

LABYRINTH DANCE THEATER

Sasha Spielvogel, Artistic Director

presents

Felicia Norton as

NOOR

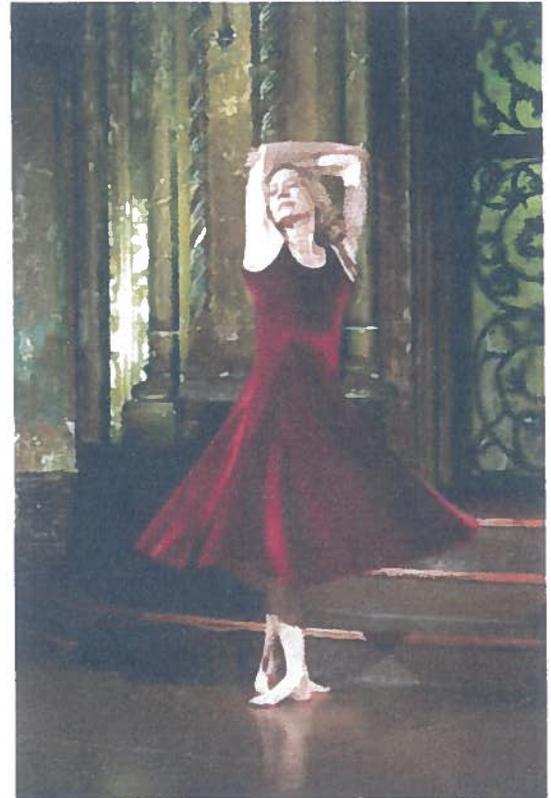
"ABSORBING ... GRIPPING STORY...
A TREAT FOR THE MIND...
FELICIA NORTON – AN EXTRAORDINARY DANCER..."
- BACKSTAGE

"Noor was such a fascinating and warm character, and dance is a great way of celebrating her life and achievements. Felicia danced her beautifully, and the music score was gripping."

- AMRAINE RASOOL, PRODUCER, BBC RADIO
SCOTLAND

*FELICIA NORTON received standing ovations in
London, Paris and New York for her performance as
NOOR*

Jennifer Dunning of The New York Times described her as
'an extraordinary dancer'



Felicia Norton as Noor. Photo by Mira Steinzor



Felicia Norton as Noor. Photo by Eve Cuyen

Labyrinth Dance Theater

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LABYRINTH DANCE THEATER

PRESENTS

NOOR

THE STORY OF ONE OF THE 20TH CENTURY'S GREATEST HEROINES

BEAUTIFULLY SHARED

EXPRESSIVELY TOLD

**INTERSPERSED WITH STORYLINES FROM NOOR'S *TWENTY JATAKA TALES*
FOR AUDIENCES OF ALL AGES**

Felicia Norton as *NOOR*;

choreography by Felicia Norton and Sasha Spielvogel

Music by David Majzlin

written and directed by Sasha Spielvogel.

VIEW THE PERFORMANCE TRAILER

<http://www.labyrinthdancetheater.org/video.html>

click on NOOR

NOOR

STUDY GUIDE

INCLUDES

AN INSIGHTFUL OVERVIEW OF NOOR'S LIFE

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

RELATED ACTIVITIES

LABYRINTH DANCE THEATER

STUDY GUIDE :

NOOR

A choreographed tribute to the Life of Noor Inayat Khan 1914 – 1944

Study Outline authored by Eva L. Kaplan, evakaplan@cs.com

- **Background**

January 1, 2014 marked the beginning of celebrating the Centennial Year for one of humanity's great heroines - **Noor Inayat Khan**. Although a **Sufi Muslim** educated in her faith's **pacifist** beliefs as to attain peace and uphold righteous behavior, Noor placed herself in a precarious position of **SPY** to fight **against** atrocities of **Nazi Germany**.

Noor's given **name means "light"**, and reflects **her life's destiny**. A "student" of her father - **Hazrat Inayat Kahn**, a renowned musician and leader of Indian Sufism - she kindled his teaching on virtue: "...one tiny flame, if kept burning, can be the means of illuminating a whole city, and someday many lamps that shall be lighted at this small fire will give light to thousands....Your work is to tend it and keep it burning.... the fuel needed is your sacrifices." ¹

Noor's moral character with respect for life, liberty, and the righteous pursuit of happiness was also a legacy from her American born mother, Ora Ray Baker (Pirani Ameena Begum). And what better lesson on love and tolerance than her father's words when expressing deep affection for Noor's mother?

