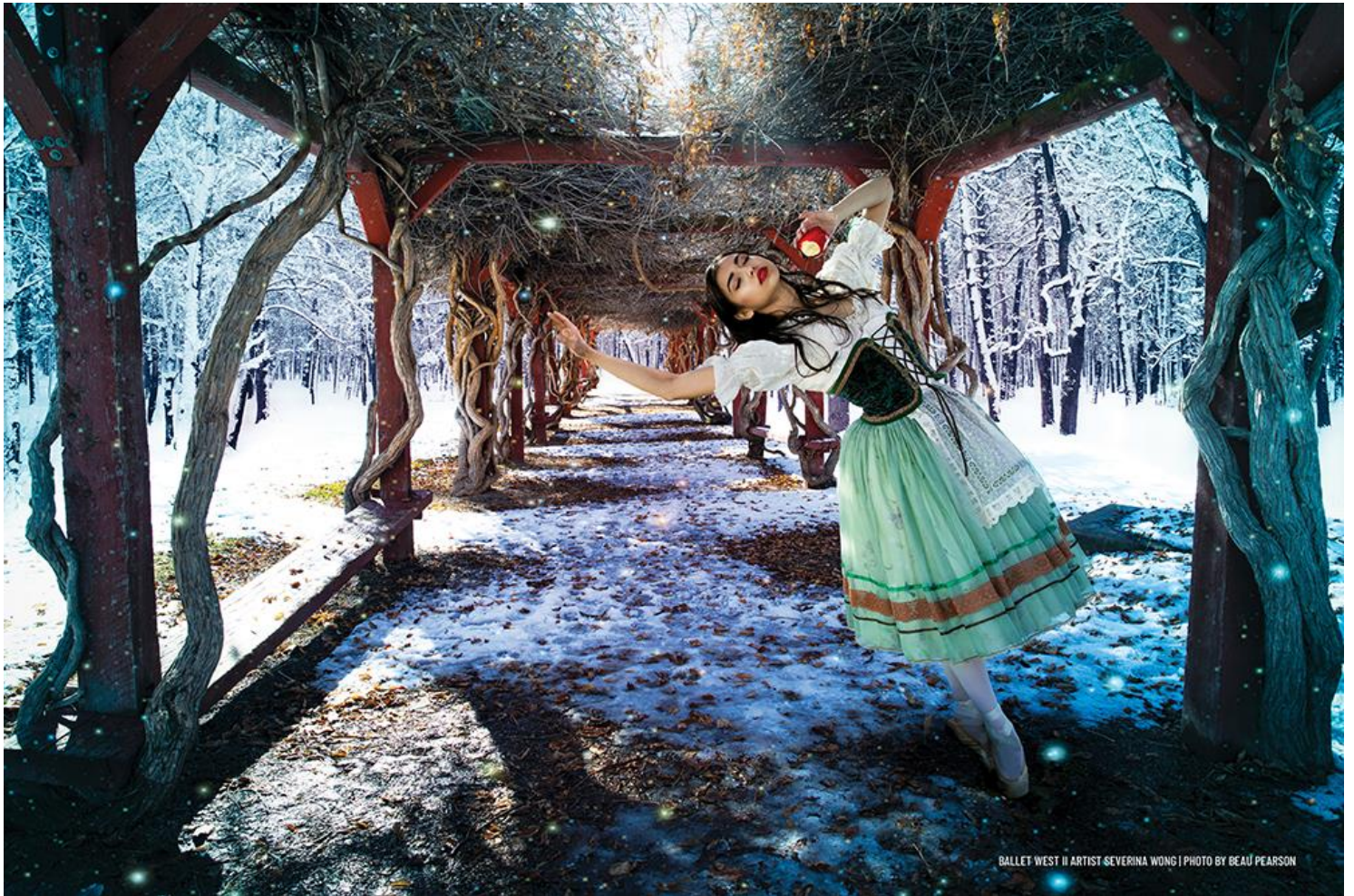


Ballet West Student In-Theater Presentations

Presents

*Fairy Tale Theatre*



BALLET WEST II ARTIST SEVERINA WONG | PHOTO BY BEAU PEARSON

**Snow White**



Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Utah State Legislature and the Utah State Board of Education have created a remarkable program that enriches the lives of schoolchildren in every community in the State. This program is called "Professional Outreach Program to Schools" or POPS for short and is funded through the Public Education Appropriation Committee and the Utah State Board of Education.

15 professional organizations currently participate in the POPS program and the RFP program. Together, they bring artists, dancers, musicians, and thespians into the classroom to work directly with students. The art groups coordinate their visits so that each area of the state and different schools are visited each year. The groups work through each school district's coordinator for arts or science. Then the principal is contacted and visits scheduled.

