

The programs provided by ***Russian Folk Music and Dance with Dan & Galla*** meet most of the standards indicated by the Pennsylvania Standards for Arts and Humanities.

“Whether through dance or drama, literature or the spoken word, music, painting, or sculpture – the arts in these and their myriad of other forms are powerful tools for learning. The arts have a liberating effect on students, through creation and reflection. They make fundamental learning concepts tangible and their conclusions relevant. The arts build self-esteem and foster positive attitudes toward learning that contribute to success in all academic areas.

The program provides thousands of children and youth with models for dedication, discipline, teamwork and goal setting, along with catalysts for intellectual and emotional discovery.”

<http://www.pacouncilonthearts.org/aie/educators.cfm>

Our attached synopsis includes a description of our programs with references to the specific standards students will meet by their participation.

As described in the 2002 Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, *“Pennsylvania’s public schools shall teach, challenge and support every student to realize his or her maximum potential and to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities”*.

THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS

9.1 Production, Performance and Exhibition of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts

- A. Elements and Principles in each Art Form
- B. Demonstration of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts
- C. Vocabulary within each Art Form
- D. Styles in Production, Performance and Exhibition
- E. Themes in Art Forms
- F. Historical and Cultural Production, Performance and Exhibition
- G. Function and Analysis of Rehearsals and Practice Sessions
- H. Safety Issues in the Arts
- I. Community Performances and Exhibitions
- J. Technologies in the Arts
- K. Technologies in the Humanities

9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts

- A. Context of Works in the Arts
- B. Chronology of Works in the Arts
- C. Styles and Genre in the Arts
- D. Historical and Cultural Perspectives
- E. Historical and Cultural Impact on Works in the Arts
- F. Vocabulary for Historical and Cultural Context
- G. Geographic regions in the arts
- H. Pennsylvania artists
- I. Philosophical context of works in the arts
- J. Historical differences of works in the arts
- K. Traditions within works in the arts
- L. Common themes in works in the Arts

9.3 Critical Response

- A. Critical Processes
- B. Criteria
- C. Classifications
- D. Vocabulary for Criticism
- E. Types of Analysis
- F. Comparisons
- G. Critics in the Arts

9.4 Aesthetic Response

- A. Philosophical Studies
- B. Aesthetic Interpretation
- C. Environmental Influences
- D. Artistic Choices

Russian Folk Music & Dance

Dan & Galla

[Includes references to the specific standards indicated by the Pennsylvania Standards for Art and Humanities.]

Artists' Background

Dan & Galla have been professional musicians, educators and entertainers for over 15 years. Galla's mother was born in Russia and escaped with her family as a young girl. She was raised in Japan and brought to this country as a war bride. Galla (Russian name pronounced Găh-lah) grew up speaking Russian and surrounded by Russian music, culture and customs. She learned to play the balalaika, flute and guitar, often singing and performing at Russian gatherings and special events. She has an avid interest in the music she grew up with and especially enjoys the "lyric songs" known for their emotion and spirit.

Dan, originally from Iowa, grew up playing the piano, accordion, trumpet and trombone. He not only has studied numerous styles of music throughout his career, he also is a composer and an arranger. He transcribes Russian folk songs from old recordings and adapts them for solo balalaika and accordion as they are performed by Dan & Galla.

Both are very involved in high school dramatic productions and direct a musical each year. This husband and wife team enjoys working with all ages K – 12, as well as college level, and they teach privately. They are in demand for cultural shows, workshops in music appreciation and drama, dance and more.

Background of Russian Folk Music

[9.2. A, C, D, E]

Since the 19th century the Western world has become acquainted with the richness of Russian folk songs, mainly through the symphonic and operatic works and songs of her leading composers, who have woven these tunes into the fabric of their own creations. The melodies express a full range of emotions from utmost joy to heart-rending sorrow and have always been an integral part

of the Russian people throughout her turbulent history. These spirited folk songs have maintained their popularity from Old Russia to modern Russia today.

Russian Folk Music – Instruments and Style

[9.1 C; 9.2 F]

Dan & Galla sing and perform their songs on the traditional Russian 3-stringed instrument (balalaika), flute and guitar, accompanied by the accordion which was introduced to Russian folk music by Catherine the Great. The songs are very exciting and melodic with many tempo changes.

Balalaika: Triangular, 3-stringed Russian folk instrument.

Accordion: A portable keyboard wind instrument in which the sound is produced by wind forced past reeds by means of a hand-operated bellows.

