

underground



Photo by Gary Noel Photography

DAVID DORFMAN DANCE
CONCEIVED AND CHOREOGRAPHED
BY DAVID DORFMAN
CO-DIRECTION ALEX TIMBERS
MUSIC BY JONATHAN BEPLER

Study Guide written by
Ann Cooper Albright

BAM Harvey Theater
Thursday, Nov 16 at 10:30am

Brooklyn Academy of Music, Peter Jay Sharp Building
Department of Education and Humanities,
30 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11217—1486
718.636.4130

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Study Guide

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Ann Cooper Albright

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Introduction

BAM is fortunate to be able to present David Dorfman's *underground* to young people at this particular moment in time. With our nation again divided over its involvement in a foreign war, it seems as if history is repeating itself. And as we look closely at our present situation it might be prudent to examine our past as well as our conscience. Our country has a rich history of social protest movements. Whether it's Womens' Suffrage, the Civil Rights movement, or the Gay Rights movement, there is something to learn from the individuals at the forefront of these movements who took to the streets and changed our country. Though most movements found non-violent means to transform society, other more radical movements felt they had no other recourse but to use violence. David Dorfman's *underground* confronts this idea directly asking, "Is violence ever justified in the pursuit of justice?" The answer might seem obvious to most, but in today's world of global terrorism, state-sanctioned torture, and preemptive war it is apparent that not everyone is in agreement.

Choreographer David Dorfman is an artist whose political consciousness is reflected in his work. This is especially true with *underground*, a work that examines the legacy of the radical, and sometimes violent, band of 1960s radicals that called themselves the Weather Underground.

BAM hopes that the performance of *underground* will encourage students to examine their own attitudes toward violence, their political consciousness, and their roles as civic-minded citizens. The members of the Weather Underground, who sought the violent overthrow of our government (leading to the death of three of its own members), were not much older than the students in your classrooms. Before your students leave high school and go on to college, or into the workforce, they should think about the world they will inhabit, and what avenues will be available to them to have a dissenting voice.

This guide is designed around the *New York City Blueprints for Teaching and Learning in the Arts* and is divided into five sections, each devoted to one of the strands. It contains background information on choreographer David Dorfman and the Weather Underground, as well as research projects, writing exercises, and activities that explore the use of movement and dance as a means of expression. Through the information and exercises contained within, BAM connects the performance of *underground* with New York State Standards in Art and Social Studies.

Additionally, through an education collaboration with David Dorfman Dance, BAM will provide schools attending *underground* with an in-school pre-performance workshop from a member of the company. This is a unique opportunity for you and your students to work directly with an artist before they see him or her perform at BAM.

Again, BAM is delighted that you and your students will be joining us on November 16, 2006 at the Harvey Theater for this provocative performance from one of the country's leading dance companies.

Connecting *underground* to the *Blueprints for Teaching and Learning in the Arts* and the New York State Standards

The activities in this Study Guide are designed to align with the current standards for teaching and learning: *The New York State Learning Standards* and *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts*.

Blueprints for Teaching and Learning in the Arts

The *Blueprint* outlines Five Strands of Arts Learning, which are summarized below. For a complete copy of the *Blueprint*, visit <http://schools.nyc.gov/projectarts/>

- I. *Art Making*: Skills, knowledge, and appreciation that should be mastered by students in selected arts areas related to creating works of art and how these are honed as students mature.
- II. *Literacy in the Arts*: The vocabulary, literacy and skills of an art form that support learning in other areas such as critical thinking and reading, writing and talking about the arts.
- III. *Making Connections*: The social, cultural, and historical contexts in which students may understand the arts which link to other disciplines and interpret the world around them.
- IV. *Community and Cultural Resources*: Students' active engagement with the rich community and cultural resources of New York City related to the arts.
- V. *Careers and Lifelong Learning*: The skills and discipline required to pursue a career in arts-related fields and integration of the arts across an entire lifetime for expression and enjoyment.

New York State Learning Standards

Generation BAM programs address the NYS Learning Standards for English Language Arts Social Studies and The Arts, which are summarized below. To download a complete version of the standards, visit <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/arts/artls.html>

English Language Arts

- Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding
- Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression
- Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation
- Standard 4: Language for Social Interaction

The Arts

- Standard 1: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts
- Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources
- Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
- Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts

Social Studies

- Standard 1: History of the United States and New York
- Standard 5: Civics, Citizenship, and Government

ART MAKING

The Public is Invited to Dance: David Dorfman's *underground*

This section is about the **PROCESS** of making a work of art. We will talk about **WHY** and **HOW** artists create. Then, we will introduce you to the work of choreographer David Dorfman and give you a bit of background on his new work *underground*.

WHY: INSPIRATION

Artists can be inspired by many different things, activities or environments. For instance, Cezanne, a famous French artist, was deeply inspired by Provence, the area of southern France where he spent most of his life. His paintings try to capture the colorful flowers, fields, and mountains of this region. Not only did he try to represent that landscape, he tried to paint it in a manner that reflected its essence, using bright, saturated colors and thick strokes of paint.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

What inspires you?

Standards Addressed:

NYS English Language Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding

Divide your class into groups of 4 or 5 people and ask each group to come up with a list of objects, experiences and environments that they find inspiring. (Objects could be a beautiful rock or a lovely shell from the ocean.) Experiences can include walking across the Brooklyn Bridge at night. Environments could range from natural to constructed, even the students' own rooms. Combine these lists into one large class list.

Then discuss the following with your class:

- What is it about the object or experience that you listed that inspires you?
- Which senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell, or spatial) do these memories most inhabit?
- Where do you look for inspiration on a daily basis?
- How can peoples' actions be a source of inspiration? Please give examples from your life or from history.
- Name works of art, i.e. a songs, a painting, a poem, that were inspired by an important event or person.

HOW: ARTISTIC MEDIUM

Once artists are inspired to create, they need to choose a medium through which to express their vision. Cezanne used oil paints on canvases. There is an enormous range of visual materials to use to create images. This includes paper, watercolor, pen and ink, marker, clay, pastel, metal or stone, to list only a few. There is also a large range of materials used by artists in other mediums. For instance, musicians use an enormous variety of instruments, the human voice, even computers to generate sounds. Writers hone in on the poetic and vibrant use of language as their artistic medium. Interestingly enough, dancers often use their own bodies or the bodies of other people to create their art. We refer to a composed dance as a choreography, and a dancemaker as a choreographer. This word can be broken into its etymological roots. 'Core' is connected to corpus or chorus, and refers to the body, while 'graphy' means writing (as in calligraphy). Thus choreography means literally 'writing the body.'

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Exploring the Human Body as an Artistic Medium

NYS English Language Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding
NYS Arts Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

Have the students come back to their groups of 4 or 5 people and discuss the following:

- What media do students have experience with?
- Which artistic media do students feel most connected to? Ask them to explain why.
- What are the challenges choreographers and dancers face using the body as their artistic medium?
- What might this say about dance that sets it apart from other art forms?
- What recent technological advances have created new media available to students, i.e. internet and digital video?