Hazrat Inayat wrote:

In spite of the vast difference of race and nationality and custom she [Noor's mother] proved to be a friend through joy and sorrow, proving the idea, which I always believed, that outer differences do not matter when the spirit is in at-one-ment ²

Noor's personal bequest to us, which can be attributed to her Indian Sufi upbringing, is that goodness will be immortal – and pacifism is not passivity with regard to evil.

Noor was well-educated and gifted in the arts. As a graduate of the Sorbonne, her degree was in child psychology. Her studies at the Paris Conservatory, a college of music and dance founded in 1795, was the impetus for pursuing the playing of the harp and the piano.

Involved with children's literature as well as writing for magazines and newspapers, Noor's adaptation of *Twenty Jataka Tales* provides a key to her heroic stand for freedom which took precedence over fear.

In *The Monkey-bridge*, the monkey chief has saved his fellow monkeys' lives by self-sacrifice. Brahmadata, the King, has witnessed the episode. In consoling the dying monkey chief, he inquired: "You made your body a bridge for others to cross. Did you not know that your life would come to an end in so doing?...."

...."Oh King, "replied the monkey,"I do not suffer in leaving this world for I have gained my subjects' freedom...." ³

The above reference raises understanding of Noor's last word upon being captured by the Gestapo, tortured, and then brought to Dachau and shot – "**Liberté**".

Noor's lineage dates back to another activist for freedom: her great-great- great grandfather – Tipu Sultan. Tipu Sultan was a crowned ruler of the "state" of Mysore, a kingdom in Southern India that he ruled in the 1700s. He is thought by some scholars to be **among the liberators** of India **from** colonial Britain. Because of her being his direct descendent, Noor is referred to as World War II's "Spy Princess". ⁴

As previously indicated, Noor embraced the values of establishing peace and tolerance from both her roots as a Sufi Indian Muslim and from her Western, multi-culture, diverse upbringing .

Noor was **born** January 1, **1914** in Moscow (Russia), **just before the onset of World War 1**. Because of impending events, Noor's parents opted to move to a safer England when she was just six months old. England was safer in that although Britain suffered great numbers of casualties in "The Great War", the battles consisted primarily as trench warfare within Belgium and France. And India was still part of the British Empire!

The family resided in Bloomsbury, a very historic residential community within London – and to this day an intellectual and cultural hub, with The British Museum in proximity. One of Bloombury's eminent residents was Darwin. Certainly this was *the* creative atmosphere for Hazrat Inayat Khan, poet, musician and Western Sufi's spiritual leader. Bloomsbury is where Noor attended nursery school at Notting Hill and where she and her British born siblings played in Gordon Square!

A sculpture in honor of her heroism now memorializes her in the park.

Following the war's end in 1920, her family moved to live near Paris – Suresnes - where there was a Sufi population. Her father referred to their new home, a large estate as "Fazal Manzil", House of Blessing. France became Noor's adopted "homeland".

However, peacetime in France and Britain ended in 1939 with the rise of Hitler and his Nazi Germany's military expansion into Poland. England and France who had an alliance with Poland declared war against Germany. With an increasing invasion of France imminent, Noor and her family decided to flee – barely catching a ship back to England.

Arriving back in Britain at a time of increasing subjugation of European countries, inaction was out of the question. Both Noor and her brother Vilayet decided to participate in defensive operations against “The Third Reich.” Noor joined England's Women's Auxiliary Air Force. Vilayet signed up with the Royal Air Force.

Noor became trained as a wireless operator, using Morse Code on restricted radio frequencies – frequencies specified just for secret, encrypted messages. This qualified Noor to request to be a member of SOE as a Special Operations Executive. The government had organized the unit for espionage. (Coincidentally, its headquarters was located on London's Baker Street – Baker Street of the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes.) Considered to be adequately skilled and fluently bi-lingual, Noor, now referred to as Nora Baker, was deployed to occupied Paris.

Working to undermine the enemy was surely a frightening, dangerous assignment. The task included listening in, cracking codes, and pinpointing locations by frequencies. Shortly, Noor became the sole individual remaining at her post – a crucial informant for France and England. Resilient and willing to give up her life for her humanitarian values, Noor refused to return “home”.