There is no cost to the schools receiving these visits because of the appropriation from Public Education Appropriation Committee to the Utah State Board of Education. Further, every organization participating in POPS brings at least a 100% match of private to state dollars. Thus, schoolchildren all over Utah benefit from the private donations to these 15 world-class organizations.

The groups that receive funding from the POPS program are:

**Ballet West**  
**Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art**  
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**Repertory Dance Theatre**  
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**Utah Festival Opera and Musical Theatre**  
**Utah Film Center**  
**Utah Museum of Contemporary Art**  
**Utah Shakespeare Festival**  
**Utah Opera**  
**Utah Symphony**

We thank you for your past support and ask you to continue supporting the POPS program.  
Sincerely,

Peter Christie  
Director of Educational Programs

# Ballet West Student In-Theater Presentations

Presents

## ***Snow White***

**Presented by Ballet West II and Frederick Quinney Lawson Ballet West Academy**

**Choreography and Libretto:** Pamela Robinson Harris

**Assistant Choreographer:** Christopher Sellars

**Music:** Edvard Grieg, Johann Strauss II

**Musical Selections and Arrangement:** Pamela Robinson Harris

**Music and Sound Editing:** Ken Kruckenberg at Sonic Pathways

**Rehearsal Assistants:** Arolyn Williams, Emily Adams

**Costumes:** David Heuvel

**Sets:** Thomas George

**Lighting:** Joseph R. Walls

**Narration:** Adam Sklute, Christopher Renstrom

Co-commissioned by Ballet West and Cincinnati Ballet

World Premiere: November 8, 2019, Janet Quinney Lawson Capitol Theatre, Salt Lake City, Utah

Featuring Dancers from Ballet West II, The Ballet West Academy Professional Training Division, and The Frederick Quinney Lawson Ballet West Academy

## **Synopsis**

In a far-away land, a good king and queen dream of having a child. After a long wait, they are blessed with a baby girl, whom they name Snow White. Shortly after Snow White's birth, the good queen dies. The king remarries, but this time to a proud and vain queen who values her beauty above all else.

Snow White grows older and lovelier and, on her sixteenth birthday, meets a handsome prince. The vain queen begins to fear that Snow White's beauty will surpass her own. She orders her huntsman to take Snow White into the forest and kill her. But the huntsman spares her life, and Snow White finds refuge in the comfort of the forest animals, who lead her to the cozy cottage of seven friendly dwarfs.

The vain queen learns from her magic mirror that Snow White is still alive, and forms a new plan to kill the young girl. Disguised as a peddler, the vain queen visits the dwarfs' cottage and tempts Snow White with a poisoned apple. Snow White cannot resist, and falls to the ground after one bite.

The dwarfs return home from their mines to find Snow White's body, and place her in a glass coffin. Then one day, the handsome prince Snow White met on her sixteenth birthday finds the dwarfs' cottage while travelling through the forest. With true love's kiss, he awakens Snow White from the poisoned apple's spell. Snow White and the prince return to the kingdom together and live happily ever after.

Although this is not the Disney version of this classic fairy tale, you may find a version of Snow White online at:

[https://www.worldoftales.com/fairy\\_tales/Brothers\\_Grimm/Margaret\\_Hunt/Little\\_Snow-white.html](https://www.worldoftales.com/fairy_tales/Brothers_Grimm/Margaret_Hunt/Little_Snow-white.html)

## Narration for: Snow White, A Grimm Brothers' Tale

### Act 1: 1st Narration after Overture and Introduction of the Dwarfs

Wilhelm: Well hello there and how nice it is to see you all!  
Jakob: We are the Brothers' Grimm...I am Jakob.  
Wilhelm: I am Wilhelm.  
Jakob: And in our time, we wrote fairy tales.  
Wilhelm: What is a fairy tale...one might ask?  
Jakob: Simply put, a fairy tale is a story about far away lands, imaginary beings, like trolls, elves or dwarfs and...  
Wilhelm: *Magic.*  
Jakob: And this tale, called *Snow White*, could be our favorite!  
Wilhelm: Shall I begin?  
Jakob: Yes! Indeed!  
Wilhelm: Once upon time, a King and Queen ruled over a far-away kingdom. The Queen was beautiful, kind, gentle and all of her subjects adored her. Her only sadness was she longed for a child.  
Jakob: Each year in the heart of Winter, the King and Queen invited one and all to celebrate the Winter solstice by lighting a Yuletide Log.  
Wilhelm: *"Come bring with joy, all my merry girls and boys, the Yuletide Log to the fire. Let its flame burn along for twelve days strong, so good fortune surrounds us the whole year long."*

