

DAWN DYSON

Dance Workshops

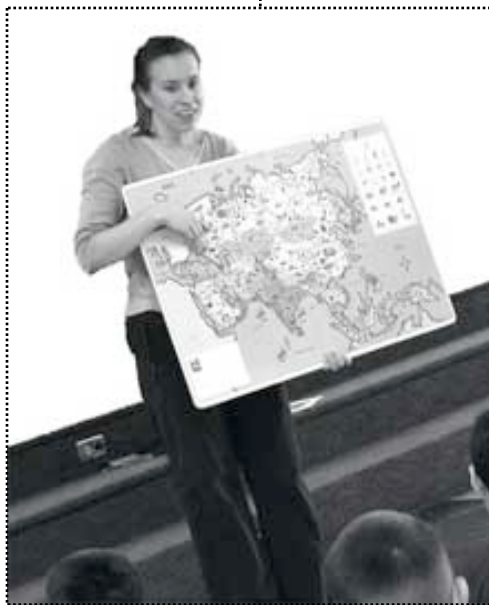
ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Dawn Dyson's first experience with folk dance was at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. That was the moment and place when she fell in love with this dance form. She responded to the community aspect of the folk style and its accessibility to people of all ages and abilities. She continued her studies at Ball State University and earned a B.S. degree in Dance Performance before becoming a performer, educator and administrator with the AMAN Folk Ensemble. During her 10 years with AMAN, she taught numerous student workshops in California and throughout the nation. As the Education Specialist for AMAN, Dyson constructed a curriculum handbook that focused on dances from the United States and helped facilitate the teacher training for other dancers in the company. She also restructured AMAN's curriculum to include lesson plans implementing the California Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Standards for Dance, as well as making connections to the Language Arts and Social Science Standards.

Dawn's own experiences in dance have prepared her to become a sensitive teaching artist who is able to immediately engage students. She utilizes effective classroom management skills to construct a friendly, but controlled atmosphere. Through her inclusive and accessible approach she deconstructs dances, teaching simple, easy-to-learn segments that allow students to feel comfortable and confident in their abilities to dance.

ABOUT THE GROUP:

Aman International Folk Ensemble worked for over 30 years to bring performances and workshops of world dance and music to audiences all over the world. Following the closure of the company, five talented members of this internationally known group have created *Aman Dance Educators*, and are taking Aman's mission to a new level. All seasoned professionals, the artists include Dawn Dyson, Kristen Smiarowsky, Shyamala Moorty, Rosina Didyk and István Szabó.



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ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS:

The Aman Dance Educators help students, teachers and others learn dances from Europe, Asia, Africa and North America. With each workshop, participants also expand their knowledge of geography, history and culture, as well as improve their coordination, creativity and rhythm skills. Cooperation and teamwork drive these fascinating and engaging workshops. All lessons are carefully crafted to be grade-appropriate and to correspond to the California Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Standards. The work also makes connections to standards in History/Social Science, Foreign Language, math, English/Language Arts and Physical Education. These Aman educators work with schools to create a custom dance experience for students and can select workshops covering a variety of topics, including the following.

Dance and Community (all grade levels):

In this residency, students use their bodies as active tools to learn about different cultures and to understand their own communities in new ways. Participants experience traditional folk dances from a variety of cultures and engage in creative activities that teach them how to create their own unique movement vocabulary that can culminate in a new community dance.

Legends through Dance (K-3rd grades):

Sessions in this residency addresses the Language Arts Standards by using dance as the medium to tell stories. Featuring examples of Native American and Polynesian dances, these workshops allow students to explore the basic elements of dance, learn how to communicate or tell a story through gestures, and bring a legend to life through movement.

Dances of California/USA (4th and 5th grades):

These workshops make curriculum connections to the 4th and 5th grade social studies standards by using line, square and circle dances from early United States history. The sessions can also include dances related to Fort Ross, California Ranchos and the Gold Rush.

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP:

- Please have the students wear nametags for the workshop. It saves time if they are made beforehand!
- Review the importance of listening and observing. Ask the students what it means to be a good listener. What does it mean to be a good observer? Why is it important in daily life? Why is it important when the artist is here?
- Please encourage the students to dress appropriately – in clothes that allow them to move comfortably.

AFTER THE WORKSHOP:

- Review the dances learned in the workshop. Discuss what the students remember about the specific culture in which the dance originated and ideas connected to the theme, steps or music. What parts of the workshop did the students like best? What did they learn about dance? What did they learn about themselves?
- Review students' ideas about folk dance, underscoring the idea that it is a universal social form of expression for many cultures of the world. Discuss the importance of dancing together with others. Where can they use this skill in their lives? (e.g. focus, working cooperatively with others, listening to directions, remembering sequences, etc.)
- Research some other folk dances and learn them as a class.