Captured, she was tortured, and brought to the infamous German Concentration Camp - Dachau. Noor remained silent, not revealing even her real name. Silent, Noor, as Code Name Madeleine, was permanently silenced by a Gestapo bullet. Born at the beginning of World War 1 in 1914, she died at the ending of World War 2 in 1944. The world’s heroine lived between two wars. She died mature beyond her years, but very young at age 30.

Noor was posthumously awarded Britain’s George Cross and France’s Croix de Guerre.

Footnotes

¹ <http://www.pirzia.org/writings/hik-fires-of-truth/>

² Remembrance.sufipaths.net/?page_id=570

In his Autobiography, Hazrat Inayat wrote:

³ **Twenty Jakata Tales retold by Noor Inayat Khan** (Inner Traditions International) 1985, pg.21 – “recounts how Buddha came once as a monkey among the monkeys and gave his life to save them”

Recommended Reading

Non-Fiction on Noor (Code Name Madeline)

Spy Princess, The Life of Noor Inayat Khan
by **Shrabani Basu** (Omega Publications), 2007

Folk-Literature

Twenty Jataka Tales (Buddhist)
retold by **Noor Inayat Khan**
(Inner Traditions International), 1985

King Akbar's Daughter:
Stories for Everyone as Told by Noor Inayat Khan
(Omega Publications), 2013

“...previously unpublished stories have been collected and are presented here in new English translations alongside her original French language versions ... Some of these stories are Noor s own creations while others are traditional myths, fables and legends retold in her own words...”

WW II Spy Related Fiction

Code Name Verity
By **Elizabeth Wein** (Hyperion), 2013

Supplemental: Usborne Activity Cards – 50 Secret Codes

Recommended Websites

On Noor

historyheroes.e2bn.org/hero/achievements/4354
suited for elementary, middle school, high school levels

On WW II British Intelligence

www.bletchleypark.org.uk/

check out

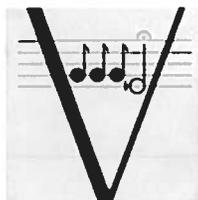
<http://www.bletchleypark.org.uk/edu/resources.rhtm>

*teachers resources pupil text overhead slides lesson plans

* especially Morse Code, the code used in wireless operations by Noor

<http://www.agigante.it/beethovens-fifth-symphony-morse-code-and-bbc/>

“During WW2 the BBC played the opening bars of Beethoven’s 5th Symphony in all its broadcasts to Europe, this is simply because it has the identical Morse Code symbol of the letter V, which, to the British, symbolized Victory during the war.



- Beethoven's **Victory** Symphony happened to be his **Fifth** with its opening phrase – "dit-dit-dit-dah" (short, short, short, long) used for the letter "V" in **Morse Code**, and its representation victory.

On an elementary level – a trivia quiz based upon facts of Noor’s Life (Indian Royalty)

It also serves as a review of the guideline

<http://www.funtrivia.com/trivia-quiz/People/Noor-Inayat-Khan---Unlikely-Heroine-305798.html>

- More Recommended Related Web Sites -

Cryptology for Kids

http://www.cerias.purdue.edu/education/k12/teaching_resources/lessons_presentations/cryptology.html

Site offers links on cryptology use through history

i.e.

Morse Code:

Navajo Code Talkers in WWII

Enigma in WWII

Secret Code Breakers Through History

NOOR

upon being recaptured she was deported to Germany.

POSED:

M.B.E.

OF OFFICER AND SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE FURTHER EMPLOY

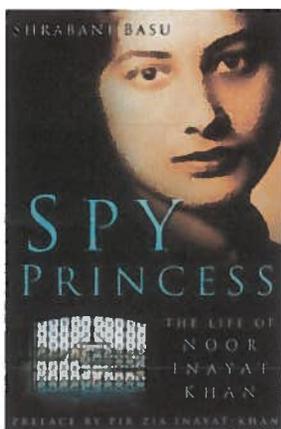
A most brave and touchingly keen girl. She was determined to do her bit to hit the Germans, and poor girl, she has.

- <http://secretfire.wordpress.com/noor-inayat-khan-madeleine/>



An upcoming movie produced by "Movies From The Heart."

"A single voice remained between occupied France and the allies in London. It was the voice of Noor Inayat Khan... code name MADELEINE."



Spy Princess, The Life of Noor Inayat Khan
By Shrabani Basu (Omega Publications) 2007