### 2nd Narration after the Solstice Celebration

Jakob: The next day, as snowflakes danced like feathers in the sky, the Queen sat at a window with a nice ebony frame, sewing. As she looked up from her sewing at the new falling snow, a bluebird flew by, startling the Queen and she pricked her finger on the needle. Three drops of her blood fell upon the snow and because the red looked so beautiful against the white snow, the good Queen wished,...  
Wilhelm: *"Ah me, if only I might have a daughter with skin as sparkling as the new fallen snow, lips as red as blood and hair as black as this window frame."*  
Jakob: And when it was Fall, the good Queen's wish came true and she had a baby daughter, who was just as she had imagined and the baby princess was named Snow White.  
Wilhelm: But shortly after Snow White's birth, the good Queen became very ill and sadly...she died.  
Jakob: After a year had passed, the King re-married another beautiful Queen, but she was proud and very vain, and could not bear the thought that anyone should be more beautiful than she.  
Wilhelm: This wicked Queen had an enchanted mirror that could speak only the truth. Each time she would ask the mirror:  
Jakob: *"Mirror, mirror against the wall, who in this land is the fairest of all?"*  
Wilhelm: The mirror would reply,  
Jakob: *"You, oh Queen, are the fairest of all."*  
Wilhelm: And then her wicked heart would rejoice!

### 3rd Narration after New Queen introduction and 1st mirror scene

Jakob: Snow White grew up and became more and more beautiful. When she was 16, she was as lovely as a bright sunny day and even more beautiful than the Queen herself.  
Wilhelm: For unlike the vain Queen, Snow White's heart was light and filled with love for every living soul. And everywhere throughout the land people spoke of Snow White's beauty.

Jakob: In celebration of her sixteenth birthday, the King threw her a birthday “Masquerade Ball”.  
And before the festivities began, Snow White met a charming Prince; who bestowed her with a necklace meant only for the “fairest” in all the land... This infuriated the vain Queen.

Wilhelm: The Prince, whose kingdom had just been attacked, had also come to ask for help, from Snow White’s father. And when the “Ball” was over, the King left to provide aide to the Prince.

Jakob: Snow was sad to see her father leave. She loved him so very much; and the vain Queen promised the King that she would look after his beautiful daughter. But, as soon as Snow’s father left, the Queen stole the beautiful necklace away from Snow White’s neck and rushed back to her magic mirror.

#### **4th Narration after the Masquerade Ball**

Wilhelm: Again, the Queen asked her mirror, “*Mirror, Mirror against the wall, who in this land is the fairest of all?*”

Jakob: But this time the mirror replied:

Wilhelm: “*Oh lady Queen you are fair tis true, but Snow White is a thousand times more fair than you.*”

Jakob: At this, the Queen flew into a jealous rage. She summoned for her huntsman and demanded that he:

Wilhelm: “*Take the girl away into the forest; I can no longer bear to look at her. Kill her and bring me back her heart in this box.*”

Jakob: The Huntsman led Snow White into the forest but as he drew his knife to pierce her innocent heart, she began to weep.

Wilhelm: “*Why are you trying to kill me?*” she begged.

Jakob: And the Huntsman said:

Wilhelm: “*The queen has ordered me to do so!*” “*But dear child I cannot kill you. Here take back the necklace she stole from you and run away!*” “*It is your only salvation!*”

Jakob: Grateful, Snow gave the Huntsman a hug goodbye and quickly fled.

Wilhelm: And then the Huntsman did return the box to the vain Queen, but not with the heart of Snow White. Instead, inside the box was the heart of a wild boar...(For how could the Queen ever really know the difference?)

#### **5th Narration after the Huntsman gives the Vain Queen the box**

Jakob: When Snow White fled the huntsman; the deeper she went into the woods, the more and more frightened she became.

Wilhelm: And it was now getting dark and Snow was tired, and hungry and just as she was about to give up all hope...

Jakob: She found herself surrounded by friendly forest animals, and they led her safely to the door of a wee little cottage.

Wilhelm: Snow White politely knocked on the door, but there was no answer, so she decided to go inside.

#### **6th Narration after Snow White falls asleep**

Jakob: Later that evening, the owners of the wee little cottage returned home from a long day’s work mining for silver and gold. Can you guess who they are?

Wilhelm: You all saw them before our tale began. The seven Dwarfs.

Jakob: In our time, a dwarf was a mythical creature, small in size who had great skill in mining.

Wilhelm: And immediately upon entering their home, they noticed someone had been there, for small bites of each of their dinners were gone.

Jakob: And when they got up from the table to get ready for bed they discovered a beautiful girl sleeping ever so peacefully in their chair. They decided not to wake her. They gently covered her with a blanket and all went to bed knowing they would speak to the girl in the morning.

## **Act 2: 1st Narration after Overture**

Wilhelm: Hello again, shall we continue?

