

LEZGINKA STATE DANCE COMPANY OF DAGHESTAN

THURSDAY
MARCH 22 2018
9:30 AM & 11 AM





2017 > 2018
FIELD TRIP SERIES

BROADEN THE HORIZONS
OF YOUR CLASSROOM.
EXPERIENCE THE VIBRANT
WORLD OF THE ARTS
AT THE McCALLUM!

LEARNING LINKS

McCALLUM THEATRE EDUCATION
PRESENTS

LEZGINKA STATE DANCE COMPANY OF DAGHESTAN

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MARCH 22 2018
9:30 AM & 11 AM

"For me, dance is life.
Let your life be like a bright,
interesting and
unforgettable dance."

> ZULUMKHAN KHANGHEREIEV
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Connecting to Curriculum and Students' Lives!

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY > The Republic of Dagestan (also spelled Daghestan) in Russia

ARTS > Music, folk dance

CULTURE > Dress, color, design, tradition

EXPANDING THE CONCEPT OF LITERACY

What is a "text"? We invite you to consider the performances on McCallum's Field Trip Series as non-print texts available for study and investigation by your students. Anyone who has shown a filmed version of a play in their classroom, used a website as companion to a textbook, or asked students to do online research already knows that "texts" don't begin and end with textbooks, novels, and reading packets. They extend to videos, websites, games, plays, concerts, dances, radio programs, and a number of other non-print texts that students and teachers engage with on a regular basis.

We know that when we expand our definition of texts to the variety of media that we use in our everyday lives, we broaden the materials and concepts we have at our disposal in the classroom, increase student engagement, and enrich learning experiences.

Please consider how utilizing your McCallum performance as a text might align to standards established for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language.

How do we help students to use these texts as a way of shaping ideas and understanding the world?

Please use this material to help you on this journey.

NON-PRINT TEXT > any medium/text that creates meaning through sound or images or both, such as symbols, words, songs, speeches, pictures, and illustrations not in traditional print form including those seen on computers, films, and in the environment.

THE WORK OF ART

A NON-PRINT TEXT FOR STUDY

WHAT'S IT MADE OF? HOW CAN THIS WORK SERVE AS A COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS-MANDATED "TEXT" FOR STUDENT STUDY IN THE CLASSROOM?



When the lights come up on the Lezginka dance company we are in another world. The colorful costumes speak of folklore. The precision and grace tell of discipline. And the dances themselves, intricate and festive, reveal a tradition spreading hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years backward in time. Of course, the particulars of this performance might seem as strange to those long ago Lezgins as they do to our modern Western eyes. For these dances are offered through the prism of modern sensibilities and current styles of concert performance.

Threaded throughout are the themes of pride, romance, ritual, tradition, and the roles of men and women in society.

The young man and woman eye each other, clearly drawn to one another. The dance begins. His outfit is that of a mountaineer, hers that of a village daughter. Their moves betray a spirit of competition. Their smiles and grace tell us it is all in good fun. The title, *My Hero*, lets us into her view of things.

My Mountain Girl picks up the theme. Once again we are given a kind of group pas de deux, that is, dance for pairs. When a young Daghestani fellow selects a gal, he calls her Moya Gorianka. In the dance, his moves are all sharp angles and brisk strokes. By contrast, her moves tend toward the smooth, the graceful, and the soft. However, the swiftness with which she executes these tells us that she is not willing to give up to her young man by accepting his superiority.

Pride shows up again in Lezginka, the traditional dance of Daghestan. Here we are made to sense the character of the people. As in *My Daghestan*, in which the dancers communicate the beauty and majesty of the homeland, we glimpse a powerful love of home and tribe.

Is any culture impervious to the stirrings of spring? *Rutulsky* – or the *Spring Holiday Dance* – features the younger generation cavorting in the throes of spring revels way down in the South of Daghestan.

Do you want horses? Antsukh carries forward – through dance – the tradition of the Caucasian horsemen. We proceed from the Caucasus to the Nogai region when the dancers take up the *Ailana*. This word translates directly to *Dance at Moonlight* – and once again we are in the realm of romance. The music is lilting, light and evocative. We can be pardoned for thinking we are gazing at the moon and stars.

And speaking of the cosmos, we turn finally to *Rhythms of a Planet*. The steady thrum of the drums puts us in mind of the eternal side of things, the ebb and flow, the good and the bad times. The sound of this dance re-creates the sound of Daghestan, say the dancers. May one never forget!



THE ARTISTS

WHO HAS PRODUCED THIS TEXT FOR STUDY?

Lezginka, the State Academy Dance Company of Daghestan, was founded in 1958. It was People's Artist of Russia, Tankho Izrailov, who organized and led this troupe for its first twenty years. Poet Rasul Gamzatov wrote: "With the birth of the Lezginka Ensemble each of us experienced a feeling that comes with the birth of a long-expected child. And a healthy, handsome and talented child it was."

Daghestan is a mountain country, closely tied to Russia, and its population is made up of many different tribes. The traditional dances of these various peoples are uniformly spirited. Fiery and temperamental are words often used to describe them. The Lezginka company, in curating these folk artifacts, transforms them into concert form. Their choreographic and music work, they say, "Convey the might and noble endeavors of the Daghestan people that are treading the highroad of national development in the multinational family of the people of Russia."

