

# 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:

*Brother Sun, Sister Moon and Yup'ik Moon Song*

## Creator:

Yup'ik Ancestors / Performer Chuna McIntyre

## Background Information:

Chuna McIntyre, a Central Yup'ik Eskimo, was born and raised in the tiny village of Eek, Alaska, on the shores of the Bering Sea. It was there Chuna learned the ancient traditions – the dances, songs and stories of his Eskimo ancestors. He first became aware that dancing was part of his culture from the stories his grandmother told him in which animals sang and danced. When Chuna was a young boy, she taught him his first dance, the *Arctic Squirrel Dance*. Singing and dancing was an integral part of Chuna's village life when he was growing up. His grandmother carried the tribe's old knowledge through the stories, dances and songs. It was a natural transition that she passed these traditions on to her grandson. Chuna is now the founder and director of Nunamta ("Of Our Land") Yup'ik Eskimo Dancers, a company which has traveled the world sharing Alaska's native cultural heritage. Chuna's performing has taken him far from Eek: to the Smithsonian, the Kennedy Center, France, Russia, New Zealand and Siberia. Chuna is as well known as a graphic artist and craftsman as he is a musician and dancer. He works in many types of media, and has been exhibited in public buildings throughout Alaska and across the continent. Chuna has crafted the cultural garments and accouterments he wears using traditional materials and designs he learned from the elders of his culture and from historic collections.

## About the Artwork:

Chuna McIntyre performs traditional Yup'ik dance and song accompanied by percussion on a hand drum. Costumed in native dress, Chuna uses authentic artifacts and masks to illuminate the customs of this ancient southwest Alaskan tribe. The performance begins with an "Entrance Welcome Song" as Chuna enters the ceremonial space singing and playing the drum. He formally addresses the audience in an ancient ritual of welcome, releasing long streamers made out of freeze-dried seal gut. Chuna then tells the Yup'ik myth *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* and performs the dance using two dance fans with tiny masks representing the sun and moon. The story tells about a time when the world was all in darkness and older brother rose into the sky and became the sun. Little sister, crying, ran after her brother and also went up into the sky, becoming the moon. The performance culminates with the poetic *Yup'ik Moon Song*.

## Creative Process of the Artist or Culture:

Chuna McIntyre learned the Yup'ik dances and songs he performs the same way his ancestors learned them,

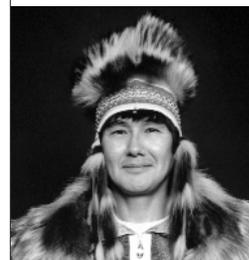


Photo: Kerry Richardson

*"... above all, you are to enjoy dance - that is the ultimate quest."*

Chuna McIntyre

passed on through the ages from generation to generation. Chuna's grandmother was his primary teacher, first telling him the traditional stories, then teaching him the songs and dances.



### **Creative Process Continued:**

The making of Chuna's parka was a family effort. Over the course of nine months, Chuna, along with his grandmother and aunt, trapped the animals, cured their hides, cut out the skin and painted the designs and symbols. The many furs and embellishments include seal skin; caribou hair; wolf, arctic squirrel and land otter fur; bird's feet; trade beads; and ivory.

### **Discussion Questions:**

After the video has been viewed:

- What rituals did Chuna McIntyre perform to prepare the space in which the dancing would take place?
- Can you retell the story of *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*? Summarize its key plot points and theme.
- How would you characterize Yup'ik dance footwork and gesture? How is symmetry used?
- Describe Chuna's ceremonial costume. Can you identify specific components or materials used in making his parka, headdress and boots?
- Explain how movement, music, storytelling and art objects are used to create Yup'ik traditional dance. How does each element contribute to the whole?
- What words would students use to describe the singing which accompanied the dancing? Comment on the song's melody and rhythm.
- The Yup'ik drum is a large hoop covered with a membrane of seal or walrus skin. Describe the relationship between this ancient drum and a modern drum?

### **Multidisciplinary Options:**

Chuna McIntyre was born and raised in the tiny village of Eek, Alaska, on the shores of the Bering Sea. Eek is south of the Arctic Circle. During the course of a year, Eek has six months when it is mostly dark and six months when it is mostly light. Research and explain how the earth's rotation around the sun creates these conditions. Use a globe to demonstrate.

