

THE CHIMERA  
PROJECT  
DANCE THEATRE  
PRESENTS



# Silly Billy

A STORY ABOUT A BUFFALO  
WHO WANTED TO BECOME A  
UNICORN...

## Study Guide

Grades K - 4



*Silly Billy in the Schools is an exciting arts education program that exposes students to contemporary dance, Indigenous culture, theatre and music.*

### **Performance:**

The Chimera Dance Theatre Project will present **Silly Billy**, a fun, funny, visually stimulating and physically exciting piece about a rare white buffalo, unhappy with his uniqueness, who goes on a quest to find the magical Unicorn in the hopes of emulating this mythical creature. Come on a journey celebrating the beauty of individuality in this unique show, where First Nations traditions and western dance and theatre meet.

### **Post show Q&A:**

The question-and-answer period is a time where the students can interact with professional artists. The artists will introduce themselves and their backgrounds and allow the students to ask any questions they may have regarding interpretations of the pieces, performance or cultural elements, the creation process or dance or music as a profession.

### **Pre-Performance Preparation:**

A review of theatre etiquette with students.

An exploration of what students know about dance.

While watching the performance students should focus on:

- The connection between the dance and the musical score
- The ways dance tells a story without words
- The shapes, forms and dynamics used by the performance



# WORKSHOPS:

## Movement with Meaning

Various workshops can be offered with the show of Silly Billy.

### First Nations Dance Workshops

In this workshop, students will learn about the history, meaning, and significance of certain traditional dances. Students will move and dance throughout this high energy learning opportunity.

### Character Movement Workshops

The workshops ask the students to connect with the physicality of one of the characters in the show, to encourage them to explore physical creativity in a team setting.

### Customized Workshops

The Chimera Project also offers customized movement workshops to students in a wide variety of dance styles.

## Technical Requirements

- A clear, clean and mopped dance space of no less than 20 ft x 20 ft
- A clear, clean space for the workshops – gym preferable
- Access to the performing space up to 2 hours prior to start of show
- Access to workshop space up to 15 minutes prior to start of workshop
- Access to a 110-volt outlet in performance space
- A changing area for the performers
- A room temperature of minimum 20 degrees

## Student Attire

Students should wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing that they can move in. We will be doing some work on the floor: jumping, turning, sliding and bending. Students should wear appropriate footwear for physical activity.

## Discussion Topics

- What art forms were used to tell the story?
- Discuss the way Silly Billy changed from the start of the show to the end. What did he learn?
- Discuss what character traits were shown by the characters in the story. What were they and how were they demonstrated?

## Themes in Silly Billy

- Self-worth
- Identity and Belonging
- Bravery
- Problem Solving
- Caring for Others
- Empowerment
- Physical Skill
- Indigenous Voices and Narratives
- Culture and sense of Self

# FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

## *Primary*

### ***Drama***

1. Form groups of two to represent the characters in the show. Create and perform an alternate ending to the story.

### ***Dance***

1. Create a short Silly Billy buffalo or Unicorn dance. Make sure to use a change of level and a variety of shapes.
2. Discuss the elements of dance as seen in the choreography and physicalize each element

### **ELEMENTS OF DANCE**

- body: body actions, body shapes, locomotor movements (e.g., running, galloping, crawling), non-locomotor movements (e.g., lifting, pulling, marching, waving arms)
- space: levels, pathways, directions, size of movement
- time: freeze, tempo (e.g., slow, sustained, fast)
- energy: force (e.g., lightness/strength), effort (e.g., pressing, gliding), quality (e.g., smoothly, cautiously, erratically, percussively)
- relationship: (e.g., interconnected shapes)

### ***Music***

1. Create a soundscape of parts of the story. Then share their soundscape with the rest of the class, who guess what part of the story they are telling. Then they might add a dance to these soundscapes.

### ***Visual Arts***

1. Students can draw or paint their favourite characters.

### ***Language Arts***

1. Have each student write one part of the story. Combine all the students work to create a big book.
2. Write a review of the show. See Appendix B

# Junior

## **Drama**

1. Form groups of two to represent the characters in the show. Create and perform an alternate ending to the story.
2. Create a scene in pairs, based on the student's experiences where they worked with a friend to overcome a problem.

## **Dance**

1. Create a sequel to the story. What type of costumes, props and music would you need to tell your story through dance?
2. Create short dances based on other mythical animals like the unicorn. Explore how they would move, and how their character is expressed in their physicality.
3. Discuss the elements of dance as seen in the choreography and physicalize each element based on the elements for each grade level as outlined in the Ontario Curriculum.

