ATM 3M: Choreographer Study

GOAL: Students will participate in a unit of study on a Canadian dancer. This unit may be replicated using various topics such as a dancer, choreographer, company, dance style, or cultural style.

TOPIC: Dancer/Choreographer David Earle

RESOURCES:

- Encyclopedia of Theatre Dance in Canada
- Dance websites such as http://www.dtde.ca/index.php; http://www.dcd.ca/
- "David Earle" video from the Dancemakers series

1. Watch videos of dances created by David Earle. What are some of the qualities of movement that are seen in most of Earle's dances?

2. Select a few shapes, movements, and/or qualities from Earle's choreography. Physically explore the selected movements, allowing the opportunity to improvise on any of them.

3. Read biographical information or stories on David Earle.

4. Complete a research project on David Earle. Students can be assigned a research topic to prepare and bring to class to share with each other. Examples: biographical information, compositions from various decades, the founding of the Toronto Dance Theatre, Dancetheatre David Earl etc.

5. As a class, learn a portion from one of Earle's pieces as accurately as possible. In pairs or small groups, create variations of a phrase and add it onto the original phrase. Variations may include changing the speed, the quality of movement, or the locomotor methods.

6. Write letters to David Earle (via Dancetheatre David Earle) to obtain any information about him. Have each student write a letter. Select one, preferably as a class, to send to David Earle and share the responses with the class. Students may have a list of questions to ask including:

- *Where do you get ideas for your dances?*
- *What is difficult about being a choreographer?*
- *What do you like best about your work?*
- *What advice would you give to someone who would like to become a professional dancer/choreographer?*

7. Research companies/people that have employed Earle and do a short presentation on pieces that he composed with them.

8.   Find pictures of Earle's performances and a review of one of his pieces with a series of pictures to match (on the "Dance Collection Danse" website). Re-create these pictures with your own bodies, inserting transitions between shapes to create a movement sequence.

9.   Study the gestures, postures and step patterns in Earle's dances. Examine what they might mean. Use some of Earle's gestures, postures and step patterns, and some of their own to create a movement sequence.

10. Select one movement or phrase from Earle's work that is repeated. Explore the movement and use it as a basis for a dance phrase. The same may be done by selecting two very contrasting movements and setting them alongside each other in an AB form.

11. View all the student explorations and discuss which elements of dance were retained and which were not. Be sure to use the language of dance relating to the elements of dance – body, space, energy, time, and relationships. Use peer and teacher feedback to polish your work.

12. Record the dance creations and compare them to Earle's original works. Which elements were maintained and which were different?

13. Have groups of students each study a different dancer/choreographer. They may create pictures or posters with crucial information such as:

     * *Where were they born?*
     * *What dance form do they study?*
     * *In what company do they work?*
     * *What awards have they won?*
     * *What dancers in my community do this kind of dance?*

14. Ask a modern dancer from the community to come in and talk and lead a workshop about his/her form and why he/she dances

Other Canadian dancers/choreographers include:

* Peggy Baker
* Margie Gillis
* Danny Grossman
* Christopher House
* Ginette Laurin
* Edouard Lock
* Robin Poitras
* Julia Sasso
* Michael Trent

Go to: http://artsalive.ca/en/dan/meet/bios/byForm.asp?formID=2

for biographies and information on the above artists and for information about other dance artists.