

# Artsource

*The Music Center's Study Guide  
to the Performing Arts*

TRADITIONAL

CLASSICAL

CONTEMPORARY

EXPERIMENTAL

MULTI-MEDIA

ARTISTIC PROCESSES

1. CREATING (Cr)

2. PERFORMING, PRESENTING, PRODUCING (Pr)

3. RESPONDING (Re)

4. CONNECTING (Cn)

TRANSFORMATION

ENDURING  
VALUESFREEDOM &  
OPPRESSIONTHE POWER  
OF NATURETHE HUMAN  
FAMILY

## Title of Work:

*The Woolloomooloo Cuddle* (An Air Mail Dance)

## Creators:

Choreographer: Remy Charlip (1929-2012)

## Background Information:

Remy Charlip was a gentle, playful man who evolved unique and delightful approaches to making dances. Born in Brooklyn, New York, he planned to become a farmer, but as his experiences broadened he became a visual artist and then began to feel that he could become a freer and more expressive spirit as a dancer. In addition to being a choreographer and dancer who toured with his own group, *The International All-Star Dance Company & Soloist* in a program called "Remy Charlip Dances," he was a theater and film director, painter, designer, teacher and author of books, plays and songs. He wrote 27 picture books including *Fortunately*, *Arm in Arm*, *Thirteen* and *Handtalk*, which received awards in Japan, the U.S.A., Italy, France and Russia. He was the first artist-in-residence at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles where he wrote, directed and performed in *Amaterasu*. He also wrote *Remy Charlip's Imaginary Dances*, a radio program for MOCA. Charlip once said, "Anybody can dance anywhere, and as a matter of fact you are already dancing right now. This is a 'Reading This Study Guide Dance.'" His innovative work has earned him two Village Voice OBIE Awards, one for "Distinguished Direction" at Judson Church Poets' Theater and another as founder/director/writer-performer/choreographer and producer of The Paper Bag Players.

## About The Artwork:

*Woolloomooloo*, an Australian aboriginal term meaning

meeting place/watering hole, was created in Australia for the Sydney Dance Company. Remy Charlip came to work with the company, but was held up in quarantine for five days because he lacked his health certificate. So he created drawings for the dance and smuggled them out to the company. They worked on the piece without him, using the drawings as their guide. He was quite surprised when he turned on the news in his hotel room and saw the dance for the first time as part of the dramatic story of his Australian plight.

## Creative Process of the Artist or Culture:

Charlip designs dances that begin with a series of 20 to 40 drawings which serve as a dance score. The drawings provide a structure, but the motional transitions are determined by the dancers who take the drawings and animate them. These became known as "Air Mail Dances" because he sent them to soloists and companies around the world. Instead of creating the motion, he trusts each person interpreting the Air Mail Dance to progress sequentially from one drawing to the next, in any order, adding the time frame and quality of the music he or the performer selects. Each interpreter produces a different version of the dance but maintains the essence. The dances always look like the drawings, but also capture the spirit of the people who are partners in creating these dances.

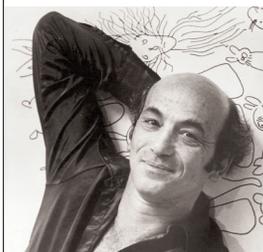


Photo: Lois Greenfield

"You don't create a dance because you want beautiful movement, you work with people to get them to feel good about themselves and they will do beautiful movement."

Remy Charlip



## Discussion Questions:

After the video has been viewed:

- Look at the drawings of the dance *Woolloomooloo Cuddle*. Were you able to see these partner designs as performed in the video? Which ones?
- How do you think a dance could be made using Mr. Charlip's drawings? How do you think this method is different from the way other choreographers work?
- What did you especially like about the dance, and why?
- Listen to the audio interview with Mr. Charlip. State in your own words his ideas about dance. What are your ideas about dance? Do they differ or are they similar to Mr. Charlip's? How?

