

# KRISTEN SMIAROWSKI

## *Dance Workshops*

### MEET THE ARTIST:

**Kristen Smiarowski** has extensive experience as a choreographer, dancer and educator. She has taught choreography, improvisation, creative dance, and folk dance to children and adults throughout Southern California, and has been creating original dance works since 1996. Her theater-based and site-specific choreography has been presented in Southern California at the REDCAT/Roy and Edna Disney CalArts Theater, Highways Performance Space, Edgemar Installations, UCLA, Center Stage Theater, and Loyola Marymount University.

Ms. Smiarowski has taught at schools, institutions and universities throughout Southern California. In addition to being on the Music Center Artist Roster, she is currently on faculty in the Dance Program at Loyola Marymount University. She has also taught dance at Crossroads School for Arts & Sciences in Santa Monica, the Center for Movement Education and Research, The HeArt Project, Skirball Cultural Center and UCLA. While earning an M.F.A. degree in Dance from UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures, she received the Gorya Kaufman Award for Excellence in Choreography and the Alma Hawkins Choreographic Award.



### 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?
- Review students' knowledge and ideas about music, underscoring the idea that it is both personal and universal. Discuss that everyone's ideas will be both different and related. Discuss the importance of being able to express oneself through music and to enjoy a wide variety of styles.
- Ask students what music they know about, or have heard, from other cultures. The workshops will focus on world music and cultures, so it would be helpful to assess the students' prior knowledge about this musical category.

### **AFTER THE WORKSHOP:**

- Review the major points presented in the workshops. What were the most important ideas? What parts of the workshop did the students like best? What did they learn? What did they learn about themselves?
- Practice the activities and skills they learned with the artist so students can attain more ability and enjoyment with music.
- Review songs they learned and practice them often.
- Perhaps build a music center within the classroom that features the music, instruments and other artifacts connected to a specific culture. It is a good idea to have a tape/CD player and headphones so students can listen to the music. Have a few questions that direct their attention to listen for different things (e.g. types of instruments, mood of the music, melody, rhythm, texture of sounds, etc.)