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A teacher’s guide to the performance of Barynya, Russian dance, song and music ensemble.

Name of Performing Group: Barynya.

Name of Performance: From Russia with lots of dance and music.

Category of Program: Music/dance.

OBJECTIVE OF PERFORMANCE:

Barynya aims to introduce students to elements of traditional Russian music and dance. Students will learn about Russian culture, language, instruments, songs, dances, costumes, and music. The performances provide a snapshot of Russian performing arts which will contextualize a broader understanding of this Eastern European culture.

SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM:

Barynya is the premier Russian folk ensemble outside of Russia, specializing in traditional dance, music, and song for Russian, Cossack, Siberian, Ukrainian, Jewish and Gypsy Roma cultures. Their program also features virtuoso performances on instruments, including the balalaika, garmoshka (Russian folk button accordion). The trio includes: Elina Karokhina (balalaika), Boulat Moukhametov (dancer), and Mikhail Smirnov (garmoshka, vocals, and guitar). Each performer has at least 20 years of professional experience.

PRE-PERFORMANCE:

- A. What background information or concepts should the students know about the topic in order to understand and appreciate your performance?

The performance is conducted in English and assumes no previous knowledge of Russian language, culture, or history. Some Russian vocabulary will be taught.

- B. Define vocabulary that is unique and necessary for your performance.

Barynya: Original Russian folk dance with short four line verses. The Barynya dance is an alternation of limericks and frenetic dancing, and it consists mainly of fancy stomping and traditional Russian squat work.

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Hopak: National dance of Ukraine, also referred to as Gopak or Cossack dance. Hopak has been incorporated into larger artistic opuses such as operas and ballets.

Kalinka: The most famous Russian folk song and dance.

Kamarinskaya: Popular Russian folk dance with accompanying instrumental music.

Korobushka: Popular Russian folk song about a countryside peddler who carries a basket filled with attractive prints and brocades.

Mazel Tov: Jewish wedding dance from the Odessa region of Ukraine.

Nanai Tribe Fighters: A sumo-style wrestling match most popular in Nanai, the frigid Northern region of Russia.

Podmiskovnye Vechera, Katyusha: Two most popular Russian songs.

Russian Jewish Medley: Instrumental performance. Balalaika solo by Elina Karokhina.

Russkie Skorogovorki: A vocal performance by Mikhail Smirnov sung acapella.

Tsyganskaiya Fantaziya: Instrumental performance which features virtuoso medleys of favorite Russian Gypsy songs.

Varen'ka: Cossack song and dance.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHT(S):

What do you want the students to notice as you perform?

As narrator, Mikhail Smirnov will draw attention to the most important aspects prior to each act, which may include clothing or vocabulary. The Bottle Dance and the Nanai Tribe Fighters stand out in particular for the athleticism exhibited by the performers. The Bottle Dance is performed during traditional wedding ceremonies and involves a dancer balancing a bottle on top of his or her head. The wrestling match between what appears to be two Nanai tribesmen in hooded costume is actually acted out by one person – a feat which requires exceptional physical strength.

PERFORMANCE FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:

The artists suggest a Russian folk dance workshop.

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What student resources or books would you recommend to extend your performance?

<http://ethemes.missouri.edu/themes/1519>

The University of Missouri provides multiple online resources designed to enrich curriculums for grades 1 to 6. One may find information on Russia's geography, language, culture, food, and history. Listen to the Russian national anthem, learn the Russian alphabet, or read about the Tsars. There are also online games, quizzes, maps, audio files, and many photographs of Russian people and places.

<http://kids.yahoo.com/directory/Around-the-World/Countries/Russia/History?pstart=1>

This website directs teachers to lesson plans on Russian history and culture, including those created by Montgomery County's Forest Oaks Middle School. This resource is best suited for middle and high school curriculums.

What teacher resources or books would you recommend to extend your performance?

Russian Folk Belief by Linda J. Ivantis gives information on the major forms of Slavic folklore: myths, legends, and fairy tales. Additionally, *Performing Russia: Folk Revival and Russian Identity* by Laura J. Olson gives information on how folk music has evolved amidst social and political changes in Russia.

Gillian Avery's *Russian Fairy Tales* is an illustrated book with recognizable Russian stories such as "The Princess and the Frog." Learning about these fairy tales will improve students' understanding of how storytelling and performing arts play a major role in the traditions of Russian cultures. *Russian Fairy Tales* by Aleksandr Afanas'ev addresses more complex stories, such as "Dracula." Teachers may use these resources to select specific stories appropriate for their classes.

<http://lessonplanet.com>

This greatly beneficial resource allows teachers to search for Russian History lessons from over 200,000 reviewed lesson plans.

