

# POST TIME

## THE ONE-MAN VARIETY SHOW



Entertains  
Educates  
Engages  
Empowers

# STUDY GUIDE





# Robert Post's Biography

When a man can dance a tango with a pair of long johns, play the six principal characters involved in a murder mystery, and take audiences into the non-stop wackiness of a television chef, all in the same evening, one has to wonder "Where does he come up with this stuff?" Robert Post grew up in Columbus, Ohio. His grandmother, Assunta DiMenna, inspired him at a young age, breaking into spontaneous song and dance at any and all family occasions (including funerals). In elementary school, his teachers didn't fully appreciate his vivid imagination. While they gave lessons in mathematics, or whatever, Post would be in his own fantasy world - flying the first spaceship to some unknown planet. Coupled with his vivid imagination and the "Ed Sullivan Show" acts, including classic vaudeville and juggling, Post was on his way to performance art.

With a brief detour into golf (his first love), he enjoyed success as a caddy - working with greats like Byron Nelson, Tom Weiskoff, Lanny Watkins, Judy Rankin, and Chi Chi Rodriguez. His fiery temperament, bred by his spirited Italian family, hindered his success as a player so he turned back to the comedy of his childhood, although trying to find where his unique vision fit into traditional theatre proved challenging. In 1978, his gallant quest to find a teacher who would help him blend his love of character work and movement arts led him to visionary theatre artist, Tony Montanaro. At his mentor's workshop in the woods of Maine, Post founded his distinctive style through their collaboration.

Today, Robert Post's award-winning charismatic comic feast "...uses body language, masks, music, and genius to create a host of unforgettable, totally radical characters" (Tampa Tribune). It's educational, inventive, "uproariously funny" (NPR), and plays to any audience. His sold-out run at Broadway's New Victory Theatre, the flagship for premier entertainment for families in New York, earned rave reviews, including The New York Times, declaring "with its dry humor, expert mime, versatile acting, skilled juggling, ventriloquism, splendid timing, and keen sense of satire and the absurd, POST Comedy Theatre has a sophisticated air about it...[and] merits a place on anybody's all-star team of the goofily gifted."

Robert Post has developed a loose, playful approach to performance that invites audiences to participate in his creative, zany world. Post creates a charismatic comedy feast that unleashes the imagination and defies description. Equally at home in concert halls or classrooms, he's an entire theatre company himself, specializing in rapid-fire character changes, even different roles for different body parts. Post's performances draw from a body of work that he carefully selects from to respond to the age levels and interests of children, teens and adults alike.

Post has created over 30 pieces that have been seen across the US, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Russia, and throughout the Mediterranean. In addition to his full concerts he has maintained a commitment to education and has performed for young audiences in countless settings including: The Big Break Festival in Moscow, New York's Lincoln Center Institute, the Alberta International Children's Festival in Canada, the Festival Internacional Chihuahua in Mexico, and for Young Audiences in Cleveland and St. Louis, and many more. The internationally broadcast PBS special, Robert Post-In Performance, won the Central Education Network Award for Best Performance Program.

Robert Post's favorite comic strip is Calvin and Hobbes. He lives in Lithopolis, Ohio with his wife, Jackie; two dogs, a cat, and eight fish.



# Description of Activities

## **Mini-Performance:** Grade levels 1-12 (grouped in appropriate age levels)

The indescribable Robert Post has developed a loose, playful approach to performance which invites an audience to participate in his creative, zany world. While students are entertained by the virtuosity and hilarious quality of the work he creates, Post, using minimal props and costume changes, constantly challenges them to use their imaginations. One elementary school teacher described him as “an imagination stimulator.” Post sets an example through his endless studies to further develop his own creative process. He is a "regular" at the local public library.

**Post's repertoire varies depending on the age of his audience and will contain four to five selections from the following:**

**Ace Wingspan - King of the Sky** – Robert Post takes us on an aerial joyride, playing the speeding plane, it's famous pilot, and everything they almost run into. He's Lucky Lindy, The Red Baron, and the Right brothers, all rolled into one larger-than-life barnstorming crowd pleaser. Swirling aloft in his trusty biplane, Ace Wingspan astounds the crowd with an airborne dance of high-flying tumbles and hart stopping dives.

**A Rather Unfortunate Evening for Burglar Burt** – a barking dog, slinking cat, snoring parent and crying baby undue the attempted burglary of the bungling Burt in this tribute to the comedic genius of Sid Caesar.

**Beyond the Wall (A Mystery)** – a six-character, quick-change spoof of a murder mystery, is performed behind and around a narrow black wall that is transformed into a variety of sets including an automobile, a castle door and bathtub. With a change of a hat, wig or impeccable dialect, Post switches at lightning speed between Inspector Wesley Bloom, from Scotland Yard to Tilson, a surly, gnarled, cockney butler to Nicole, the scheming French “beauty” to Fritz Hinkle, her pompous German husband to Lady McNaughton, very British and remarkably casual about her husband's death, and, finally, to Lord McNaughton, the Scottish stuffed corpse.



# Description of Activities

## (continued)

**Pasquale's Kitchen** – a wacky TV chef whips up a culinary feast of juggling, visual gags, dialects, jokes, magic and rhythm. He serves up his special cooking secret, “Let the chef inside you guide you.” While demonstrating French, Australian, Russian, and British specialties, Pasquale — like a method actor — totally immerses himself in the character. He battles an uncooperative seafood dish, creates quick bread like you’ve never seen, shakes a cow to churn his own butter, and creates a new definition of “natural food.”

**Post Child** – Is he a dad driving home with his son after a performance? Or, is he a performer reassuring his “inner child” as he struggles to stay awake? Post performs an enchanting duet with a puppet—a third grade version of himself—created by Jim Henson Studio artist Matt Brooks.