## **ELEMENTS OF DANCE**

- body: body awareness, use of body parts, body shapes, locomotor and non-locomotor movements, body bases, symmetry versus asymmetry, geometric versus organic shape, curved versus angular shape
  - space: pathways, directions, positive versus negative space, proximity of dancers to one another, various group formations
  - time: tempo, rhythm, pause, stillness, with music, without music, duration (e.g., short, long), acceleration/deceleration
  - energy: effort, force, quality (e.g., flick, fold, stab, poke, flow freely)
  - relationship: dancers to props/objects (e.g., in front of, inside, over, around), meet/part, follow/lead, emotional connections between dancers, grouping
4. Research the different movement styles used in Silly Billy and create a short dance that uses elements from 2 forms:
    - Hoop Dancing
    - Ballet
    - Voguing
    - Hip Hop
    - Jazz
    - Contemporary

## ***Music***

1. Choose two different pieces of music that are opposite in terms of dynamics and tempo.
2. In small groups, the students create their own piece of music by using classroom instruments, body percussion, or found sounds.
3. Students use their composition to accompany a poem, or narration, or dance piece.

## ***Visual Arts***

1. Create a graphic novel from the story in the performance. Students can use their imaginations to fill in details about the characters and their journey and to illustrate the imaginary enemy.
2. Create a depiction of the unseen enemy in any form (drawing, painting, collage etc.).

## ***Language Arts***

1. Write a Review of the show as though writing for a newspaper. Include the facts (where, when, who, what, how), an analysis of the work and an opinion of it. See Appendix B for guidance.
2. Write a background story for one of the characters in the show.



# COMPANY PROFILE

The Chimera Project Dance Theatre is a Toronto-based contemporary dance company recognized for its energy-charged physicality and inquisitive content. Established by founding artistic director Malgorzata Nowacka-May in 1999, Chimera's mission is to create and produce original dance in theatres and on film, and to develop educational programming.

Described as the “most exciting” and “most original in Canada” (The Globe and Mail), Chimera's presence garnered accolades including Top 10 performances of the year in The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, NOW, and FASHION. Chimera aims to transcend limits, navigating the space between urban and rural duality, small and large endeavors, and reimagining of traditional techniques.

## **The Chimera Project Dance Theatre**

Artistic Director

Malgorzata Nowacka-May

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# *Malgorzata Nowacka-May*

## *Artistic Director*

orn into a family of artists in Warsaw, Poland, Nowacka-May studied visual arts with her parents and is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design (Toronto) which informs the strong visual aspect of her creations. Her training includes The School of Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre (New York), Bengt Jörger's School of Classical and Contemporary Dance (Toronto), and with Elizabeth Langley (Montreal). Malgorzata Nowacka-May's works have been critically acclaimed as "most exciting" and "most original in Canada" (The Globe and Mail) and garnered accolades including Top 10 performances of the year in The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, NOW and FASHION. Her recognition also includes Best of International Dance Festival, the Paula Citron fFIDA Award, Toronto Emerging Artist Award, The Globe and Mail's Most Fearless Change of Direction Award, the Dance Ontario Commission, and Ontario Arts Council's Chalmers Award. Her work was performed at the Canada Dance Festival (Ottawa), as part of the DanceWorks Mainstage series (Toronto), Dance Victoria (Victoria), Dancing on the Edge (Vancouver), Tangente (Montreal), Soon Young's showcase (New York) and Lila Lopez International Dance Festival (Mexico City, Puebla), among others. Many of her contemporary ballets have been on the Ballet Jorgen Canada's touring repertoire since 2010

# *Amy Hampton*

## *Choreographer*

Amy Hampton is a graduate of L'École Supérieure de Danse du Québec and was a member of Le Jeune Ballet du Québec, performing works by international choreographers in both Quebec and France. She has performed nationally and internationally with CORPUS and has danced with many Toronto companies including The Chimera Project, Kaeja d'Dance, Tiger Princess Dance Projects, Anandam Dance Theatre and Larchaud Dance Project. Independently, she has originated roles in works by Kathleen Rea, William Yong, Lydia Wagerer, Keiko Ninomiya, Lincoln Shand and Michael Caldwell and participated in a three-year collaboration between choreographer Robert Desrosiers and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. She has appeared in a variety of dance films as well as music videos by Feist, Ash Koley and the Swallows. In 2007, Amy founded AKA Dance with Keiko Ninomiya. The company has since performed at Tokyo's Dance Ga Mitai International Series, Vancouver's Dancing on the Edge, the Guelph Contemporary Dance Festival, LuminaTO and Dusk Dances and its work for young audiences toured throughout Ontario. Amy is a certified Pilates instructor and is active in the community as a teacher, rehearsal director and administrator. She has worked with a range of artists and companies as an administrator including DNA Theatre, The Canadian Association of Photographers and Illustrators in Communications (CAPIC), The Chimera Project, Green Tea Collective and the Suzana da Camara band. Amy has been with Dance Ontario since 2010 and is thrilled to be taking on the role of Executive Director. Amy has been the founding member of The Chimera Project, and was a featured dancer in numerous works that toured across Canada. She is currently part of a new creation by choreographer Malgorzata Nowacka-May.