Repetition and Variation

NYS Arts Standard 1: Creating and Performing and Participating in the Arts
NYS Arts Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

Divide into groups of 4 or 5. Have each student select a pedestrian gesture. Find movements to connect these gestures and teach the sequence to all members of the group. Then one by one, have each person repeat this sequence, allowing the gestures to evolve with each repetition. After each person has experimented with this exercise, have the group discuss how they interpreted this evolution.

Making Dances

Contemporary choreographers choose from many different kinds of dance languages to create their work. Some well-known companies have developed their own movement language and have created schools that train dancers in that specific style. Some of the more familiar dance techniques today include those originated by Alvin Ailey, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and José Limon, Merce Cunningham, Trisha Brown, and Urban Bush Women, to name just a few. Other dance schools may teach classes under a more general rubric of ballet, modern, jazz, tap, contemporary and post-modern. Generally, contemporary choreographers either create movement directly on their own bodies and then teach it to their dancers, or they have the dancers develop the movement themselves, often by having them either improvise on a theme or work within a specific movement dynamic. Later, the choreographer will select aspects of these sessions that they want to explore further. For the most part, this is how the movement in *underground* was made.

Choreographer David Dorfman

Born in 1956, David Dorfman was raised in a working-class Jewish suburb of Chicago. He was an athlete (he played baseball and football) in high school. In college, he studied business. After he graduated, he began dancing seriously, receiving a Master's of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) from Connecticut College where he now teaches. Often, his short program biography humorously alludes to this unexpected shift in careers. "He would like to thank long-time mentors Martha Meyers and Daniel Nagrin for taking a chance and rescuing him from counting leisure suits in St. Louis."

A recipient of a 2005 Guggenheim Foundation fellowship, Mr. Dorfman has also been honored with four fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, three New York Foundation for the Arts fellowships, an American Choreographer's Award, the first Paul Taylor Fellowship from The Yard, and a New York Dance & Performance Award ("Bessie") for David Dorfman Dance's community-based project *Familiar Movements (The Family Project)*. Dorfman's choreography has been produced in New York City at venues ranging from the BAM Next Wave Festival to The Joyce Theater, The Kitchen, Dance Theater Workshop, The Duke on 42nd Street, Danspace Project/St. Mark's Church, P.S. 122, and Dancing in the Streets. His work has been commissioned widely in the U.S. and in Europe, most recently by Bedlam Dance Company (London), d9 Dance Collective (Seattle), and the Prince Music Theater in Philadelphia for the musical *Green Violin*, for which he won a 2003 Barrymore Award for best choreography. An avid fan of collaboration and collective processes, Dorfman is pleased to tour an evening of solos and duets, *Live Sax Acts*, with friend and collaborator Dan Froot, and a half-evening duet, *Menne Awn Frauen*, created with longtime colleague and friend Stuart Pimsler. Dorfman has been guest artist at numerous institutions across the country and abroad, most recently at Illinois Wesleyan University, Rutgers University (New Brunswick, NJ), and Knox College (Galesburg, IL). As a performer, he toured internationally with Kei Takei's Moving Earth and Susan Marshall & Co. Dorfman holds a BS in business administration from Washington University in St. Louis and an MFA degree in dance

from Connecticut College, where he joined the faculty as Associate Professor in Dance in the fall of 2004.

David Dorfman's choreographic work ranges from his solos works about memory and loss such as *Sleep Story* or *Dayenu*, to duets with performer Dan Froot which humorously spoof on the conventions of masculinity in American culture, to a variety of dances for his company of professional dancers. Another important aspect of Dorfman's repertoire is his series of group works on topics connected to his community outreach programs. Because they explore issues from both a personal and a social perspective, these works provide a useful foundation for understanding his new choreography *underground*.

On his company's website, Dorfman discusses the motivation behind one of these projects entitled, *Out of Season* (The Athlete's Project).

I am an athlete turned dancer and choreographer who combines risky athletic movement with a more delicate gestural vocabulary. Combining humor and drama, I attempt to create an atmosphere of passionate theatricality. *Out of Season* is a project in which David Dorfman Dance, our six-person company, rehearses over a two-week period with a group of volunteer athletes selected from the communities to which we tour, and performs the finished piece along with other work from the company's repertoire at the end of the residency.

Most of the athletes, who range widely in age, training, and social makeup, have never been on stage before and when performance time comes, the level of personal expression and physical expertise is breathtaking . . . The project is not strictly about athletics. It is more about a dialogue between any two groups of people that share a common language of some sort. The ability--or inability--of people from different cultures or social roles to integrate and assimilate provides a potent starting point for much of our exploration of the human spirit. The project is about encouraging people that have never been on stage before to use their bodies and voices in potent ways. We are interested in telling stories, uncovering aspects of athletics, dance, and life that are not often dealt with in a theatrical context. Issues of intimacy in athletics and winning or losing in dance are of key concern to us. Aspects of competition (personal and societal), media views of events and personas, and definitions of worth and value also fit prominently into our investigation.

This term "investigation" is crucial for understanding Dorfman's new work, for *underground* is essentially an investigation of the questions: What is my role as a citizen in today's world? In a violent world, do we fight for peace?

Development of *underground*

underground was inspired in part by Academy Award-nominated documentary by Sam Greene and Bill Seigel on the Weather Underground, a radical and sometimes violent leftist group active in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Although choreographer David Dorfman was too young to be involved personally in the anti-war, anti-establishment youth movements of this time period, he regards that period as part of his personal and cultural history. He writes: "Looking back at the 60's and how it was the core of my emotional and artistic formation will be my entry point into this exploration – in essence, a return to my own 'movement' roots." Indeed, his movement vocabulary for this dance tries to capture something of that time period, connecting physical movement to the idea of political movements.

While the title of the piece refers to the specific political activities of the Weather Underground, Dorfman's choreography in *underground* really takes up the investigation of the personal as political, asking the audience to reflect on their own responsibilities in the midst of today's turbulent world. Referring to this in an interview Mr. Dorfman has said "...I want my generation and younger people ...to look at the nature of activism and what, if anything, justifies the use of force and violence."

David Dorfman's *underground* begins with a prelude, danced by Dorfman while the audience enters the theater. This is a series of movements and posed gestures, like physical snap shots from another time. The most recognizable of these include a lunge, a raised fist, and what looks like a baseball pitch. While early rock music from the 60's and early 70's plays, Dorfman repeats this series, over and over again. At first the combination of these gestures seems random, but eventually, after many repetitions, they begin to carry their own meanings. Certainly by the end of the evening-length dance, they have acquired multiple resonances. For instance, what starts out as a simple baseball pitch at the beginning of the piece, eventually morphs into throwing bombs, and then at the end becomes a gesture of reaching out for something.

His dancers move and talk, weaving their answers to the questions of political activity (how far would you go to resist the government?) and personal apathy (why would I care?) into responsive movement phrases. At times, they just mull around, with no particular direction or desire to do anything. At other times, they zip into high gear, zooming around the stage with bombastic movements. Relating how physical energy translates into political action (or not) is one of the central themes in the dance.

Long dedicated to cross-disciplinary collaborations, Dorfman incorporates music by "Bessie"-award winning composer Jonathan Bepler into this new work. Co-direction and dramaturgy is provided by Alex Timbers, video design by Jacob Pinholster, costuming by Heather McArdle, lighting design by Jane Cox, scenic design by Cameron Anderson, and additional text is provided text by Ann Washburn.