Jakob: Yes, well, where were we? The very next morning when Snow White awoke, she saw the seven dwarfs and became frightened. But, she soon realized that they were friendly. So when they asked her name she quickly replied:

Wilhelm: *"My name is Snow White".*

Jakob: One of the dwarfs asked, *"How did you find your way to our cottage?"*

Wilhelm: So she told them of her evil stepmother's plan to kill her, and how the Huntsman had saved her life, and how she had run the entire day thru the forest, finally stumbling upon their cottage.

Jakob: The Dwarfs spoke together for some time and then one of them said, *"If you would be willing to cook, make beds, wash, sew, knit and keep everything neat and tidy, then you may stay with us forever and you shall have everything that you shall ever need!"*

Wilhelm: Snow White was grateful and she lived happily with her new friends.

Jakob: Each morning the dwarfs went into the mountains mining for gold and silver. But, leaving Snow alone every day made them worry, and they would warn her:

Wilhelm: *"Beware of your step-mother, The Vain Queen, for soon she will know that you are here!" And NEVER visit with any strangers while we are gone!"*

Jakob : But...in truth, Snow White was never really alone for she had made friends with forest animals and they kept her company while the dwarfs were away.

## **2nd Narration after Snow says goodbye to the forest animals**

Jakob: Now back at the castle, the Vain Queen believing that she had captured Snow White's heart, was confident that she was once again the most beautiful in all the land. So she stepped before her mirror and asked:

Wilhelm: *"Mirror, Mirror against the wall, who in this land is the fairest of all?"*

Jakob: And much to her surprise the mirror replied: *"You, my Queen, are fair; it is true. But Snow White, beyond the mountain with the seven dwarfs, is STILL a thousand times more fair than you."*

Wilhelm: Shocked, the Queen realized the Huntsman had deceived her. So she thought and thought of how to rid herself of Snow White once and for all.

Jakob: Finally she knew just what to do...so she went into her most secret room and made a poisoned apple. From the outside the apple looked delicious and anyone who saw it would want to eat it. But anyone who might taste even a tiny morsel of it would in fact, die. Then the Queen disguised herself as an old peddler woman, traveled to the Dwarfs house and knocked on the door.

Jakob: *"Hello my dear, would you like one of my delicious apples?"*, asked the old woman.

Wilhelm: *"No thank you; I cannot accept anything from strangers,"* said Snow.

Jakob: *"Don't be afraid, look, I'll cut it two, I will eat half and you may eat half."*

Wilhelm: Snow White longed for the beautiful apple and when she saw the old woman eating part of it she could no longer resist. She barely had a bite in her mouth when she fell to the ground, seemingly dead.

Jakob: *"Beautiful girl, your friends the dwarfs shall never awaken you!"*

Wilhelm: "Back at the castle the Vain Queen once again asked her mirror:

Jakob: *"Mirror, Mirror against the wall, who in this land is the fairest of all?"*

Wilhelm: And when the mirror replied: *"You, my Queen, are the fairest of all."* Her cruel and jealous heart did finally rest.

### **3rd Narration after Snow dies and Mirror, Mirror**

Jakob: When the dwarfs returned home they found Snow White lying on the floor. Not a single breath came from her lips. For three whole days, they sat round her and wept.

Wilhelm: But then, to honor their dear and beautiful Snow, they placed her in a coffin made of shining glass. And upon the coffin was written: Here lies Snow White. She was a Princess. And they kept the coffin in front of their cottage.

Jakob: One day a Prince was passing by the dwarfs cottage and he saw Snow lying in the coffin. He could not believe his eyes. It was the beautiful Princess Snow White to whom he had given a necklace. And yes...she was still wearing it.

Wilhelm: He opened the glass to gaze upon her and overcome with grief he kissed her forehead. As he did a single tear from his eye fell upon her blood red lips.

Jakob: He took her hands in his and professed his love for her; and suddenly, magically, the lovely Snow White opened her eyes. She was alive! The Prince asked Snow if she would marry him and she immediately replied:

Wilhelm: *"Yes of course I will marry you!" "But please, you must tell me, how is my father?"*

Jakob: The Prince assured Snow that her father was well and they decided to return to her father's castle to be married.

### **4th Narration after Snow White Awakens**

Wilhelm: On the day of Snow White's wedding, the King summoned for his wife...

Jakob: And what his wife did not know; was that instead of making a poison that kills, she had mistakenly made a potion that sealed true love's bond...

Wilhelm: And because in the end, her mistake indeed saved Snow's life...

Jakob: The Vain Queen was forgiven and her wicked heart finally found peace.

Wilhelm: Snow White and the Prince were married and lived happily ever after.



Dancers: Claire Wilson and Noel Jensen Photo: Beau Pearson

# Ballet West Company History

From Balanchine to Bournonville and Petipa to Tharp, Ballet West boasts a rich and varied repertoire, elegant and versatile artists and an American style and legacy that is as dynamic, expansive and unexpected as the Rocky Mountain region it represents. Ballet West has toured the world several times over presenting the very best in American classical ballet.