**Odds and Ends** – A fast-paced introduction of Post’s unique style comprised of illusions and his signature style, “cartoon graphics.” His fingers take on a life of their own and become an Olympic diver or an uncontrollable toupee that won’t stay on his head. His nose comes right off for a quick cleaning, two arms form a giant mouth and a football play is rewound from every angle at an impossible speed. This seven-minute opening is a physical free-association to challenge and expand the imagination of the audience.

**Shticks** – They’re just three sticks: about three feet long with red tips. But in Robert Post’s hands, they’re magic, pirouetting through the air in exact and almost mathematical patterns. Suddenly, they’re not just pieces of wood. One snakes through the air as a cobra. One leaves home to join the circus as a trapeze. Soon, they all conspire to make a movie, simultaneously starring as cowboys, Indians, horses, speeding bullets, seagulls, fishing poles and sharks.

**SPIKED!** – (Inspired by Spike Jones, the legendary master of sound effects) “...as American as cell phones, fax machines and bottom lines. Post’s harried office worker, whose life is governed by gadgets, will never catch up. The use of sound effects in this work is completely ingenious.”

**Tango** – the dance of passion comes with a whole new set of entanglements when the partner is a pair of red long johns. In the resulting tangle of arms and legs it’s difficult to tell who’s leading whom.

**The Bag** – Children (and sometimes adults) truly think they see the invisible balls Post pulls out of a plain grocery bag. Everyone participates in this imagination stimulator, throwing the invisible balls into the empty bag that magically produces a stream of tiny red balls.

**Three Ball Juggling** – this is one of the first skills that Post learned in 1972 and it gave him (still shy at the time) the confidence to perform in front of an audience. He enjoys showing a zany variety of juggling patterns as he effortlessly showcases the most basic (and toughest) form of virtuosic hand eye coordination.

An additional element important to Post’s work is an ongoing dialogue with the audience. Where appropriate, students will have an opportunity to ask questions between works.



# What will happen during the performance?

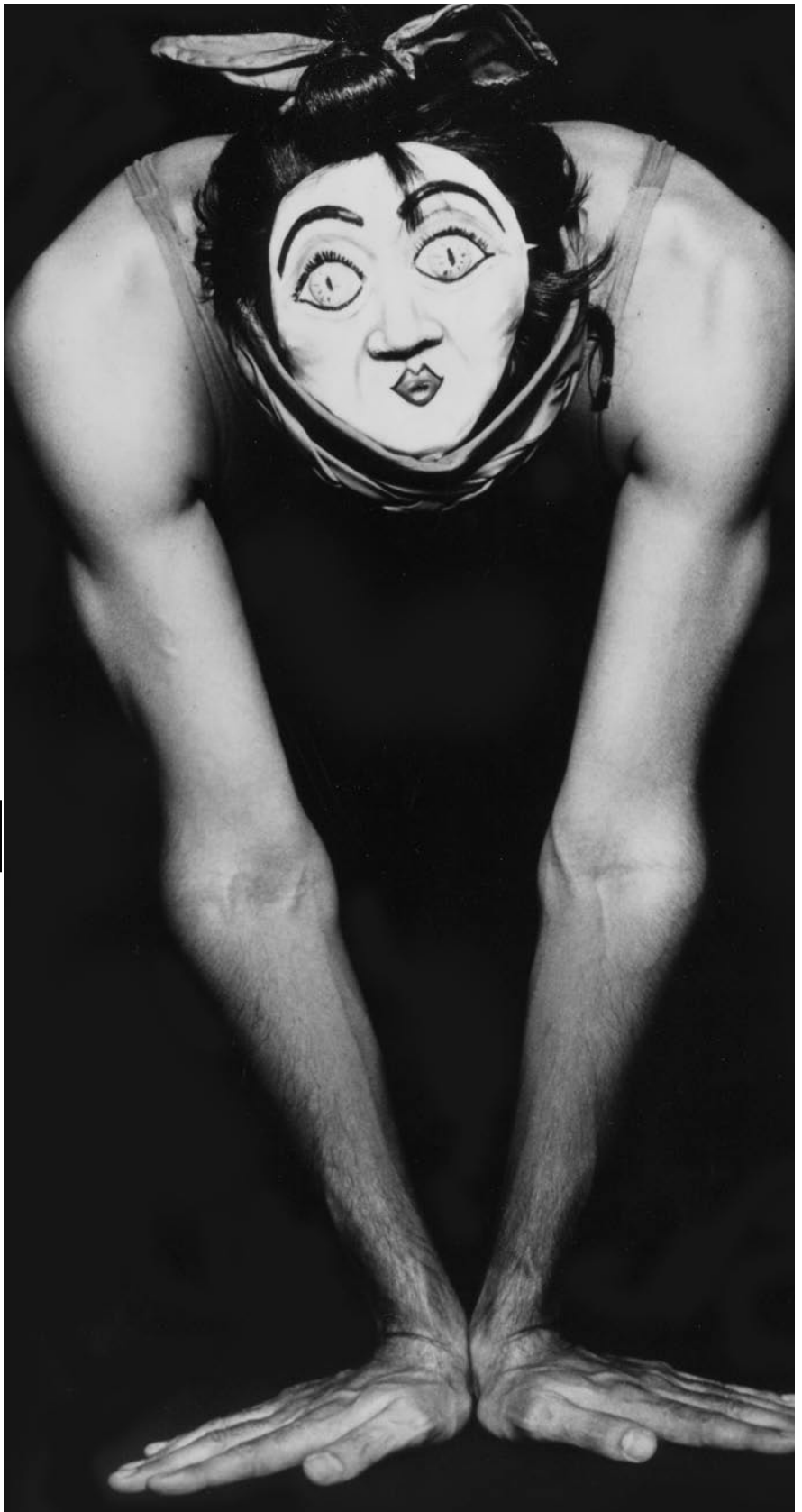
Mr. Post will begin the performance in a very informal manner. He enjoys talking to the audience as he begins with a pot-pourri of basic illusions which he titles *Odds and Ends*. This is an introduction to Post's signature style of "cartoon graphics." The students will be eased into focusing attention on the variety of images created by Post's body. He will move from large movements/classic pantomime illusions to more subtle images which require the students to use their imaginations in preparation for the pieces which will follow.