Underground had its premiere at The American Dance Festival in Durham, North Carolina in June 2006

Additional Artist Biographies

Delightedly, **Lindsay Ashmun** (*performer*) began working with David Dorfman Dance early this year. A dancer/performer all her life, Lindsay moved permanently to NYC in 2004 from Boulder, Colorado. Holding a BFA in Dance and Contemplative Performance Studies from Naropa University, Lindsay has been a guest faculty member for the dance departments of the University of Colorado-Boulder, Naropa University and NYU-Tisch School of the Arts. Lindsay has a private practice in Somatic Movement Education, working with people of varying abilities combining forms such as Hatha Yoga, Pilates and Body-Mind Centering. In addition to dancing with DDD, Lindsay currently has the pleasure of working with Gerald Casel Dance Company and Blueprint Violation. She would especially like to thank David and the company for welcoming her and shining the love!

Patrick Ferreri (*performer*) began dancing at a very young age when, in addition to entertaining himself and his family, he discovered how useful the form could be in expressing emotions as it helped to expedite his potty training experience. Since his early explorations, Patrick has been lucky enough to receive support and inspiration from such teaching artists as Maryann Irwin, Pamela Pietro, Joy Kellman, Nancy Stark Smith, Douglas Nielson, Kay Cummings, Jaclynn Villamil, and many more. He has had the opportunity to perform with Gerald Casel dance, Johannes Wieland, Julian Barnett Project, Skybetter and Associates, and is also looking forward to future stints with Karl Rogers and Clare Byrne. Patrick wishes to send his thanks to his mother for her unwavering support and his love long distance to his aunt and grandmother.

Heather Mcardle (*performer/costume designer*) Heather McArdle: Native Californian whom began her movement career with gymnastics. She graduated from Cal State University Long Beach with a BFA in dance. Her most influential mentors include Keith Johnson, Jacques Heim & most notably Bella Lewitzky. She joined the professional world of dance with the hyper physical dance troupe Diavolo Dance Theater. Heather has spent the past five years traveling around the world with Bill Young, and has been working for David Dorfman for the past 3 years. She is on faculty at Dance New Amsterdam and teaches residencies in NY and around the country. Heather has been presenting her own solo choreographic works at loft showings in NYC and random Brooklyn spaces. Her latest group project involves forming a troupe of artists together calling themselves Blueprintviolation, you can guess by the name what that's about www.blueprintviolation.org. In addition to the performing and teaching Heather also does costume work for most of the companies she works for as well for this show and her own company.

Jennifer Nugent (*performer*) is a performer, teacher, and choreographer. She has been a member of David Dorfman Dance since 1998 and received a New York Dance and Performance Award (Bessie) for her work with the company. Originally from Miami, she danced locally with Gerri Houlihan & Dancers, Mary Street Dance Theatre, and Barbara Sloan--Duo Da Da Dance Theater, and, since moving to New York, with Martha Clarke, Shen Wei, Lisa Race, Nina Winthrop, Yin Mei, and Daniel Lepkoff. She is often a guest artist at DNA Dance New Amsterdam. She has also taught at The North Carolina School

of the Arts, Hollins University, George Washington University, Ohio State University, NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and is currently on faculty at the American Dance Festival. This past summer she was also on faculty at the Bates Dance Festival and taught and performed at the Florida Dance Festival. Jennifer's work has been presented around the United States, Korea, and Vietnam, and she is currently co-artistic director of Nugent+Matteson Dance with Paul Matteson.

Molly Poerstel (*performer*) graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University on a Dean of the Arts Scholarship for Dance and Choreography. She has been inspired by and fortunate to study with and perform in projects by Jeanine Durning, David Grenke, Barbara Grubel and Mark Jarecke.

Joseph Poulson (*performer*) is from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is a graduate of the University of Iowa and relocated to New York City in 1999. He is currently working and performing with Susan Marshall Company, Creach/Co., Bill Young and Dancers, Jeanine Durning and, since 2001, David Dorfman Dance. He has also worked with many other choreographers in NYC including Alexandra Beller, Gerald Casel, Lar Lubovitch, Mark Morris, Melinda Ring and Peter Schmitz, to all of whom he is very thankful.

Karl Rogers (*performer*) is originally from Tulsa, Oklahoma. He defected to the Midwest, where he graduated with a degree in Educational Studies and Theatre from Knox College, and then trained at the Dance Center-Columbia College in Chicago, simultaneously serving as its Academic Program Coordinator. He completed an MFA in Choreography from the Ohio State University in 2003, where in addition to teaching technique, improvisation, and dance/theatre history, he was the first artist to receive the University's top award, a Presidential Fellowship.

Francis Stansky (*performer*), originally from Worcester, MA and a graduate of Connecticut College, resides and survives in NYC. He has been able to learn from, teach to, and collaborate with many great choreographers, dancers, artists, and everyday people of the city. He is currently working with Jeremy Nelson of Full Fat Dance and began collaborating with David Dorfman Dance in 2004.

Whitney Tucker (*performer*) a southern Illinoisan, graduated Magna Cum Laude with a BFA in Dance Education from Arizona State University. She is grateful to have explored movement as a public school teacher, the creator and facilitator of a healing arts program for women recovering from prostitution, and a social dance enthusiast. Her choreography has been presented at Bates Dance Festival, Conduit, Inc. and in the Ten Tiny Dances series, both of Portland, OR, as well as at The West Coast Contact Improvisation Festival. She is so thankful to have performed in the works of Nita Little, Jon Lefan, Michael Foley, and various other thought-provoking friends and colleagues.

Sarah Young (*apprentice*) received her BFA at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, with an International Arts minor. Through her studies, she received a Ford Foundation Fellowship and traveled to Zimbabwe to study indigenous dance and perform for Zimbabwe's Ministry of Culture. In 2002, Sarah founded Flying Art, an international

exchange of art among children, creating links between youth throughout the USA and worldwide. While in NYC, she has performed Steven Koplowitz's *Grand Step Project*, on board with Ann Robideau and Alexx Shilling, with Fresh Blood Productions, RedShift Dance, and continues to perform with the Treehouse Shakers, bringing folktales to children through storytelling and dance.

Alex Timbers (*co-director*) is an OBIE Award-winning director and the Artistic Director of New York-based theater company Les Freres Corbusier. Last month, he directed the NY Premiere of the Evangelical haunted house, *Hell House*, at St. Ann's Warehouse. His urban planning fantasia, *Boozy*, which he wrote in addition to directing, was named one of the "Ten Best of 2005" by the New York Daily News and Time Out New York. He received two 2005 Backstage West Garland Awards for the twice-extended Los Angeles production of *A Very Merry Unauthorized Children's Scientology Pageant* in an addition to an OBIE for the New York premiere. Alex is the recipient of a Boris Sagal Directing Fellowship at Williamstown Theatre Festival, a Drama League Directing Fellowship, an EST/Sloan commission, and is a former President of the Yale Dramat. Later this month, a new production of the *Scientology Pageant* will open at New York Theatre Workshop.

