



King Middle School working with Jones Family Singers, 2017

OVATIONS OFFSTAGE

Organized for Excellence, Expansion and Uniqueness
November 17, 2017

ABSTRACT

Integral to Portland Ovations' live performances is our vibrant, community-based arts education and outreach, Ovations Offstage (O2). O2 is a way of working that delivers activities that integrate the performing arts into everyday community and promotes the enjoyment of the arts for all.





Pre-kindergarten in-school workshop at Kaler Elementary in South Portland, 2017



Integral to Portland Ovations’ live performances is our vibrant, community-based arts education and outreach, Ovations Offstage (O2). O2 is more than a program, it’s a way of working that focuses on the artistic exchange between audiences, artists and fellow participants. O2 designs and delivers activities that integrate the performing arts into everyday community life and promotes the enjoyment of the arts for all. Audience members are encouraged to explore their own creative life while experiencing another’s creative spirit. O2 is building new and future audience members for the arts while advancing the position and perception that Ovations contributes to the public good. Education and outreach is geared to audience members at all ages and all stages of their performing arts exploration.

Through a thoughtful, community-informed process in the spring of 2017, an emerging and expanded O2 vision was created. At the center of this vision are three central organizing programmatic containers, heretofore called the “pillars”: Arts Integration (with Focus on Literacy), Cultural Competence, and Skills-based Arts Instruction. The three pillars are defined on the following pages with accompanying rationale for why O2 has identified them as key principles. Examples of each in current O2 programmatic practice are provided for added clarity.

The pillars provide the structure for achieving the Ovations 2020 goal of an expanded O2, positioned and recognized as one of the leading arts education and outreach programs in New England.



Pillar: Arts Integration with Focus on Literacy

Arts integration, a primary pathway to learning, uses the arts as a tool to learn through and across all subject areas. Arts integration – infused with multiple opportunities to engage with literacy – is especially relevant in the K-12 classroom where it enriches learning and contributes to innovation, creativity, critical thinking, career readiness, achievement, and overall academic engagement.

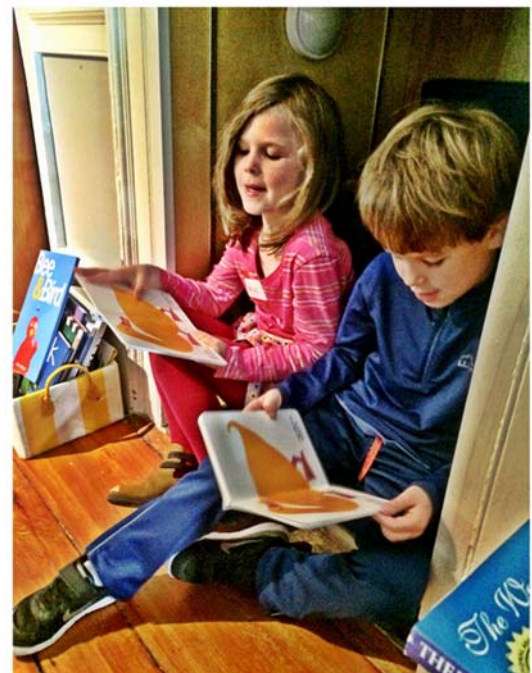
JUSTIFICATION

Arts integration has a lifelong impact on student learning, according to extensive research conducted over the last 20 years. Students who have “arts-rich” experiences (characterized as multiple opportunities to access dance, movement, theater, music, and other creative modalities) provided in school do better academically. Students also become more engaged citizens – voting, volunteering, and generally participating at substantially higher rates than their peers. (Catterall et al., 2012, p. 5.) Teachers working in schools that support and value an arts integration model also report deeper connections with students and their family and community, higher instances of alternative methods to support learning, enhanced student-centered learning, a more positive classroom climate, and higher job satisfaction.

Educators report to O2 the role of arts integration in facilitating “difficult conversations” by offering students new modalities to explore and comment. Further supporting all of the above, is the additional impact of literacy-infused curriculum as part of the arts integration model, solidifying long-term impact of learning outcomes in and out of the classroom. High quality arts integration, aligned with Common Core Standards and Maine Learning Results, is the cornerstone of O2’s work in secondary schools and extends to lifelong learners

EXAMPLES PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

- ✓ Our School-Time Performance Series (STPS), with related student and educator workshops and study guides has been an integral part of O2 programming since 2009.
- ✓ Cultivating Curiosity, our early literacy arts integration initiative (now in year two) that places books in the hands of all students attending STPS, is geared towards early elementary school children. Now offered twice a year.
- Summer professional development institutes for educators, teaching artists and homeschoolers in planning phase for 2018 and beyond.
- Season-long offerings of book groups and literary enhancements associated with main stage programming beginning in 2018-2019 season.