Ballet West was established in Salt Lake City in 1963. Willam F. Christensen was the company's first artistic director, co-founding the company together with Utah's "First Lady of the Arts" Glenn Walker Wallace. In 1951, Christensen had established the first ballet department in an American university at The University of Utah and with the tireless assistance of Mrs. Enid Cosgriff this program grew into the Utah Civic Ballet, Ballet West's first incarnation. But this was not the first ballet company Willam Christensen's founded. Along with his brothers Lew and Harold, Christensen made history by establishing the oldest ballet company in the western United States, the San Francisco Ballet. There he went on to create the first full-length American productions of *Coppélia*, *Swan Lake*, and his evergreen production of *The Nutcracker*, which remains in Ballet West's repertoire to this day.

With 37 company members, 15 second company members, and a thriving academy that trains dancers of all ages, many of whom have gone on to professional careers with Ballet West and companies around the world, Ballet West ranks among the top professional ballet companies in America. Since its inception, the Company has had five artistic directors – its founder Willam Christensen, Bruce Marks, John Hart, Jonas Kåge and currently Adam Sklute, each who have helped to build Ballet West's unique and expansive profile.

A 20th Century ballet pioneer, Christensen developed a distinctly American and theatrical repertoire for his company based on his early training in Utah and New York City as well as his years traversing the American Vaudeville circuit. He also built a strong connection to the works of George Balanchine. In 1975 Christensen invited the great American dancer Bruce Marks to join him as Ballet West's Co-Artistic Director. Marks became Artistic Director in 1978 when Christensen retired. Under Marks' direction, the company presented its first full production of *Swan Lake* and it earned a reputation for developing emerging choreographers of the time. Also during this period Marks made history, along with his wife, the acclaimed Danish Ballerina, Toni Lander, by presenting the first American full-length production of *Abdallah* by renowned 19th Century Danish choreographer, August Bournonville. John Hart, C.B.E., former dancer, administrator, and Assistant Director of The Royal Ballet in England succeeded Marks as Artistic Director of Ballet West In 1985. Under his leadership, the company's repertoire was expanded to include more well-loved 19th Century classics such as *The Sleeping Beauty*. Hart further enriched the company's treasure trove of ballets with the works of many early 20th Century masters, most notably the great English choreographer, Sir Frederick Ashton. From 1985 to 1996, Hart engaged San Francisco-based Val Caniparoli as Ballet West's resident choreographer. Internationally known dancer and choreographer Jonas Kåge served as Artistic Director from 1997 to 2006. During this time Kåge maintained Ballet West's repertoire of classics while revitalizing its profile with notable late 20th Century choreographers such as Christopher Bruce, Hans van Manen, Glen Tetley and William Forsythe.

Since 2007, Artistic Director Adam Sklute, former dancer, Ballet Master and Associate Director of The Joffrey Ballet has further energized and expanded Ballet West's remarkable repertoire with works by the most renowned choreographers of today such as Ulysses Dove, Jiří Kylián, Mark Morris, Twyla Tharp, and Stanton Welch. Sklute has also introduced the elegant historical masterpieces from the great Ballets Russes of the early 20th Century and continues to preserve Ballet West's classical legacy. Sklute has further strengthened Ballet West's heritage by introducing new creations by local, national and international choreographers.

For 50 years, Willam Christensen and Ballet West have developed and influenced innumerable great artists in the ballet world. Some notable figures include Bart Cook, Finis Jhung, Jay Jolley, Victoria Morgan, Tomm Ruud, Michael Smuin, Richard Tanner, and Kent Stowell.

With this eclectic and ever expanding outlook, Ballet West is truly an American pioneer in the world of dance.



# A Brief History of Dance

Dance is a way of expressing oneself that has been around throughout the centuries. People have used the language of dance to express a feeling or story. Ancient Greek culture is credited with the first theatrical dances, but each culture has an identifiable way to express itself through movement. The reasons may be spiritual, social or religious but dance is everywhere. It surrounds us. Weddings, social clubs, in the movies, Broadway, all are examples of how dance is ever present in our lives. It lifts our spirits, releases tension, or marks an occasion.

As a form of dance, ballet stems from the five positions of the legs and arms that have been built upon through the centuries and codified. Classical dance is distinguished by the use of external rotation or turn-out that creates the foundation of classical ballet as well as a freedom of movement in all directions. In the last two centuries the “pointe shoe” and the toe dancing that came with the introduction of it have been most identifiable with ballet.