Post will then perform appropriate works from those listed on the previous pages. He will talk with the students throughout the performance and may incorporate audience participation if appropriate and time permits.

## Workshops:

Grade levels 3-12  
(grouped in appropriate age levels)

Post, a sensitive and experienced teacher, offers a variety of workshops ranging from theater improvisation and other basic acting techniques to a variety of juggling and other physical skills. It is best to call and discuss the needs and experience level of the student group. He is very interested in assisting students who are creating their own works and also enjoys conducting workshops with teachers, other school personnel and parents.



## \*Useful Definitions

**ABSURD**... 1. Ridiculously incongruous or unreasonable.

**CARTOON**... 1. A drawing depicting a humorous situation, often accompanied by a caption. 2. A pictorial satire or comment on a subject of current public interest, usually accompanied by words; caricature. 4. An animated cartoon.

**COMEDY**... 1. a. A play, motion picture, or other work that is humorous in its treatment of theme and character and has a happy ending. b. The branch of drama made up of such plays. 5. A comic element literature or life.

**COMIC**... 3. Amusing; humorous

**DIALECT**... 1. a. A regional variety of a language distinguished by pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, esp. a variety of speech differing from the standard literary language or speech pattern of the culture in which it exists.

**DIRECT**... 4. a. To move or guide (someone) toward a goal. b. To show or indicate the way. 8. a. To give guidance and instruction to (actors or musicians) in the rehearsal and performance of a work.

**EDIT**... 4. To put together the component parts of (a film, for example) by cutting, combining, and splicing.

**GRAPHIC**... 1. b. Of or pertaining to pictorial representation. 3. a. Described in vivid detail. b. Clearly outlined or set forth.

**ILLUSION**... 1. a. An erroneous perception of reality. 2. The condition of being deceived by a false perception or belief.

**IMAGINATION**... 1. a. The power of the mind to form a mental image or concept of something that is not real or present. b. Such power of the mind used creatively.

**IMPROVISE**... 1. To invent, compose, or recite without preparation. 2. To make or provide from available materials.

**JUGGLE**... 1. To keep (two or more objects) in the air at one time by alternately tossing and catching them.

**MIME**... 1. a. A form of ancient Greek and Roman drama in which realistic characters and situations were farcically portrayed and actual persons mimicked on the stage. 3. a. Pantomime

**PERCUSSION**... 1. The striking together of two bodies, esp. when noise is produced. 2. The sound, vibration, or shock caused by the striking together of two bodies.

**RHYTHM**... 2. The patterned, recurring alterations of contrasting elements of sound or speech. 3. Mus. a. A regular pattern formed by a series of notes of differing duration and stress.

**THEATER/THEATRE**... 3. a. Dramatic literature or its performance: the theater of Shakespeare and Marlowe. b. The milieu of actors and playwrights.

**VENTRILOQUISM**... A method of producing vocal sounds so that they seem to originate in a source other than the speaker, as from a mechanical dummy.

\* definitions taken from The American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition, published by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston

## Activities for Students

Ask the students to become familiar with the words listed above by researching the words in reference books appropriate to their grade levels. Encourage them to think of these words they watch Mr. Post's performance and ask them to discuss ways in which the various words could be a part of his performance or his process leading to performance.

# What are people saying about Post?

*Robert Post engages an audience of school children in the fantastic journeys of his imagination, creating worlds which reflect the lives and concerns of kindergarteners to high schoolers. He examines the issues of their existence through their imaginations and involves them in the process. I hope nobody hires him so that we can have him here all the time.*

**Richard Willing, Educational Programming Director  
L.A. Arts, Lewiston, Maine**

*I really enjoyed your show! That is the first time I ever saw (sic) live and not in front of a T.V. I thought your show was better than any television show.*

**Laura Bennett  
Phillips Elementary School, Marietta, Ohio**

*Robert Post is original and delightful. He brings his audiences together by allowing them to discover those humorous common threads that make us all human.*

**Molly Kellet, Teacher  
Beechcroft High School, Columbus, Ohio**

*Not only were our students entranced throughout the whole performance, but our staff was also. Descriptions ranged from "magnificent" to "totally awesome". Our staff thought that the performance was educational as well as entertaining, and would like to see more of this type of program in the future.*

**Curtis C. Ross, Principal  
Salt Rock Elementary School, West Virginia**

*During the assembly, students received an introduction into the many styles of performance skills of the artist. He is intuitive in the pacing of such a performance and attuned to the level of sophistication of his audience. He amazed our kids!*

**Diana Prince, Teacher  
Dominion Middle School, Columbus, Ohio**

*After watching your magnificent performance at Marshall School, I have developed a greater love for the arts.*

**Lisa Dyer - Grade 8  
Duluth, Minnesota**

*I cannot compliment you enough on your performance yesterday. I am sure that many people left the auditorium with you as their idol. Your skits were so imaginable, and you looked so at ease and so natural on the stage, like you truly belonged there.*

**Erin Billings - Grade 6  
Ely, Minnesota**

*The performance was absolutely first rate. Post had the students total attention at all times and they moved from one concept to another easily. He made us feel very special - and smart!*

**Elem. School Teacher in Hibbing, Minnesota**

*Well, what can I say! You are brilliant and I am really glad you visited our schools. I have gotten so many good evaluations. You did a super job.*

**Jean Green, Jefferson County Public Schools  
Louisville, Kentucky**

*I've known him to become one of Ohio's remarkable talents. His many abilities include strong artistic talents, the ability to share that talent with all age levels and a true sensitivity that pervades all that he undertakes.*

**Vonnie Sanford, Former Director of Artists in  
Education Program, Ohio Arts Council**

# Follow Up Activities

It may come as depressing news to children up to their ears in homework, but to be an artist, one must be a dedicated student for a lifetime. Post is constantly studying: watching old and new films, listening to music from Dexter Gordon's jazz to Bach's concertos to thought-provoking Hip Hop; reading everything from Shakespeare to Gabriel Garcia Marquez to Maya Angelou; combing the papers for current events, working with experts for assistance on every piece he creates; and attending performances of artists of all disciplines. He has also worked on a variety of television programs which involve learning about how our government works.

