

Where the dance and stories are

Dance performances and workshops, inspired by Maurice Sendak's books

By **Nicola Ayoub, dancer and choreographer**

This **3-part program** for young audiences is constructed around the works of great American children's author Maurice Sendak – introducing participants to Dance Fundamentals of Space, Body, and Time.

Each 1 hour-long session includes:

- **A 30-to-40-minute dance workshop**, in which participants explore aspects of 1 of the 3 dance fundamentals. Participants are provided with simple instruments and scarfs, to further awaken the senses and support the movement quality.
- **Interactive Reading** of one of Maurice Sendak's works. The children hear the story in its original language. They engage in the story telling through guided choreography and attention to rhythm, language and movement.
- **Dance performance, 5-10 minutes**, inspired by the book. Participants get to witness a professional dancer perform as they rediscover aspects of their own movement explorations.
- **Discussion.** A guided dialogue as to what participants saw, felt, explored, and learned throughout the event.

The goal of these sessions is to awaken the students' curiosity and build their self-confidence:

- ✓ **Discover the English language**, by reading the book in its original version
- ✓ **Refine sensory perception**
- ✓ **Develop a connection to oneself and to the group**
- ✓ **Express oneself** through an artistic practice
- ✓ **Foster concentration and attention**



Performance of first session at the theatre Pavillons de Romainville, July 2021

Description of sessions

SESSION 1

Initiation to Space through travel

10-15 participants, accessories provided by the artist

- Dance Fundamental: **Space** (aspects: pathway and direction)
- Book: *Where the Wild Things are*

The theme of travel allows the students to reach 3 objectives:

- Discover pathways in lines, curves, and zig zag
- Develop one's capacity to perceive his body in space
- Structure space with landmarks

SESSION 2

Initiation to Body through sculpture

10-15 participants, accessories provided by the artist

- Dance Fundamental: **Body** (aspects: body parts and shapes)
- Book: *In the Night Kitchen*

The theme of sculpture allows students to reach 2 objectives:

- Discover and identify the different body parts
- Develop perception of body size and volume

SESSION 3

Initiation to Time through rhythm and duration

10-15 participants, accessories provided by the artist

- Dance Fundamental: **Time** (aspects: duration and pulsation)
- Book: *Chicken soup with rice*

The repetition and rimes of words and movement allow students to reach 2 objectives

- Discover and experiment the notion of duration
- Through body percussion learn elementary notions of music

About the artist



Nicola Ayoub, Franco-American dancer and choreographer, always aspired to share her joie de vivre on stage across the world. She trained at the Atlanta Ballet and received degrees in History and Art History from the University of Georgia. In France, she became a choreographer with her bilingual one-woman show *The Language*, awarded Paris Jeunes Talents (2008).

Nicola has danced for such diverse choreographers as Gigi Caciuleanu, Christopher Williams, and Alexandra Bansch. Since 2012 she has worked with Africa Regional Services of the U.S. Embassy, teaching, creating, and performing throughout Africa. Since 2015 she is a member of ACM Ballet which brings dance performances to hospitals throughout France. Between 2015 and 2019 she organized and led the *Bohol Dance Project*, a cultural outreach project in the Philippines for aspiring, underprivileged dancers.

In 2016, the French Institutes of Burundi and Rwanda invited her to teach and choreograph. In 2019, she choreographed for and performed in *La Chute* with André Nerman. This theatre piece for dancer and actor toured throughout North America and France. In 2021, she received her French state diploma as a ballet teacher. Nicola is the proud mother of two little girls, her best creations. She is a member of UNESCO's International Dance Council.

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