Perfomances plus!

Presents

Masked Marvels and Wondertales with Michael Cooper

Tuesday, May 6, 2008
10am in the Concert Hall

Study Guides for Teachers are also available on our website at www.fineartscenter.com - select For School Audiences under Education, then select Resource Room.

Please fill out our online surveys at http://www.umass.edu/fac/centerwide/school/index.html for the Registration Process and each Event. Thank you!
MICHAEL COOPER
THE MASKED MARVEL

ABOUT MICHAEL COOPER
Since receiving his B.A. in Peace Studies from Goddard College and completing six years of theater training with Tony Montanaro in Maine and Etienne Decroux in Paris, Michael has spent the past twenty years crisscrossing the country and performing over 8,000 times for audiences of every age and description. His credits include performances at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Eugene O’Neill Theatre, the Richmond Children’s Festival, the Mayfair Festival in Pennsylvania, the Love Affair Festival in Georgia, Boston First Night and special family theater events across the United States. Michael’s movements range from lyrical to madcap. His original masks and stilt characters are truly mythic in their dimensions.

THE PROGRAM
Michael Cooper’s one-man show is indeed a celebration of life! Taking up to three hundred hours to produce a single paper, cloth or wooden mask, Michael has elevated this most ancient of theater crafts to the level of a fine art. Exquisite masks, skilled illusion and captivating stories told in prose, poetry and silent mime are certain to please everyone. The program is designed to encourage creativity, compassion and a greater sense of self-worth. Laughter, audience participation and a humorous and energetic style captivate young and old alike.

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES
Masks are FUN! Everyone loves to play “dress up.” Halloween is one of our favorite holidays. Why? Becoming another person or animal gives both children and adults a freedom seldom found in the regular world. Along with the body and the voice, masks are one of the oldest and most important tools in theater. Masks allow a performer, like Michael, to play many different characters. They also add color and beauty to a performance. Masks make the stories come alive. Michael also uses movement in his performance. How does movement add to help make the stories become more real? Tell (or have your students tell) a story to the class using no movement or gestures. Then tell the same story with movements. How is the story better?

POST SHOW ACTIVITIES
- Look at pictures of masks from other cultures: Africa, Native America, Northwest Coast Indians, Bali, Japan, Ancient Greece, etc.
- Using the study guide and bibliography, help children to make paper masks. Discuss what other materials can be used to make masks: wood, leather, papier mache, paper, rubber, plastic and cloth.
- Practice some new movements that Michael showed in his performance: finger ripples, head isolation, sitting, leaning, etc.

BAYLIN
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INTRODUCTION

This guide has been prepared for educators who, along with their students, will be attending performances of MICHAEL COOPER. MICHAEL COOPER is one of the United State’s foremost mask makers and performers. This guide is an introduction to his work. Teachers will find an interesting history along with simple masks to make. There is also a comprehensive bibliography.

This guide is written to the teacher. It is hoped that each teacher will be inspired to reinterpret the enclosed information for their appropriate grade level. Whether teaching primary grades or upper level students, teachers will have the opportunity to investigate (along with their students) new, educational and exciting projects and activities that will be lots of fun!

Teachers are permitted to copy any or all pages of this guide for their classroom use.

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A SHORT HISTORY & DESCRIPTION OF MASKS

People have been making masks for at least 10,000 years. The first ones were probably animal masks made from the skin, bones and teeth of real animals. They were most likely used to re-enact the stories of great hunts, to scare away sickness and disease and as objects of worship. And, like most masks throughout history, they would have been highly regarded and kept in sacred places.

Today, when masks have little importance to most people beyond Halloween or an occasional costume party, it is hard to understand that at one time they were among the most important objects a family or community could possess. Worn during ceremonial dances and story telling, these elaborate “false faces” helped to celebrate the blessings a community had received, to pass on its history and beliefs, to coax and sometimes scare young people into proper behavior and to mark important events such as births, marriages and the changing of the seasons.