Post's creative process comes from an initial process of improvisation. To improvise, one must have a warehouse of information in the mind and body so that the resulting material will hopefully be interesting. Students should be encouraged to try to create characters of their own based on memories they have stored.

Following are some other activities which can be worked on after the performance:

- Ask students, as a group, to try to recreate one of Mr. Post's works. This can be done verbally or as a physical activity. For example, the students may wish to recreate *A Rather Unfortunate Evening for Burglar Burt*. Ask them to think about his body posture. What kinds of sounds did he make? What happened first... did the dog chase him or did he climb through the window? For this exercise it would be helpful to tell the students before the performance that they will work on this project later. It may help them to concentrate more as they watch the piece.
- Ask the students to take a simple object, (a pencil, scarf, chalkboard eraser, etc.) and see how many things they can create by transforming the object. Remind them of the *Shticks* piece where three sticks became many different things. This can also be done on either a small scale (at desks) or in larger movements outdoors or in the gym.
- The students may want to try basic pantomime skills. Instruct them to attempt to isolate a hand while the rest of the body moves. To illustrate this, place a hand against a wall and keep it "glued" there while the rest of the body moves gently. Now take the hand back a few inches, pretend it is still glued in one place, and try the same movement. This can also be practiced at home in a mirror.
- A simple circus skill involves balancing a stick on the palm of the hand. Ask students to try to move the body while allowing the stick (perhaps a ruler) to remain standing on an open palm of the hand. It is easier to do if the students focus their eyes on the top of the stick they are attempting to balance.
- Show a video of any of the early Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton films. This will inspire many discussions of the ability to communicate nonverbally. These artists, along with many others, have been significant influences on Mr. Post's work.



# **Making Curricular Connections with Robert Post's Performance Work**

## **NATIONAL SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS (MODIFIED FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADE LEVELS) FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES**

Students studying social studies (and the Humanities) can learn more about performing artist, Robert Post through experiential learning projects that deliberately connect nine out of ten strands of the National Social Studies Standards to guiding questions about Robert Post – his life and artistic work.

Below find descriptors of each Social Studies Standard strand listed. Review each strand; then consider the scope and sequence of developing concepts and skills that will lead to achievement of the anticipated learning outcome listed at the end of each strand description.

**Interdisciplinary Connections:** Consider the guiding questions offered at the end of each strand. Use these questions to focus discussions, essays and interdisciplinary projects that connect Robert Post's artistic work with questions raised in each Standards strand.

### **I. Culture and cultural diversity**

Students learn that humans create, learn, and adapt culture; that culture helps us to understand ourselves as both individuals and members of various groups and that human cultures exhibit both similarities and differences. This understanding allows them to relate to people in our nation and throughout the world.

Students learn that cultures are dynamic and ever changing. Studying culture prepares students to ask and answer questions such as: What are the common characteristics of different cultures? How do belief systems, such as religion or political ideals of the culture, influence the other parts of the culture? How does the culture change to accommodate different ideas and beliefs? What does language tell us about the culture?

**Anticipated Learning Outcome:** In middle and high school grades, students understand and use complex cultural concepts such as adaptation, assimilation, acculturation, diffusion, and dissonance drawn from anthropology, sociology, and other disciplines to explain how culture and cultural systems function.

**Interdisciplinary Connections on following page (Modify as needed)**

## Culture and cultural diversity

- 1) **What are the most significant features observed in Robert Post's artistic work? Discuss this as a body of artistic work, or select one work that resonates most with you.**

*Robert's comments: "Body control. I use my body and props to their fullest extent; the variety of my work. I don't repeat myself. Imagination and invention."*

- 2) **How does Robert Post create his work?**

*Robert's comments: "I watch myself in rehearsal through a video camera as I improvise. I videotape my rehearsal and then purposely don't watch it for a few days so I can step away from it and not take it personally when I critique myself. I do this all the time – even with works that seem complete – because I always want to get better at what I do."*

- 3) **Explain his artistic processes in relation to his everyday life.**

*Robert's comments: "I am a great observer of human nature. I watch life around me to get ideas for characters and for work I can create."*

- 4) **How does Post's artistic work embody culture? Whose culture(s) may be affected by his work? Explain.**

*Robert's comments: "While my own cultural experience was formed by my Italian Catholic childhood, it has expanded as I have had the honor of performing for (and working with) people from many different cultures, in many different environments. People often comment about how my work seems to reach across cultures as I reflect upon situations that happen to so many different people. Sometimes the situations are different in the details but very similar in the emotional experience. I usually improvise during a performance. This also allows me to connect in the moment to whatever setting/experience/culture I'm engaged with which in turn, deepens the relationship between us, helping us to recognize our commonalities."*

**Student:** As a person who also creates, what did you take from the performance that you may wish to incorporate into your own creative work? Why might it be important for you to do so?

5) Add your own questions.



## **II. The ways human beings view themselves in and over time**

Students learn that humans seek to understand their historical roots and to locate themselves in time. Such understanding involves knowing what things were like in the past and how things change and develop. Knowing how to read and reconstruct the past allows one to develop a historical perspective and to answer questions such as: Who am I? What happened in the past? How am I connected to those in the past? How has the world changed and how might it change in the future? Why does our personal sense of relatedness to the past change? How can the perspective we have about our own life experiences be viewed as part of the larger human story across time? How do our personal stories reflect varying points of view and inform contemporary ideas and actions?

This theme typically appears in courses that: 1) include perspectives from various aspects of history; 2) draw upon historical knowledge during the examination of social issues; and 3) develop the habits of mind that historians and scholars in the humanities and social sciences employ to study the past and its relationship to the present in the United States and other societies.