Cameron Anderson (*set design*) Recent credits include *The Barber of Seville* for The Opera Theater of St. Louis, *Massacre (Sing to Your Children)*, directed by Kate Whorisky, for LAByrinth Theatre Company, *Heddatron* for Les Freres Corbusier, *Maria Padilla* for the Minnesota Opera, *Così Fan Tutte* for the Seattle Opera, *Much Ado About Nothing* for Shakespeare and Company, *The Consul* for the Opera Boston, *La Bohème* for the San Francisco Opera Center, *Susannah* and *Romeo et Juliette* for the Festival Opera in Walnut Creek, CA, *Café - A Go-Go* (Off-Broadway musical), *Dead City*, *Anna Bella Eema* and *Belly* for the New Georges, *Measure for Measure* and *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot* for the Garson Theater Company, *Scapin* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* for the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, *The Cripple of Inishmaan* for Dartmouth College, and *Earthquake Chica* for the Summer Play Festival in NYC. She made her European debut in Italy with her design of *Così Fan Tutte* for the Opera Theatre of Lucca.

Jonathan Bepler (*composer*) has been doing music and sound in collaborative settings for many years. Recent projects include a mobile soundtrack for rural Japan, live surround-sound karaoke performances in NY and Europe, and multi-channel sound installations at P.S. 1. He has worked often with choreographers including Sasha Waltz, Wendy Perron, Jennifer Lacey, Susan Rethorst, Jennifer Monson, KJ Holmes, DD Dorvillier, and Scotty Heron. He has composed the music for the Cremaster films in a ten-year collaboration with artist Matthew Barney. He won a 2005 NY dance and performance (Bessie) award for his score for John Jasperse's 'California'. Current projects include a commission by Ensemble Modern in Frankfurt, an opera/film in Greece with artist Eve Sussman, and multi-room collaboration with Sasha Waltz in Berlin.

Jane Cox (*lighting designer*) Collaborations with David Dorfman include designs for *Older Testaments*, *Subverse* and *To Lie Tenderly*. Other dance collaborations include many designs for Doug Varone, Eliot Feld and Monica Bill Barnes. Recent theatre in

New York includes: *Dame Edna – Back with a Vengeance* (Broadway), designs for Brooklyn Academy of Music; Playwrights Horizons; Signature Theatre; NYSF/Public Theatre. Regional theatre includes: Guthrie Theatre; CenterStage; Arena Stage; McCarter; National Theatre London; Project Theatre Dublin. Music designs include Bang on a Can, Gotham Chamber Opera and Minnesota Opera. Jane was a recipient of an NEA/TCG grant 2001-2003 and received her MFA from NYU.

Bart Fasbender (*sound design*) Recent designs: *Heddatron* (Les Freres Corbusier); *24 Hour Plays*; *Top Girls* (Fordham University); *Swimming in the Shallows* (Second Stage); *Huck and Holden* (Cherry Lane); *India Awaiting* (Immediate Visions); *Terrorism* (The Play Company/The New Group); *The Orphan Singer* (Making Books Sing); *Liberty Land* (Playwrights Premiere Theatre, VA); *Barrio Grrrl* (SPF 2005); *Getting Home* (NYU First Look); *Sideways Stories* (Manhattan Children's Theatre); *Kringle's Window* (The Northeast Theatre, PA); *See Rock City* and *Nina Variations* (Miniature Theatre of Chester); *Slag Heap*; *Women on Fire*; *Bhutan*; 2003 - 2005 Mentor Projects (Cherry Lane).

Jacob Pinholster (*media design*) Jake spends most of his time in Phoenix, AZ where he is the new professor of media design at Arizona State University. Last year he was nominated for a Hewes Design Award for his work on the Les Freres production of *Boozy*. Other projects include: *HeddaTRON* (Les Freres Corbusier), *Current Nobody* (La Jolla Playhouse), *My Renaissance Faire Lady* (Ontological-Hysteric), *Voyage of the Carcass* (Greenwich Street).

Tricia Toliver (*production manager*) is currently the Production Stage Manager for the Trisha Brown Dance Company, and has also worked with such dance companies as Doug Varone and Dancers, Donald Byrd/The Group, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, Susan Marshall, and Complexions. Her other credits include production managing for the National Ballet of Cuba, Netherlands Dance Theatre II, City Center Theater and NJPAC. She has also designed lights for a variety of projects in dance and theater. She has a B.A. in dance from UCLA and an M.F.A. in dance from the University of Washington and danced with Donald Byrd/The Group from 1987-1991.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

From Idea to Stage

NYS English Language Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

NYS Arts Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

Have students free write on what theme(s) they might choose if they were a choreographer responding to current events in the world today. As they write, students should describe what music, props, and costumes they would choose for their piece. Would the student include video, film or dialogue in their work?

After the students are finished writing, ask them the following:

- What theme(s) are explored in your hypothetical dance?
- Why did you choose this theme/themes? Why is it important, and what is at stake?
- If video/film and/or dialogue is used in your dance, justify your reason for its inclusion. What can these media add to your dance that the choreography can not?
- How will the theme/themes be conveyed through these other mediums?
- How does each aspect of the total production affect how the audience perceives the dancing (i.e. the difference between watching movement done in everyday clothes, versus fancy ballet costumes, etc.)?

DANCE LITERACY

Seeing, reading about, and participating in dances from other historical moments and different cultures can enrich and enliven our own dance practices and choreographic visions. The study of a dance can help us to see how movement can both reflect and shape important questions about identity, aesthetic beauty, physical training regimes, the making of community, and the distribution of power within social groups. Because dance comprises the daily technical training of the dancer's body as well as the final choreographic production, dance can help us trace the complex negotiations between somatic experience and cultural representation. Dancing is a way of thinking through the body. Studying a particular dance helps us to recognize how the choreographer understands his or her world.

Historical Precedents

The belief that dance could be an artistically expressive medium really gained momentum at the beginning of the twentieth century. At that time, famous dancers such as Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, or Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn (to name only a few) revolutionized theatrical dance by insisting that dance could be a thoughtful pursuit. Like many early modern dancers throughout America at this time, these dancers created a physical language that focused on breath rhythms, the dynamic use of the torso, and the articulation of gestures that galvanized space in new and important ways. By asking audiences to see not only the movements of their arms and legs, but also the source of those motions in their torso, or even its initiation in the breath, these dancers created a new form of communication based in physical sensation and the kinesthetic. Together, they taught dance audiences to pay attention not only to enticing smiles and high leg kicks, but also to the somatic experience of the dancers onstage. Indeed, eventually these early modern dancers convinced audiences to see dancers not as pretty otherworldly objects onstage, but rather as subjects of their very human lives.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Researching Early Dancers

NYS English Language Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding

NYS English Language Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

NYS Arts Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts

Research one of the above-mentioned early modern dancers (Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, or Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn):

- What years did the subject of your study live?
- What was his or her major contribution to dance?
- What working choreographers of today have been influenced most by this early modernist?

- Find a photograph of your subject of study that seems to capture an essential aspect of his or her work.
- Present that aspect in class with an informal demonstration of what you think his or her movements might have looked like.