European royalty were the first to develop ballets as a form of entertainment. Catherine de Medici, the Italian Queen of France is responsible for bringing the Italian form of “comedia dell’arte” to the French court in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. France’s King Louis XIV was the first balletomane, and he created the first ballet academy, *Academie Royale de Musique* in 1669 that still exists today as the Paris Opera Ballet. Therefore, most of the ballet terms are in French. Women were not involved in the creation of many of the first ballet steps and weren’t even allowed to partake in the art form until 1681. Once allowed, ballerinas began to shorten and lighten their skirts so they could better execute the steps and their movement began to look more and more effortless.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, ballet began to stand on its own and was no longer an addendum to an opera. It moved from the palaces to proscenium stages in the 18<sup>th</sup> century thanks in part to the choreographer and ballet master to Marie Antoinette, Jean-Georges Noverre. Noverre thought that movement itself should tell a story and under his influence, dancers became trained professionals and the “ballet d’action,” a precursor to the story ballet, was born.

The Romantic Era of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries coincided with the Industrial Revolution. There was a sense of displacement in society; therefore, storylines with themes of good versus evil, spirit versus flesh flourished. *La Sylphide* was the first ballet to introduce a supernatural character and influenced changes in theme, style and costuming in ballets. *Giselle*, choreographed by Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot in 1841, is the culmination of these changes as the heroine falls in love with the wrong royal, dies of a broken heart and comes back from the dead or spirit world to find redemption. The most significant introduction of the Romantic Era was that of the pointe shoe. Italian ballerina Marie Taglioni danced “en pointe” in *La Sylphide* in 1822. From that day on, dance was forever changed. The audience began to appreciate ballerinas that could execute effortless technique all while portraying a character.

The most influential person in America during this time was an Italian ballerina named Fanny Elssler. She toured the country raising the standards of ballet greatly. She had adoring fans that drank champagne from her slippers. America’s first ballerina was Mary Ann Lee from Philadelphia. She studied in Philadelphia as well as in Paris under Jean Coralli who taught her *Giselle*. She was the first to perform the authentic version in America with a man by the name of George Washington Smith. These two were ahead of their time because it was a few more years for ballet to take off on its own in America not involving singing or burlesque dancing.

The mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century ushered in the Classical Era. There had been a decline in the popularity of ballet in France, but the Russians maintained the integrity of classical dance during this time. A man by the name of Marius Petipa arrived in Russia in 1847 and he, along with Lev Ivanov, produced many classical ballets in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century such as *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*, and *Swan Lake*. The Maryinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, to this day, is a foundation of Russian ballet. The scores for these ballets were commissioned and written with the story line in mind. It was popular in this day to have a composer work for a certain theatre and write music for ballets and operas. These ballets were so strong that they have withstood the test of time having changed little over the last century and being referred to as the classics.

The early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought the Modern Era. Sergei Diaghilev and many of Russia’s finest artists left the Maryinsky Theater during the Russian Revolution in 1917 and

founded Ballet Russes or went on to teach around the world. Finding an international audience, members of Ballet Russes became household names all while influencing the future of the art form. Many protégés such as Ninette de Valois and George Balanchine went on to form major ballet companies, The Royal Ballet in England and The New York City Ballet in the United States, respectively.

The beginning of the contemporary or abstract ballet was born when Diaghilev, a major producer of ballets, broke away from the “story” ballet and started requesting that choreographers make briefer ballets. He also embraced the change happening in the music world where the rigidity of rhythms relaxed and different styles of music influenced different styles of dance. These ballets appealed to a wider range of people, not just royalty or aristocracy, and became known as repertoire. A company’s repertoire, or repertory, could be grouped in threes, hence the “triple bill.” Repertory evenings are audience favorites because more of the variety is offered.

The middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century continued to bring some exciting changes in the art form. The world had survived two wars and Russia was no longer open for outsiders to see. Europeans fled the wars and continued west to the Americas. Pioneers in modern dance such as Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham were taking dance in a new direction, all the while breaking down the walls of strict classical technique. American choreographers were experimenting with these new styles and America found itself becoming the new center of dance. Russian stars began to defect and break from the rigidity of the classical style. Dance in the west was being influenced by jazz, modern dance and different cultures around the world. Rudolf Nureyev, Natalia Makrova, and Mikhail Baryshnikov were the first to dazzle audiences with their brilliant technique but craved the opportunity to dance other styles of dance. Eventually, with the end of the Cold War, vast opportunities were opened up worldwide. All of this kept raising the bar for dancers, and dancers today are required to have a mastery of many styles in dance. They have to perform the classics with authenticity and purity of line, as well as stretch themselves in neoclassical and modern works.

Dance has been around for centuries. Classical dance in all its’ varying forms has remained a strong cultural presence in many cities throughout the world and the United States, including Salt Lake City. As a language, classical dance will continue to find ways of expressing itself through movement. It will continue to dazzle the eye and enliven the senses. Ballet encompasses the purest of styles all the way to the funkiest. Ballet is, after all, an art form meant to be enjoyed by all.