## Audio-Visual Materials:

- *Artsource*® video excerpt and drawings: *Woolloomooloo Cuddle* courtesy of the estate of Remy Charlip.
- *Artsource*® audio recording: *Remy Charlip's Imaginary Dances*, with Remy Charlip, David Vaughan, Sally Hess, from the *The Territory of Art*, #16, a former radio series of The Museum of Contemporary Art, producers Julie Lazar and Mary Jane Soule. [www.moca.org](http://www.moca.org)

## Additional References:

(partial list of works currently in print)

- Written and illustrated by Remy Charlip:
  - *Fortunately*, (1964) Simon & Schuster.
  - *Arm in Arm*, (1997) Tricycle Press.
  - *I Love You*, (1998) Scholastic Books.
  - *Sleepytime Rhyme*, (1999) Green Willow Books.
  - *Why I Will Never Ever Ever Ever Have Enough Time to Read This Book*, (2000). Tricycle Press.
  - *A Perfect Day*, (2007). Greenwillow Books
- Written by Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Remy Charlip:
  - *The Dead Bird*, (1958) Harper/Collins.
- Written by Remy Charlip, illustrated by Jon J. Muth:
  - *Why I Will Never Ever Ever Ever Have Enough Time to Read this Book*, (2000) Tricycle Press.
- Remy's website: [www.remycharlip.org](http://www.remycharlip.org)
- Dance video: *Remy Charlip Dances*, WGB H-TV Boston

## Multidisciplinary Options:

- Use one sheet of paper as a background; tear a sheet of another color into sections which represent the sizes and shapes of the following 16 body parts: head, neck, upper torso, lower torso, upper arms, lower arms and hands, upper legs, lower legs and feet. Leaving spaces between each part, place them in different relationships to create specific shapes or positions of the body.

Glue down when satisfied. Older students can add a second or third body to create a contrasting or complementary design.



## Sample Experiences:

### LEVEL I

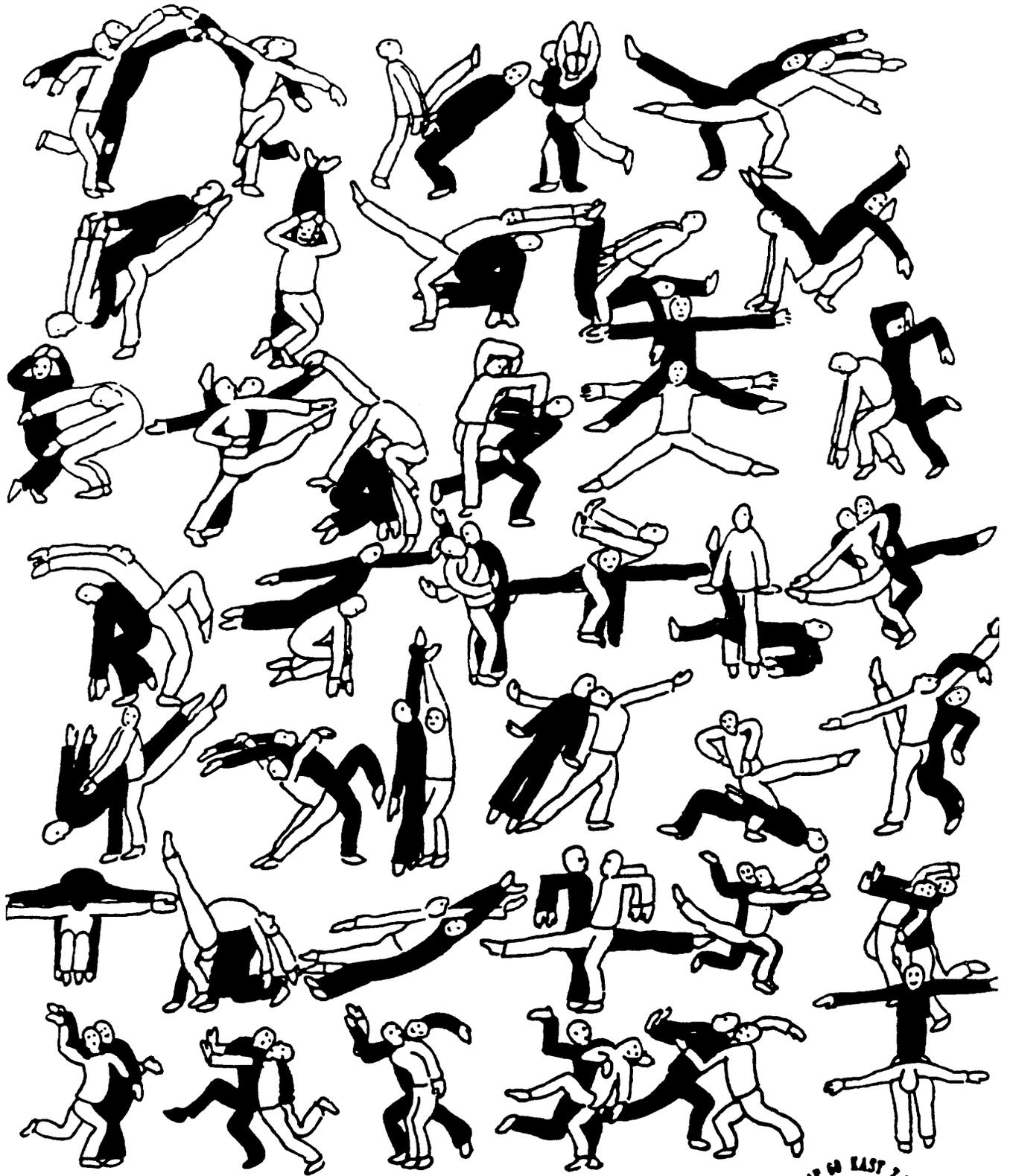
- Listen to the *Radio Dance* and follow the instructions to create your own interpretation of the words. Discuss how the different styles of music change each version of the movement.
- \* Explore the idea of 'Body Spelling.' Select a word with three to five letters and put each letter into a body shape. Do the letters in sequence to make a dance.
  - Cut out several pictures of people in different poses from a magazine (sports, fashion, news, people with different emotions). Take two to four poses and design movement that will take you from one to the other.