Many cultures have used masks. To name a few, masks have played a central role in the art and religion of Africa, Japan and Bali. Perhaps no where have masks held a higher position or have been more skillfully and powerfully made than in North America by the Eskimos, the Kwakiutl and other native people of the Northwest Coast. Boldly carved in cedar wood, richly colored and topped off with headpieces of grass and feathers, many of these works of art were made with movable eyelids, beaks and jaws. Their lips and eyebrows were often covered with copper and their eyes were sometimes inlaid with shell. The most magnificent of these creations were the transformation masks, where an outer face would suddenly swing open to reveal another face, which in turn might split apart to uncover still a third. Expertly manipulated by skilled dancers, one can imagine the power of these masks as they swayed and flickered in the fire light and magically transforming before the onlookers’ eyes.

To the ancient Greeks, theater, oratory and sculpture were the most important arts; and their clay canvas and stone masks were the ties that bound these disciplines together. As a story device they empowered a single actor to play many parts simply by changing masks. The expressions of the masks were not totally fixed, but seemed to change and reveal more with each new tilt and turn.

Masks were widely used in the bawdy Roman plays and the refined and beautiful Noh Theatre of Japan. In Britain, during the Middle Ages, wildly disguised “mummers,” in a precursor to today’s Christmas caroling or Halloween trick or treating, went from door to door demanding to be let in for fun and games. In Medieval France there existed the infamous “Feast of Fool’s” an annual holiday when priests and church members would take a holiday from their beliefs and cavort in devilish papier mache masks called “larvae,” so named for their metamorphic qualities. Commedia dell ‘arte, the great improvisational theater of Renaissance Italy, made use of the leather half masks, which gave a player’s upper face a distinct character while allowing him to joke and Grimace with this exposed mouth and jaw.

Today, the mask is not widely used outside of a few festivals and theaters. The most important of these is the Bread and Puppet Theater, whose founder Peter Schumann is the great mask artist of this century. Besides touring the world with his stories of protest and hope, he produces extravaganza where audiences can sit and watch masked performers and then turn to see a twenty foot mask/puppet float out of the woods to dance and tell its story. As Schumann’s work demonstrates, the mask still retains much of its original power and potential. After all, to entertain by covering and uncovering the face is instinctual. Just watch any baby. The mystery of the hidden face and of the mask that hides it, with its strange power to reveal what it conceals, continues to hold us in its sway.
Primitive African mask from Zaire in the Kuba or Lele style.

Primitive Nigerian belt mask.

Primitive Liberian mask in the Dan style.

Primitive Nigerian (Ibo) mask of a maiden spirit.
Celastic heads made directly over clay by the 'small piece' technique. Bulbhead family made in Plainfield, Vermont, and used in *Tragedy of the Soaring Price Index*, 1973.

MASKS by PETER SCHUMANN
Bread & Puppet Theatre
HOW TO MAKE A PAPER CLOWN MASK
The nose can be made into a definite shape, like the bulbous noses worn by clowns.

VARIATIONS ON A CLOWN MASK
HOW TO MAKE A ONE-PIECE PAPER BIRD MASK
VARIATIONS ON A ONE-PIECE BIRD MASK
HOW TO MAKE A TWO-PIECE PAPER BIRD MASK
—Birds with a single beak can carry extravagant decoration, and can be given the appearance of having a double beak if the form is painted with a line along its length.

VARIATIONS ON A TWO-PIECE BIRD MASK
BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR MASKS


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Evacuation Procedures

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation of the building, procedures are in place to ensure that the audience can exit safely.

Sections 4, 5, 6
Exit through the lobby.

Sections 1, 2, 3 & Pit
Exit toward stage.

Note: Interior house conditions may necessitate alternate exit routes.

Mezzanine 1, 2, 3
Exit rear through lobby.

Balconies 1, 2 exit toward stage, up two flights and down interior fire escape.
NOTICE TO ALL TEACHERS AND CHAPERONES

➢ PERFORMANCES BEGIN PROMPTLY AT 10AM OR NOON.
Many of our performances sell out. This means we can have up to 1,600 students to seat. Please help us by arriving 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow our ushers to get everyone seated and for you and your students to visit the rest rooms and get settled. It is important that we begin our performances on time so that all schools can meet their lunch and/or dismissal times.

➢ PLEASE CHECK LOCATION OF PERFORMANCE WHEN MAKING YOUR BUS RESERVATION.