## How do we put ballet all together?

Like other kinds of performance dance (dance that takes place on stage, in movies, or on television for others to watch), Ballet is a combination of dancing, music, costumes, scenery, and lighting. A new ballet requires the creativity and teamwork of many talented people. The choreographer, of course, has the idea for the new ballet and creates all the steps, but also counts on a number of other artists to help bring the vision to life. If the ballet is to have original music, the choreographer works closely with a composer, who writes the music or decides what sounds to use. The costume designer, set designer, and lighting designer also play important parts in helping the choreographer to make the ballet look just the way it has been envisioned.

**This section describes the different roles of the many people involved, who work as a team to help create a new work of art.**

**Choreographer** The choreographer is the creator of a new ballet. Whether they are trying to tell a story, interpret a particular piece of music, or express a certain mood or idea, it is the choreographer who puts together all the ballet’s steps and movements. Just as a painter uses color, a writer uses words, and a composer uses musical notes, the choreographer uses the steps and movements of ballet to create their masterpiece.

If the ballet is to tell a story, like *The Sleeping Beauty* or *The Nutcracker*, the choreographer must first write an outline of the action, divided into scenes and acts just like a play. Because there are no words in ballet, everything must be communicated through movement and gesture, and the story should be told as clearly and simply as possible. If a story ballet is created for music that already exists, the choreographer must also fit the story to the music. If the

choreographer is not working from a story, they might create a ballet to express a certain emotion or feeling. In this case, the movement itself is all-important. With no story outline to follow, the choreographer uses the movement to create patterns and communicate their ideas to the audience.

Choreographing a new ballet is a very slow process. It can take hours of rehearsal to create one or two minutes of dance. Creating a whole ballet can take months. Choreographers work in different ways when it comes to creating the actual dance steps and movements of a new ballet. Some choreographers work out all the steps ahead of time and just teach them to the dancers once they are in the studio rehearsals. Others, like George Balanchine, go into the studio with a good idea of what they want to do, but only create the specific steps and movements while working with the dancers. For Balanchine, the dancers were an important part of the creative process of choreography. Trying different movements and seeing how they looked on different dancers' bodies helped him to decide what steps to use. However they do it, once the choreographer has decided on all the steps and movements, the dancers must then rehearse the steps over and over until it is perfect.

At the beginning of the process, even as they are beginning to work with the dancers, the choreographer also must work with the set, costume and lighting designers. The designers' jobs are to collaborate with the choreographer to help them realize the full effect of the creation. The choreographer is the one who coordinates and oversees all phases of the creation of the ballet from beginning to end, from the review of initial design sketches to the approval of final staging and lighting effects.

The choreographer finally gets to see his work on the stage for the first time during the "stage rehearsal." This is his last chance to make final changes before the "dress rehearsal," when the ballet will be performed for the first time with costuming, sets, lighting and an orchestra. The dress rehearsal is also a time for "fine tuning" before a new ballet has its world premiere before a live audience. That's when the choreographer has the thrill of seeing their creation come to life.

**Composer** A composer is a person who writes music. Some ballets are created using music that already exists. In that case, the choreographer must become thoroughly familiar with the music and use it to help shape the movements he creates to tell a story or communicate an emotion. At other times, the choreographer might commission new music from a composer. In this case, the choreographer outlines their ideas for the new ballet and the composer responds with music that the choreographer can work with. The composer and choreographer will work very closely throughout the creation of the new ballet so that the movement and the music go together exactly the right way.

**Set designer** The set designer creates scenery and backdrops that help the audience enter the world the choreographer is trying to take them to. After talking with the choreographer about their ideas, the set designer draws detailed pictures of their vision for each scene and sometimes constructs scale models of the stage settings. When the choreographer has approved the drawings, the backdrops are painted and skilled carpenters construct the sets. The set designer must also understand architecture and engineering, making sure all parts of a set fit together and can easily be moved by the stage crew.

**Costume designer** The costume designer is responsible for clothes, hats, shoes, wigs, jewelry, and, sometimes, make up for the dancers. After talking to the choreographer about their ideas and watching some of the rehearsals, the costume designer draws color sketches for each costume for the new ballet. Using color, different fabrics, and just the right accents, the new costumes must be appropriate for the characters in a story or help convey the choreographer's concept. Once the costume designs are approved, the fabrics are ordered and the costumes are cut and sewn by skilled dressmakers and seamstresses and fitted on each dancer. The costumes must fit perfectly so that the dancers can move freely on the stage. Many costumes, like tutus, are made by hand and take many hours to build. It can cost up to \$5,000 to make just one professional tutu.

**Lighting designer** The lighting designer works closely with the choreographer, the music, the sets and the costumes. They use colored lights, spotlights and special effects to help create the mood for the new ballet and add just the right atmosphere. Their lighting design, which is finalized during the "dress rehearsal" just days before opening night, is entered into a computer and operated at each performance by a technician located backstage.