### LEVEL II

- Partners create four shapes for each other to duplicate. Next have each partner make several shapes which are contrasting or complementary.
- \* Perform the *Radio Dance* and discuss how words can be used to evoke dance movement. Divide into small groups and create new *Radio Dances* to perform. Record them.

### LEVEL III

- Look at the dance drawings of *Woolloomooloo Cuddle*. With partners select three of the poses and develop motional transitions to get from one to the other.
- \* Write an *Imaginary Dance* using word images which evoke dance movement.
  - Listen to the audio recording and learn how Mr. Charlip sent his drawing to friends and called them *Air Mail Dances*. Think of a specific idea, such as a chair dance, shower dance or basketball dance. Draw several positions of a person doing that activity. Title your dance, then give your drawings to someone else to interpret in movement. If you wish, add an audio recording of music.



THE WOOLLOOMOOLOO CUDDLE

1991 © / *Woolloomooloo Cuddle*  
THE GROUP OF EAST TARRANTS

# BODY SPELLING TRANSFORMATION

## LEVEL I Sample Lesson

### INTRODUCTION:

Remy Charlip spent his life searching for simplicity in his art. He viewed everything he experienced as a dance. He choreographed two pieces for the National Theater of the Deaf and went on to write two books, *Handtalk* and *Handtalk Birthday*, which highlight finger spelling and sign language. He also choreographed a dance about his own childhood, *Glow Worm*, in which he uses both finger spelling and sign language in the dance.

This lesson will take the idea of finger spelling into 'body spelling.' Both concepts are based on the idea that letters, which form words, are one of the symbols people have invented to communicate ideas. Simple words composed of three to five letters can provide students with symbols which they can translate into body shapes. For younger students, a three letter word also gives a clear idea of a beginning, middle and ending structure. Older students can each select their own five letter word which they will transform into body shapes or 'body spelling.'

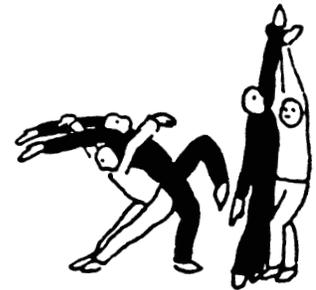
### OBJECTIVES: (Student Outcomes)

Students will be able to:

- Use letters in selected words to motivate original dance shapes and build affinity for words. (Creating & Performing)
- Describe, discuss, analyze and connect information and experiences based on this lesson. Refer to *Assessment* at the end of this lesson. (Responding & Creating)

### MATERIALS:

- Cards with selected words (optional).
- *Handtalk* and *Handtalk Birthday* books by Remy Charlip (optional).