Witnessing Dance

Early modern dance taught audiences to look differently, and much contemporary dance extends that curiosity, asking the audience to stay committed to watching even when the subjects become uncomfortable. To witness something implies a responsiveness, the response/ability of the viewer toward the performer. It is radically different from what we might call the "consuming" gaze which says, "here, you entertain me, I bought a ticket, and I'm going to sit back and watch." This traditional gaze doesn't want to get involved, doesn't want to give anything back. In contrast, witnessing is much more interactive, a kind of perceiving (with one's whole body) that is committed to a process of mutual dialogue. There are precedents for this responsive watching in Quaker meetings, African American notions of bearing witness, the responsive dynamic of many evangelistic religions, as well as the aesthetic theory of "rasa" in Classical Indian Dance, to mention only a few such examples. This act of "witnessing," however, raises the stakes of audience engagement, sometimes making the audience member uncomfortable, sometimes provoking highly charged responses to the work. This is particularly true of dances that foreground issues of social, political, and cultural experiences or issues.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Performance Dynamics

NYS Arts Standard 1: Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts

NYS Arts Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

Ask the students to make a very elemental sequence of movements using motions that alternately extend out into space and then gather in towards the body. (This can be as simple as opening and closing the arms in conjunction with a slight lift and release in the upper body.)

Now have them perform this sequence facing an audience with an emphasis on a big inhalation initiating the movement of expansion. Then have them perform it again with an emphasis on the finishing gesture. Note how this simple shifting of emphasis from the TA-da to the ta-DA creates a very different aesthetic "look."

Have the class discuss the difference in viewing priorities by asking the students what they most pay attention to in each variation.

Dance as a Language

David Dorfman's belief that movement can have meaning and speak to vital political and social issues of our time is deeply indebted to these early modern dancers. His movement vocabulary, however, is not. Indeed, the combination of personal gesture, repetition of movements, pedestrian interludes (walking and directly talking to the audience), and athletic, full-body, rambunctious dancing is quintessentially post-modern, a style which developed in the 1980s. After graduating from Connecticut College with an M.F.A. in dance, David Dorfman moved to New York City and danced with Susan Marshall's company before starting his own in 1985. This was also the moment when AIDS-related illnesses were devastating the dance community. In 1987, Dorfman created a piece that intertwined his personal history of loss with that of the larger dance community.

While there are two people present throughout the dance, *Sleep Story* is essentially a solo, which begins and ends with Dorfman running in place, talking. As he begins his story about visiting a Holocaust memorial in Eastern Europe, however, a tension is set up between his efforts to speak coherently and clearly enough to be understood by the audience and his breathing, which becomes increasingly audible as the dance progresses. To add to this bodily disruption, another dancer periodically slams into him, forcefully knocking him to the ground. This dancer crouches in the shadows next to him throughout the piece, unexpectedly interrupting his story mid-sentence by tackling him. At first, Dorfman agilely rolls back up to his feet after each attack, continuing the narrative exactly where he left off. Each blow brings in another bruising memory of absence, as his story weaves a tale of past cultural loss (the Holocaust), with his own personal loss (Uncle Bob, his girlfriend) and the respective losses in his artistic and dance communities (of his ballet teacher Ernie Pagnano, Willie Smith). As his body becomes physically more distressed, his stories become more entangled with one another, as Dorfman tries to use the memory of the past to make sense of the present situation. Abruptly assaulted with each encounter with the past, however, he becomes physically and psychically overwhelmed with the experience of remembering loss. At the end of the dance, his narrative unwinds, his body becomes exhausted and yet running, still running, he marks the possibility of survival.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Exploring Gestures

NYS Arts Standard 1: Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts

Ask each student to demonstrate the simple gesture of offering or receiving something:

- First, ask students to do it in a normal, matter-of-fact manner.
- Then ask them to experiment with changing the dynamics, the speed, and the spatial extension (enlarging the gesture to include the whole body, for instance).

Next, experiment further by playing with repeating the gesture so that it starts to take on a meaning different from the original context of giving or receiving.

- Why does the meaning of the gesture change when repeated over and over again?
- Make another change that further alters the meaning of the gesture, i.e. add another person demonstrating their own gesture, or add music or dialogue to the gesture

As a class discuss what has been observed. Try the same exercise with a movement from sports, such as throwing a ball, or leaping a hurdle.

Post –performance Question:

Compare and contrast Dorfman's *underground* with his solo work *Sleep Story*. Use the above description of *Sleep Story* to get an idea of its theme and scale.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Dance as a Form of Social Protest

Emma Goldman, a nineteenth-century revolutionary and early feminist, is famous for saying: “If I can’t dance, then I don’t want to be a part of your revolution.” Her belief that physical movement is essential to the success of a political movement is telling. After all, why are so many political and social reform movements called movements? Probably because they literally try to get people up out of their complacent chairs (or couches) and out into the streets. Dance sends the body into action. Could this mean that dance has inherent revolutionary potential?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Movements of Social Protest

NYS English Language Standard 4: Language for Social Interaction

NYS Arts Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts

NYS Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

NYS Social Studies Standard 5: Civics, Citizenship, and Government

As a class, make a list of as many social movements that you can name (Some examples might included the Civil Rights Movement, the Women’s Movement, the Gay Rights Movement, the Disability Rights Movement, etc.)

Ask students:

- What were these movements about?
- Who were the movement leaders?
- What are some historical events associated with the movement?
- What works of art were generated by these movements (For example James Brown’s “Say It Loud - I’m Black and I’m Proud” became an anthem during the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s)
- Did these movements achieve their objective(s)?
- How are these movements still alive today?

Ask them to think of gestures or dances associated with these forms of liberation.

Research: To help in finding these gestures, have students search for photos, either online or in photography books, that depict key moments in each of the named movements.

Have them write one paragraph addressing the following prompt: What does it mean to be free to move or dance?

The 1930's Worker's Movements

In the 1930's, American modern dance had developed into a wide network of companies and studios which taught forms of dance that had originally been inspired by social and aesthetic revolutions against Victorian notions of womanhood, and nineteenth-century ideas of classical beauty. While modern dance had evolved its own institutions, there was still the excitement of a utopian vision of creating a better world. The Great Depression of the 1930's triggered a general political activism. This included a continuum of reforms, from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" legislation meant to help the average working-class person get ahead, to a growing sympathy for the emerging Communist Party in America.

Union Square in New York City was the hub of this political activity. It was also the center of the modern dance world, with legends such as Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, and Helen Tamiris all occupying dance studios within walking distance. The fact that many working class and immigrant dancers were attracted to both the modern dance world and the budding radical political activity in the area created an immediate spark; dancers became involved at all levels of the political organizations, teaching to the masses and choreographing dances with political themes. An organization called the Workers Dance League was formed to organize and train workers, and the New Dance Group began to teach movement classes to amateurs. While some of this political choreography was basically agit-prop skits where oppressed workers rise up against their mean bosses to start a revolution, much of this choreographic activity focused on the human condition, revealing universal struggles within a new movement idiom.

The 1960's Youth Movements

The decade of the 1960s was arguably the most turbulent 10 years in America's history. At no other time in the 20th century had the country been more divided over its social and foreign policies. The lines were largely drawn between generations, with young people demonstrating against long-tolerated injustices, while older Americans stubbornly maintained the status quo.

