

Curriculum Guide

The Fratello Marionettes

The North Pole Review

Teacher Guide

K-8

About the Artist

The Fratello Marionettes began entertaining audiences in 1989 by bringing the ancient art of marionettes to audiences throughout the world. We have toured extensively throughout the United States and internationally.

The Fratello Marionettes produce high quality marionette shows using the “cabaret style” of manipulation. In this truly American style the puppet and puppeteer perform in full view of the audience. Our shows present intricately handcrafted marionettes that range in size from one foot to three feet tall. Our shows are geared for children of all ages, and some of our work is performed without dialog. These music-based programs are designed to surmount the language barrier.

About the Program

The North Pole Review is created from a long line of marionette variety shows. The first marionette variety shows were made in the 1800’s in Europe and typically featured a family of performers traveling around to different venues. Much of the shows featured specialized trick marionettes. These marionettes were designed to do very specific task such as juggling, balancing on a tightrope, playing musical instruments, singing, dancing, and transforming.

Our modern marionette variety show, *The North Pole Review*, consists of our most popular marionette holiday acts. The production starts off with a clever janitor who cleans the stage before the maestro takes the stage to conduct the overture. The show also showcases our graceful ice skater, the high kicking antics of the Russian Trepak Dancers, and the vocal talents of our singing Hawaiian mice. We also demonstrate to students how they can make their own simple puppets with only a few items in a hand ballet we call “Snow.”

Annually new characters are added to the cast of this highly popular production. This is a perfect presentation for the holiday season. There are no religious themes or overtones, so it is appropriate for any public school. This show is often used as a celebratory assembly before winter break.

Learning Objectives

- To introduce children to the art of puppetry
- To open children's imagination to theater
- To learn how to celebrate the holiday season
- To listen to classical music
- To show how to follow one's dreams (Both puppeteers started in puppetry at a young age)

Teacher Preparation for the Program

Discussing the History of Puppetry

- What is a puppet?
- What is a marionette?
- How many different types of puppets are there?
- How can I make a simple puppet?
- When did the art of puppetry begin?

The North Pole Review

- Where is the North Pole?
- What type of animals comes from the North Pole?
- Who composed the music for The Nutcracker?
- What is a ballet?

Follow-Up Ideas and Activities

How to Create a Puppet Show

- Think of a clever story to tell.
- Writing the script.
- Develop what characters are involved.
- Decide what type of puppets to use to tell the story.
- Determine how and when to use sound effects or music.
- Decide who is going to play which characters.
- Rehearse the show.
- Put on a performance.
- Have fun!

Vocabulary and Key Concepts

Classical Music: A form of music played by symphonic orchestras using strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion instruments.

Acrobat: a skilled performer of gymnastic feats, as walking on a tightrope or swinging on a trapeze.

Juggler: a person who performs juggling feats, as with balls or knives.

Marionette: mar-i-o-nette ; a puppet manipulated from above by strings attached to its jointed limbs.

English-Language Arts Content Standards

This puppetry program meets the VAPA and ELAC standards:

- 1.1 Artistic Perception: puppets, story, classical music, conflict
- 2.1 Creative Expression: Students connect emotional bonds with the characters portrayed in the puppet show presentation
- 3.2 Historical and Cultural Context: Students are enlightened on one of the earliest forms of performance art. They are also encouraged to ask questions following the performance.

Resources

Joan O' Brien, Holidays Around the World, Dover, 2006

Jean Malaurie, Call of the North: An Explorer's Journey to the North Pole, 2001

Luman Coad, Marionette Sourcebook, Charlamagne Press, 2007

Mabel and Les Beaton, The Complete Book of Marionettes, Dover Publications, 2005

David Currell, Making and Manipulating Marionettes, Crowood Press, 2005

Mark Mazarella, Stories of the American Puppet, DVD, 2007