Performance Synopsis

[9.1 A-K]

Dan & Galla offer a lively performance of the folk music of Russia, entwined with the story of Galla's family in Russia and later in Japan. Students are taught "Are You Sleeping Brother John" in Russian and are encouraged to come onto the stage and play tambourines with the faster songs. Audience participation is always an important and very popular part of this presentation. Target groups of students are featured as Russian folk dancers in colorful costumes. Another group of students performs a short play by Tolstoy. In the classroom, students enjoy a folk art display, experience the Russian (Cyrillic) alphabet and learn words in Russian. They are especially encouraged to find out about their own heritage, their own interests in life and to be the best they can be at whatever they choose.

Suggested Pre-performance Discussion and Activities

[9.2 D, E, G, H, I, K, L]

1. Locate Russia on the map. Explain that Russia is very large: 2 ½ times larger than the USA with 11 time zones.
2. Show students the Russian (Cyrillic) alphabet*. Forming the words and students' names with these foreign letters is a highlight of our classroom presentations.
3. Show pictures of or have the students search the internet for examples of Russian folk art. The Russian "nesting" matryoshka dolls and wood carvings are always very popular and we bring several for "hands-on" fun for the students.
4. Show pictures of the balalaika and accordion. Play some examples of Russian music – folk, classical – to familiarize students with the music of this culture. Play some balalaika and accordion music.

*A copy of the Russian alphabet and CDs of Russian folk music are available from Dan & Galla.

Post-Performance Discussion

[9.2 F, J, L]

1. Galla describes her experience growing up in a Russian-influenced household and learning the Russian language. How do you suppose that benefited her as a child? As an adult?
2. Share some of the new information you learned about Russian culture. What role does music play in Russian traditions? How did the music make you feel?
3. Students will have learned "Are You Sleeping Brother John" in Russian. Here is the song written phonetically to reinforce the learning in class:

BRAHT EE VAHN, BRAHT EE VAHN,
SPEESH LEE TEE, SPEESH LEE TEE,
KOLA KOLA ZVONNIT, KOLA KOLA ZVONNIT
DEAN DEAN DEAN, DEAN DEAN DEAN

4. Ask students to "interview" family members (grandparents, parents, relatives) - to the best of their ability - to find out more about their own ethnic background. Follow up with students researching those countries to see how much the "old country" is a part of the relatively "younger" USA. Discuss how these customs make us culturally richer. Discuss Ellis Island.

A note from Dan & Galla...

We strongly feel that the more the students participate and become involved with our program, the more they will have a memorable experience with exposure to music, language, history and a culture that is foreign to them. We hope this inspires them to discover their own heritage and uniqueness; to have a better appreciation and tolerance for someone who is different.

As part of our anti-drug/bullying philosophy, we urge the students to be individuals, to learn how to do something new, to find out what *THEY* are good at, to become all that they can be and truly get the most out of life.



More details on our 3- to 5-day residency ...

1. **Russian Folk Dance!** [9.2 A-L]

- Prior to our arrival, one or more “target” groups of students are selected to dance. During our residency, we teach our dancers 1 to 3 (depending on time constraints and scheduling) exhilarating Russian folk dances that they will rehearse.
- Dancers perform in colorful costumes with us during our performance for the entire student body on the final day. This generates much excitement and is always a highlight. **

2. **Art and Creativity!**

- A small acting troupe is put together and learns a short Russian play.
- The stage is decorated for the performance by artistic students.
- If there is time, the group of dancers designs and creates Russian headdresses (for the girls) and sashes (for the boys). If not, we provide them.

In addition to our target groups, we see each of the other grades in the classroom:

[9.1 & 9.2]

3. **Adventures in Music!**

- We show, demonstrate and talk about our instruments and how they are played. Dan gives a tour – inside and out! - of the accordion and Galla explains the balalaika family.
- Students learn Russian songs and are given instruments to play along.

4. **Folk Art, History, Language and a strange (Cyrillic) Alphabet!**

- We display a Russian folk art collection of painted eggs, lacquer boxes, wooden carved toys and the very popular matryoshkas (Russian ‘nesting’ dolls).
- We show historical articles of interest such as old money and pictures from Tsarist Russia.
- The story of Galla’s mother in Tsarist Russia and Japan is expanded upon with discussion about Russia.
- Students are shown the Cyrillic alphabet and some Russian words, including what their names look like written in the Russian alphabet. They learn some Russian words and even write in Russian.

**** We always encourage a performance for the community during our residency at the school. When this can be scheduled, our dancers and actors are featured as part of the presentation – a wonderful community-school-parent-teacher-student experience.**