### **Audio-Visual Materials:**

- *Artsource*® video excerpt of *Brother Sun and Sister Moon*. Courtesy of Chuna McIntyre and the Music Center.

### **Additional References:**

- *Native American Dance: Ceremonies and Social Traditions* edited by Charlotte Heth. National Museum of the American Indian Smithsonian Institution: Washington, D.C., 1992.

### **Sample Experiences:**

#### **Level I**

- Have students practice the arm movements, gestures and footwork they observed in the performance or on the videotape. Improvise a chant to accompany them.
- Find the state of Alaska on a classroom map or globe. Look for the Bering Sea. The village of Eek, the homeland of Chuna McIntyre, is on the south coast.
- \* • Chuna used his hands throughout his songs and stories to communicate feelings and ideas with gestures. Look at pictures of Indian signs and practice them.

#### **Level II**

- Many tribes in the Native American culture used masks. Look at pictures of masks from Native American cultures and use the designs to inspire original masks.
- \* • The words to the "*Yup'ik Moon Song*" which follows the story *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* are written in the form of a poem. Have students write a poem about some aspect of man's relationship to the earth, sea or sky using the structure of the "*Yup'ik Moon Song*" as a model.
- Yup'ik dance movement and gesture is symmetrical. When one side of the body does a movement, the other mirrors it. Choose partners and practice this movement concept, taking turns leading and following in a simple mirror exercise.

#### **Level III**

- Choose an elder to interview. Select a story learned through the interviewing process, and prepare it for a class storytelling session.
- \* • Imagine a dance or cultural ceremony in which you would participate. Dances may be based in actual cultural celebrations or can be completely original. Design costumes and include the following: garments, footwear, head coverings, accessories, use of color, symbolic or cultural elements, and a description of the dance or ceremony in which it will be worn. Create a chant or music to accompany the ceremony.

\* Indicates sample lessons

## Yup'ik Dance: Ceremonies and Traditions

Yup'ik dance encompasses many aspects: movement, music, storytelling, folklore, masks and other art objects such as dance fans, dance sticks, headdresses and jewelry. They are all woven together into one creative unified work within Yup'ik ceremony.

Thomas Johnston, an ethnomusicologist who has studied the music and dance of Alaska Natives, has compared the song and dance to a library containing Yup'ik history and knowledge. The dance masks are the “illustrations” for the “volumes” of dances categorized in the living library. The masks were made to be worn in dance, not hung on walls in galleries. We can appreciate them as examples of Yup'ik art, but to understand them, one must see them as part of a dance.

In Yup'ik culture, dances were of two kinds, recreational and ceremonial. People danced for the sheer pleasure, as well as to communicate with the spirits that shared their world and affected their lives. They danced to break up the monotony of long, cold winters, to nurture a sense of community, to relieve stress and to welcome visitors. Recreational dances were done at social gatherings and ceremonial dances took place during religious festivals. Most dances took place in the *guasgiq*, a large semi-subterranean structure that served as the men's communal dwelling, steam bath, workshop, studio, and community hall. It was built of driftwood logs with the top half above ground and covered with sod, giving it a domed appearance. There was no formal training or dance school in traditional Yup'ik culture. People learned dances by watching others perform. Yup'ik dance was pure folk dance; it could be done by everyone and was not restricted to professionals or specialists. As dancers became more proficient the meanings of the gestures would unfold.

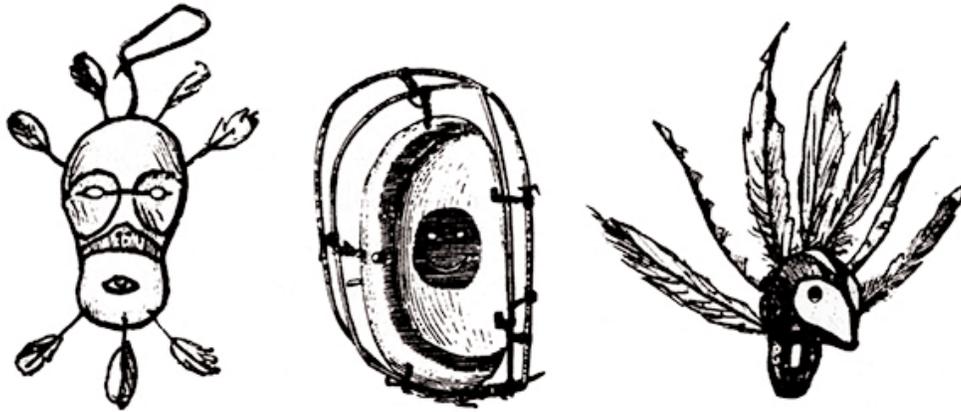
Music for the dances is traditionally made on a drum. The Yup'ik drum is a large hoop covered with a membrane of seal or walrus. It is struck from the top with a thin wooden wand. Drum beats are regular, such as a steady  $2/4$  meter. The singing which accompanies the drumming is in unison. A song leader often calls out the words during a performance, like a prompter.

