

Guidelines for Teachers

Curriculum Connections:

- Dance
- Writing
- Media Literacy
- Social Studies

Learning Goals:

- Recognizing and appreciating how dancers communicate through live performance and media
- Experiencing, responding to, and analyzing dance through reflective and critical writing
- Exploring the theme of community support as it is represented in *Arise*, and applying the theme to personal experience

Big Ideas:

- We can support our communities to overcome challenges together
- Performance and collective arts experiences foster important social connections
- Choreographers use the language of dance to connect people, and tell stories

Big Questions:

- How can we, in our own communities, support each other to overcome challenges in our own lives?
- How do choreographers use the elements of dance to tell stories and share emotion?
- What can we learn about each other and ourselves through collective artistic experiences?
- How can art be healing?
- How can media texts facilitate a collective arts experience when we are physically separated?

Getting Started:

- Assign the whole guide to your students as an extended project or pick and choose sections to assign at different times

Watch *Arise*: www.nbs-enb.ca/loveballet

Learn the 2020 NBS Sharing Dance Choreography, which has also been created by Jera Wolfe and is inspired by *Arise*:

<http://www.nbs-enb.ca/en/sharing-dance/bring-dance-into-your-home/all-ages>

Student Viewing Guide

Creating *Arise*:

For *Arise*, Jera came into the creative process with movement ideas that were inspired by the music, and put them to the students through workshops to see how they would work. Throughout the process, Jera collaborated with the young artists, sharing his vision and the movement ideas, and then allowed for interpretation from the dancers.

Engage with the Theme:

Arise, created by **Jera Wolfe** for Canada's National Ballet School (NBS), explores how collaboration and support for one another enables us to rise up and face challenges in our lives.

As Jera says, "There will always be challenges in life. I have realized that what defines me is not necessarily my failures or accomplishments, but how I rose to face them. We will all have great challenges to overcome in our own lives, everything from personal, political, to environmental. Only by collaborating, supporting and caring together will we be able to arise to face these challenges."

In the current reality, when almost every person on planet Earth is affected by COVID-19, Jera's message of community and collaboration has never been more poignant. He says, "It's times like this, when the unthinkable happens, that we need to stand together; we need to be united. It is the foundation of this support that is essential in times of uncertainty."

Before watching *Arise*, take a moment to reflect on Jera's statement. Read and think about the following statements.

- What does Jera's message mean to you?
- Think about a challenge you have experienced or overcome. Why was it challenging? Where or to whom did you turn for support?
- Think about a time you helped someone face a challenge.

Watch Arise

Because this is a recorded performance, you can watch it once through to fully experience it, and then again to take notes.

Take Intentional Notes:

Use the following to create your own note-taking template before you watch. You can do this on paper or on the computer. This will help you keep your notes organized.

- **Before:** There are many bits of information you can gather and include in your notes before you start watching.
 - Date
 - Performance location
 - Title
 - Choreographer
 - Composer
 - Designers (costume, lighting, set)
 - Cast information, if available
 - Reason for performance (e.g., regular season, fundraiser, part of an event, student showcase)
 - Context (societal, or historical)
 - Details about plot/theme

- **During:** It can be tricky to take notes while you are watching a performance. If you look down at your notebook the whole time, you'll miss a lot. Remember that you do not need to retell the whole performance. Fully experiencing the performance is important, so focus your note taking during the performance on the following:
 - Specific details relevant to the development of the story or theme
 - Your aesthetic judgement of movement phrases, images, or patterns
 - Particular dancer or dancers that stand out for you
 - Movement motifs you notice (recurring movement patterns that develop the theme, the story, the characters)
 - Artistic details you think you might forget by the end (e.g., the way the costumes moved on the dancers, or a musical phrase that moved the theme forward)

- **After:** Write down your initial response. Use the following questions to help shape your response.
 - Which moments were the most memorable?
 - Which dancers stood out for you?
 - What was your aesthetic impression of the piece?
 - What was missing?
 - What message do you think the choreographer was sending?
 - What was the emotional effect?
 - Describe some images that stick with you.
 - How did the choreographer and dancers use the elements of dance (time, space, energy, body, and relationship)?

Short Answer Questions:

After watching *Arise*, answer the following questions in approximately 1-2 paragraphs each.

