



FRWRDDANCECO▶▶



LOVEBUG



LOVEBUG Study Guide



A compilation of performance-inspired activities, lessons & resources

photos by Chad Harnish



Welcome to this comprehensive study guide designed to accompany FRWRD Dance Co's production of "Lovebug." This adaptable resource is crafted to enrich classroom experiences across varied grade levels, seamlessly integrating the arts with science and literature.

This study guide aims to cultivate curiosity, creativity, and a deeper appreciation for the natural world, while also enhancing students' interpretive and analytical skills. Whether used in a single lesson or as part of a larger curriculum, "Lovebug" offers a rich tapestry of themes to explore and enjoy.

About the Performance

Inspired by the diverse and intriguing realm of insects, LOVEBUG invites audiences on a magnified, imaginative nature walk, guided by Wes, the bug enthusiast. As the journey unfolds, viewers are drawn into the extraordinary micro-habitats of bugs, all from the comfort of their seats.

From the beautiful to the bizarre, the iridescent to the angular, and from arthropods to arachnids, FRWRD Dance Co's talented cast utilizes poetry, dance, and elaborate costumes to conceive a hungry bullfrog's fly-filled bog, a bustling beehive, the silver-spun web of the tarantella, the wispy, winding movements of the millipede, and more.

The complete list of the bugs portrayed includes:
bees, slug, fireflies, spiders, flies,
grasshopper, caterpillar/moth/butterfly,
mosquitos, cockroaches, millipede, and cicadas.



About FRWRD Dance Co

FRWRD Dance Company was established in 2023 in Lititz, Pennsylvania, under the leadership of founding director Lauren Tait. The company aims to present bold, original, and relevant work that prioritizes accessibility and community engagement. For Lauren, this entails creating immersive concert experiences that leverage the skill, versatility, and artistry of performers to craft captivating worlds on stage. The themes explored are designed to resonate not only with seasoned arts patrons but with individuals across diverse demographics, including varying ages, genders, and interests beyond dance and theatre.

Additionally, the company emphasizes the importance of community interaction by frequently stepping outside traditional performance venues to engage in workshops, pop-up events, and presentations in unconventional spaces.

The overarching objective is to produce work that is vibrant, sophisticated, and meaningful, igniting curiosity and stimulating conversation.

FRWRD's ensemble consists of 16 talented artists who embody these ideals. With diverse backgrounds in dance, theatre, and various other fields, the company members bring a wealth of life experience to this collaborative effort. Among them are college students, professors, educators, studio owners, professional actors, dancers, and choreographers, and individuals whose primary careers lie in entirely different sectors. This diversity fosters a rich tapestry of experience and cultivates a company culture at once challenging and supportive that thrives on a shared passion for dance. Lauren Tait herself possesses a multifaceted background, encompassing dance performance, education, choreography, business, and advocacy, having spent a significant portion of her career as an Artistic Director in the nonprofit sector, along with a broad spectrum of collaborative projects, grant work, adjunct-teaching, and board service.



The Science of Bugs and Ecosystems:

Dive into the world of bugs with lessons on their anatomy, lifecycles, and the vital roles they play in our ecosystems.



Go on a real-life bug safari

- Bring a log-book, work together or use a guide to identify the bugs you find
- Catalog each bug with a sketch
- Discuss the bugs' habitats, diet, behaviors, and unique features



Have students design their own bugs

- Mandibles, antennae, claws, wings, compound eyes, hard shells, bioluminescence: discuss the variety and purposes of the many unique features of bugs. Then, have students invent their own bugs. Students might draw their creatures, label the parts and features, include fun facts, and/or discuss its habitat, needs, and adaptive features

www://



Have students invent their own insects

- The following links to an "Invent an Insect" lesson plan for grades 2-6 provided by the California Academy of Sciences:
<https://www.calacademy.org/educators/lesson-plans/invent-an-insect>

