

# Bach Festival Society

OF WINTER PARK

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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

## FreshSTARTs Program

### Beowulf: A Tale of Courage and Honor

**Appropriate for:** Grades 3-8

**Materials needed:** Microphones for groups larger than 100

#### This program meets the following Sunshine State Standards:

MU.C.1.2 Students understand music in relation to culture and history

MU.D.1.2 Students identify instruments and diverse music

SS.A.1.2 Students understand historical chronology and perspective

TH.E.1.2 Students understand applications of theatre to life and culture

MU.E.1.4 Students understand the relationship between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.

#### Objectives:

- Students will know the role music, drama, and language played in the Renaissance and how the arts, especially music and drama, make every subject easier and more enjoyable to learn.
- Students will see how a difficult piece of literature can be dramatized to gain insights into the characters, their motivations, the cause and effect of their actions, and what relevant message is conveyed.
- Students will be able to talk about the characters in Beowulf and will know the epic poem's place in history.
- Students will be able to identify homophones, alliteration and kennings. Throughout great literature the heroes' journey is a timeless tale of character education. In Beowulf, an ordinary man recognizes his gifts, confronts and defeats fear to discover true values, and uses his newly found powers for good.
- Students will be able to discuss the character traits of true heroes.

#### Introduction/Background Information:

The arts, particularly music and drama, were used to convey information to ordinary people whether it was religious or secular up until the mid-1700s. Most people could not read and most writings were in manuscript for only a privileged few to enjoy. The primary woodwind instruments used during the Renaissance were recorders. Dramatization of stories is still an effective means of understanding characters, their motives, and complex story lines.

Teachers may introduce the instruments to be used in the program namely recorders and tambourines.

Helpful Background information:

During the Renaissance, a period of history roughly 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, poets and musicians called minstrels and scops (pronounced 'shops'), carried the news of discoveries, entertained, and portrayed heroic characters throughout Europe.

In England, guilds (like unions) were formed to protect the economies of local musicians and poets. Wandering minstrels were unwelcome and 'sent packing'.

**Program Experience:**

The story our minstrels tell is of the medieval epic poem Beowulf. Beowulf was first told in the 600s or 700s. It is considered the first literary example in the English language when finally written down in perhaps 750 or 800. The language of the poem is considered old english. The language of Shakespeare is considered modern english. The epic poem is 3,200 lines of alliterative verse. Examples of alliteration are: Steak & Shake; Dunkin Donuts, a storm of swords, marauding man-munching monster. Beowulf was a favorite of some minstrels. The tale could take days to tell, used audience participation as part of its entertainment, and provided instruction in character education—the 'traits' of the hero.