**Anticipated Learning Outcome:** In middle and high school grades, students engage in more sophisticated analysis and reconstruction of the past, examining its relationship to the present and extrapolating into the future. They integrate individual stories about people, events, and situations to form a more holistic conception, in which continuity and change are linked in time and across cultures. Students also learn to draw on their knowledge of history to make informed choices and decisions in the present.

**Interdisciplinary Connections on following page (Modify as needed)**

## The ways human beings view themselves in and over time

### 1) Who influenced Robert Post's artistic processes? Artistic work?

*Robert's comments: "I learned a lot about performing as a young actor in college but when I joined a mime/dance company in the early 1970's it gave me a direction that I will follow my entire life. Meeting Tony Montanaro helped me to complete my artistic vision."*

### 2) What techniques, strategies, methods or ideas influenced Post's artistic work?

*Robert's comments: "Theatre, vaudeville, circus, dance, mime, puppetry, ventriloquism, improvisation, stand-up comedy."*

### 3) How and why did Post reshape the historical foundations of his artistry to create his own stylized body of work?

*Robert's comments: "I feel the secret to good performing is to have a style that is unique only to you. When I was a young artist many teachers and other performers would complain about my wide range of performance styles. They told me this was a weakness but I knew it was my strength."*

### 4) Discuss some of the unique problems solved with sets, costumes and props in performance?

*Notes: Sets need to be light, efficient, and easy to set up/tear down. Fabrics can't be flammable. There is chemistry involved to create the special latex for the skull cap ("bald head") for Just Another Head. The weight and design of the hand carved juggling sticks and wooden spoons, and the knife, bowls and pans, are critical to the show.*

*Physics concepts are used especially when thinking about how the Mystery set slides. In the Shticks/Three Ball Juggling piece, applied physics skills are used to determine how the sticks and balls will move through the air and balance. How does the bowl balance at the edge of the table during Pasquale? How does the fish jump out of the bucket during Pasquale?*

**5) Who are some of the people that Robert works with to create a performance?**

*Notes: Builders, welders, photographers, researchers, writers, agents, managers, set designers and set builders, sound engineers, production managers, lighting designers, musicians, singers, graphic designers, website designers, costume designers and costume builders, choreographers, mask makers, puppeteers, prop designers and prop builders, videographers and video editors, directors dialect coaches, juggling coaches, and more...*

**6) Add your own questions**



### **III. People, places, and environments**

Technological advances connect student learning as they connect to the world beyond their personal locations. The study of people, places, and human-environment interactions assists learners as they create their spatial views and geographic perspectives of the world. Today's social, cultural, economic, and civic demands on individuals mean that students will need the knowledge, skills, and understanding to ask and answer questions such as: Where are things located? Why are they located where they are? What patterns are reflected in the groupings of things? What do we mean by region? How do landforms change? What implications do these changes have for people? This theme helps learners make informed and critical decisions about the relationship between human beings and their environment. In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with area studies and geography.

**Anticipated Learning Outcome:** In middle and high school grades, students apply geographic understanding across a broad range of fields, including the fine arts, sciences, and humanities. Geographic concepts become central to learners' comprehension of global connections as they expand their knowledge of diverse cultures, both historical and contemporary. The importance of core geographic themes to public policy is recognized and should be explored as students address issues of domestic and international significance.

**Interdisciplinary Connections on following page (Modify as needed)**

## People, places, and environments

### **1) Where does Robert Post find inspiration for his artistic work?**

*Robert's comments: "In my imagination and daydreams. I also work very hard in the rehearsal studio and on the improvisations that mold my works."*

### **2) What were the ideas that mentor, Tony Montanaro, challenged in Robert Post?**

*Robert's comments: "To not be afraid of being original/unique and to take the time that is necessary to create great art."*

### **3) Why did these ideas resonate so deeply with Post's fundamental art making processes?**

*Robert's comments: "When I first saw Tony's company I was amazed by the work. I had never seen anything like it before. The way the artists transformed their bodies into different graphic images and objects was mesmerizing. Tony Montanaro was the first great artist that I got to work with in such an intense, personal way. Watching him improvise and experiencing his working and teaching process, I was able to learn firsthand what it takes to invent original works of art."*

### **4) How does touring to other cities, states, and countries influence Post's creative process?**

*Robert's comments: "Every state, every country, and every community has a slightly different response to my works. There is a difference in how people "get" the images, the comedy and the stories. For example, in Post Child I talk about "lightning bugs" but in some places lightning bugs don't exist. These little differences surprise and teach me every time I travel. Also, because I love to observe people I'm always picking up new dialects, facial expressions, body stances, and more and I find these things showing up in my rehearsals...sometimes when I don't even expect it."*

### **6) Add your own questions.**

## **IV. Individual Development and Identity**

Students learn that personal identity is shaped by one's culture, by groups, and by institutional influences. They ask: How do people learn? Why do people behave as they do? What influences how people learn, perceive, and grow? How do people meet their basic needs in a variety of contexts? Questions such as these are central to the study of how individuals develop from youth to adulthood. Examination of various forms of human behavior enhances understanding of the relationships among social norms and emerging personal identities, the social processes that influence identity formation, and the ethical principles underlying individual action.

Given the nature of individual development and our own cultural context, students need to be aware of the processes of learning, growth, and development at every level of their school experience. In the early grades, for example, observing brothers, sisters, and older adults, looking at family photo albums, remembering past achievements and projecting oneself into the future, and comparing the patterns of behavior evident in people of different age groups are appropriate activities because young learners develop their personal identities in the context of families, peers, schools, and communities. Central to this development are the exploration, identification, and analysis of how individuals relate to others.

**Anticipated Learning Outcome:** In middle and high school grades, students need to encounter multiple opportunities to examine contemporary patterns of human behavior, using methods from the behavioral sciences to apply core concepts drawn from psychology, social psychology, sociology, and anthropology as they apply to individuals, societies, and cultures.