Today, their artistic director and choreographer is Zulumkhan Khanghereiev. A man of many accomplishments, he is People's Artist and winner of State Prize of the Republic of Daghestan. Under his careful guidance, the repertoire highlights the study of unique national traditions and folklore.

Leading dancer Ramin Zubayrayev has been called the Baryshnikov of the Caucasus. Beginning his study of dance at the age of five, he now routinely takes the lead in *Dance with Drums*, in which the dancers perform complicated pirouettes on their fingers and beat out rhythms on drums.

Founder Izrailov visited the Caucasus often, scouring the villages of Daghestan for examples of folkloric dance. He studied these carefully. When he had amassed a good sampling, he began the process of weaving these into a comprehensive format. He truly unified these traditional village dances into one cohesive whole, providing a beautiful example of what can happen when art unifies what other forces would separate.

There are 35 Lezginka dancers, and they have performed with great success in Russia, Europe and Asia.

"With the birth of the Lezginka Ensemble each of us experienced a feeling that comes with the birth of a long-expected child. And a healthy, handsome and talented child it was."

> RASUL GAMZATOV
POET

CONTEXTS

WHAT INFORMATION SURROUNDS THIS TEXT FOR STUDY & COULD HELP MAKE STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH IT MORE POWERFUL?

The Lezginka is a national dance of the Lezgins. This is also known as the Lezgi or Lezgian (лезги кьуьл) dance. You often experience the Lezgian dance as a solo and pairs dance. Even in ensemble, there is a sense of pairing men and women. Traditionally, it is performed in national costume and a musical ensemble plays the accompaniment. The music itself often has a 6/8 rhythm. The melody is memorable and the tempo fast.

The dance is built on particular images. The man moves as if he were an eagle, one minute slow, the next minute fast. His most spectacular movements are those when he rises on his toes, throwing his hands out in opposing directions. The woman moves are more swanlike. Her posture is graceful. Her hands and arms move in sustained lines through the air. She speeds up in response to the man's increased tempo. The dance, common among the Caucasian peoples, was named for the ancient totem of the Lezgins: the word "Lek" (лекъ) means eagle. Typically, a certain formality keeps the pair from actually making physical contact.

The Republic of Dagestan (Республика Дагестан) is a republic of Russia. It's located in the North Caucasus region. Its capital and largest city is Makhachkala, located at the center of the country on the Caspian Sea.

With a population of nearly three million, Dagestan is ethnically diverse. None of its several dozen ethnicities form a majority. The biggest groups are the Avar, Azerbaijani, Dargin, Kumyk, Lezgian, Laks, Tabasaran and Chechen. Ethnic Russians make up a bit over three percent of Dagestan's total population. Russian is the primary official language and the lingua franca among the factions.

Just for fun, here's a section of a poem by People's Poet of Dagestan Rasul Gamzatov, the spirit and content of which seemed to us in keeping with the work of art:

Let us go where girls entrance us
To Akhvakh return!
Are we handsome? Our advances
Shall they greet or spurn?

We'll observe the age-old rite,
Setting hearts aglow.
Through a maiden's window wide
Furry caps we'll throw.

We'll discover straightaway
Who the favorite is,
From her window back shall come
Every cap but his.

Palest moonlight I recall...
Silent streets below,
Where we argued life and love
All so long ago!



TO GET READY FOR THE PERFORMANCE, STUDENTS COULD RESEARCH THESE:

- > DAGHESTAN
- > FOLK DANCE, PARTICULARLY LEZGINKA

HERE'S A 60-MINUTE LESSON IN COLLABORATION & PROBLEM-SOLVING YOU COULD TEACH TO HELP PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THIS WORK:

LINE OF INQUIRY – LOI is an essential question that generates a lesson:

How does Lezginka State Dance synthesize traditional folk dance and modern concert dance format to create dance art that conveys culture?

Begin by showing a map of Daghestan and its neighbors. Have students discover which countries those neighbors are. A student with access to the Internet might volunteer to learn about the relationship between Daghestan and its largest neighbor overnight and share that the following day.

ASK: WHAT'S A FOLK DANCE?

One possible definition, adapted from Wikipedia: The term “folk dance” is applied to certain dances of historical importance in a country’s culture and history; typically originated before 20th century.

Play a Lezginka folk music selection:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7U8uKen-v0 or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1deFVudZhsc>

Have students write down descriptions of the music as they listen. These descriptions are shared after the hearing.

Show students some photographs of Daghestani folk dress:

www.pinterest.co.uk/liv3301/dagestan/?lp=true

Ask them to describe the details aloud. Then, each student selects one of these images and attempts to copy it, paying close attention to colors and shapes. These are shared gallery-style. One or two of these pictures could be described by the whole class in an act of group noticing facilitated by your questions.