The Yup'ik dance costume was a display of finery and a visible sign of the “specialness” of an occasion. One of the most dramatic pieces of apparel is the *gut parka*, a pullover, hooded garment made with strips of sea mammal intestine that had been inflated and dried. Embellished with many animal furs and heads, it is usually too warm to dance in and is removed after the first part of a ceremony or performance. Fancy footgear or dress boots are worn. Elaborately decorated armband made of furs or skins are tied around the upper arms. Headdresses with crowns of fur and tassels complete the costume. Jewelry, such as necklaces, earrings, nose ornaments and beaded caps for women are also worn.



Wooden Mask, Eskimo

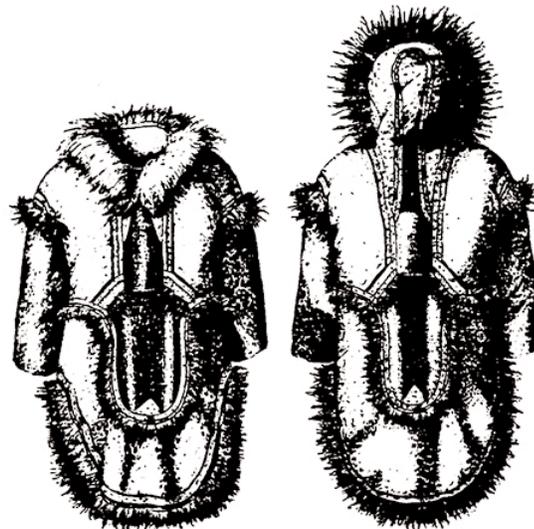
Dance “fans” were held in the hand while dancing. Men’s fans, like those Chuna uses in his performance, are hoops of bent wood into which feathers have been stuck. Long ago, women held “finger masks” while dancing. Carved of wood, they resembled tiny mask faces. Today in some communities, gloves, rather than dance fans are used. Some believe that covering the hands shows respect for the spirits and also wards off evil.



Eskimo Finger Masks

Yup’ik dance masks embody complex concepts symbolized in the various styles. Realistic masks look like either human faces or animal heads. Some are naturalistic, some are highly stylized. Realistic masks were used in secular dances portraying human or animal actions. For religious ceremonies, masks representing animal spirits and supernatural creatures were worn. Some were surrealistic, with both human-like and animal-like features. Secular masks were painted red and could be worn by anyone. Spirit masks were carved by shamans or by master carvers according to a shaman’s specific directions. Many spirit masks were burned following a ceremony in order to ward off evil spirits. Some masks were sold to collectors who took them far away where the spirits would not bother the Yup’ik. That is the reason that some masks escaped destruction and are on view in museums today.

Today, young people learn Yup’ik dances in their classrooms from elders who come in specifically to give them instruction. In this way, centuries of dance are passed on to new generations to learn and perform, creating a life-line for this fascinating, ancient art form.



Pictured to the right is an Eskimo woman’s dress made of shanks and bellies of reindeer pieced together to form light and dark stripes. It is hemmed with white mountain sheep, fawnskin and red worsted (trade cloth), and fringed with wolfskin.

# NATIVE AMERICAN HAND TALK

## ENDURING VALUES AND THE HUMAN FAMILY

### LEVEL I Sample Lesson

#### INTRODUCTION:

Chuna used his hands throughout his songs and stories to communicate feelings and ideas with gestures. Indians of the Great Plains used a sign language or sign-talk based on simple gestures. By the use of Sign-talk, tribes without a common language could communicate. Hunters used sign language when sneaking up on their prey. Warriors used sign language to surprise the enemy. Older people used sign language when their hearing became poor.

