



Moving Beyond the Text **Performance Guide**

Rooted in oral traditions, African American writers have profoundly shaped American literature. Their voices have driven social change and enriched the cultural fabric of America, weaving stories that reflect the nation's history, struggles, triumphs, cultural expressions and universal aspects of the human condition. By blending African American literature with contemporary dance, we transform written text into a visual language, deepening the audience's connection to these narratives in ways words alone cannot.

This performance guide includes:

- Artist bio
- A warmup activity
- Pre-show thinking prompt
- Key vocabulary & context
- Suggested Q & A questions
- Post-show discussion questions
- A student survey link
- Post-show activities
- Related Ohio Learning Standards

BEFORE THE SHOW

Meet the Artists



Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC) was founded in 1968 to create performance opportunities for dancers of color. Five decades later, the 10th largest modern contemporary dance company in the nation remains rooted in the African American experience and committed to the development of diverse movement artists on the global stage.

Our performance will be led by **Rehearsal Directors Devin Baker and**

Countess V. Winfrey and showcases the artistry of dancer artists and **First Company Members:** Edgar Aguire, Emily Brayn, Nicolay Dorsett, Aaron Frisby, Alexandria Flewellen, Niarra Gooden-Clark, Donovan McFadden, Alliya Nelloms, Elizabeth Ramsey, Fabio Tello, Sadale Warner, and Jalen Williams.

Find DCDC at www.dcdc.org and on Instagram: [@daytoncontemporarydancecompany](https://www.instagram.com/daytoncontemporarydancecompany)

Classroom Warmup: Body Talk

DCDC is celebrating 57 years of artistic excellence! Creating work that tells our stories using movement as our text allows us to express ourselves both physically and emotionally.

On your own: Write a short paragraph describing yourself. Include three important things you would like others to know about you. Be creative – instead of picking surface level details (likes and dislikes), go a little deeper. What do you value? What experiences make you who you are?

With a partner: Try using your physical body only (*no words!*) to communicate and express those three important things. How well do you understand each other's movements?

This is what DCDC refers to as BODY TALK.

Think While You Watch

DCDC uses the words of poets and writers as the foundation or basis of the movement. Pay attention to the dancers' **gestures** (the movement of a part of the body to express an idea or meaning) – what stories are they telling?

Vocabulary

The following concepts and terms are helpful to understanding DCDC's performance.

- **Body Talk** – Communicating thoughts and ideas through movement. Also, the title of DCDC's touring production that draws on inspiration from prominent works by African American playwrights.
- **Breath** – The air taken in or expelled from the lungs
- **Griot** – Storytellers who maintain the tradition of oral history in West Africa; more broadly, modern-day griots can include musicians, poets, writers, artists, dancers, and actors who tell the stories of Blackness in many parts of the world
- **Imagination** – The faculty or action of forming new ideas, images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses
- **Rhythm** – A strong regular repeated pattern of movement or sound
- **Solo** – An artistic performance by one person

Stories Told in Short

Today you will see four **excerpts**, or short selections, from DCDC's body of work. Each excerpt has its own mood, tempo, and choreography, but the dances are connected as representations of different aspects of the African American experience.

I. Migration

Music: ["Spiritual"](#) by Sweet Honey in the Rock

II. Mental Health

Music & Prose: Original composition

III. Love

Poem: ["Negro Love Song"](#) by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Music: ["In the Bottoms: Ill. Honey"](#) by Robert Nathaniel Dett & Natalie Hinderas

IV. Power

Prose: ["The Amen Corner"](#) by James Baldwin

Music: ["Blackbird Special"](#) by The Dirty Dozen Brass Band

["Power \(VooDoo Version\)"](#) by King Britt & Sister Gertrude Morgan

The Q & A

Artists love to answer thoughtful questions! If you are having trouble thinking of a question, here are some that the artists would love to answer for you.

- What drew you to this art form?
- What kind of training/education did you complete?
- What advice would you have for someone wanting to follow in your footsteps?

AFTER THE SHOW

Post-Show Discussion

Discuss as a class or with a partner:

- Choose one of the linked songs or poems on page 3 and listen or read it again. Do you think that dance enhanced the original author's intent? Why or why not?
- Is there a poem, story, or piece of music that you feel might be used to help express who you are as a person?

Student Survey

Tell us about your experience at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BJPMLRY>

Write a Review

Try your hand at being an art critic! Describe your impression of the in-school performance. (We bet your Muse Club advisor would love to read it!) An effective review includes four important elements:

1. **Description:** *What did you see?* How would you describe it to someone who is not there to see it?
2. **Analysis:** *How is the dance organized?* Is there a story or narrative, or is it abstract? How does the movement relate to the sounds?
3. **Interpretation:** *What did it make you think about?* Use a hypothesis and support it with arguments.
4. **Evaluation:** *What impression did the piece make on you?* How did it make you feel? Are you moved? Focus on whether the dance worked as a piece of art, not so much on whether or not you liked it.



FOR TEACHERS

Related Ohio Learning Standards

The following standards are linked to the artist’s performance and/or the activities in the performance guide. Teachers may be able to make additional connections.

Dance

<i>Enduring Understandings:</i> Artists/students engage in analysis and interpretation to understand and evaluate artistic works. Artists/students understand and communicate the value of creative expressions in internal and external contexts.	
Responding (RE)	
6-8.1RE	Recognize and articulate the relationship between production elements, music, and movement in creating meaning for dances performed or observed.
6.2RE	Recognize appropriate audience etiquette during class, rehearsal, and performance.
6.3RE	Observe the movement characteristics or qualities of a specific dance genre and make connections to attitudes and movement preferences.
7.3RE	Critique a dance using genre-specific dance terminology to determine how effectively the various aspects communicate a theme or idea.
HSP.1RE	Recognize and identify fundamental dance concepts in selected dance works.
HSP.4RE	Recognize the importance of artistry and technical proficiency in dance.
HSAC.1RE	Critique a dance based on fundamental dance concepts.
HSAC.3RE	Develop and refine personal beliefs and questions about dance experiences based on aesthetic opinions.
Connecting (CO)	
8.2CO	Examine and discuss ways various external contexts impact dance and articulate how meaning in dance is communicated and understood.
7-8.3CO	Explore how dance supports the development of 21 st century skills.
HSAC.4CO	Explore a diverse range of dance in global cultures, screen dance, theatrical styles, and historical periods.

Music

Connecting (CO)	
6.7CO	Identify different functions and uses of music in American and other cultures.
8.4CO	Discuss the purpose and value of music in various cultures and settings.

Literature

CCR Anchor Standard 7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
CCR Anchor Standard 8	Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
CCR Anchor Standard 10	Read, comprehend, and respond to complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Writing

CCR Anchor Standard 1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
CCR Anchor Standard 2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
CCR Anchor Standard 4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCR Anchor Standard 10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening

CCR Anchor Standard 1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
CCR Anchor Standard 2	Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
CCR Anchor Standard 3	Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Social and Emotional Learning

Self-Awareness	A4: Demonstrate a sense of personal responsibility, confidence, and advocacy
Relationship Skills	D1: Apply positive verbal and non-verbal communication and social skills to interact effectively with others and in groups D2: Develop and maintain positive relationships
Responsible Decision-making	E4: Explore and approach new situations with an open mind and curiosity while recognizing that some outcomes are not certain or comfortable