The Youth Movement took on great urgency, as America's involvement in Vietnam grew and an increasing number of young Americans were drafted into combat and were killed or wounded. Huge anti-war demonstrations were staged throughout the nation, many of which ended with clashes with police or counter-demonstrators.

On October 8th 1969, members of the Weather Underground descended on the city of Chicago to protest the trial of the so-called Chicago Seven. A riot broke out after the planned rally, and over the course of several days, fires were started, cars damaged, dozens arrested and at least one person was killed. To avoid their court dates that resulted from this riot, many of the WU became fugitives and went "underground."

Perhaps the most galvanizing event in the anti-war movement took place on the campus Kent State University on May 4, 1970, when the Ohio National Guard fired on war protesters killing four people.

The tragedy of this event was captured in a Pulitzer Prize winning photo by John Filo see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Kent_State_massacre.jpg

In addition to the civil unrest that arose out of the anti-war movement, the cause of civil rights for African Americans suffered several violent backlashes throughout the 1960s, including the bombing of the 16th Street Church in Birmingham, Alabama, which killed four young African American girls; the murder of three Civil Rights workers in Mississippi in 1964; and the assassinations of Civil Rights leaders Medgar Evers in 1963, and Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968. These and similar events throughout the 1960s gave rise to the Black Power Movement and organizations like the Black Panthers.

Out of the unrest during the 1960s emerged socially conscious choreographers who created works in response to the world around them. Among these artists were Urban Bush Women and Bill T. Jones.

Many leftist political groups were making connections between what they saw as the imperialist attitudes of the American government and the global capitalist economy run by ever-growing corporations. One of the biggest of these groups was Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), a national organization with its own paper. SDS attracted many socially liberal, left-leaning young people since it held its first meeting in Ann Arbor Michigan in 1960. Its manifesto "criticized the political system of the United States for failing to achieve international peace and for failing to address social ills in contemporary society. It also advocated non-violent civil disobedience as the means by which student youth could bring forth a "participatory democracy." When some members of SDS began to think that their non-violent stance was no longer effective, they left the organization and created the Weather Underground, an organization that called for the violent overthrow of the US government.

The Weather Underground

The Weather Underground was a radical leftist movement in the United States that formed as an offshoot of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). The Weather Underground was first known as the Weathermen, but the name was later changed because of feminist opposition to the term "man" to represent all the people involved. It splintered off from SDS in 1969, identifying itself as a revolutionary organization of communists who sought to overthrow the US government by military action. It is also known for coining concepts such as "white privilege" and for holding forums to discuss possible coalition between the predominantly white leftist groups and African-American groups such as the Black Panther party. Like their radical black counterparts, the Weather Underground believed that armed revolution was the most effective path to ridding the United States of oppressive, imperialist leadership.

The earliest notable event staged by the Weathermen was the October 8th, 1969 Vietnam protest in Chicago. Weathermen collectives, located in New York, Boston, Seattle, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Ann Arbor, Cleveland, and Detroit, all sent members. On October 6th, the Weatherman destroyed a statue of a policeman in Haymarket Square, and two days later, a march occurred in Chicago. Though the protest only contained several hundred people, a riot occurred in the wealthy Gold Coast Area, where windows of a bank and many cars were smashed. The police shot six rioters and arrested seventy.

In November of the same year, the Weathermen became involved in the nationwide General Motors strike, participating in picket lines and demonstrations. They also began to distribute their newspaper, FIRE! on high school and college campuses across the United States. 1970, following a police raid that resulted in the death of Black Panther Fred Hampton, the Weathermen group issued a "Declaration of War" on the US government, and went underground.

On March 5th, 1970, while preparing to bomb a US military officers' dance in Fort Dix, New Jersey, there was an accidental explosion in Greenwich Village that killed WU members Diana Oughton, Ted Gold, and Terry Robbins. Membership of the organization shrank considerably. However, the WU pressed on with bombing actions against the Pentagon, the Capital, prisons and police stations, and (again) Haymarket Square.

In February of 1970, Timothy Leary, who was known as the "Harvard psychologist turned high priest of the counter-culture" (Jacobs 117), was convicted in California, then in Texas for possession of a small amount of marijuana. He was denied appeal and sentenced to ten years. The Weather Underground, securing a \$25,000 payment from an LSD supplier (one of Leary's friends), broke Leary out of prison. He was eventually captured by the FBI and offered to serve as an informant to capture the Weather Underground in exchange for a reduced prison sentence.

Underground Members

Bill Ayers was born in 1944 into a highly privileged family. He attended the University of Michigan where he became involved with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Married to fellow Weather Underground member Bernadine Dohrn, Ayers went underground in 1970. He and other Weather Underground members continued to bomb government buildings and landmarks throughout the early 1970s. He and his wife turned themselves in to authorities in 1981. All charges against him were dropped. Ayers and Dohrn raised two children together, and adopted the son of David Gilbert and Kathy Boudin, former WU members who were sent to prison.

Kathy Boudin was born in 1943 into a family with a long history of left wing activities. Raised in New York City, Boudin attended the Little Red School House and its secondary school, Elisabeth Irwin High School. She attended Bryn Mawr College, and spent time studying in the Soviet Union. Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, Boudin was a member of the Weather Underground. She survived the Townhouse explosion that killed fellow WU members, Diana Oughton, Ted Gold and Terry Robbins. She was

convicted in 1984 for her involvement in a Brinks Truck robbery that resulted in the deaths of three people. She was released from prison in September 2003.

Bernardine Dohrn was a young lawyer in the 1960s when she became the leader of the Revolutionary Youth Movement, a radical off shoot of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Dohrn formed the Weather Underground after the demise of SDS. A powerful orator with unshakable convictions, Bernadine Dohrn was considered Weather Underground's leader; it is her signature that appears on the "Declaration of a State of War," a document formally declaring war on the United States. In the 1970s, Dohrn went underground to avoid capture by the authorities. She still, however, planned bombings with other members of the Weather Underground. In 1981, she surrendered to authorities, eventually though most of the charges against her had been dropped. She did, however, serve some time in prison for refusing to testify against Weather Underground member Susan Rosenberg in an armed robbery case. Since the mid 1980's Dohrn has worked as a lawyer, and law professor, and she is currently professor and director at Northwestern University's Children and Justice Center.

David Gilbert was born in 1944 in Brookline Massachusetts, and was one of the founders of SDS and a member of the Weather Underground. After the demise of the Weather Underground, Gilbert and other activists formed the Revolutionary Armed Task Force and declared their solidarity with the Black Liberation Army. In 1981 he and fellow WU member Kathy Boudin were involved in a robbery of a Brinks truck in Nyack, New York that resulted in the deaths of three people. Gilbert is currently serving a life sentence in New York's Attica Correctional Facility for his involvement in this crime.

Ted Gold was born in 1947 to progressive and politically left-leaning parents. Considered a "red-diaper baby," meaning a child born to parents who were Communists or had Communist sympathies, Ted became an activist very early in life. He attended his first Civil Rights rally when he was only 11 years old. Like many other "red-diaper babies," he attended a summer camp that taught liberal and progressive ideologies. Ted Gold attended Columbia University where he became the Vice-Chair of SDS, and in 1969, joined the Weather Underground. Also in 1969, Gold visited Cuba, returning to the U.S. more radical. He was killed along with fellow Weather Underground members Diana Oughten and Terry Robbins when a bomb they were making accidentally exploded.