Glossary of Insect Terms



abdomen: the last of an insect's three main body parts

antennae: the thin feelers on the head of an animal like a crayfish, isopod, or insect. Antennae are used to sense the environment.

arthropods: a group of animals with exoskeletons, jointed legs and segmented bodies, including insects, spiders, ticks, scorpions, millipedes, crabs and shrimp.

entomologist: a scientist who studies insects

exoskeleton: a hard, protective covering found in all arthropods, which provides structure like a skeleton, but is on the outside.

habitat: the place or type of place where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows

head: the first of an insect's three main body parts

larva: the wormlike early stage in the life cycle of an insect.

metamorphosis: the change of an insect (or other animal) from one form into another as it develops into an adult. Butterflies are a well-known example.

thorax: the middle of an insect's three body parts. An insect's legs and wings are always attached to the thorax.

tymbals: sound-producing organs on the abdomens of male cicadas, the vibrations of which produce clicking sounds, which in rapid succession create a buzzing, or singing, sound.

waggle dance: a figure-eight movement performed by a honeybee at the hive that indicates to other bees the direction and distance to food and water sources.



"Cheeto Fingers" Experiment:

Have students make their own paper flowers and then give them cheeto dust, or



"pollen" to cover their fingers. As they visit the paper flowers, they will see how pollen is transferred from one flower to another.

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Pollination lesson plan:

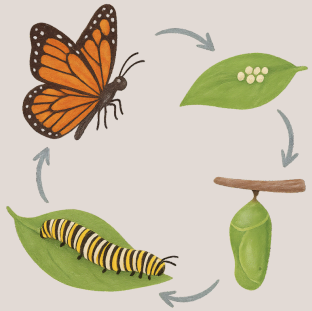
Pollinators such as bees, beetles, flies, moths, and butterflies provide vital help to plant reproduction and are crucial to a healthy ecosystem.

This lesson plan, provided by the US National Parks Service, explores this vital process in a fun and interesting way:

<https://home.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/pollination-exploration.htm>



Insect Life Cycles



The movement, poetry, and costumes in LOVEBUG provide a vivid and unique window into the study of insect life cycles, from the dramatic changes that take place during metamorphosis, to food chain

studies, ecology, and leading to applications in agriculture and science.

Examples in the performance:



Lovebug's Caterpillar/Moth segment begins with a solo dancer, isolated and stationary, performing small, bound movements that suggest being wrapped in an outer membrane with limited range of motion. When she emerges, with gauzy, illuminated wings, she floats and flutters about the stage, traveling freely.



The Cicada dance is broken into five distinct stages: the first depicts an underground scene, where shadowy creatures slide, wriggle, and grow beneath the earth. Then follows emergence, climbing, molting, and the final section, "flight and song," for which the dancers don brightly veined wings.