Yarmouth students reading their Cultivating Curiosity books, 2016



Pillar: Cultural Competence

In accordance with the National Education Association, Oventions defines Cultural Competence as: “having an awareness of one’s own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms, practices, beliefs, rituals, and backgrounds of others.”

JUSTIFICATION

Promoting “cultural competence” fosters the capacity of our audiences’ curiosity and increased awareness of cultural beliefs and behaviors and the wide range of experiences within our multicultural community. Audience members’ engagement with culturally competent programming expands our artistic and educational bandwidth. Oventions’ global and issues-based programming has a proven track record serving Portland’s diverse multicultural school-aged population. This pillar is considered a national priority by funders, including the Ford Foundation. Additionally, through this pillar O2 promotes civic engagement and global citizenry. As a result of all the above, there is a mandate to facilitate and promote civic dialogue.

The demographics of Greater Portland and Maine are dynamic and rapidly changing. Oventions Offstage is uniquely positioned to promote cultural competence in our community, providing a range of opportunities for our global audience to connect with each other in meaningful and authentic ways.

EXAMPLES PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

- ✓ Community suppers and dialogue in conjunction with Spirit of Uganda, Voices of Afghanistan, Nile Project, and Jones Family Singers, 2008-present.
- ✓ Yuval Ron’s 3-day Seeking Resonance residency exploring spirituality, meditation, and music with Chaplaincy Institute of Maine and University of New England, 2016.
- Semester-long program for teens and adults providing multiple opportunities to experience performing artists from vastly varied geographical, spiritual and cultural backgrounds, launching 2018.
- EQME Youth Event: #BeWhoYouWantToBe in conjunction with Kinky Boots.



Companhia Urbana De Danca, 2016



Pillar: Skills-based Instruction

Skills-based instruction -- such as masterclasses, workshops, and other opportunities to deepen one's knowledge of various art forms -- is the foundation of a performing arts organization's education and outreach programming. By engaging the artist in all of us, skills-based instruction (including opportunities to perform) enhances aesthetic awareness and judgment, visual and aural observation, self-expression, and self-exploration.

JUSTIFICATION

Instruction in the skills of dance, music and theater is foundational to a presenting organization's ability to connect with audiences at all stages of their creative exploration and/or career. Due to school budgets, arts instruction in the classroom is at an all-time low at all academic levels across the county. Furthermore, children at or below the poverty line have little to no access to formal arts learning. Connecting participatory arts opportunities with live performance experiences strengthens the relationship between O2 and its community and contributes to lifelong patronage of the arts. O2 has an established reputation of bringing the highest quality arts instruction to Portland through visiting artists and teachers, and offering a wide range of pre-and post-performance engagement opportunities.

EXAMPLES PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

- ✓ Classical, Dance, Movement, Theater, Voice, Circus Arts masterclasses and workshops with visiting artists consistently offered for over a decade.
- ✓ Performance opportunities for community members through mini residencies such as Maine-based musician and dancer participation in Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zanes Dance Company (BT/AZ) in 2016.
- Expanding into camps and afterschool programming to offer year-round programming and summer opportunities for school age students.
- Arts administration internships beginning in 2018.



Masterclass at University of Southern Maine School of Music with Matt Haimovitz

Indicators of Success



Daniel Bernard Roumain, coming 2018

1. O2 is profiled in a regional or national publication/report/white paper outlining exemplary arts education/outreach programming.
2. Ovations is selected to speak at a regional or national conference on excellence in arts education.
3. O2 is published in a regional or national academic arts education or arts integration journal.
4. O2 is funded through a national grant that recognizes excellence in arts education and outreach.
5. High quality and excellence in programming is achieved and measured by evaluative means
6. O2 programs are fully (85%-90%) subscribed to. Stakeholder feedback (evaluations, emails, cards) is positive.
7. O2 receives up to 5 “media hits” per season.

Resources

Bibliography:

<https://www.pps.net/Page/3155>

<http://chicagoguide.cpsarts.org/pdf/teachingresources.pdf>

http://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1158&context=education_etd

Raising Readers resources:

<https://mainearts.maine.gov/Pages/Programs/Arts-Education-Census>

<http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Understanding-Excellence-in-Arts-Education.pdf>

Additional resources:

<http://www.nea.org/home/39783.htm>

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/culture/cultural-competence/multicultural-collaboration/main>

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/enhancing-cultural-competence>

<https://artskc.org/repository/2013/02/Arts-Cultural-Comp-Worksheet.pdf> (worksheet)



"I Love My Little Storybook" Professional Development for Educators, 2017