Jeff Jones was raised in California. Like his father, Jones became a Quaker and a pacifist, but turned radical during the social upheaval of the mid and late 1960s. At the 1968 Columbia University take-over, Jones met his partner Eleanor Stein, and together they took part in the more extreme and sometimes violent opposition to the U.S. government and the war in Vietnam. Jones and Stein spent many years underground until the FBI raided their home in the Bronx in 1981. The couple pleaded guilty to minor offences and received no jail time. Jones' story in the context of radicalism in the United States is told in the book *Radical Line: From the Labor Movement to the Weather Underground, One Family's Century of Conscience*, by his son Thai Jones.

Diana Oughton was born in 1942 and attended Bryn Mawr College as an undergraduate. As a graduate student at the University of Michigan, she joined the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Like many conscientious young people in the 1960s, she became an activist for liberal and progressive causes. For two years in the mid 1960s she spent time working as a volunteer in a Guatemalan village for Volunteers in Service to America. Upon her return to the U.S., Oughton joined the Weather Underground. On March 6, 1970 she was killed in an accidental explosion in a Greenwich Village townhouse that she and fellow Weathermen had turned into a bomb factory. Diana Oughton was the daughter of Illinois State Senator James Oughton.

The Weather Underground's last major activities were the bombings of the Agency for International Development in D.C., the Department of Defense in Oakland, Rockefeller Center, and the Kennecott Corporation Headquarters in Salt Lake City, all in 1975. By 1977, however, the group began to dissolve after its members moved on to other revolutionary groups, especially the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, which focused on ending imperialism and sought to liberate colonized people worldwide. Most Weather Underground members did not serve prison time; the group had been covert enough to avoid the police and FBI in many of its activities.

Working with Community and Cultural Resources

Partnership with BAM Teaching Artists

In addition to this study guide you and your students will receive an in-school pre-performance workshop with a dancer/teaching artist from David Dorfman Dance. These workshops are an integral component of this program.

Together you and the dancer/teaching artist will create an effective curriculum to probe deeper into the dance and the issues it explores.

ATTENDING A PERFORMANCE AT BAM

Your students' behavior is your responsibility. There will be many students from schools throughout New York City at this performance.

You should arrive at the performance at least one hour before the performance and check in with the BAM staff. Food and drink are not allowed in the theater. All phones, beepers, and electronic devices must be turned off and put out of sight.

POST PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION

There will be a discussion after the performance with David Dorfman and members of his company.

Please make arrangements for your class to remain for the 30 to 45-minute discussion. These discussions give you and your students the opportunity to ask questions and delve deeper into the issues raised by the work.

Prepare your students for this question and answer period. It is a rare opportunity to actively engage in an open discussion with professional artists and other New York students and teachers.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Dance Research

NYS Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources
NYS Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

Encourage students to visit the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center. Students and teachers can view the library's extensive video-archive collection. This is an excellent way to become familiar with the works of legendary choreographers like Martha Graham, George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Merce Cunningham, and other works by David Dorfman. You can visit the website at <http://www.nypl.org/research/lpa/dan/dan.html>

Additional Resources:

<i>Dance Magazine On Line</i>	www.dancemagazine.com/
<i>The Dance Insider</i>	http://www.danceinsider.com/
"A Dancer's Journal	.
Learning to Perform the Dances of Martha Graham"	http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/marthagraham/

Other Dance Venues & Companies

New York City is one of the great dance centers of the world. It is possible to see live performances of almost every genre from ballet to modern as well as dance from around the world. Allow your students to research the websites below and familiarize themselves with the different dance companies and venues around the city.

New York City Ballet	www.nycballet.com/nycb/home/
American Ballet Theatre	www.abt.org/
Dance Theater of Harlem	www.dancetheatreofharlem.org/home.html
City Center	www.nycitycenter.org/
Joyce Theater	www.joyce.org/
Dance Theater Workshop	www.dtw.org/
Symphony Space	www.symphonyspace.org/
Brooklyn Academy of Music	www.bam.org

EXPLORING CAREERS AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Dancing is for everyone

David Dorfman's career in dance is unusual in that he didn't start dancing until he was in college. Perhaps it is because of this belated beginning that compels him to include all kinds of people in his performances. *underground* uses a group of 20 extra people from the community in several culminating scenes. Dorfman is one of many contemporary choreographers who use non-professional dancers in their works. At the end of the twentieth century, various choreographers and dance companies began to use amateur dancers of all ages, shapes, and sizes to help create a world of dancers onstage that reflected the diversity of people in the audience. These experiments opened up the field of dance considerably. No longer does one have to have the perfect model-thin body in the right proportions to imagine oneself as a dancer. In fact, several companies in the United States and abroad are specifically focused on making dances for disabled dancers, or dancers of mixed abilities. All these egalitarian movements in dance create more and more opportunities for everyone to get involved, regardless of previous experience or training.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Who can dance?

NYS English Language Standard 1: Language for information and Understanding

NYS English Language Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

NYS Arts Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts

Break the students up into three groups and have each group research one of the following dance companies: Liz Lerman's "Dancers of the Third Age," Adam Benjamin's "Candoco," or "Axis Dance" from San Francisco. Then have the students present to the class the information they have gathered. After all the groups have gone, have the class discuss how these examples might change how they think about which kinds of bodies can be dancing bodies.

Thinking and Writing about dance:

One of the most interesting aspects of the incredible variety of contemporary dance is the fact that each dance establishes its own viewing priorities. That is to say that there is no one way to look at dance. A sensitive audience member will soon become aware of what and how the choreographer want us to watch. But it can also be helpful to know a little bit about the choreographer's ideas and inspirations for the piece. Dance critics and writers are people who believe in the power of dance and want to find ways to communicate that power through words so that more people can hear and appreciate this art form, even if they were not in the audience to see the dance. They may interview a choreographer, watch rehearsals of a dance before its premiere, or find out more about

the collaboration between the composer and lighting designers, etc. Then they write about the dance with as much descriptive language as possible.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Writing Dance

NYS English Language Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation
NYS Arts Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts

Either present the students with dance reviews or have the students find two dance reviews from different sources such as *The New York Times* or *Dance Magazine*. Ask them to look for and highlight the author's use of descriptive language, and how the writer supports this opinion with examples from the performance.

If your students have already seen the performance of *underground* ask them to compare their reaction to the work with that of the professional critic.

Have students write their own reviews of *underground*. Urge students to use as much descriptive language as possible. Have students state their opinion, but also support their opinion with as much information as possible about the performance, including the music, the décor, the costumes, and the video component.

Researching Careers

English Language Standard 1: Language for information and Understanding

Have students interested in non-performing careers in dance research the job titles below:

- Dance Educator K-12
- Dance Critic
- Dance Therapist
- Professor of Dance
- Director of Dance School
- Company Director of Marketing / Public Relations
- Composer
- Costume Designer
- Set Designer
- Lighting Designer
- Dance Notator
- Company Archivist/Historian
- Rehearsal Director
- Company Executive Director
- Sound Designer
- Company Manager

Use the list below to research who occupies the above listed position in these renowned New York-based dance companies. In many cases these dance companies may offer dance classes to the public as well as summer internships for students.

