

# Study Guide for Teachers

## Galumph *The Human Jungle Gym*

presented by  
Young Audiences New Jersey &  
Eastern PA  
(866) 500-9265  
[www.yanjep.org](http://www.yanjep.org)



### **ABOUT THE PROGRAM**

Combining stunning acrobatics, striking visual effects, physical comedy, and inventive choreography, Galumph brings to life a world of imagination, beauty, muscle, and merriment. The three performers create a sensory feast of images ranging from the ridiculous to the sublime, drawn together into a seamless whole, consistently bringing audiences to their feet. They show students a stunning model of physical strength and ability, collaboration, and teamwork.

### **LEARNING GOALS**

Students will

- See a model of collaboration and teamwork between dancers.
- See innovative choreography that challenges the limits of the physical body.
- Understand that dancers must work together to be successful.
- See images and ideas in dance that connect to their daily lives.
- Be inspired to stay fit, healthy, and strong.
- Be inspired to think about imaginary worlds and creatures.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS**

The word “galumph” (without the final “a”) was coined by author Lewis Carroll and first appeared in print in his 1871 Children’s novel, *Through the Looking Glass*, as part of a poem within the novel, “Jabberwocky.” The originally nonsensical word has moved into frequent usage and is defined by Webster’s Dictionary as “to move with a heavy, clumsy tread.” Another definition, by philosopher and author Steve Nachmanovitch, reads,

“Galumphing is the immaculate rambunctiousness and seemingly inexhaustible play-energy apparent in puppies, kittens, children, baby baboons—and also in young communities and civilizations. Galumphing is the seemingly useless elaboration and ornamentation of activity. We galumph when we hop instead of walk, when we take the scenic route instead of the efficient one.”

The dancers of Galumph have created a show that demonstrates the true beauty of galumphing. Some of their dances and poses might remind you of animals, trees, or other things in nature. Not all dancers choose this type of dance; just as there are different styles of music, dancers learn different types of dance, from ballet to tap to cultural dances. Galumph blends athleticism, acrobatics, and modern dance in their work.

## **BEFORE THE PROGRAM**

Have a discussion with your students about dance:

- What do you think of when you think of dance?
- What types of dances do you do?
- Have you ever seen modern dance?
- This group is called Galumpha. Why do you think they chose that name?

Look at some images of Galumpha at [www.yanjep.org/program/the-human-jungle-gym](http://www.yanjep.org/program/the-human-jungle-gym). Have your students look at the sculptural shapes the dancers make.

- How many dancers do you see here?
- How do you think they do that?
- What body parts can you see and what body parts can't be seen?
- Why do you think they are doing that shape?
- Does this remind you of anything you've done in gym class, gymnastics, etc. ?

## **VOCABULARY WORDS**

**Cantilever:** to support a protruding beam or body part with support on only one end. Used extensively in architecture and sculpture, the dancers also use cantilevering to create different shapes with their bodies.

**Choreography:** movement sequences that are created, memorized, and performed.

**Focus:** to concentrate on a task to the exclusion of everything else.

**Negative space:** Space that is not taken up by performers' bodies. This might be the space around and between dancers or between different body parts that are not touching.

**Positive space:** the space taken up by the performer's bodies.

## **AFTER THE PROGRAM**

Hold a follow-up discussion. This is a good way for the students to process what they saw:

- What was your favorite part and why?
- Was anything surprising to you?
- Did the dancing make you think of anything else?
- What do you think the dancers need to do to prepare for their dances? How do you think they practice or train?

Have students sketch pictures of what they saw in the performance. They can make up stories about what they see in the shapes of the dancers as well.

In a safe environment, have the students try experiments with balance, first alone and then with a partner. Challenge them with the following tasks:

- Can you and your partner make a shape with only 2 feet on the ground?
- Can you and your partner make a shape with 2 feet and 2 hands on the ground?
- Can you find a way for one partner to lean into the other partner that is safe and lets the leaning partner "give" their weight to the other partner?

## **RESOURCES**

[www.galumpha.com](http://www.galumpha.com)

For more about Galumpha.

[www.franklloydwright.org](http://www.franklloydwright.org)

Look at images of Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture work and talk about how the dancers used similar techniques for building their shapes.

[www.thencata.org](http://www.thencata.org)

The National Collegiate Acrobatics and Tumbling Association, for additional ideas about athleticism and teamwork.

## **ARTIST INFORMATION**

Formed in 2002 by Andy Horowitz and Greg O'Brien, Galumpha delivers a fast-paced, athletic brand of movement, distinctive for its ingenuity. Highlights include "Velcro," as seen on *The Late Show with David Letterman*, *Crook and Chase* (TNN), and the 2002 MDA Jerry Lewis Telethon, and "Clackers," seen on MTV, Showtime, A&E, Just for Laughs in Montreal, and by over one billion television viewers around the globe.

The dancers of Galumpha are highly trained and accomplished in the realm of dance but also have expertise in other fields, such as sculpture, martial arts, and Chinese translation. They are world citizens, educators, and artists committed to pursuing their thirst for learning and expression and to sharing that passion with children.