you were reading a book. Dance doesn't necessarily have a storyline. If you watch the dance with openness, you may experience an emotion, an image, or a feeling that you may not be able to describe. You may not know why or where reactions come from, but don't worry. That is a part of the magic of theater.

Every piece of choreography has a reason for being. Dances may be celebrations, tell stories, define moods, interpret poems, express emotions, carve designs or visualize music. As you watch a dance, a story may occur to you because of your past experience. However, not all dances tell stories. The sequences do not have to make literal sense. Allow images and personal feelings to come to the surface of your consciousness.

After the performance, feel free to discuss your thoughts with others, but do not be disturbed if you find others have a different reaction than yours. Think about your own personal images and thoughts. Was it fun to watch? Did the dance remind you of any experiences in your own life? Did the choreography inspire you to express yourself, write a poem, draw a picture, or make up your own dance?

Dance Criticism and Questions for Written Analysis and Discussion

Criticism (writing or talking about dance) or evaluation of a dance performance is affected by past experience, sensitivity, involvement, and personal judgment. Criticism involves three processes: **description**, **interpretation**, and **judgment** of a particular piece being analyzed.

When you write or talk about a dance performance you should consider or analyze four different aspects of the dance.

- The **choreographic elements**: the overall form, use of space, rhythmic and timing factors, use of dynamics, style, music, and movement invention
- The **performance elements**: the technical skill of the dancers, their projection, commitment, ability to communicate.
- The **production elements**: the costumes, lighting, props, sets, and music
- The **general impact**: the clarity of intent, concept, invention of the dance performance.

When answering the following questions, try to be multi-dimensional in your responses by describing visual and auditory perceptions and feelings. Make sure you state your reasons for anything you liked or disliked.

1. What emotional reactions did you have? What moved you?
2. What was the most interesting feature of the performance?
3. What in particular do you most remember about the experience?
4. Was there an apparent motive for the dance? Was it dramatic, abstract, a mood piece, etc.?
5. Were there any social, political, or historical elements?
6. What did you notice about the form of the dance?
7. Were the performers skilled technically?
8. How well did they portray their characters or communicate with movement?
9. What kind of music was used?
10. What were your reactions to the technical or production elements, the staging, décor, props, lighting, costumes?

These questions may stimulate great discussions in the classroom, or may allow the students to delve deeper into their performance experience.



RDT's Goals for Arts-in-Education

Using dance as a way to help people become more:
Connected, Compassionate, Aware, Inspired, Original, Focused, Courageous, Passionate, Human

- To provide alternative ways of learning in order to achieve basic educational objectives such as concentrating, creative problem solving, planning, visualizing and conceptualizing
- To develop skills and insights needed for emotional maturity and social effectiveness-sharing, cooperating, integrating, and interacting.
- To develop an individual's physical and mental discipline at all levels of ability.
- To open participants' minds and imaginations by developing tools of communication
- To develop feelings of self-worth, confidence, and achievement by giving students and teachers opportunities to explore movement, the art of improvisation and the creative process.
- To develop an understanding and appreciation of American Modern Dance.
- To deepen the understanding of the relationship between art and life.
- To develop Life Skills by encouraging good citizenship, by helping students be responsible and understand their relationship to the other members of their group, family, class or community.



RDT and Arts Education

REPERTORY DANCE THEATRE founded in 1966, is a professional modern dance company dedicated to the creation, performance, perpetuation, and appreciation of modern dance. RDT's long standing commitment to arts in education focuses on enriching young students lives and providing on opportunity for students to experience the joy of living through dance. The company of outstanding performers, teachers, and choreographers has created new pathways for audiences to experience and value the art of dance. Residency activities that include demonstrations, movement classes, and teacher in-service workshops encourage students to integrate movement into their learning and teaching process. RDT's residency activities are specifically designed to assist teachers and students in achieving the standards for arts education.

The following organizations and donors generously support Repertory Dance Theatre's Arts-in-Education Activities:

- Jarvis and Constance Doctorow Family Foundation
- Salt Lake City Arts Council—Arts Learning Grant
- Salt Lake County Zoo, Arts & Parks Program
- George S and Dolores Dore Eccles Foundation
- Emma Eccles Jones Foundation
- Utah State Office of Education—POPS Program
- Ally Bank
- Lawrence T & Janet T Dee Foundation
- Utah Division of Arts & Museums and the National Endowment for the Arts
- HR Burton Foundation
- BW Bastian Foundation
- 4Life
- Deluxe Corporation Foundation



For more information about Repertory Dance Theatre, our upcoming workshops, performances, residencies, etc. Please visit our website at www.rdtutah.org or contact us at 801-534-1000.