➢ The staff of the Fine Arts Center needs your help! An increasing number of students are coming into the performance space with gum, food, beverages, cell phones and portable music players. None of these items is allowed in the halls for performances. Many of these items are stowed in backpacks and are not easily noticed. Our goal is to offer high quality performances for young people. In order to enhance the experience, we ask for your cooperation in preventing these items from entering the hall.

➢ For the comfort of all concerned, we ask that backpacks, lunches and other gear be left on the bus. Our long-standing policy of no cameras or tape recorders still is in effect.

➢ At the conclusion of the performance please remain in your seats until your school group is dismissed.

We hope that you and your students enjoy your theatre experience!
PARKING AND DIRECTIONS FOR THE FINE ARTS CENTER’S
CONCERT HALL and RAND THEATER

School Bus Parking: Students should be dropped-off at Haigis Mall off of Massachusetts Avenue. University Security will direct buses to an appropriate parking lot during the performance (typically by the football stadium). PLEASE BE SURE YOUR BUS DRIVER KNOWS THAT ALL PERFORMANCES LAST APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR AND THEY SHOULD RETURN A FEW MINUTES BEFORE THE ANTICIPATED END TIME. If drivers are not with the buses, they may miss the radio call from security asking them to return for pick-up, resulting in unnecessary delays returning to your school.

Individual cars: If necessary, individuals may drop-off students with a chaperone at Haigis Mall (you will be directed by security to the mid-point turn of Haigis Mall – see map) prior to parking. We recommend parking in the Campus Center Parking Garage to avoid searching for a metered space. It is a five-minute walk to the Concert Hall. All other available parking during weekdays is at meters. Available lots and pricing (current as of 1/1/07) are listed below:

Parking in the Garage is available to our patrons at a discounted rate of $1. To receive this rate you MUST give the Garage attendant a parking pass. To receive your pass, please call our office to let us know that you will be arriving by car. Parking passes are sent with the invoices. Please call (413) 545-2116 if you didn’t receive one.

Parking meters are enforced Monday - Friday, 7AM - 5PM. Meter rates are $1.00 per hour.

Parking Garage – near Campus Center, across from the Mullins Center off Commonwealth Avenue
Lot 34 – Behind Visitors Center with 3, 5 & 10-hour meters available
Haigis Mall – 2 hour maximum on meters
Lot 62 – Adjacent to Fernald Hall with 3 hour maximum on meters, limited spaces available.

From the North: (Vermont, Greenfield) I-91 south to Route 116. Follow signs on 116 “To the University of Massachusetts.” Exit ramp leads to Massachusetts Avenue. Turn left (east) on to Massachusetts Avenue toward the campus. Continue through one light and watch for Lot 34 by the Visitors Center on your right and the entrance to Haigis Mall on your left.

From the South: (Springfield, Holyoke) I-91 north to Route 9. Turn right (east) on Route 9 over the Coolidge Bridge and through Hadley. Turn left (north) on Route 116 (across from Staples) heading toward campus. Turn right at first exit at “University of Massachusetts,” then bear right onto Massachusetts Avenue toward campus. Continue through one light and watch for Lot 34 by the Visitors Center on your right and the entrance to Haigis Mall on your left.

From the West: (Northampton, Pittsfield) Route 9 east through Northampton and over Coolidge Bridge. Follow remaining directions under “From the South”.

From the East: (Belchertown, Ludlow) North on Routes 21, 181 or 202 to Route 9 into Amherst. Right on to North Pleasant Street (main downtown intersection), north through center of town. Turn left at Triangle Street (Bertucci’s Restaurant on your right), rejoining North Pleasant Street. To reach Lot 34 and Haigis Mall continue on main road, which becomes Massachusetts Avenue. Haigis Mall will be on your right, Lot 34 on your left.
For Concert Hall, Rand Theater and Bowker Auditorium – Patrons traveling by car are encouraged to park in the parking garage. Discounted parking is available in the garage for $1. A parking permit is required for discounted parking in the garage. Please call the Arts & Educational Programs Office if you require permits at (413) 545-2116. All other parking on campus is at available meters at the rate of $1 per hour. Parking is enforced Monday – Friday, 7AM – 5 PM.

Buses will drop-off students as indicated on map. Buses will be given parking instructions by Campus Security.