#### OBJECTIVES: (Student Outcomes)

Students will be able to:

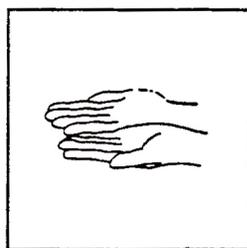
- Learn eight words using Indian Sign Language. (Connecting)
- Use selected signs in the creation of simple gestural sentences. (Connecting)
- Describe, discuss, analyze and connect information and experiences based on this lesson. Refer to *Assessment* at the end of this lesson. (Responding & Connecting)

**MATERIALS:** None

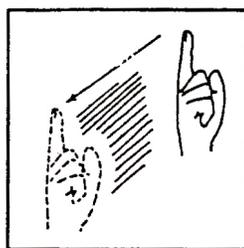
#### PROGRESSION:

- Look at the Indian Signs illustrated below and practice them with your students.

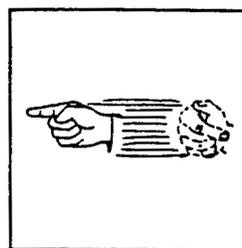
American-Indian  
Sign Language



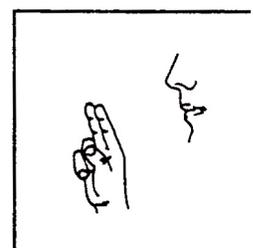
**Book**



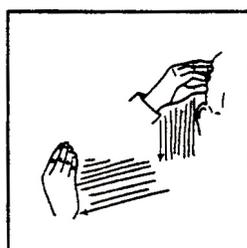
**Boy**



**Bring**



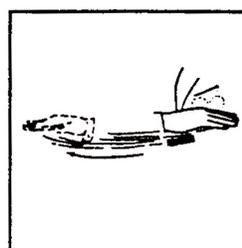
**Friend**



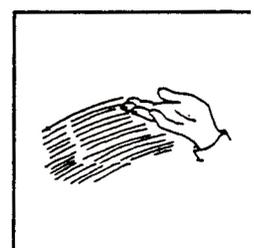
**Girl**



**Go**



**Good**



**Give**

Try putting several of the signs together in simple gestural sentences.

Examples: "Boy-Good-Friend"  
"Go-Bring-Book"

- Ask students to pick a partner and take turns communicating with each other using the signs they have learned.

### **EXTENSIONS:**

- Recite the sentences you have made into the form of a chant. Accompany your chant with the beat of a hand drum.
- Explore other ways that people have communicated without words: smoke signals, Morse code, flags, etc.
- Compare words in Indian sign-talk with those in American Sign Language (ASL). Choose several words and learn to express them both ways. How are the hand gestures for the same word alike? How are they different?

**VOCABULARY:** sign-talk, nature poems

**ASSESSMENT:** (Responding & Connecting)

**DESCRIBE:** Describe your feelings when using sign language rather than verbal language.

**DISCUSS:** Discuss what was learned by using only hands to express ideas.

**ANALYZE:** Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of sign language in comparison to verbal language.

**CONNECT:** Discuss professions that use sign language as an integral part of their work? (Sports referees, animal trainers, scuba divers, construction workers, etc.).

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

## NATURE POEMS

### THE POWER OF NATURE

#### LEVEL II Sample Lesson

#### INTRODUCTION:

The words to the *Yup'ik Moon Song* which follows the story *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* are written in the form of a poem. The ancient Yup'ik language is kept alive today through traditional song and dance.

#### OBJECTIVES: (Student Outcomes)

Students will be able to:

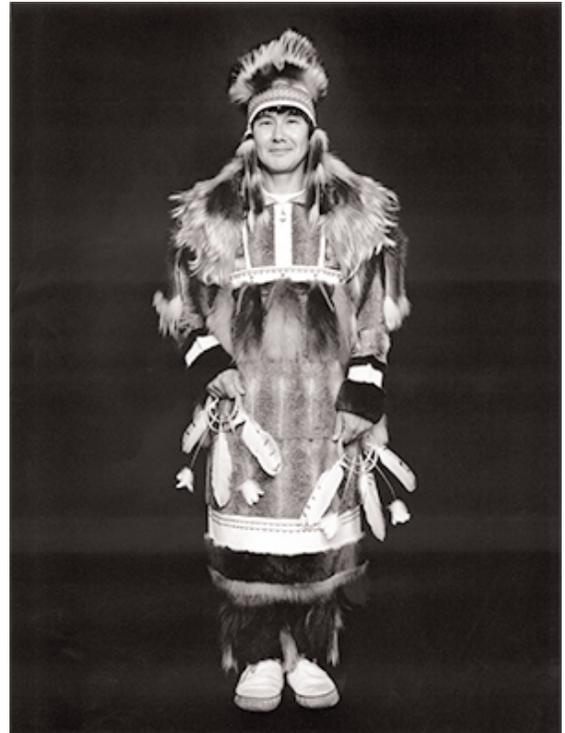
- Become familiar with the language, form and content of a traditional Yup'ik song. (**Responding & Connecting**)
- Write original poems about man's relationship to the earth, sea or sky using the structure of the *Yup'ik Moon Song* as a model. (**Creating & Connecting**)
- Describe, discuss, analyze and connect information and experiences based on this lesson. Refer to *Assessment* at the end of this lesson. (**Responding & Connecting**)

#### MATERIALS:

- *Artsource*® video excerpt of *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*.
- Paper, pencils or pens.

#### PROGRESSION:

- Watch the video excerpt of *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* and pay particular attention to the *Yup'ik Moon Song section* of Chuna McIntyre's performance. You might want to watch this part several times to become familiar with the words.
- Read the words of the *Yup'ik Moon Songs* below in both languages, Yup'ik and English.
- Read the words as you hear Chuna sing them. Discuss the meaning of the words.



Chuna McIntyre  
Photo: Craig Schwartz

## *Yup'ik Moon Song*

*Unuganga*  
Nighttime has come to me.

*Tangaritanga*  
Darkness has come to me.

Sung twice

*Unuganga*  
Nighttime has come to me,

*uralungutanga*  
but the moon came to me.

*Nunaniritanga*  
and made me happy.

*Yugiyama*      *Tangeranga*  
My people,      who look at me.

*Kinguliaranli* *Kingyarakinga*  
My ancestors, who look back at me.

*Iralumi pikani* *Aluyarlinga*  
In the moon up there, I shall swing back and forth,

*Nunaniritanga*  
and be happy.

- Study the format of the poem. Count the number of syllables in each line and write a formula.

Example:      Line 1 - 10 syllables  
                  Line 2 - repeat  
                  Line 3 - 10 syllables  
                  Line 4 - 5

- Discuss the meaning of the poem. What images are created in your mind's eye as you read it? What feelings does the poem evoke? Describe.
- Ask students to choose a topic from the realm of nature for an original poem which explores man's relationship to earth, sea, sky, stars, sun, etc.
- Write the first draft. Younger students (grades 1 - 3) may write free-form or use rhyme and meter. Older students (grades 4 - 8) should follow the structure of the *Yup'ik Moon Song*.
- Edit the first draft. Write a final draft.
- Draw an illustration to go with your poem.
- Share the poems in a class poetry reading.

**EXTENSIONS:**

- Create a melody for your poem and perform it in the style of the *Yup'ik Moon Song*.
- Explore the poetry of another culture, such as the Japanese haiku. Write Haiku and publish them in a class poetry book on handmade paper.

**VOCABULARY:** Yup'ik words

**ASSESSMENT:** (Responding & Connecting)

**DESCRIBE:** Describe your feelings and impressions of the *Yup'ik Moon Song*.

**DISCUSS:** Discuss other poems that you know that celebrate aspects of nature.

**ANALYZE:** Discuss how the poem you wrote was similar to and different from the *Yup'ik Moon Song*.

**CONNECT:** Think of other cultures you know of and how these cultures refer to the sun and moon.

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



Artwork by Chuna McIntyre

# DESIGN A DANCE COSTUME

## THE POWER OF NATURE

### LEVEL III Sample Lesson

#### INTRODUCTION:

Chuna McIntyre made his elaborate costume with his grandmother and aunt. It incorporates animal fur and skin native to Alaska. The color palette uses Yup'ik ceremonial colors. The symbolic meanings are: red (Yup'ik ancestors' blood), white (snow or caribou fat) and black (the underworld or spirit realm).