AFTER COMING TO THE THEATER, STUDENTS COULD RESEARCH THESE:

- > RUSSIA
- > POEM WRITING

HERE'S A 45/60-MINUTE LESSON YOU COULD TEACH AFTER STUDENTS HAVE EXPERIENCED THE WORK:

DISCUSSION

Have students take a look back at the performance. What stood out, and why? Describe the performance. What were the different dances – and how were they sequenced? What skills were the dancers using? What were the different groupings of dancers? How did the dancers appear to communicate with each other? What emotions were conveyed – and how? How would you describe the traditional dress? What stories, if any, appeared to be conveyed through the dance? What did you notice about the music? What things came to mind as you watched and listened? What surprised you? What do you want to know more about?

Share with students the poem fragment from People's Poet of Daghestan Rasul Gamzatov.

ASK

In what ways do you think performances like this one are valuable?

"Lezginka is]
the dance of the mountains,
a temperamental dance
that could even make the dead
want to come back to life."

> ANATOLIY VARTANIAN
LEZGINKA DANCER



WHAT'S YOUR READ OF THIS NON-PRINT TEXT?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS - AND HOW COULD THEY BE ADAPTED AS GUIDING QUESTIONS TO SPARK STUDENT DISCUSSION?

- > Which moments stand out to you, and why?
- > How did multiple dancers interact with each other?
- > Which moments or aspects struck you as super traditional? Which more contemporary?
- > What was the order of the program (what came first, second, etc.) and how was this sequencing effective?
- > What other kinds of dance came to mind watching this?
- > What, if anything, seems most “unfamiliar” to you about this presentation?
- > What did you notice about the solo sequences?
- > How did the dancers arrange themselves spatially?
- > How did you observe them communicating with each other?
- > What are some adjectives that describe how they moved?
- > What are the strengths of these dancers?
- > What are some especially striking choreographic choices?
- > Of what other performance-based art does this remind you?
- > How is this program valuable to the maintenance of Daghestani culture, would you say?
- > What role does gender play in this work?
- > How is humor used?
- > How do these dancers do things differently when dancing solo versus dancing in an ensemble?
- > What can you glean about Daghestani life from these pieces?

INTERNET

LEZGINKA DANCE COMPANY OF DAGHESTAN

<https://worldtouring.net/home/lezginka-dance-company-of-daghestan/>

Some super gorgeous photos of dancers in action.

HOW TO DANCE THE LEZGINKA

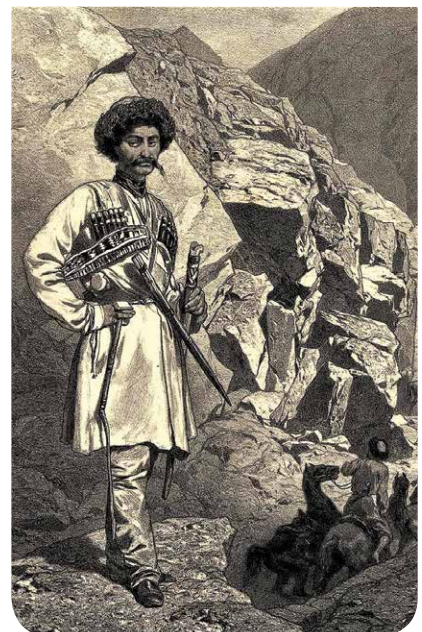
www.hejorama.com/articles/lezguinka-8/

A totally offbeat site but rather fun, including step by step instruction, a floor plan map of the partners' pathways, and so on.

LEZGINKA STATE DANCE COMPANY FROM DAGESTAN

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1deFVudZhsc

Colorful costumes, precise choreography, energy!



BOOKS

RUSSIA FOR KIDS: PEOPLE, PLACES AND CULTURES - CHILDREN EXPLORE THE WORLD BOOKS

By: Baby Professor

Publisher: Baby Professor, 2017

ASIN: B06XCGY947

You will get to learn about the country, its people, and its rich history and traditional as you open the many pages of this wonderful book. There are also pictures!

IF YOU WERE ME AND LIVED IN RUSSIA: A CHILD'S INTRODUCTION TO CULTURES AROUND THE WORLD

By: Carol Roman

Reading level: Ages 3-8

Publisher: Chelshire, Inc., 2014

ASIN: B00KYXLFK2

Roman uses select vocabulary, a pronunciation guide, and simple, rich-hued illustrations to depict country-specific foods, holidays, and games ... Much of the strength of the series lies in Roman's ability to present complex matters at a level appropriate for kids 3 - 8 years old.

MUSIC

LEZGINKA - RUSSIAN FOLK DANCE ON EDISON RECORD (65503-L)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7U8uKen-v0

Lezginka is played here by Kiriloff's Balalaika Orchestra during the early 1920's.

LEZGINKA BY ARAM KHACHATRYAN PERFORMED BY THE ORCHESTRA OF FOLK INSTRUMENTS

www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAAtXzIN-ELI

Classical composer/conductor Aram Khachatryan conducts an orchestra playing his symphonic rendition of Lezginka.

"Even though it's not very popular among New Yorkers or even Americans, it's very popular among [the greater Daghestani community] culture. So whenever we get together for a wedding we would dance this."

> ANATOLIY VARTANIAN
LEZGINKA DANCER

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