

Study Guide for Teachers

Brian Gillie

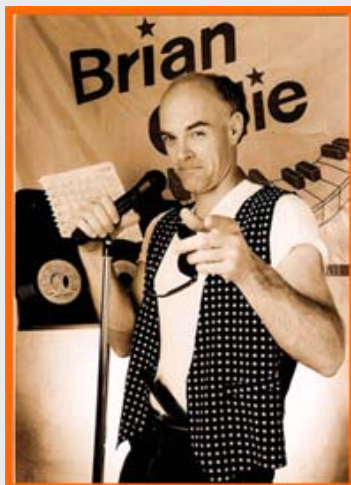
*Social Dance in America
1620 until Today*

**Workshops and Residencies
Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism
Master Teaching Artist**



Young
Audiences
Arts for
Learning
Connecticut

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Brian Gillie, 1999 YAC Artist of the Year and CCT Master Teaching Artist, is the rare artist who does it all: singer, dancer, pianist, educator and historian.

His interactive performances and workshop showcase the histories, stylings and novelty of America's social dances and popular songs from 1776 to today.

Brian Gillie joined the roster of Young Audiences of Connecticut as a “hooper” in 1983 and was their artist of the year in 1999. He has toured New England with the Reel Nutmeg Colonial Dance Company, The Elm City Vintage Dancers and the Mountain Laurel Cloggers. Brian was principal choreographer with the Connecticut Swing Dancers for five years and currently has two nationally available swing dance instructional videos. Brian has been an annual lecturer/performer at Yale and Wesleyan Universities and was recently an adjunct professor of dance at Naugatuck Valley Community College. Brian believes that early movement and dance experiences improve overall academic success and well-being.

Brian has performed professionally as a piano/vocalist and percussionist since high school. Brian runs his own music and recording studio, has four albums of original songs and an award-winning radio jingle. Brian is a music historian with a Masters of Education Degree, and he has been a member of the Connecticut Songwriters' Association and BMI. Brian has written the reference text titled, [A Guide to the Best Vocal Harmonies of Rock 'n' Roll](#), and he teaches adult education classes on the Evolution of Rock 'n' Roll. Brian is also a regular in the nightclub circuit and provides weekly, piano/vocal entertainment at senior communities throughout Connecticut. Finally, Brian is a Master Teaching Artist with the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism and travels New England with the Commission's Touring Artists program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Following a sequential time-line from 1620 to the present day, Mr. Gillie presents the signature dance styles of specific decades through historical narrative, demonstration and audience participation. In his presentation Brian includes the following dances, along with their origins, locales and popular personalities: circle dance, line dance, square dance, jig, hornpipe, clog, waltz, polka, cakewalk, one-step, grizzly bear, slow drag, camel walk, foxtrot, charleston, swing, tango, rumba, cha cha, samba, merengue, bunny hop, conga, macarena, twist, monkey, swim, bump, disco, hip-hop, robotics and more. Fifteen periods of dance history are represented by thirty-five different dances.

OBJECTIVES

- Art vs. entertainment: Entertainment confirms what we already know; art is outside of what we already know. This cultural arts program empowers students with notions of what is possible.
- Students actively participate in the processes that constitute observation, performance and invention in the art of dance.
- Students will hear the importance of musical accompaniment which has been a catalyst for the rich texture of dances through the decades.
- Students will learn, through observation and participation, the overall construction of a dance and the body's abilities and limitations in movement.
- Students will learn the origins and history of select dances, and the personalities associated with their popularity.
- Students will be able to evaluate a variety of dance styles, comparing and contrasting one style to another and one generation to another: the art of response-ability.
- Students will discover how historic dance styles represent the needs, concerns, cultural forces, mores and leisure pursuits of our ancestors and peers

OTHER PERFORMANCES AND WORKSHOPS

Song, Dance and the Possibilities (Grade K-6)

Try Brian's *anyone can write a song* and *anyone can invent a dance* experience! Learn the predictable ingredients of song and dance and then dare to break the rules to create the extraordinary. Sing a ragtime classic in doo-wop style, add rap rhythms to a jazz tune and create a hip-hop Charleston. Length: 60 minutes

Song, Dance and the Possibilities – the Holiday Version (Grades K – 6, families)

Flying reindeer? Dancing snowmen? Students invent outrageous new versions of some old, holiday song favorites and then create a hip, holiday dance to a funky seasonal tune; all this while exploring language, poetry, music and pop culture. Ho Ho Ho!

Dance in America (Grade K-6)

Seen your students dance lately? History, humor and period music accompany dances from Charleston to Cha Cha, Ragtime to Rumba, and Lindy Hop to Hip Hop. Students participate throughout the presentation of over 35 dances. Length: 60 minutes plus workshop.

Dance Workshops and Residencies Include:

Swing Dance

Ballroom and Rock Dances of the last 75 years

Folk Dances 1700- 1900

Never Too Small to Dance and Boogie!!

RESOURCES

- The video/DVD, [That's Dancin'](#), available at most libraries
- The text, [Black Dance](#), by Lynne Fouley Emery
- The text, [Dance a While](#), by Jane A. Harris, Anne M. Pittman and Marlys S. Waller
- The website for the National Dance Association: www.aahperd.org
- Local library listings for available dance videos/DVDs and dance music CDs
- Amazon.com and local record stores to locate ballroom dance/folk dance compilation CDs and DVDs
- Videos/DVDs featuring Michael Jackson and contemporary hip-hop videos/DVDs from MTV

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

- Students take a trip to a local Ballroom Dance studio and observe/participate in some of the contemporary ballroom dances.
- Students take a field trip to a local tap/jazz/modern/hip-hop dance studio to observe/participate in some of these disciplines.
- View Brian's swing dance instructional video titled, [Swing Dance, Mama](#): Part 1.

AFTER THE PROGRAM

- Name, describe and perform several European Ballroom dances; compare and contrast their styles and origins.
- Name, describe and perform the Latin Ballroom dances; compare and contrast their styles and origins.
- Name, describe and perform the dance styles created in the African-American dance communities.
- Compare and contrast European dances with Latin dances and/or African-American dances and their origins.
- Create a dance (to music of your choice) combining features of European, Latin and African-American steps.
- Using any of the dance music styles presented, create an original dance from scratch that has: beginning, repeated motif and ending.
- Invent a square dance or line dance that uses four to six different patterns, repeated in sequence.
- Utilizing your own favorite contemporary dance moves, dance to any dance music popular before 1950.

CURRICULAR LINKS

CT Academic Standards for Music requires that students perform songs (raps) with expressive dynamics, in rhythm and with a steady beat in solo and partnered patterns. Research shows that participation in these musical facets correlates with student reading skills. Since rapping is poetry and storytelling to music, the art form enhances language art standards for theme and character development. Similarly, learning the meters and structures of music and poetry directly relate to mathematical patterns and understanding as required by **CT Academic Standards for Math**.

Additionally, students learn to create poems and raps, to compose and analyze music and rhythms, to evaluate music and music performance, and to understand music in relation to history and culture. Research (the *Mozart Effect* and learning curves based on the *Multiple Intelligences*) has also demonstrated that early music experiences improve overall academic performance and well-being.

CT Academic Standards for Dance call for students to create, evaluate and perform art works that express concepts of dance. Dance history illuminates human experience and values and reveals facets of different cultures. In creating hip hop dances students learn to apply choreographic principals and analytical thinking and to make connections between dance, personal accomplishment and healthful living.

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