

Young Audiences Assembly Teacher Guide
“Ya Feel Me? The (Martial) Art of Caring”
with
SKHER BROWN & THE DANCING WARRIORS



The Goal: by engaging the audience in heart-felt stories with interactive play, a space opens for each youth to experience her/his own feelings. And from this sacred place, we invite each soul to consider caring for the humanity of others and eradicating emotional abuse.

The Performance: Capoeira Angola is an African-Brazilian folk art that allows for a dynamic presentation of:

Martial arts
Theatrics
Acrobatics

High-Energy Dance
Singing
Live Music

Audience Participation
Play
Storytelling

The Artist: “Baba” Skher is one of less than 10 American-born artists in the United States who have reached his ranking in this African-Brazilian art form. He serves as the director of the Dancing Warriors ensemble and performs alongside fellow veteran artists who have traveled throughout Brazil and collectively presented for thousands of adults and children.

Assembly Description



Ya Feel Me? The (Martial) Art of Caring” is a show about getting at the root of empathy to lessen the occurrence of bullying and emotional abuse in our schools. With three main activities that emanate from the core of the African Diaspora, we journey into the soul. Through storytelling, the characters weave a narrative that pulsate our human sensibilities. Through music, the audience participates and simultaneously connects with each member of our performance community. And through movement, we see and do the dance of a sacred art form that spans centuries and continents. This assembly is well-suited for expanding Common Core lessons on Speaking and Listening.

Performance Scene Summary

The Berimbau Flower of Sorrow: The show begins with a long bright sunflower who has transformed herself into the image of a beautiful girl. She has done so in order to look like the humans she envies, but soon finds out that the makeover comes at a cost.

The Orchestra of Mouths: The entire audience comes alive as The Conductor harmonizes its different sections into polyrhythm mouth and body-instrument sounds. There are no spectators. The room IS the performance.

The Game of Capoeira Angola: This is what the martial art of Capoeira Angola looks like. But is it a dance, fight, or game? With backs twisting, legs whipping, heads ducking, and hands walking on the ground as feet dance in the air, it can be hard to tell. You decide!

Bye-Bye Bully: This is a childhood story of friends found from enemies.

A Display of African-Brazilian Percussion Instruments: the audience is introduced to all of the musical instruments used in capoeira, while some lucky students are invited on stage to learn to play them.

On-stage Martial Arts Workshop: Several students are invited on stage to learn some basic movements of Capoeira Angola. And for the finale, they will show their skills with the student instrument players and audience Orchestra of Mouths.

Setup Requirements

- Performance space: at least 20 X 20
- Students should be seated as close to the performance area as possible.

Artist arrival time

At least 30 minutes before performance time

Suggested Introductions

Ladies and Gentlemen, our performers want you to know that it's okay to cheer them on during the show. It helps them get pumped up! Now, with no further delay, please give a warm welcome to the Dancing Warriors!

Inclement Weather

DON'T WORRY! Artists will follow school closings and delays and will work with you to reschedule the performance if necessary.

Young Audiences Contact Number

Call 410-837-7577 and follow the prompts to be connected with a staff member on call for After Hours or Emergency. To reach Skher Brown directly, call c)443.519.6390 or email skher.brown@gmail.com.

Artist Bio

“Baba” Skher is one of less than 10 American-born artists in the United States who have reached the level of “Contra-Mestre” in this African-Brazilian art form. For more than 20 years, he has studied Capoeira Angola under the tutelage of a renowned master from Salvador, Brazil. This traditional dance-fight art form led him to live in South America, learn Portuguese, and to literally “stand on his head.” As a teacher, he gains student trust as an authority figure that is

committed to nurturing their character development. He has also served as an on-going teacher for Goucher College and Towson University.

Baba Skher's ensemble, The Dancing Warriors, has mesmerized audiences with acrobatic choreography at dozens of school assemblies throughout the state of Maryland. Students are transported through time and across the Atlantic Ocean to learn about the origins of Capoeira Angola's unique culture, dance, and music.

Common Core Standard:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Maryland State Curriculum Standards For Fine Arts:

Fine Arts Content Standards in DANCE

2.0 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Students will demonstrate an understanding of dance as an essential aspect of history and human experience.

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the contexts of dances from variety of cultures
 - a. View dances from cultures related to general classroom studies and explain their purposes.

Fine Arts Content Standards in Music

2.0 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Students will demonstrate an understanding of music as an essential aspect of history and human experience.

1. Develop the ability to recognize music as a form of individual and cultural expression through experiencing music as both personal and societal expression.

Vocabulary

Capoeira Angola:

1. A martial arts tradition that began in Central Africa and perfected in Brazil by enslaved descendants of Africa.
2. Capoeira Angola is an African-Brazilian folk art that combines dance, play, music, theater, and martial arts into a unique experience.

List of Resources

ONLINE

Adult Capoeira Practitioners: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omqt7PrbKJQ>

Youth Capoeira Dancers: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5ohbZLtwas>

Capoeira FICA Youth Camp: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MzLUIWo4d4>

CAPOEIRA MUSIC

CD Title: "Capoeira Angola from Salvador, Brazil." Grupo de Capoeira Angola Pelourinho with Smithsonian Folkways. code SFW40465

Sounds: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TDFio7_YC8
CD liner notes from “Capoeira Angola from Salvador, Brazil.”
http://media.smithsonianfolkways.org/liner_notes/smithsonian_folkways/SFW40465.pdf

ORAL TRADITION

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral_tradition

MAAFA

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maafa>

BOOK

2005. Learning Capoeira: Lessons in Cunning from an Afro-Brazilian Art. *New York: Oxford University Press.*

Pre-Performance Activities

Background information or concepts students should know about the topic in order to understand and appreciate the performance:

Performance Etiquette

In many African traditions, the audience is considered to be part of the performance. While the dancers are performing, the audience is encouraged to sing, clap, cheer, interact, and enjoy along with the performers. However, when performers are speaking directly to the audience, talking and whispering are inappropriate and distracting to both audience members and to the performers.

A Description of Capoeira Angola for Students

CAPOEIRA ANGOLA is an African-Brazilian martial art that combines acrobatics, dance and fight movements, music, history and philosophy. Enslaved Africans brought the movements of Capoeira Angola to Brazil during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, disguising the martial elements by adding music and singing. After the abolition of slavery, Capoeira Angola continued to grow as a tool for freedom and resisting injustice. Today, Capoeira Angola groups flourish across Brazil and around the world.

Performance Highlights for Audience

Pay attention to what the movements and interactions look like to you. When you return to your classroom you will be asked to come up with descriptive words and phrases that best express what you experienced.

Notice how there are many different artistic elements that merge together to form this African-Brazilian art form? When you return to your classroom we will try and name them.

Post-Performance Activities

Capoeira Angola Art Form

- Writing prompts: Do you feel what you saw today was a dance, a game, or a fight? How can you tell? Write a paragraph to support your conclusion from what you observed.
- Attempt to mimic some of the basic dance movements seen in the performance
- Search Youtube for videos and Google for images of “Capoeira Angola”
- Research other art forms and traditions that originated from people of African descent. How many of these African diaspora art expressions can students identify? How have these art forms and traditions affected you personally?

Anti-Bullying

- Questions for students:
 - Did you identify with any of the characters in the story? Who and why?
 - Have you had or witness any situations of sharing/caring for others in school? Uncaring behavior? How do they feel differently?
- Questions for teachers:
 - How can you advise student to deal with abuse among peers?
 - Begin with a Google search of “teaching tolerance” and “anti-bullying tips.” Begin a discussion with your students to create an inclusive, safe classroom space to dialog.