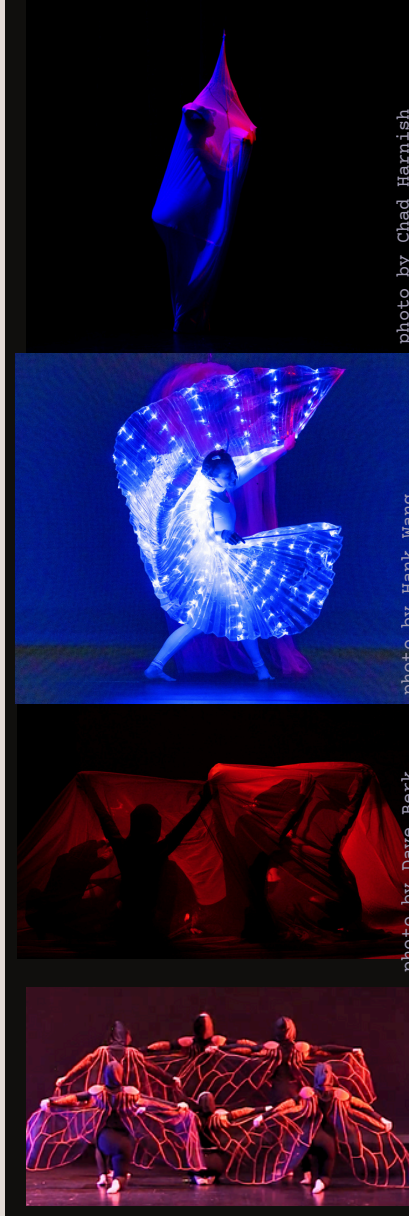
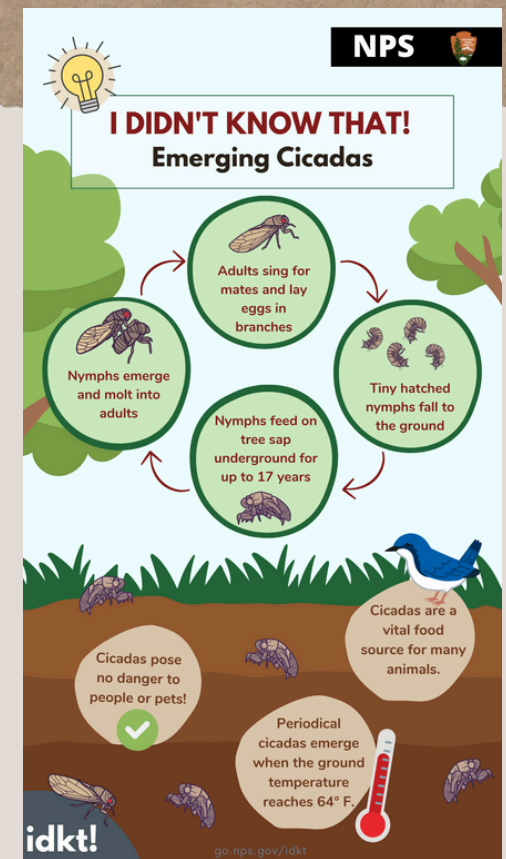


photo by Chad Harnish

photo by Hank Wang

photo by Dave Berk



infographic: nps.gov

The above graphic illustrates the lifecycle of a cicada. Interestingly, much remains unknown about the precise mechanism that prompts all of the nymphs of a brood to emerge simultaneously after a specific interval of time underground.

Lesson plans and resources

Periodical Cicada Lesson Plan: <https://www.pbs.org/news hour/classroom/lesson-plans/2013/06/periodical-cicadas-are-back>

Insect Life-Cycle Wheel: <https://www.entsoc.org/sites/default/files/files/Insect%20Lifecycle%20Wheel.pdf>



Poetry as Preface

Lovebug employs various forms of poetry to introduce its bugs as Wes, the charming guide, leads the audience on a virtual bug safari. Each bug's dance is prefaced by a poem, delivered in a conversational, narrative format, that helps establish the mood for the upcoming performance.

The poetry featured in Lovebug is original and serves as a vital component of the show's creation. Choreographer and director Lauren Tait crafted the poems herself, inspired by the unique characteristics and features of the bugs highlighted in each dance.

Continue reading for ideas and resources that explore the poetic aspect of Lovebug!



"Poetry4kids" is a website
providing various poetry activities
and lesson plans for various grade
levels:

[https://poetry4kids.com/lessons/
poetry-writing-lessons/](https://poetry4kids.com/lessons/poetry-writing-lessons/)



Glossary of Poetry Terms

Accent: The emphasis placed on a syllable or word in poetry, which contributes to the rhythm and meter of a poem.

Alliteration: The repetition of initial consonant sounds in a sequence of words, often used to create rhythm or mood (e.g., "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers").

Verse: A single line of poetry or a specific section of a poem, often used to describe a stanza or a complete poem.

Couplet: A pair of successive rhyming lines, usually of the same length, that form a complete thought or idea.