**Interdisciplinary Connections on following page (Modify as needed)**



## Individual Development and Identity

### 1) How did Post's worldview and artistic work expand by working with Montanaro?

*Robert's comments: "Tony drilled into my head that great performing is to underplay the character and story. In other words, to make it real for me I have to believe it first. Then the audience will believe it."*

**Touring nationally and internationally?** *Robert's comments: "It is a powerful and very personal feeling to be able to successfully tour a show around the USA and the world. I feel like I have to be brave and take some chances."*

**What about New York City/Broadway performances? Prisons? Homeless shelters? Schools?** *Robert's comments: "Every audience and performance space is unique. Because I have performed in almost every conceivable setting I'm now a lot more confident in myself when I'm on stage."*

### 2) Add your own questions.

## **V. Not listed as a deliberate curricular connection.**

## **VI. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions**

Institutions such as schools, churches, families, government agencies, and the courts all play an integral role in our lives. These and other institutions exert enormous influence over us, yet institutions are no more than organizational embodiments to further the core social values of those who comprise them. Thus, it is important that students know how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they control and influence individuals and culture, and how institutions can be maintained or changed. The study of individuals, groups, and institutions, drawing upon sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines, prepares students to ask and answer questions such as: What is the role of institutions in this and other societies? How am I influenced by institutions? How do institutions change? What is my role in institutional change? In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, and history.

***Anticipated Learning Outcome:*** In middle and high school grades, learners benefit from varied experiences through which they examine the ways in which institutions change over time, promote social conformity, and influence culture. They should be encouraged to use this understanding to suggest ways to work through institutional change for the common good. Students must understand the paradigms and traditions that undergird social and political institutions. They should be provided opportunities to examine, use, and add to the body of knowledge related to the behavioral sciences and social theory as it relates to the ways people and groups organize themselves around common needs, beliefs, and interests.

**Interdisciplinary Connections on following page (Modify as needed)**

## **Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions**

### **1) Why is humor important as a healing agent and as a valuable life skill?**

*Robert's comments: "Humor is a wonderful tool to take people out of their negative thoughts and to stop taking life so seriously. It is very freeing and can change the mood in almost any situation. There is some great research about the power of humor as a healing for both physical illness and mental stress. It's also an excellent life skill that, when used respectfully, will be beneficial in almost any profession."*

### **2) Why should you and or your institution e.g., class/school, community theatre, prison, consider the purchase of the Post Comedy Theatre performance/residency? See comments listed above.**

### **3) How does a performing artist, such as Robert Post, get the opportunity to perform in your school? Prison? Community theatre? Who makes the initial contact? What is negotiated? By whom? Who sets the fees? Who sets the production values? How is the artistic vision supported in various institutions?**

### **4) How does public funding (National Endowment for the Arts, State Arts Councils, Local Government, etc. and/or corporate/foundation funding help support Post's work and the community's access to his work?) Note: Visit some of these sites to get started: Americans for the Arts: [www.americansforthearts.org](http://www.americansforthearts.org), National Endowment for the Arts: [www.nea.gov](http://www.nea.gov), Ohio Arts Council: [www.oac.state.oh.us](http://www.oac.state.oh.us)**

### **5) Who else is employed (paid and volunteer) to insure that you and your institutional group get to attend the Post Comedy Theatre performance/residency?**

### **6) What does it cost to produce a Post Comedy Theatre performance/residency?**



- 7) **Create a budget to include all expenses related to the Post Comedy Theatre performance/residency. Include earned and unearned income generated to pay for the performance/residency.**
- 8) **How will your institution generate the funds necessary to pay for the work incurred?**
- 9) **Create a work log that supports the necessary duties to be performed, and by whom, to support the Post Comedy Theatre production/residency.**

## **VII. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services**

People have wants that often exceed the limited resources available to them. As a result, a variety of ways have been invented to decide upon answers to four fundamental questions: What is to be produced? How is production to be organized? How are goods and services to be distributed? What is the most effective allocation of the factors of production (land, labor, capital, and management)? Unequal distribution of resources necessitates systems of exchange, including trade, to improve the well being of the economy, while the role of government in economic policymaking varies over time and from place to place. Increasingly these decisions are global in scope and require systematic study of an interdependent world economy and the role of technology in economic decision-making. In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with concepts, principles, and issues drawn from the discipline of economics.

Young learners begin by differentiating between wants and needs. They explore economic decisions as they compare their own economic experiences with those of others and consider the wider consequences of those decisions on groups, communities, the nation, and beyond.

**Anticipated Learning Outcome:** In middle and high school grades, learners expand their knowledge of economic concepts and principles, and use economic reasoning processes in addressing issues related to the four fundamental economic questions. Students develop economic perspectives and deeper understanding of key economic concepts and processes through systematic study of a range of economic and sociopolitical systems, with particular emphasis on the examination of domestic and global economic policy options related to matters such as health care, resource use, unemployment, and trade.

**Interdisciplinary Connections on following page (Modify as needed)**

## **Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services**

1. See guiding questions listed in VI and VII.
2. How does a performing artist set his/her professional fees?

*Note: Post makes choices about how he sets his fees. Post performs for schools/community centers at a much lower price than he charges for a profit-making or well-funded organization.*

3. Why Does Robert Post make this distinction in pay scale?
4. Why would he choose to support education and community based programs rather than just performing in high profit situations?
5. How does an individual performing artist, such as Robert Post, contribute to the economy by paying for housing, food, education, transportation and health care, and taxes?
6. How does an individual performing artist, such as Robert Post, contribute to the economy by paying for costume/prop/set/graphic/website/lighting designers, sound engineers, musicians/singers, agents, writers, photographers, production managers, auto rental agencies, sound equipment companies, airlines, shipping companies, printers, etc.
7. As a citizen of the world, why should you care how an individual performing artist pays for his/her housing, food, education, transportation, health care and taxes?