# Arik Pipestem

## Choreographer

Erik “Arik” Pipestem is a performer, dancer, choreographer and a proud member of the Tsuut’ina nation. He has been trained in dance styles including; hip-hop, Latin, contemporary, ballet and multiple traditional powwow styles. Arik is a world renown hoop dancer who fuses traditional and modern forms to create his unique approach to the ancient craft.

Arik had the pleasure of collaborating with and performing alongside many companies, forms of media and artists including: Taboo (Black Eyed Peas) The Calgary Flames, So You Think You Can Dance, Cirque du Soleil: TOTEM, Kaha:wi dance theatres: Transmigration, The Chimera Project: Bears, Stars and Trees and ANA:OWARA Dance Théâtres: SkyBridges, Bear Grease Live on tour (2022), The Hole in the Sky (2018), Crux (2015), and TradCirque (2013) to name a fine few.

Recently Arik broadened his performance to other forms of media including video and film that includes: Hey Viktor!(2022), DREEZUS- Red Winter(2016), Shaun Frank-Together(2021).

Arik has written, choreographed and directed many aspiring dancers in original pieces and is a founding member of The Ancient Neon Dance Collective and aims to remain grounded in diverse expressions of tradition and imagination through movement and storytelling.

Arik has been working as a dance artist with Chimera since 2014, and has been an integral part of the development of many new works as a dancer, choreographer and Cultural Advisor.

# Dana Macdonald

## Choreographer

Dana Macdonald (she/her) is a mover and collaborator based out of Tkaronto, (Treaty 13 Territory) Ontario. A 2018 Graduate from Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson) with a BFA in fine Arts – Dance. Dana has had the privilege to work and train with many international and Toronto based companies including but not limited to Hubbard Street Dance, Transcendance projects, Alysa Pires Dance projects, Kylie Thompson Creative and CHUTHIS. Dancer, rehearsal director, choreographer, certified animal flow instructor (lvl1); First and foremost Dana considers herself a lover of stories. Through many mediums, dana hopes to be a vessel and contributor for the stories yet to be shared.

# APPENDIX A

## DANCE FORM

**Hoop Dancing** is not acrobatic, but restrained. The dancer usually takes small steps when performing the dance. Hoop dance, an individual dance, is a "show dance". Hoop Dancers will move either clockwise or counterclockwise as determined by their cosmology and worldview. Hoop Dancing usually focuses on very rapid moves, but sometimes speed and creativeness balance the scoring between Hoop dancers who use only four hoops but dance to extremely fast songs, versus dancers with 20 or more hoops who danced to a slower drumbeat Every dance is as individual as the person who choreographs it. Some dancers mimic animals such as birds or working of hunting, fishing, planting and harvesting. In elaborate sequences of moves, the hoops are made to interlock, and in such a way they can be extended from the body of the dancer to form appendages such as wings and tails.

**Ballet** is a classical art form that dates back to the 15th century. The dance originated in French and Italian court dances and later emerged as a concert dance form in Europe and Russia. Ballet is an intensely technical and codified dance that takes years to master. It is traditionally performed to classical music and often tells a story.

**Contemporary dance** is a highly creative art form that began in the early 20th century that is constantly changing, evolving and taking risks. Contemporary dance draws on a variety of techniques including Modern Dance and Ballet and explores new ways of using the forms. Contemporary dancers train in a variety of dance styles in order to be versatile, strong and adaptable. Contemporary dance invites the audience to use their own imaginations. There are no right or wrong interpretations of contemporary dance.

**Hip Hop Dance** evolved out of Hip Hop music culture and is typically a freestyle or improvised dance form. Hip Hop is about 30 years old and includes a variety of sub-genres such as popping, locking and breaking. Hip Hop dance is often performed in battles where different groups compete.

**Jazz Dance** is a type of music of African American origin characterized by improvisation, syncopation, and usually a regular forceful rhythm, emerging at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Brass and woodwind instruments and piano are particularly associated with jazz, although guitar and occasionally violin are also used. Styles include Dixieland, swing, bebop and free jazz.

**Vogue Dance**, or voguing, is a highly stylized, modern house dance originating in the late 1980's that evolved out of the Harlem ballroom scene of the 1960's. It gained mainstream exposure when it was featured in Madonna's song and video "Vogue", and when showcased in the 1990 documentary Paris is Burning.

# APPENDIX B

## *Student Review Questions*

*The facts:*

We saw a dance and theatre piece called... It is a story about...

*What I feel:*

I liked the part when... It was funny when...

It was scary when...

It was sad when...

*What I saw:*

I was surprised when I saw the dancers...

I saw dancers moving fast when...

I saw the dancers moving slow when...

*What I heard:*

Many sound effects like...

It was scary when I heard...

*Connections to my life:*

While watching this dance story, I learned