

Myths, Legends, and Fables

Donna Wissinger, Flutist/Story-Teller



Donna Wissinger demonstrates pan pipes to Sneads third-graders. — Mark Skinner/Florida

An Educator's Guide

Welcome to the show!

Follow! Follow me to a wondrous place of fantastic tales! In *Myths Legends and Fables* students receive a lively musical and dramatic introduction to legendary heroes, Greek mythology and the science of sound, and the far-reaching power of fables. Doing your best and having courage to 'write your life story' are modeled by the stories of the legendary William Tell, current athletes, and American icons. Throughout the program students are encouraged to learn more about the world through reading. In *Myths, Legends and Fables*, students find inspiration for their own life stories while learning history, culture, science, story-telling traditions, critical thinking, and participation in the arts. **45 minutes**

Before the show

Dear Teachers,

This program employs the magic of surprise; that said, students will gain confidence and have greater retention with some preparation. It will also assist you in creating richer follow-up after the program. For **Grades 3-5** read the show synopsis and review musical instrument families, as well as the importance of using pictures in your imagination to enhance comprehension and retention when reading or listening to stories. Review reasons for reading and learning.

Review of Knowledge: some general information for review

- What are the families of instruments? In what family is the flute? (Strings, Brass, Woodwinds (flute), Percussion)
- How many continents are there? On what continent is Egypt?
- Compare and contrast the genres myths, legends and fables

The artist uses the following definitions

- **Myth:** A story that is told to explain something. Usually there are supernatural beings in the story, often from ancient Greece
- **Legend:** A story that is based on an actual person or event in which some details have been exaggerated
- **Fable:** A story that is told to teach a lesson or moral; often there are talking animals in the stories.

Topics for Reflection

- What value do stories from long ago or from different cultures have for you? (Examples: Stories can give us ideas about how to best write our own life stories. We can see behaviors or character traits that we can use or reject. By learning about others we can learn compassion and have understanding of other's lives. We can affirm or develop our own dreams of great life adventures.)
- What kinds of books do you like to read? Why? (As a child I gravitated toward biographies and autobiographies. My siblings were inclined towards fairy tells and fiction. The stories we choose can give us insights into who we are and who we would like to be.)

Synopsis of 2 stories used in the program:

William Tell: There are several versions of the story. This is the one I choose. A long time ago William Tell, an expert Swiss marksman with the crossbow, lived in relative comfort. This was not true for many living around him. The nobility, those born to riches, took advantage of those who worked the land and taxed them beyond what they could pay. One day a noble placed his hat in the town square and demanded that all bow to it. William Tell refused and was imprisoned. Jealous of William Tell's talent and expertise, the noble kidnapped Tell's son and put the great marksman to a test. The test would be that Tell and his son would be hanged unless William Tell shot an apple off of his son's head. He agreed; the shot split the apple in two but then another arrow fell out of Tell's jacket. The noble demanded to know what intent Tell had for the fallen arrow; Tell replied that, if he had killed his son, the arrow was for the noble. William Tell and his son made a very quick escape.

Pan and Syrinx: Pan was the Greek lord of woods, fields and flocks. From the waist up he looked like a boy, from the waist down, he looked like a goat. In the story, Pan was asleep in the forest when suddenly, someone or something awakened him by singing. Standing in front of him was Syrinx, a beautiful wood nymph, or fairy. When Pan saw Syrinx, he tried to capture her. Syrinx ran and Pan ran after her. He thought he had caught her when she jumped into a lake and became reeds. Pan was startled and sat down. After a while, a breeze blew across the lake and Pan heard the same song he had heard Syrinx sing. He waded into the lake. He pulled out the reeds and cut some long, some short and tied them together. Pan had made the first flutes, which he called Pan Pipes.

Florida Standards that connect to the performance experience:

LAFS.3.FL.1.2; Understand fables, legends, myths from diverse cultures; determine central message, lesson or moral and explain.

MU.3.C.1.3; Identify families of the orchestra

MU.3.H.1.1 Compare cultures through music

LAFS.4.RL.1.AP.1b; Refer to details and examples in a text that are relevant to drawing basic inferences about a story, poem or drama.

LAFS.5.SL.1.AP.1a Make appropriate comments that contribute to a collaborative discussion.

