

BELLS & MOTLEY

Olden Music, Dance, & Storytelling

Participatory Musical
Theater Performance,
Multi-Arts Workshops

Chinese Folklore, Art, Dance, Music & Instruments

“BAWSHOU & THE WATER DRAGON”

PERFORMANCE:

What would you do if the Sun was captured by a powerful Dragon, and hidden in a cave, deep beneath the sea? In this traditional Chinese tale of wonder and adventure, the young boy Bawshou bravely sets out to rescue the Sun from its dark prison. With the help of the magic golden Phoenix, Bawshou is able to meet the dragon's three great challenges, and heroically restores the land to prosperity for his people.

In this artistically rich telling, Bells & Motley evoke a magical atmosphere through ageless symbols, costumes, dance, and performance techniques of the Orient. The action and mystique of the tale are further highlighted by music on authentic Chinese traditional stringed, wind, and percussion instruments, including *pipa*, *erhu*, *moon lute*, *gong*, *temple bells*, *Chinese theater drum*, and *guzheng* (the ancient Chinese zither-harp)

WORKSHOPS & RESIDENCY OPTIONS:

A performance of Bawshou frequently is preceded by artist workshops. Participants will gain an appreciation of Chinese arts & traditions, an understanding of the importance and meaning of this traditional story, and prepare for their special roles in the storytelling presentation through dance, movement, music, & maskmaking...

First, to prime young imaginations, there's a slide program of dragon images, presenting the attributes, symbolic meanings, and detailed characteristics of different dragons. Next, those details are translated into the medium of Chinese paper mask-making, as children learn special paper-cutting techniques, then design, and create their own unique and fantastical paper dragon masks. Wearing their colorful streaming creations, children participate in a dragon dance procession with great fanfare, playing their starring role as the sinuous dragon of the “Bawshou” storytelling performance.

Further pre-performance workshop activities can also prepare audience members for supporting roles in the play, including sound effects, river shakers, villagers, ceremonial gong players, and more, according to time allowance.

Additional workshops are available in an extended format. Participants can learn to create the archetypal calligraphic symbols related to our story - the Dragon, Sun, Phoenix, Joy, making & decorating a paper lantern of their own creation. Learn lantern & ribbon dances. Practice traditional Chinese songs, creative sound effects, play on simple instruments, and for Orff programs, perform special instrumental pieces to collaborate in the final pageant performance.



POSSIBLE THEMATIC TIE-INS:
East-West Arts, Traditions
Chinese New Year; Earth Stewardship
Heroism & Character Development

“...As a Children's Librarian, I will add that I too enjoyed the performance very much. The creativity, devotion, & artistic talent of these musician/folk-tellers is far above the caliber I have seen anywhere. I highly recommend Bells & Motley.”
-Mary Jo Cohan, Bayport Public Library, Bluepoint, NY

“...We enjoyed your performance of “Bawshou & the Dragon” so much! Your use of props, costumes, and instruments was such an integral part of the story, and kept the audience involved from the minute the story began. I especially appreciated the way you related to the audience -- by speaking to the children ahead of time; drawing them into the performance with participation; letting them experience the instruments after the show...The story certainly gave us a taste of Chinese culture in a very real and authentic way. I really look forward to having you here again.”
- Cheryl Gravelle, Williamson Free Public Library

Arts Disciplines

Historic /Traditional
Storytelling, Music, Musical
Instruments, Folkways

Audiences & Venues

Libraries, Festivals, Concert &
Performing Arts Series,
Children's Storytelling Series,
Art Museums, Art Camps

Captivating for children in
Public & Elementary School
settings; Family Performances

Helpful Information, Fees

- For library audiences, children seated on the floor up close to the performers creates an intimate, inclusive atmosphere that young children appreciate.

- We prefer natural acoustics whenever possible. In general, indoor audiences of up to 150 don't need amplification, in keeping with the spirit of a historical performance.

+ Maskmaking equipment list includes scissors, gluesticks, staplers, and hole punches. Parental assistance requested for any child too young to manage scissors adeptly. Consumable materials fee is approximately \$2.00 per child.

PERFORMANCE FEES: NYS DEC grants should go in as \$600 + travel. Fees for additional workshops & residencies will be negotiated, according to numbers of participants, ages, including block booking discounts. etc.

Related Arts Programs

- Dragon Images, Symbols, and Meaning in Oriental Art
- Dragon Mask -Making; Dragon
- Rod Puppet Making
- Bamboo Flute Making;
- Ribbon, Lantern, Processional dancing