1. How does the title fit the piece? Use specific examples from the choreography to support your response.
2. How many dancers are in the performance? What kind of an effect does that create?
3. What is the mood of the piece? How do the music, costume and lighting contribute to the mood?
4. Choose one of the elements of dance (time, space, energy, body, relationship), and describe the use of that element in *Arise*. Give at least 3 examples.
5. Which movement patterns bring forward the theme? Choose one, and explain how.
6. When you were watching the piece, did you think of anything else (a person/people in your community, a memory, a place, an experience, a book, a movie, a song, etc.)? Why do you think that came to mind?
7. Which was the most memorable moment of the choreography for you? Describe the movement. Why was it memorable?
8. How might this online viewing platform inform your experience of watching *Arise*? What do you think would be different about watching this piece live? What would be the same?
9. Think about the following words. How does the meaning of each word apply to the choreography? Think of a community you are a part of. How does each word apply to that community?
 - a. Challenge
 - b. Collaboration
 - c. Support

Essay Prompts:

After watching *Arise*, choose **one** of the following prompts, and respond with a persuasive essay.

1. How can media texts, like this video of *Arise*, facilitate collective arts experiences and foster human connection for people who are physically separated?
2. How can artists collaborate to help people in their communities overcome challenges? OR How can you, as an arts student, collaborate with others to fulfil a need in your community?
3. Why do we perform in schools, and what is the value of student performances in your school and/or community? Use examples of student performances you have been a part of and/or have seen.

Journal:

After watching *Arise*, respond informally to the following journaling prompts. Choose how long you would like your responses to be.

1. How did you feel watching *Arise*? What emotions did the performance evoke?
2. Did watching the choreography bring up any personal memories for you? Why do you think that memory came up?
3. Did you feel a personal connection to this piece? Why or why not?
4. Would you share this with others? If so, who would you like to share this with? Write a letter to that person saying why you are sharing it and why you think they would want to see it.
5. How can arts experiences be healing?
6. Taking inspiration from *Arise*, create a one page media text that sends a supportive or hopeful message to your community. You can do this by hand or on the computer.
7. Create a thank you message for someone who has helped you overcome a challenge? You can use any form of artistic expression to offer the message.
8. How could you apply Jera's message in your own community?

Performance Review

Practice writing a (1-2 page) performance review of *Arise*, using the attached guidelines. Use your notes, your journal, and your short answer questions to inform your review.

Performance Review Guidelines

Introduction:

- Include the following:
 - Date (if it is a video, include the actual performance date)
 - Title
 - Choreographer
 - Composer
 - Designers (lighting, costume, sound, etc.)
 - Relevant historical and societal context about when/where/how the piece was created and/or performed.

- Include a short synopsis of the piece. Remember that you are not recounting the whole piece. The reader may not have seen it yet, so give just enough information for your reader to understand your opinion. No spoilers!
- Offer your general opinion about the piece. Like a persuasive essay, you will begin with a thesis statement, and supporting arguments.
 - A good thesis will go further than simply saying you liked or disliked the performance. The following questions might help you create your thesis.
 - What is the purpose of this piece? Do you think it was achieved?
 - Who might want to watch this and who might not want to watch this?
 - Would you see it again? Why?
 - What was well executed about the performance and what could be improved?

Body

- Develop your argument using specific examples from the choreography.
- Support your argument by describing and analyzing the following:
 - Choreography
 - Dancers
 - Theme/story
 - Costumes
 - Music
 - Lighting/stage design
- Make sure to provide evidence for aesthetic judgements by describing the movement you saw and analyzing why you responded that way.
- If possible, name dancers when describing their movement.
- When analyzing, avoid absolute statements like “the best”, “the worst”, or “perfect”.
- Instead, think about what you thought was effective or ineffective. For example, “the choreography was moving because...”, or “the storyline was confusing, because...”.
- Avoid exaggerations like, “she is the most beautiful dancer ever.”
- Instead, think about why you felt that way. For example, you could write that “her sensitive port de bras and graceful leaps were captivating.”

Conclusion

- Restate your thesis.
- Summarize your argument.
- Leave off with an engaging ending.

Before you start writing, explore examples of dance performance reviews on <https://dancetabs.com/>

Some movement verbs you can use instead of 'do' and 'be':

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|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| • Move | • Leap | • Exit | • Share | • Inspire |
| • Jump | • Travel | • Lift | • Step | • Stretch |
| • Enter | • Carry | • Support | • Reach | • Rebound |
| • Turn | • Execute | • Balance | • Connect | |

Some adverbs you can use to describe movement:

- | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|
| • Carefully | • Sensitive | • Gently | • Creatively | • Accidentally |
| • Precisely | • Vigorously | • Enthusiastically | • Elegantly | • Fluidly |
| • Energetically | • Quickly | • Confidently | • Boldly | • Mechanically |
| • Effortlessly | • Slowly | • Generously | • Awkwardly | |