Theater Etiquette

Dear Teachers,

Your excitement is an essential part of excellent preparation for students. Your students can also understand their role in creating a fun and exciting experience. Please review or explain the following:

- There are many chances to answer questions and participate. If hands are raised then everyone will have a chance to share what they know; this feels good and teaches awareness and self-control.
- Sometimes everyone will be invited to answer together, sometimes the artist will ask for raising hands. Be courteous and alert!

Performance Etiquette Reflection Activity

For reflection: In what ways does the audience have a role in the performance?

- How is a performance different than watching TV?
Remember that the performers are in the room with you and can hear you and feel your interest and actions.
- How does being involved increase your own enjoyment?

Information relating to performance genre and content

For teachers: The artist uses many dynamics, props, and tones in her voice to create interest and meaning. She also uses her body movements and the room to engage students. Every student will be honored for his or her answers and participation.



Participation: The artist asks questions that encourages thinking. Teachers can **practice skills in the classroom of speaking clearly and in a voice that can be heard by others.**



After the Show

Language Arts 3-5:

1. Ask students to form a circle. Using stories from the program, select one student to begin one of the stories. Upon cue from the teacher, another student continues the story. Retell as many stories as needed to engage all students. The stories can be retold or embellished the second time. Teachers can ask students to determine the messages, lessons, or reason the story was created as well as key details as part of the circle experience.

LAFS.3.RL.1.2

Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

2. Ask students to reflect upon the character traits of Robin Hood, William Tell, or any other characters studied in the classroom and discuss how those traits influenced the stories. What traits do they value? Who living today reflects those traits to them?

LAFS.3.RL.1.3

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

3. Ask students to write a narrative about their favorite genre of stories. For example, some students prefer biographies, mysteries, sci-fi, myths, legends, etc.

LAFS.4.W.1.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

4. Ask students to research various accounts of a legend such as William Tell or Robin Hood, or a historical figure such as Harriet Tubman or others. Discuss or use as a writing exercise their findings and the possible reasons for various accounts. When appropriate, ask students to reflect upon various viewpoints in current affairs.

LAFS.5.RI.2.6

Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.

5. Ask students to complete the Inventory of Learning as teams or individually to further solidify knowledge. Ask students to elaborate upon questions 2 and 6.

6. Ask students to share their impressions of the program and what parts they enjoyed and why.

Inventory of Learning: Choose the best answer

1. **The flute belongs to which family of instruments?**
 - a. Brass
 - b. Percussion
 - c. Woodwind

2. **The importance of reading is to:**
 - a. stretch our imaginations
 - b. learn to comprehend new information
 - c. expand our horizons
 - d. all of the above

3. **A myth is a story that:**
 - a. explains something and usually involves supernatural creatures
 - b. is based upon an actual person or event

4. **The artist's concert flute is made of**
 - a. brass
 - b. copper
 - c. gold

5. **Choose the meaning of macaroni in *Yankee Doodle*.**
 - a. It has no meaning.
 - b. It was the decoration on an officer's uniform.
 - c. It meant noodles with cheese.

6. **We are each responsible for:**
 - a. the writing of our life stories
 - b. depending upon others to live our lives for us
 - c. we have no responsibility for our life stories

About the Artist

Flutist Donna Wissinger has been called a '*flutist of rare gifts*' by the New York Times. Her concerts include acclaimed solo recitals on the mainstages of **Carnegie Hall** and on the equally renowned **Glinka Capella** in St. Petersburg, Russia. Featured tours have included Europe, Asia, The Middle East, Australia, and New Zealand.

Donna's great passion is combining fun and real learning for unforgettable educational programs. Her programs, including *The Pied Piper and other Fantastic Tales*, *Peter and the Wolf*, *The World Turned Upside Down: Music of the American Revolution*, *Tales of Legendary Florida*, and *Preserving Our Coral Reefs: Teams of Success* and the accompanying programs with orchestra receive rave reviews.

Donna is the inaugural recipient of the prestigious **Doris Leeper Award for Excellence in Arts Education** and is a premier artist with Creative Leaps International; the Florida Touring Program; and The New York based Learning Arts. Donna enjoys being fit. She is a USPTA tennis professional, a long distance runner, and an internationally ranked USTA long distance triathlete. Her bicycle/flute performance tour of cycling 2000 miles and playing 82 concerts from NYC to Miami was featured on the National Geographic Channel. To learn more visit www.donnawissinger.com.