Free Verse: Poetry that does not adhere to a specific rhyme scheme or meter, allowing poets more flexibility and freedom in expression.

Haiku: A traditional Japanese form of poetry consisting of three lines with a syllable pattern of 5-7-5, often focusing on nature or a moment of insight.

Imagery: Descriptive language that appeals to the senses and creates vivid mental pictures for the reader

Metaphor: A figure of speech that compares two unlike things directly, suggesting they are the same in some way, without using "like" or "as" (e.g., "Time is a thief").

Onomatopoeia: Words that phonetically imitate or suggest the sound they describe (e.g., "buzz," "clang," "whisper").

Refrain: A repeated line or group of lines in a poem or song, often used to emphasize a theme or create rhythm.

Rhyme: The repetition of similar sounding words occurring at the end of lines in poems or songs, contributing to the musical quality.

Poetry Excerpt from LOVEBUG:

The Millipede

by Lauren Tait

Every day at crack of dusk
The waking arthropod
stretches each and every leg
and sets upon her promenade

Each feathery floating footstep
Fraught with odd peculiarity
Cascading forward flawlessly
With flourishing dexterity

A wispy, winding, wavy walk
A surging, swelling stroll
A mad, meandering multitude
Of limbs she must control

A serpentine succession
Furling forth along her way
The many-legged millipede
Walks 8 million steps per day!





Behind the Choreography: Interpreting Dance

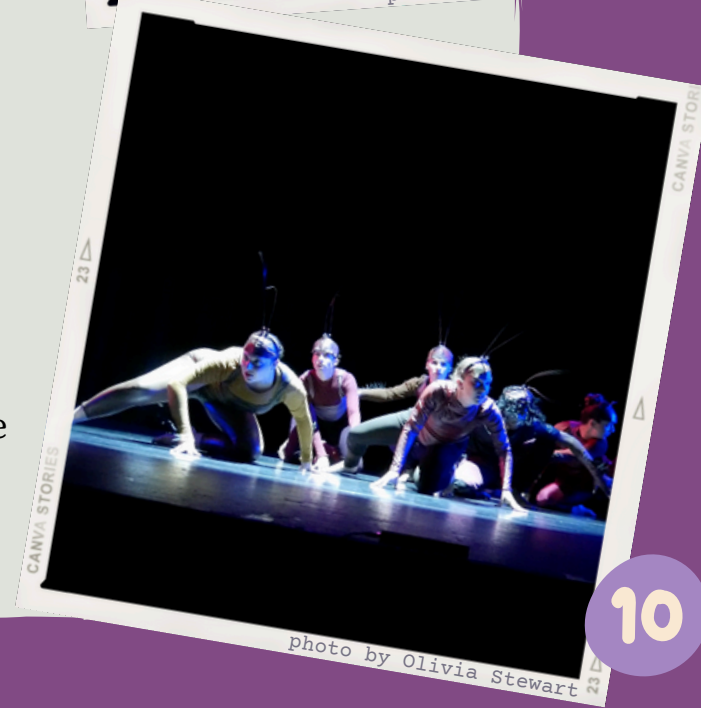
- How can we encourage students to become passionate young dance enthusiasts?
- What deeper meanings are expressed through dance?
- In what ways does the dance reflect the qualities of each bug?

In choreography, the goal is often to draw from inspiration rather than imitate directly. This process involves abstraction and expression, leading to a creation that stirs emotions and evokes experiences.

If experiencing dance encompasses movement, music, costumes, and props, then these are the elements that serve as vital tools in a choreographer's toolkit.

So, how does a choreographer shape these components to craft a vivid, intentional, multisensory experience that resonates with the audience?

Continue reading for an insightful behind-the-scenes look at these components, as well as examples from the show, that illustrate the transformation from the initial spark of an idea to its presentation on stage and spark young audiences' observations.