*Note: People who come to see Post's performances contribute to the local economy by buying tickets, paying for parking, buying dinner, paying babysitters, etc.*

8. Add your own questions.

### **VIII. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society**

Technology is as old as the first crude tool invented by prehistoric humans, but today's technology forms the basis for some of our most difficult social choices. Modern life as we know it would be impossible without technology and the science that supports it. But technology brings with it many questions: Is new technology always better than that which it will replace? What can we learn from the past about how new technologies result in broader social change, some of which is unanticipated? How can we cope with the ever-increasing pace of change, perhaps even with the feeling that technology has gotten out of control? How can we manage technology so that the greatest number of people benefit from it? How can we preserve our fundamental values and beliefs in a world that is rapidly becoming one technology-linked village? This theme appears in units or courses dealing with history, geography, economics, and civics and government. It draws upon several scholarly fields from the natural and physical sciences, social sciences, and the humanities for specific examples of issues and the knowledge base for considering responses to the societal issues related to science and technology.

In middle and high school grades, students begin to explore the complex relationships among technology, human values, and behavior. They will find that science and technology bring changes that surprise us and even challenge our beliefs, as in the case of discoveries and their applications related to our universe, the genetic basis of life, atomic physics, and others. Students learn to think more deeply about how we can manage technology so that we control it rather than the other way around. There should be opportunities to confront such issues as the consequences of using robots to produce goods, the protection of privacy in the age of computers and electronic surveillance, and the opportunities and challenges of genetic engineering, test-tube life, and medical technology with all their implications for longevity and quality of life and religious beliefs.

**Interdisciplinary Connections on following page (Modify as needed)**

**Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society**

- 1) What technology did Robert Post employ in his Post Comedy Theatre performance, his research and the documentation and promotion of his work?
- 2) How is Post's use of technology compare to your own use of technology?
- 3) Add your own questions.



## **IX. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence**

The realities of global interdependence require understanding the increasingly important and diverse global connections among world societies. Analysis of tensions between national interests and global priorities contributes to the development of possible solutions to persistent and emerging global issues in many fields: health care, economic development, environmental quality, universal human rights, and others. Analyzing patterns and relationships within and among world cultures, such as economic competition and interdependence, age-old ethnic enmities, political and military alliances, and others, helps learners carefully examine policy alternatives that have both national and global implications. This theme typically appears in units or courses dealing with geography, culture, and economics, but again can draw upon the natural and physical sciences and the humanities, including literature, the arts, and language.

Through exposure to various media and first-hand experiences, young learners become aware of and are affected by events on a global scale. Within this context, students in early grades examine and explore global connections and basic issues and concerns, suggesting and initiating responsive action plans.

**Anticipated Learning Outcome:** In middle and high school grades, learners initiate analysis of the interactions among states and nations and their cultural complexities as they respond to global events and changes. Moreover, students learn to think systematically about personal, national, and global decisions, interactions, and consequences, including addressing critical issues such as peace, human rights, trade, and global ecology.

**Interdisciplinary Connections on following page (Modify as needed)**

## **Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence**

- 1) List the titles of Robert Post's works viewed at today's performance.
- 2) Under each title make a list of each work's overarching theme, then descriptors that support what you observed. (Be sure that you include actual movements and your interpretation of what the movements may have directly conveyed or implied).
- 3) Where else in the world might you see artistic work similar to Post's work?

*Robert's comments: "England, France, Italy, Germany, Canada are just a few of the places where I've seen similar work. While there are performers that present physical comedy, mime, juggling, and storytelling in a style similar to mine, it's unusual to see it all in one show and created/performed by one person."*

- 4) How did you learn these similarities? For example, in the media – television, Internet, video/DVD, film; live performance, newspaper or magazine.
- 5) How is Robert Post's work similar and different from other's work around the globe? Explain.
- 6) Why would you want to know about others that produce artistic work that is similar to Post's work? What does this tell you about the world today, in the past and as it can be envisioned in the future.
- 7) Add your own questions.

## **X. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic**

An understanding of civic ideals and practices of citizenship is critical to full participation in society and is a central purpose of the social studies. All people have a stake in examining civic ideals and practices across time and in diverse societies as well as at home, and in determining how to close the gap between present practices and the ideals upon which our democratic republic is based. Learners confront such questions as: What is civic participation and how can I be involved? How has the meaning of citizenship evolved? What is the balance between rights and responsibilities? What is the role of the citizen in the community and the nation, and as a member of the world community? How can I make a positive difference? In schools, this theme typically appears in units or courses dealing with history, political science, cultural anthropology, and fields such as global studies and law-related education, while also drawing upon content from the humanities.

***Anticipated Learning Outcome:*** In middle and high school grades, students expand their ability to analyze and evaluate the relationships between ideals and practice. They are able to see themselves taking civic roles in their communities. Students increasingly recognize the rights and responsibilities of citizens in identifying societal needs, setting directions for public policies, and working to support both individual dignity and the common good. They learn by experience how to participate in community service and political activities and how to use democratic process to influence public policy.

**Interdisciplinary Connections on following page (Modify as needed)**

**Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic**

- 1) Should all people have the opportunity to view artistic work (Post Comedy Theatre) as seen today? Some people? Wealthy? Poor? Differently-abled? Incarcerated? Homeless? If so, why? If not, why not?
- 2) How can you get involved to insure that artistic work such as Post's Comedy Theatre is supported by your community? To what extent?
- 3) How can Robert Post be assured that his artistic practice and subsequent work will be sustained over time?
- 4) Add your own questions.

# Ohio's Standards and Benchmarks Alignment<sup>1</sup>

## Drama/Theatre

### **Standard I: Historical, Cultural and Social Contexts**

Students understand and appreciate the historical, social, political and cultural context of drama/theatre in societies both past and present. Students identify significant contributions of playwrights, actors, designers, technicians, composers/lyricists, choreographers, directors producing organizations and inventors to dramatic/technical heritage. Students analyze the social and political forces that have influenced and do influence the function and role of drama/theatre in the lives of people.