### PROGRESSION:

- Select any words from your curriculum which have three to five letters or choose a sampling from the following list:

THREE LETTER WORDS  
cat, fat, sit, rip, tip, fun, run

FOUR LETTER WORDS  
boat, trip, melt, tree, hand, cold

FIVE LETTER WORDS  
house, zebra, train, elbow

- For younger children select one word for the entire class to work with simultaneously. Have older students each select their own word with a designated number of letters. Ask them to find a way to transform the letter design into a body shape. Explain that with some letters it may only be possible to 'feel' the shape, not actually create it.

- Call out each letter for younger students, but with older students simply call out “letter #1, letter #2, letter #3,” etc.
- Have groups of student perform their ideas for each other and see if the class can guess what their words were. Stress the point that there are many different ways to show each letter. Congratulate each ‘unique’ usage. Have them try some of the same words again, finding new ways to create the letters. Letters may be made in manuscript (upper or lower case) or cursive. In other words, they can be still shapes or moving lines.

**EXTENSIONS:**

- Point out the difference of seeing a letter from the inside as the creator, as well as from the outside as a viewer. Performers may have to reposition themselves to be “read” correctly.
- Repeat the above process to guide each student to create/spell their own *Name Dance*.
- Have older students choose one of the words they worked with and memorize the shapes and the sequence, working to create four-count movement transitions between each letter.
- Have each student teach his selected movement sequence and word idea to a partner or small group. Each learns the other’s *Name Dance* and then they should combine their dances and perform together.
- It is fun to add an additional challenge of making one of the movement transitions travel from one place in space to another.

**VOCABULARY:** create, translate, transition, sequence, unique

**ASSESSMENT:** (Responding & Connecting)

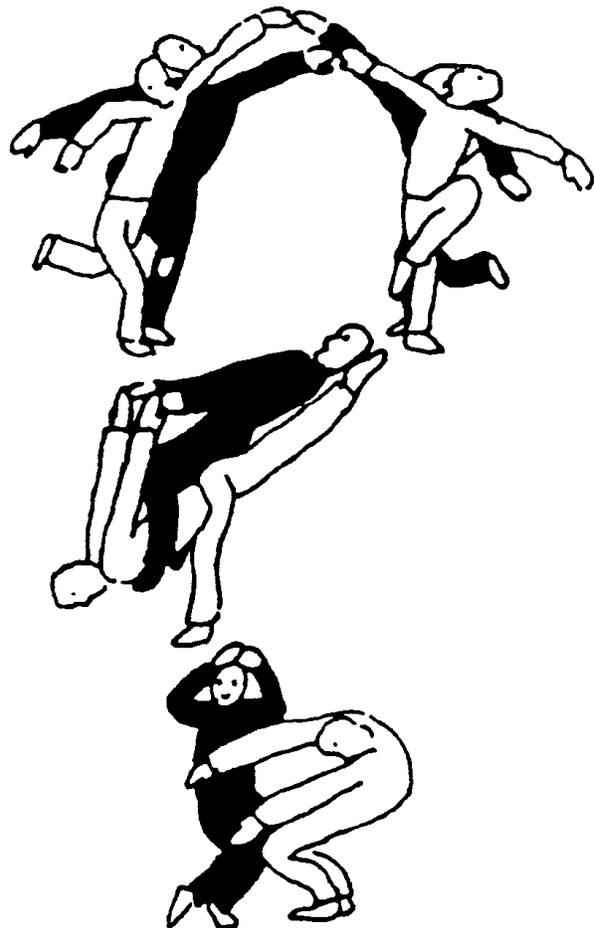
**DESCRIBE:** Describe what you needed to do to create letters with your body.

**DISCUSS:** Discuss what you liked or found interesting about making letter shapes with your body.

**ANALYZE:** Discuss what you learned from making letters using your body to make the shapes. What did you need to do in order to be successful?

**CONNECT:** Discuss what other kind of shapes can you make with your body.

**Emphasis on: Common Core - CA State Standards for Language - Reading; Writing; Listening; Speaking**



Drawings from “Woolloomooloo Cuddle” by Remy Charlip

# RADIO DANCES

## TRANSFORMATION

### LEVEL II Sample Lesson

#### INTRODUCTION:

Are any of you old enough to remember radio dramas like *The Lone Ranger*, *The Shadow Knows* and *The Green Hornet*? Well, it was a lot of fun because everyone had to use his own imagination. There were no pre-determined images for us to watch as there are in the movies or on television. Our hero could be tall or short, fat or thin, black, brown or white. In fact the leading characters could look just like us. Remy Charlip conceived the idea of a *Radio Dance* several years ago. It allows the listener to improvise his own movement to a sequence of words spoken over the airwaves. It is a combination of radio listening and active participation, allowing the dance to belong to each one of us.