Buggy Beginnings: Tapping into Bug Baggage

Many of us already have strong feelings about bugs! Some insects inspire mystery, wonder, and fascination, while others elicit fear and horror, even spine-tingling shudders. Some bugs are regarded as nuisances, while others are cherished and thought to bring good fortune or tranquility. In creating these works, we carefully considered these emotions, sometimes drawing upon them and weaving them into the pieces, and sometimes attempting to broaden viewpoints and foster a newfound love and appreciation for bugs.



photo by Chad Harnish

Creepy-Crawly Choreography: Creating Bug Phrases

Scuttle! Float! Flit! Dart! Inch! Spring! Slide!

To develop the movements for our diverse bugs, we closely observed each bug's unique movements. Consider the following: Are movements sharp or fluid? Are they free or restricted? Heavy or light? Quick or slow? Are they full-body movements or localized to specific areas? This information guided the phrasing for each bug.



The duet between the grasshopper and grass contrasts the gentle, fluid, wavy motion of a field of tall grasses with the tight, quick springing movements of a grasshopper.



In the flies dance, a pair of bold, playful, flies darts about a bog. To create their movement, we incorporated characteristic fly actions with a quick, athletic, quality, and layered in a variety of human games. Can you spot leapfrog, hopscotch, tag, airplane, a three-legged race, and handclapping games? What other games do you notice?



To depict a millipede using a group of six dancers, we faced the challenge of utilizing twelve human limbs (arms and legs) to emulate its movement. The resulting choreography is connected, symmetrical, geometric, and controlled, all aimed at evoking the graceful, winding walk of a many-legged creature.

Kids Choreo Workshop

Here are several prompts to get students moving, inventing, and exploring the concepts of choreography:



Experiment with Action Words

- Prompt students to put these and other bug-themed words into action: Scuttle, skitter, float, flit, dart, inch, spring, slide, glide, flutter
- For another layer, write down specific body parts on little pieces of paper and draw them out of a hat to pair with each action word, creating prompts like "flit" your fingers, "float" a leg, "glide" your head, and so forth!



Play "On the Border"

- To explore contrasting movement qualities, have students line up on a real or imagined borderline bisecting two open areas. Explain that all of the space one on side is "Quick-land," while all of the space on the other is "Slow-land." Students can explore either land, crossing between them at will and matching their movements accordingly. For a fun challenge (sometimes students will discover this possibility on their own)--try standing on the border with half of the body subject to "Quick-land" and half subject to "Slow-land!" Continue with Sharp/Fluid, Heavy/Light, Free/Restricted, Full-bodied/Localized, and so forth!

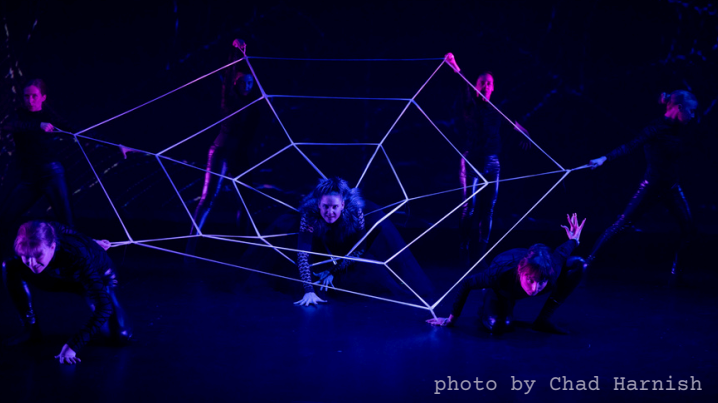


photo by Chad Harnish

Caught in a web!

Lovebug's spider, the "Bella Tarantella," resides within her glistening, silvery spun web. The prop serves multiple purposes, functioning both as a web and a skirt, seamlessly tying together the movements of the round dance of the flies that revolve around her.