#### Grades 5-8 Benchmarks

- A. Explain the style of a dramatic/theatrical work in historical or cultural context.
- B. Compare and contrast playwrights and/or screenwriters from various time periods.

#### Grades 9-12 Benchmarks

- A. Determine the authenticity and effectiveness of a dramatic/theatrical work or experience in terms of style, time period, culture and theatre heritage.
- B. Discuss the place of a dramatic/theatrical writer's body of work in drama/theatre history.

### **Standard II: Creative Expression and Communication**

Students improvise, create produce and perform dramatic/theatrical works. Students experiment with dramatic/theatrical processes, develop dramatic/theatrical skills and participate in drama/theatre.

#### Grade 5-8 Benchmarks

- A. Use basic acting skills, (e.g. voice, posture, movement language) to develop characterizations.
- B. Explain the functions and interrelated nature of scenery, props, lighting sound, costumes and make up to create an environment appropriate for drama.
- C. Explore the roles and responsibilities of various theatrical personnel.
- D. Create scripted scenes based on personal experience and heritage.

#### Grades 9-12 Benchmarks

- A. Analyze the physical, social and psychological dimensions of a character and create a believable multidimensional portrayal of that character.
- B. Effectively use technology and/or resources to mount a performance.
- C. Create an imaginative and complex script using historical cultural and/or symbolic information and refine it so that story and meaning are conveyed to an audience.

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<sup>1</sup> Ohio Department of Education (2004). *Academic Content Standards K-12 Fine Arts – Drama/Theatre*. Columbus, OH: Center for Curriculum and Assessment, Office of Curriculum and Instruction.



**Standard III: Analyzing and Responding**

Students respond to dramatic/theatrical texts, experiences and performances by describing the distinguishing characteristics and interpreting meaning, themes and moods. Students analyze the creative techniques used in creating and performing dramatic/theatrical works and evaluate dramatic/theatrical works using appropriate criteria.

## Grades 5-8 Benchmarks

- A. Use appropriate dramatic/theatrical vocabulary, elements and principles.
- B. Discuss the collaborative nature of drama/theatre as a vehicle for the expressions of ideas.
- C. Articulate opinions about dramatic/theatrical work using established criteria.

## Grade 9-12 Benchmarks

- A. Incorporate specialized dramatic/theatrical terminology accurately and consistently in analyzing and responding to dramatic theatrical experiences.
- B. Indicate the artistic techniques used in planning and performing drama/theatre work.
- C. Evaluate dramatic/theatrical works using appropriate criteria.

**Standard IV: Valuing Drama/Theatre/Aesthetic Reflection**

Students demonstrate an understanding of reasons why people value drama/theatre and a respect for diverse opinions regarding dramatic theatrical preferences. Students develop personal drama/theatrical philosophies and articulate the significance of drama/theatre in their lives.

## Grades 5-8 Benchmarks

- A. Defend personal responses to a drama/theatre event.
- B. Compare their personal responses to a drama/theatre event with the responses of another person.

## Grades 9-12 Benchmarks

- A. Defend their responses to a drama/theatre event based on their personal drama/theatre philosophies.
- B. Respect diverse opinions regarding drama/theatre preferences.

**Standard V: Connections, Relationships and Applications**

Students identify similarities and differences between drama/theatre and other art forms. Students recognize the relationship between concepts and skills learned through drama/theatre with knowledge learned in other curricular subjects, life experiences and potential careers in and outside the arts. Students recognize the benefits of lifelong learning in drama/theatre.

## Grades 5-8 Benchmarks

- A. Discover the interdependence of theatre and other art forms.
- B. Explain the relationship between concepts and skills used in drama/theatre with other curricular subjects.
- C. Identify recurring drama/theatre ideas and concepts that occur across time periods and /or cultures.

Grades 9-12 Benchmarks

- A. Synthesize knowledge of the arts through participation in the creation of a dramatic/theatrical work or experience.
- B. Synthesize the relationship between concepts and skills used in drama/theatre with other curricular skills.
- C. Explain how the arts are an index to social values and accomplishments of a civilization.
- D. Engage in activities that lead to continued involvement in theatre.

# Robert Post's Artistic Process

*To be an artist, one must be a dedicated student for a lifetime.*

## Robert Post is constantly studying by:

- (1) watching old and new films
- (2) listening to music from Dexter Gordon's jazz to Bach's concertos to thought-provoking Hip Hop
- (3) reading everything from Shakespeare to Gabriel Garcia Marquez to Maya Angelou
- (4) combing the papers for current events
- (5) working with experts for assistance on every piece he creates
- (6) attending performances of artists of all disciplines.
- (7) working on a variety of TV programs that involve learning about how our government works.
- (8) Learning to cook

Robert Post's creative process comes from an initial process of improvisation. To improvise, one must have a warehouse of information in the mind and body so that the resulting material will, hopefully, be interesting.

## Just a few of the artists that have influenced Robert Post artistic life and work:

### Artists from around the world:

Woody Allen	Fred Astaire
Samuel Beckett	Sid Caesar
George Carlin	Charlie Chaplin
Imogene Coca	Bill Cosby
Walt Disney	Fyodor M. Dostoevsky
Dario Fo	Whoopi Goldberg
Lotte Goslar	Eugene Ionesco
Buster Keaton	Gene Kelly
Jerry Lewis	Marcel Marceau
Gabriel Garcia Marquez	Steve Martin
Mark Morris	Jerome Robbins
Chris Rock	Maggie Smith
Jon Stewart	Ed Sullivan
Lily Tomlin	Dick Van Dyke
Señor Wences	Robin Williams

### Ohio Artists

George Carl	Bob Hope
Dean Martin	Bobby May, <i>Juggler</i>
Red Skelton	Jonathan Winters

### Influential films (small sample)

City Lights (Charlie Chaplin)	Mr. Hulot's Holiday (Jacques Tati)
Sullivan's Travels (Preston Sturges)	The General (Buster Keaton)

### Influential TV shows (small sample):

Dick Van Dyke Show	Ed Sullivan Show
Johnny Carson Show	