#### OBJECTIVES: (Student Outcomes)

Students will be able to:

- Experiment with different word sequences and a variety of music to create Radio Dances. (Creating)
- Describe, discuss, analyze and connect information and experiences based on this lesson. Refer to *Assessment* at the end of this lesson. (Responding & Connecting)

#### MATERIALS:

- Artsource® audio recording of Remy Charlip's *Radio Dance*.

#### PROGRESSION:

- Ask the students to find a space of their own in which to work. Tell them to listen to the *Radio Dance* instructions and to respond spontaneously using their own movement ideas.
- The *Radio Dance* uses the following sequence of action words:

STRETCH • BEND • TURN • SLIDE  
 SWING • TWIST • JUMP • REACH  
 LIFT • FALL • RISE • BOW

- It is a good idea to go over the meaning of the words before the audio is played. Also explain that students may show more than one action per word (a stretch can be done in two different directions). Stress that each student will be interpreting the word in his own way.



- The first time through there will be no music. The next three times, students will improvise by responding to both the words and the style of the music (swing beat, classical, contemporary, etc.).
- After all students have tried the *Radio Dance* and its variations, ask them to discuss the differences they felt when the music was added. How did the quality of their movements change? Which style of music did they most enjoy moving to? Were any of the musical styles difficult or uncomfortable? If so, why?
- Divide the class into four groups and have each group repeat one of the radio dance variations. Direct the class to observe how the silence or the music influenced the energy and rhythm of the movements. Discuss and make comparisons.
- Play the *Radio Dance* again without moving and dance it in your mind, placing the dance on a beach, on the grass, on your bed, in the rain, on the wing of an airplane, etc.

**EXTENSIONS:**

- Talk about action words and brainstorm a long list of those which could be used in a *Radio Dance*.
- Divide the class into small groups and have them create an original radio dance made up of five to seven words, ending with a bow or other clear ending. Have three or four choices of music available for them to select from or have them bring in their own selections.
- One student will be the radio announcer calling the words out for the dancers, or each announcer can record the words and music for a more challenging project. Stress that the announcer needs to be aware of how much time is needed to perform each idea.
- Have each group perform its *Radio Dance* for the class. Direct the class to critique each one by commenting on the choice of music, the movements, the style and quality of the movement. Also, ask whether the group used changes of level and directions.

**VOCABULARY:** improvisation, classical, contemporary, quality, style

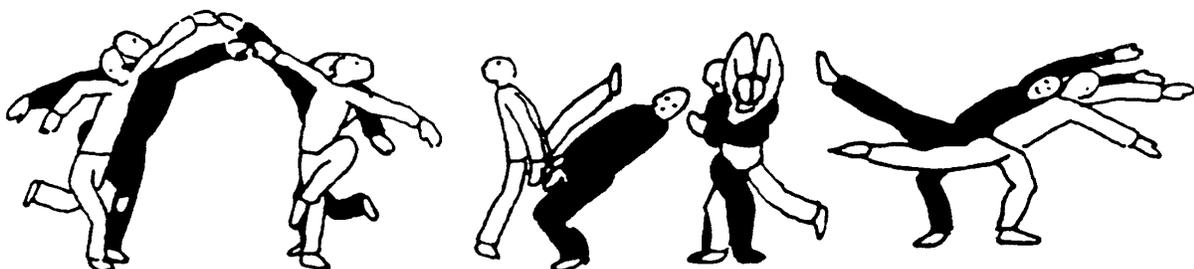
**ASSESSMENT:** (Responding & Connecting)

**DISCUSS:** Discuss the difference between listening to dance instructions and watching dance instructions.

**ANALYZE:** Discuss how the different styles of music motivated you to perform movements differently.

**CONNECT:** Discuss the difference between listening to a radio drama and seeing live action drama.

**Emphasis on:** Common Core - CA State Standards for Language - Reading; Writing; Listening; Speaking



Drawings from "Woolloomooloo Cuddle" by Remy Charlip

# IMAGINARY DANCES

## ENDURING VALUES

### LEVEL III Sample Lesson

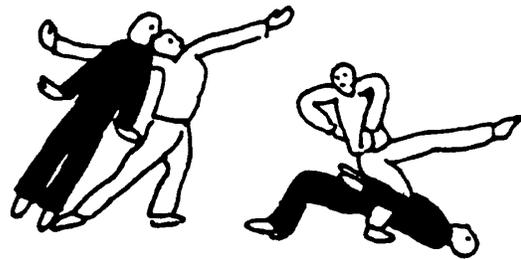
#### INTRODUCTION:

This lesson is inspired by Remy Charlip and his *Ten Imaginary Dances*, examples of which are on the *Artsource*® audio recording. An imaginary dance is one which is seen in one's mind, rather than with live dancers on a stage or television. It is motivated by word images or stories which stimulate each person to create mental image pictures of the dance. Students will draw upon their own experiences and cultural references as they do this.

#### OBJECTIVES: (Student Outcomes)

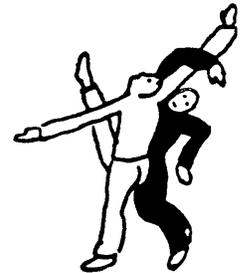
Students will be able to:

- Create an imaginary dance. (Creating)
- Describe, discuss, analyze and connect information and experiences based on this lesson. Refer to *Assessment* at the end of this lesson. (Responding & Connecting)



#### MATERIALS:

- *Artsource*® audio recording of Remy Charlip's *Ten Imaginary Dances*.
- Paper and pencils.



#### PROGRESSION:

- Introduce Remy Charlip to your students by using the background materials provided. Then play a segment of his *Imaginary Dances*, as well as his interview.
- Ask for class responses to what they heard. Did they see images in their minds?
- Ask the students to close their eyes. Do the following exercise with them to strengthen their confidence and their ability to see mental image pictures:

- Imagine a person walking.
- Have that person jump.
- Make the person turn as many times as you wish.
- Have the person travel backwards.
- Stretch the person into a strong ending pose.
- Make the person bow.



- Ask if the students were able to see the person in their imagination and if they could make the person do all of the above actions. You may want to do this exercise several times, giving simple actions for them to imagine. This can also be done with partners, one giving ideas to the other to imagine.

- Ask the class to list some of the following ideas for their own *Imaginary Dances*:
  - Action words they want to use.
  - Type of music.
  - Style and color of costumes.
  - Dance style (jazz, ballet, folk, rock) or cultural style (Mexican, Japanese, Armenian, etc.).
  - Feelings they want to communicate.
  - Theme, story or pure dance movement.

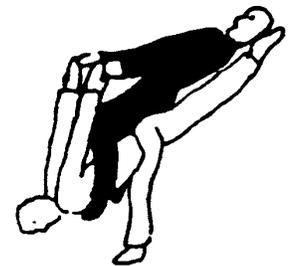
• Ask the class to close their eyes and see the curtain opening on stage. As the curtain opens what do they see? Ask them to follow the action until it ends.

• Have the class take out paper and pencils and begin to write down the dance they see in their mind.

It can be short or long and they may describe it in any way they wish. Many students find it helpful to illustrate their dance. Tell them to create a clear beginning, middle and ending. This process may take longer than one class period. Once they get started, they may need other periods of time to complete and refine it.



- The class may want to use this format:
  - Title of dance
  - Theme, story or pure dance movement (select one)
  - Number of dancers
  - Type of music
  - Costumes and Setting



• When the dances are completed, have students divide into pairs and share their dance with a partner. Then ask for volunteers to read theirs to the class. Ask the class to imagine the dance as they see it in their minds.

- Ask questions to stimulate awareness, such as the following:
  - Did the writer use movement words?
  - Was there a story or theme or was it pure dance movement?
  - Could you hear the music in your mind?
  - What feelings did you have as you listened to the dance unfold?
  - What were the strongest parts?
  - What one suggestion can you make that would make the dance work better?

**EXTENSIONS:**

- Make a book of all the *Imaginary Dances* with accompanying drawings.

**VOCABULARY:** imagination, images, mental image pictures

**ASSESSMENT:** (Responding & Connecting)

**DISCUSS:** Discuss the idea of “Imaginary Dances” and the value of doing this activity.

**Emphasis on:** Common Core - CA State Standards for Language - Reading; Writing; Listening; Speaking

