

Student Testimonials

I thought poetry would be pretty boring, but the first day was really fun. Now I am making my own poems.
-- Ryan (5th grade)

You did something that got every single person in the audience involved. You made your poetry so fun, it took me half the period to realize you were actually telling poems to everyone. -- Antonio (10th grade)

I am a student taking English as a second language. I came to America no more than 2 years ago. You showed me how poetry can help me learn this language.
-- Eason Jiang (11th grade)

Administrators & Teachers Testimonials

Well, obviously your visit was a tremendous success. I think you accomplished your mission to make people think differently about poetry many times over. The students buzzed about your presentations all day. More importantly, faculty was pumped up as well. I certainly will look at Shakespeare and Sandburg in a different light.
-- Mike Hoffman, Lima City Schools

Your performance at Worth County School was wonderful. The kids really 'got into it' and even some of our 'tough guys' found themselves enjoying poetry through your presentation. -- Alan Grimsley, Administrative Assistant, Worth County Schools, Sylvester, GA

Ray McNiece was so charismatic and dynamic, he had the children in the palm of his hand. They can't stop talking about him – nor can we teachers. Fantastic experience – far, far beyond any and all expectations.
-- Kelly Caress, classroom teacher (through Young Audiences of Greater Cleveland)

'He speaks their language,' one of our teachers has said. He encourages students to follow their dreams by his example. And he is 'street-wise' and practical enough to earn their respect. -- Ruth Skillicorn, High School Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education for the Elyria Schools.

FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS Ray McNiece has been presenting poetry theater shows and leading writing and performance workshops for students from kindergarten through college.

- On the rosters of both the **Ohio Arts Councils' Artist in Residence Program** and **Young Audiences of Cleveland**.
- On the board of the **Poets and Writer's League of Cleveland** and **PAD**, as well as being a member of the **Cleveland Theater Alliance, Alternate Routes** and **Poetry Slam, Inc.**
- Keynote speaker at **ASU's Literature and Language Arts Symposium**, **The First Coast Writers' Conference**, and **Lakeland College's Writing Festival**.
- Presented at **NASAA**, **The Palm Beach Shakespeare Festival**, **Massachusetts Festival of Literary Magazines**, and **Alabama Young Authors Conference**
- **Artist in Residence** at the **Cuyahoga Valley National Park**, **The Jack Kerouac House**, and currently **Artist in Residence** at the **WRHS's Crawford Auto and Aviation Museum**.
- Performed internationally at **Scotland's Edinburgh Fringe Theatre Festival**, at the opening of **City Lights Italia**, and on "Good Morning, Russia" in Moscow.
- Twice captained **National Poetry Slam Championship Teams** and won the **Arkansas Grand Slam**, the largest performance poetry prize ever awarded.
- Author of **six books of poetry, two plays, one children's book, "The Land of Poetry,"** and co-editor of the anthology **"America Zen."**

FROM THE PAGE TO THE STAGE



Ray McNiece's *Poetry Theater*

- Assembly Programs
- Writing & Performance Workshops
- Residencies
- Teacher Training
- Historical Characters
- Poetry Slams & Other Programs

"A poem is not finished until it is shared out loud."

For more information, log on to:
www.raymcniece.com

Dedicated to facilitating student literacy, developing critical thinking, and improving communication skills, author, actor, and educator Ray McNiece offers a variety of “edutaining” performances and informative workshops for children of all levels and ages.



ASSEMBLY PROGRAMS

combine original poetry, monologues, and songs with classic and multicultural works from the curriculum. Drama, improvisation, and audience participation create a lively mix that brings poetry alive from *the page to the stage*.



WRITING & PERFORMANCE WORKSHOPS

Using blueprint exercises, students will develop a better understanding of grammar, usage, and a broader vocabulary. Performance workshops utilize kinesthetics to learn poems by heart as well as group work to make poems into “moving pictures.”



RESIDENCIES

of one, two or four weeks provide students with an in depth opportunity to explore creative language, building skills and confidence through the completion of a process. At the end of residencies, students will create print anthologies and present a performance of their own works.



Ray's “performance poetics” are aligned with national and state ELA standards, and enable students to achieve benchmarks by:

- Improving writing, editing, and communication skills
- Organizing thoughts and verbalizing feelings
- Understanding lyric, narrative, and dramatic modes of writing
- Exploring imagery, metaphor, and other figurative writings

TEACHER TRAINING

provides teachers with writing and presentation strategies and a week's worth of exercises for a poetry unit, demystifying poetry and demonstrating its cross-curricular applications to promote content understanding.

POETRY SLAMS & OTHER PROGRAMS

• Slams

Ray demonstrates, organizes, and emcees a slam (6 – college)

• The Seanachie

Irish bard, stories, poems, and songs (K-12)

• Down Home Hootenanny

Appalachian stories and songs (K-12)

• History of Rock & Roll

Americana song lyrics as literature (5-12)



HISTORICAL CHARACTERS (interactive programs)

These cross-curricular historical interpretations recreate two influential characters from American history who have helped in developing our knowledge of the world of plants and their role throughout man's history.



Johnny Appleseed (K-3)

Leads participatory story telling, songs, and activities that describe his personal history, the benefits of apples in frontier life, and the varieties and usages of them in our own times.



Teacher Testimonials

He made history ‘come alive.’ Johnny stayed in character throughout the entire presentation.
-- (2nd grade)



Thomas Jefferson (3-6)

Presents his ideas on government and democracy, colonial farming methods, his inventions, the Lewis and Clark Voyage of Discovery, and his garden at Monticello as he leads students through four journaling exercises.

Johnny Appleseed was excellent. He knew how to speak at the children's level. They enjoyed his accent and clothing. I liked the way Johnny interacted with my students. The whole activity was valuable because the students got a look at history in a way they found fun. -- (3rd grade)

Ray's interpretation of Jefferson was compelling; the journal exercises brought the achievements of this scientist/president into focus. -- (6th grade)