About ensemble Barynya:

The Russian music, dance and song ensemble Barynya, established in the year 1991, is a world renowned group that enjoys exalting stature as the premier Russian folk ensemble. Barynya presents Russian, Cossack, Ukrainian, Russian Jewish, and Russian Gypsy traditional dancing, music, songs, and virtuoso performances on instruments including the balalaika, balalaika-contrabass, garmoshka (Russian folk button accordion). Barynya has been invited to perform at some of the most prestigious cultural venues in the United States, including Carnegie Hall in New . . .

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York City, the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, the Smithsonian Institute of America in Washington D.C. , the United Nations in New York, and the Russian Embassy in Washington D.C.

Barynya is globally recognized and boasts an impressive client roster of dignitaries, politicians, celebrities and organizations from around the world. The group performed at the black-tie Gala after the Liberty Medal was presented to former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev by President George H.W. Bush in 2008. The prestigious event was attended by over one thousand dignified guests including the likes of Tom Brokaw, Dikembe Mutumbo and Van Cliburn.

Latest major concert tours: Australia (2011), Hong Kong (2010), Canada, Mexico (2009), United States (2008).

Barynya also performs annually at the Russian Nobility Ball for the Russian Nobility Association in New York . Members of the ensemble have been invited to perform at many film premier and celebrity parties, including the official post-Grammy Award parties in New York and for private events hosted by Barbara Walters, Elton John, the Rolling Stones, and Tommy Hilfiger.

Most recently, Mikhail Smirnov, the founder and Artistic Director of Barynya, was invited as one of the eight judges on NBC's hit dance show, "Superstars of Dance". Each judge is an expert in a different nation's traditional style of dance and the NBC producers decided that Mr. Smirnov, as founder of the premier Russian folk ensemble outside of Russia , is the authority on traditional Russian dance.

Founder of the group Mikhail Smirnov is hosting all performances by giving a short explanation of every number of the program in English.

About the Artists:

Mikhail Smirnov, was born in Moscow, and has been involved with Russian folk dance and music for more than 25 years. Mikhail is the artistic director and founder of **Barynya**¹, author of many articles about traditional Russian dance, music, and instruments, and the owner of **Barynya Entertainment**. As a child, Mikhail was a member of the **Moscow Boys Chorus**. He was also a soloist in several Russian folk and music groups. Mikhail is an accomplished musician playing the balalaika-contrabass, balalaika, and gusli. In January 2009 Mikhail and the dancers of **Barynya** were featured on NBC's "Superstars of Dance".

Elina Karokhina is Russia's top balalaika player and a musician of international renown. She was born in St. Petersburg, and started to play the balalaika as a teenager. Elina belonged to the Russian folk group **Izba Trio** and toured with the

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Moscow Circus under the name “Smirnov’s Folk Orchestra. “ She is now the principal balalaika player and musical director for **Barynya**.

Boulat Moukhametov was born in a tiny Tatar village in the Ural Mountains in Southeast Russia. He was born into an artistic family. His father was a dancer and his aunt was an opera singer at La Scala. At age 11, he chose to continue in his father's footsteps and went to ballet school in the city of Ufa: Rudloph Nureev Academy. When Boulat was 18, he was chosen to dance with the Presidential Dance Company of Republic of Bashkortostan. He danced with the company for 4 years, touring Europe. At age 21, Boulat served with the Russian Navy and was chosen as soloist for the Song and Dance Company of the Baltic Navy Forces. During this time, Boulat fell in love with the sea, and after serving in the Navy for 5 years, he began dancing on cruise ships as an Adagio Dancer. He was traveled around the world six times and worked on the world's biggest cruise ships. He continues to travel and dance and bring others happiness through his passion for dancing. In 2009 Boulat has joined ensemble Barynya in New York. He led the team of dancers to perform at the International Dance Festival "United Colours of Dance", Birmingham, West Midlands, UK (United Kingdom).

Performance Summary:

The school show will include many of the following traditional dances and musical numbers:

During the show we perform the following numbers:

01.

Moroz (father frost), Russian folk song with accompaniment of Russian folk instrument [garmoshka](#).

02.

Balalaika solo. Introduction to Russian folk instrument the [balalaika](#).
Photo: http://www.barynya.com/barynya/images/2012/school_assembly/06.jpg
Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=farIE_EQzmQ

03.

Barynya. Russian folk dance. First costume change. Original Russian folk dance with short four line verses. The Barynya dance is an alternation of limericks and frenetic dancing. It consists mainly of fancy stomping and traditional Russian squat work.

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Schedule of upcoming performances:

<http://www.barynya.com/g.htm>

Full list of performances since 1991:

<http://www.barynya.com/duo/gigs.htm>

Video of full company concert with 8 dancers, 6 musician, 4 singers
Van Nostrand Theatre, Brentwood , NY:

<http://barynya.com/mp3/gypsy.htm>

Full company video promo:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AI0MPNbJ8nY>

Barynya dancers at the International dance festival, Stamford , CT:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=At13wrGSi4A>

Video - two dancers and one musician:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbnnEPCV82w>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01k1n_7j7Rs

Video - two dancers, one singer, and one musician:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mI9pA5_Tb7E



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