Paul Taylor Dance Company
Mark Morris Dance Group
Merce Cunningham Dance Company
Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

www.ptdc.org/
www.mmdg.org/home.cfm
www.merce.org/
www.alvinailey.org/

Dance Theater of Harlem	<u>www.dancetheatreofharlem.org/home.html</u>
Susan Marshall & Company	<u>www.susanmarshallandcompany.org/</u>
Doug Varone and Dancers	<u>www.dougvaroneanddancers.org/</u>
Elizabeth Streb	<u>www.strebusa.org</u>
Urban Bush Women	<u>www.urbanbushwomen.org/</u>
Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company	<u>www.billtjones.org/</u>
David Dorfman Dance	<u>www.daviddorfmandance.org/</u>

Discussion Questions

Pre-Performance Questions:

- What are some of the issues, politically and socially, dividing this country today?
- Can you describe the different factions that are divided in this country and what is different about them?
- Do you consider yourself politically minded?
- Is there one particular issue that you feel very strongly about?
- Can the use of violence ever be justified?
- Have you ever attended a political rally? If so, describe what it was like.
- Have you attended a dance performance in the past? If so, what was it?
- What do you remember most about this performance? What did you like about it? What did you not like?
- What does the title *underground* conjure up in your mind?
- What does it mean to say that “movement has meaning?”

Post Performance Questions

- What struck you, if anything, as unusual about this performance?
- How do you think the solo dance performed by David Dorfman at the beginning of the program related to the rest of the dance?
- Was there another moment in the dance that is especially memorable for you? If so, what was it, and what made it memorable?
- What impact did the use of the video images have on the performance?
- How did the dialogue spoken by the dancers influence your understanding of the performance?
- Were you familiar with the music used throughout the performance?
- Describe the use of music in *underground*.
- Did the music enhance your enjoyment of the piece or not?
- Do you think that the work, *underground*, had a message? If so, what could the message be?
- Was any thing about the performance to confusing or unclear to you? If so, what?

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Amanda Smith, "Autobiography and the Avant-Garde," *Dance Magazine* (January 1985), p.50.

Iris Fanger, "Looking Up: David Dorfman's Ascending Boundaries," *Dance Magazine* (April 1992), pp. 59-61.

Felciano, Rita, "Weather Channeling: David Dorfman's latest finds inspiration in activism," *San Francisco Bay Guardian On Line* (September 2006)

David Dorfman Dance

David Dorfman Dance Company's website: www.daviddorfmandance.org
Look under the articles section for links to:

* Weather channeling David Dorfman's latest finds inspiration in activism (pdf)
By Rita Felciano, *The San Francisco Bay Gaurdian*

* Mapping States and Bodies: Colliding Worlds
By Deborah Jowitt, *The Village Voice*

* David Dorfman
By Suzanne Carbonneau

* Dorfman program for SPA is an engrossing one
By Molly Glentzer, *Houston Chronicle*

* Dorfman hits the mark with two very different productions
By Alice Kaderlan Halsey
Special to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

"Dancing Bodies and the Stories They Tell" (chapter on David Dorfman's early work) in *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance*. Ann Cooper Albright. Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1997 (pp.119-149)

Who Dances/ Mixed Ability Dance

Liz Lerman Dance Exchange/ Dancers of the Third Age: www.danceexchange.org
Candoco: www.candoco.co.uk

Axis Dance: www.axisdance.org

see also, *Making an Entrance: Theory and practice for disabled and non-disabled dancers*. Adam Benjamin. London: Routledge, 2002.

“Three Days” by Steve Paxton, *Contact Quarterly*, Winter 1992

Weather Underground Research Resources

Helpful Websites:

“Revolutionary Youth Movement” Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia –
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutionary_Youth_Movement

“Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)” Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia –
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Students_for_a_democratic_society

“Weather Underground” Public Broadcasting Service: Independent Lens Special -
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/weatherunderground/>

“Weather Underground Organization: Weathermen” Federal Bureau of Investigation
Summary - <http://foia.fbi.gov/foiaindex/weather.htm>

“Weatherman Organization” Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia -
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weatherman_%28organization%29

Film:

The Weather Underground Dir. Sam Greene, Bill Seigel (Documentary, New Video Group) 2002 <http://www.upstatefilms.org/weather/main.html>

Film Reviews

“The Weather Underground” http://www.columbia.edu/~lnp3/mydocs/culture/Weather_Underground.htm

Quart, Larry “Letter From New York: The Weathermen Revisited” <http://www.americansc.org.uk/Online/Weathermen.htm>

Inter-net Movie Data Base

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0343168/>

Books/Literature

Ayers, Bill; Bernardine Dohrn; and Jeffrey Jones *Sing a Battle Song: The Revolutionary Poetry, Statements, and Communiques of the Weather Underground 1970 – 1974* (Seven Stories Press) 2006

Gitlin, Todd *The Sixties : Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (Bantam) 1993

Jacobs, Harold; Ed. *Weatherman* (Ramparts Press) 1971

Jacobs, Ron *The Way the Wind Blew: A History of the Weather Underground* (Verso Books) 1997

Varon, Jeremy *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (University of California Press) 2004

BAM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & HUMANITIES

BAM Education & Humanities is dedicated to bringing the most vibrant, exciting artists and their creations to young people and their families. The Department presents performances and screenings of theater, dance, music, opera, and film in a variety of programs: *Generation BAM* for high school students, *kaBAM* for third to eighth graders, *BAMfamily*, and the *BAMkids Film Festival*. In addition to the work on stage, programs take place both in school and at BAM that give context for the performances, and include workshops with artists and BAM staff members, study guides, and classes in art forms that young people may never have had access to before. These programs include *Shakespeare Teaches*, *AfricanDanceBeat*, *AfricanMusicBeat*, *Dancing into the Future* (with Chuck Davis, David Dorfman Dance, Urban Bush Women, and others), the *Young Critics Institute*, *Young Film Critics*, and our film programs *Screening Identity* as well as topically diverse professional development workshops for teachers and administrators. In addition, the Department collaborates with the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation to provide an arts and humanities curriculum to students who create an African Sculpture Garden at BAM and perform on stage in BAM's *DanceAfrica* program. The Department produces humanities programs surrounding the Next Wave Festival and BAM Spring Season, including the *BAMdialogue* series and *BAMtalks*, which join BAM artists in discussion with the community, as well as adult master classes.

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Suzanne Youngerman, Ph.D.: Director
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Eleanor Skimin: Humanities Manager
Offer Ben-Arie: Box Office Manager/Program Associate
Aquilah Gantt: Program Assistant
Leah King: Intern

Study Guide author:

A performer, choreographer, and feminist scholar, **Ann Cooper Albright** is Professor of dance and theater and Chair of the Gender and Women's Studies program at Oberlin College. Ms. Albright is the founding director of Girls in Motion, and co-director (with Ann Dils) of Accelerated Motion: Towards a New Dance Literacy in America, which was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities during the 2005 and 2006 summers.

Brooklyn Academy of Music, Department of Education and Humanities
30 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11217-1486, 718-636-4130