



Vulcanalia's Story

Blending elements of Roman and Greek mythology with a modern day twist, *Vulcanalia*'s story is simple and engaging. *Vulcanalia* unfolds the following three-part tale:

Part 1

Vulcan has been expelled by his father Zeus from Mt. Olympus. Amid clanging music depicting the sound of iron, Vulcan lands with a thud on earth - alone, despised, and looking for purpose. Vulcan befriends fire, represented by small individual impish flames called Flame Sprites that eventually combine into one giant fire. After learning to control fire, Vulcan turns his attention to creating a city called Birmingham. The music becomes frenzied and dancers perform an abstract, athletic sequence while musicians shout a call and response in honor of the new city.

Part 2

Vulcan attempts to dance a *pas de deux* with Aphrodite, but she rejects Vulcan for the much more handsome god of war, Mars. This love triangle is frustrating to Vulcan. Taming fire and building a city are much more natural to him than winning the affection of Aphrodite. Strains of Joplin's *Solace* can be heard as Vulcan laments his loneliness, alternating with moments of optimism occurs with strains of John Philip Sousa's marches. Vulcan eventually decides to direct his energy toward his work, and the forge again erupts as Vulcan finds his creative strength.

Part 3

Vulcan decides to put a statue on Red Mountain, to celebrate the city's creativity. Industrial rock beats, as before, take over but are more relentless now. Aphrodite, Mars, Flame Sprites - all acknowledge Vulcan, god of the forge, who has tamed creative fire, built a city, and sculpted his greatest work, a 56-foot tall statue!

Classroom Activities

The following classroom activities will help students internalize *Vulcanalia*'s story prior to seeing the ballet:

1. Original Vulcan Stories

Working individually or in teams, students can use the *Vulcanalia* story to write an original Vulcan play or to make an original graphic short story. Students may decide to add dialogue and scenes by referring to myths about Vulcan and his Greek counterpart, Hephaestus, or inventing more "story" using just their imaginations. Older students might enjoy posting their original stories on the popular site www.fanfiction.net. Classes opting to make a graphic short story can use the program Comic Life, available as a free download.

2. Vulcan Miming

Using only gestures and no dialogue, students can create a mimed version of the *Vulcanalia* story to the score, included with this supplement.