#### OBJECTIVES: (Student Outcomes)

Students will be able to:

- Describe, discuss and analyze the Yup'ik dance costume used by Chuna McIntyre in his performance. (**Responding & Connecting**)
- Design an original dance costume for a ceremony or cultural celebration. (**Creating & Performing**)
- 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*® video excerpt of *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*.
- Design guidesheet, pencils, watercolors, color pencils, markers, fabric swatches

#### PROGRESSION:

• Study the parka, headdress, shirt, pants, moccasins, and finger masks Chuna McIntyre uses in his performance. Describe, discuss and analyze what you observe.

• Try to identify the specific elements:

- |                       |                  |               |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------------|
| • seal skin           | • rabbit hair    | • ivory       |
| • caribou hair        | • calf skin      | • wolf fur    |
| • arctic squirrel fur | • land otter fur | • earth paint |
| • wolverine fur       | • bird's feet    | • trade beads |

• Next ask students to imagine a dance or cultural ceremony in which they would participate. Their dances may be based in actual cultural celebrations or they could be completely original, based in artistic expression rather than ethnic heritage. Use the guidesheet on the following page for each student to render his/her design creations. Encourage the use of colored pencils, watercolors, markers and fabric swatches.

**EXTENSIONS:**

- Study the costumes used in dance from another culture: African, Polynesian, Mexican, South American, Asian, etc.
- Construct the actual garments you have designed. Put on a costume parade of the finished work.

**VOCABULARY:** costume design, palette

**ASSESSMENT:** (Responding & Connecting)

**DESCRIBE:** Describe as many details of Chuna's costume as you can remember.

**DISCUSS:** Discuss the purpose and significance of each part of the costume as you understand it.

**ANALYZE:** Discuss the similarities and differences between Chuna's dance costume and other dance costumes you have seen.

**CONNECT:** Discuss what materials you use from your environment and how these materials are used in your life.

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

# GUIDESHEET FOR YOUR DANCE COSTUME

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Garments:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Accessories:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Colors:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

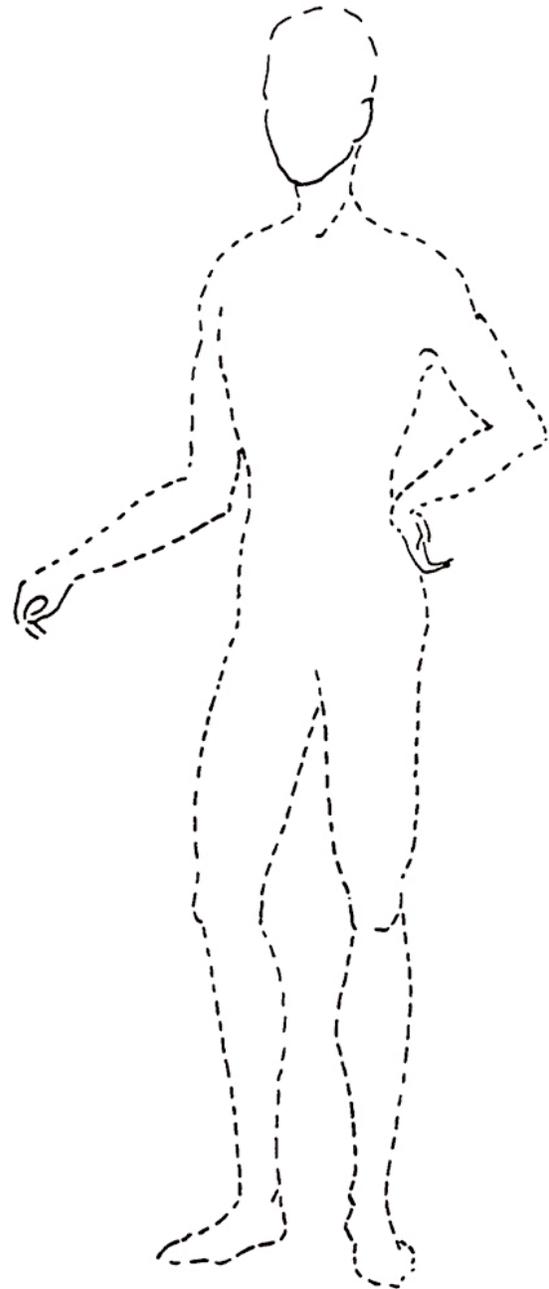
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Symbolic or Cultural Elements:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_



Description of Dance and Costume: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_