Arts Education

**MOMIX**

*Opus Cactus*

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2017**

11AM | Jackson Hall

**Recommended for grades K–12**

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**Common Core**

Common Core broadens the definition of a “text,” viewing performance as a form of text, so students are experiencing and interacting with a text when they attend a performance. Seeing live performance provides rich opportunities to write reflections, narratives, arguments etc.

K-12.RL.2-4; K-12.RL.6-7; 6-8.RH.5; K-12.RL.7-8; K-12.SL.2

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**About**

Artistic Director Moses Pendleton and the dancers of MOMIX bring the landscape of the American Southwest to life with their signature illusionistic style in a new rendition of the troupe’s classic *Opus Cactus*. Originally created as a 20-minute piece in 2001 for Ballet Arizona, *Opus Cactus* was revised as a full work to take the audience through a mind-boggling multimedia world of cacti, slithering lizards and fire dancers.

*Opus Cactus* reflects the company’s interest in the natural world and is strongly influenced by the way animals move and interact in nature. Inspired by Native American culture, the performance bears characteristics of the animals and plants found in the desert. Through sounds, projections, props and bodies, MOMIX creates fanciful images that take the audience into the natural habitat of the American Southwest.

With nothing more than light, shadow, props, and the human body, MOMIX has astonished audiences for more than 37 years. Known internationally for presenting work of exceptional inventiveness and physical beauty, MOMIX practices a unique kind of modern dance with acrobatic dancers, improvised movements, theatrical costumes and eclectic music.

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**Learn More:**

[MOMIX official website](#)

[Videos of Opus Cactus](#)
Think About It

Dear Students,

1. Describe what you SAW in the performance. How did the special effects and theatrical props work together to create each scene? How did the costumes contribute to the performance? Did the colors, shapes, or textures the dancers wore tell you anything?

2. Describe what you HEARD in the performance. What sounds made you think of the desert habitat?

3. What did you like best about the performance and why? Was it what you expected?

MC Fun Facts:

- The outside walls of the Mondavi Center are made from sandstone from India that is 1.8 billion years old.
- What look like fossils in the sandstone tiles, are really iron and manganese crystal dendrites.
- The building sits on 200 pillars to keep the sounds and vibrations of the freeway and trains from being heard or felt inside the theater.
- The ceiling curtains in Jackson Hall weigh 2,200 pounds each.

What is expected of student audiences at the matinee:
- To facilitate starting the performance on time, get a drink of water and use the restroom before entering the seating area
- Enter the auditorium quietly and take your seats immediately (note that all matinees have reserved seating)
- Show courtesy to the artist and other guests at all times
- Demonstrate appreciation for the artists’ work by applauding
- Refrain from making unnecessary noise or movements
- Please eat lunch before or after the performance. Food is not allowed in the theater
- Use information learned from the pre-matinee discussion to enhance the performance experience
- Please do not photograph or record the artists

What your students can expect of their experience at the Mondavi Center:

A theater is a charged space, full of energy and anticipation. When the house lights (the lights that illuminate the audience seating) go down, the excitement level goes up! Theaters are designed so that the voices of the singers and actors and the music of the musicians can be heard. But this also means that any sound in the audience: whispering, speaking and moving about, can be heard by other audience members and by the performers. Distractions like these disrupt everyone’s concentration and can spoil a performance.

The performers on stage show respect for their art form and for the audience by doing their very best work. By watching attentively the audience shows respect for the performers. Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending upon the art form and the culture(s) of the people in the audience. For instance, while the audience at a dance performance may sit quietly, other types of performances may invite audience participation.

Applause is the best way for audience members to share their enthusiasm and to show their appreciation for the performers. Applaud at the end of a performance! Sometimes the audience will clap during a performance, as after a featured solo. Audience members may feel like laughing if the action on stage is funny, crying if the action is sad, or sighing if something is seen or heard that is beautiful.

Mondavi Center Arts Education

Arts Education provides CueSheets for all performances in the Mondavi Center 2017–18 School Matinee Series. They are intended to help teachers prepare their students for the school matinee that they will attend at Mondavi Center, UC Davis.

Support provided by