Behind the Music

LOVEBUG features a collection of songs selected to embody each bug's essence, diverse styles and instrumentation converging in a vivid soundscape. The music of the flies captures the chaotic, rising and falling buzz of their swift movements. In contrast, the slug glides gracefully to a dramatic opera piece. The cockroaches' music mirrors their shadowy, skittering motions, and the fireflies' melody is soft and shimmering, reminiscent of their gentle glow. In "Tres Mosquitos," nature guide Wes humorously narrates his attempt to evade a swarm of tiny, stinging bandits.

Bug Bodies: The Making of Costumes & Props

We couldn't have asked for a more captivating and varied source of inspiration for our costumes and props than the remarkable physical features of bugs!

Just take a moment to appreciate the incredible colors and textures represented in the insect world! When you add their otherworldly attributes—such as antennae, intricate wings, tentacles, iridescent shells, cocoons, compound eyes, jointed legs, and mandibles—the possibilities are endless!



photo by Chad Harnish

Shake a leg!

The grasshopper legs are a standout element of the costume. Designed to evoke the powerful hind legs of a grasshopper, these legs create an illusion that partially conceals the dancer's human form. They fold and extend behind the dancer, opposite to the direction of human legs. Observe as the grasshopper lowers to crawl along the ground—it's a truly buggy spectacle.



photo by Chad Harnish

Weight! Weight! Don't tell me!

The slug embodies a spirit that is lighter than air, longing to float and soar like a butterfly, while her body remains firmly grounded. Her movements are both elegant and laborious, a balance of heaviness and lightness, wistful yet weighted. To express this, her costume is anchored by a hidden weight that the dancer must drag forward. This pushing and striving cause the slug's body, made of inflatable tubes that graduate from large to small, to stretch and compress, mimicking the movement of a slug. The bright outer layer resembles a stunning ballgown, and just like a real slug, she leaves a shimmering trail behind her to mark her journey.

Post-show Sample Questions

Did you have a favorite bug or bugs? Which and why?

Did the movements of the dancers remind you of bugs?
Do you remember any specific bug-like movements?

Did different bug dances make you feel different emotions? Which were funny, creepy, silly, mysterious, peaceful, etc?

How did the costumes remind you of bugs?

Did you notice any bug features (i.e. antennae, wings, legs, fur/hair, shiny exoskeletons, tentacles)?

Why do you think the fireflies dancers held their own lights? Why was there a line of glitter behind the slug?

How was the beginning of the butterfly/moth dance different from the end? Why do you think that was?

Did you notice the "skittering" walks in the cockroach dance? How would you describe them?

How were the various bug "walks" different? (i.e. the slug, the grasshopper, the flies, the cockroaches, the millipede). Would you like to invent your own bug walk?

If you could create your own bug dance, which bug would you choose?



"They live all around us, up high and down low
In the sky and the treetops and down here, below

In hills and in tunnels, in grass and on leaves
Beneath stones and on sticks and on stems and in eaves

They're buzzing! And building! And spinning and crawling!
Flying! And hopping! And creeping and calling!

They're Chomping! They're munching! They're chewing and
stinging!

They're glowing and floating and chirping and singing!

They might sometimes seem funny or strange, even scary
But most bugs are our friends, even ones that are hairy

Their jobs are important. They help keep our world green.
Growing and blooming, renewing and clean.

So please, the next time you encounter a bug
Say hello, give a wave, and send it off with some love"

--Excerpt from LOVEBUG, by Lauren Tait



Resources & Works Cited

California Academy of Sciences
<https://calacademy.org/exhibits/bugs>

Entomological Society of America
<https://entsoc.org/>

PBS News Hour Classroom
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/classroom/lesson-plans/2013/06/periodical-cicadas-are-back>

Poetry 4 Kids
<https://poetry4kids.com/lessons/poetry-writing-lessons/>

The Poetry Foundation
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/education>

US National Parks Service
<https://www.nps.gov/teachers/index.htm>



we hope you enjoy the show!