## How does ballet tell the story?

Most often stories are told using words, but in ballet there are usually no words are used to convey the storyline if there is one. Productions containing a story rely on the Scenery, Costuming, Lighting and Pantomime to help explain what is going on. Reading about the ballet ahead of time either in the program's synopsis or from information found at the library is always the best way to understand the plot. Let's look at how these four things help tell the story.

**Scenery:** The Scenery is often the first thing you see. It immediately sets the style of the piece. If it is a simple village scene such as in *Giselle*, we know that peasants, not royalty, will reside there. The scene will unfold in a more grounded manner. In ballets such as *The Sleeping Beauty*, the curtain rises on a grand hall inside a Castle. A much more rich and royal background will allow for a more formal style of story telling.

**Costuming:** Costuming, as with the scenery, sets up what kind of characters the dancers are portraying and the era in which the piece is taking place. Costuming includes hairstyles or wigs and makeup. White wigs are indicative of royalty and can be a clue as to what century the piece is from. Dark colored costumes and makeup are indicative of sinister or evil characters, whereas lighter colors are reserved for the more pure or happy characters. Looking closely to the costumes can also give you lots of clues about whether the character is human or supernatural.

**Lighting:** Lighting is key to setting the mood of the ballet. A brightly lit stage is used for happy occasions such as a wedding or birthday. If a mean or scary character is about to enter, the lights may grow darker and more mysterious. Lighting can also give you an idea of who is important to the storyline during a particular scene by using spotlights on particular characters.

**Pantomime:** Pantomime or mime is a universal form of sign language used in ballet. The gestures used are the same regardless of the ballet or the character using them. They certainly can look more graceful from the elegant Lilac Fairy than from the crude and evil Carabosse.

## What did you learn?

Can you name 4 ways ballet productions help tell the story?

What clues do hairstyles, makeup and costumes give about a character?

A brightly lit castle is a clue that:

A sad character resides there?

A princess and her family live there?

An evil sorceress resides there?

What can dark flashing lights tell us about the action about to take place?

How do dancers talk to each other?

## What is a dancer's day like?

Professional ballet dancers are like professional athletes. Their workday is designed to help them stay in top physical condition, perfect their craft, and learn parts for upcoming performances. Here's a glimpse at what dancers do each day to make sure they are always ready to perform at the highest level.

**Company Class** Professional ballet dancers all over the world, whether they are beginners or prima ballerinas, start their day by taking a 90-minute ballet class. This is an extremely important part of the dancer's day. These classes are taught by the ballet master or ballet mistress and follow the same basic structure. During the first half of the class, while holding onto

the barre, the dancers do movements that strengthen their muscles, loosen their joints, and keep them flexible. They also do exercises that strengthen their balance, equilibrium and control. For the second part of the class, the dancers move away from the barre to the center of the studio. Here, under the direction of the teacher, they do unsupported exercise, sequences, and combinations that include pirouettes, jumps, and other traveling steps. The sequence of exercises is designed to help the dancers increase their stamina, perfect their technique, and improve the overall quality of their dancing.

**Rehearsals** The rest of the dancer's day is taken up with rehearsals for the different pieces they are preparing to be performed. Rehearsals, which are held in different studios throughout the day, are scheduled by the ballet master or mistress and posted two days in advance. The dancer's must check the schedule each day and keep track of when and where they have rehearsal, and what they are going to rehearse when they get there. A dancer could be rehearsing three or four different pieces at the same time. Rehearsals usually last until about 6:30 in the evening. After rehearsal, or if they have a break during the day, a dancer might spend time preparing their shoes, in costume fittings, in physical therapy if they are dealing with an injury, or at the gym working on their strength and conditioning.

**Stage Rehearsal** A couple of days before opening night of a ballet performance, the dancers, stage crew, artistic staff, and technicians move into the theater to rehearse. If the company is to perform a new ballet, a world premiere, this is the choreographer's first opportunity to see his work on stage. This is when he'll make a lot of last minute decisions about placement, movement, and spacing of the dancers, as well as the lighting for the piece to achieve the desired effect.

**Dress Rehearsal** At last the dancers get to perform a piece for the first time in costume with full orchestra. This is very different from dancing in the studio. During a dress rehearsal, the choreographer or artistic director will make last minute adjustments, or stop the dancers and musicians to correct anything that doesn't look or sound just right. Hopefully, the months of hard work have paid off and everybody is ready. The house lights dim, the audience grows quiet as the orchestra begins to play. It's opening night at the ballet!

## Common Questions about Ballet West

**What do the dancers do besides dance?** Dancing for Ballet West is a full time job. Thirty five dancers are given one year contracts that are reviewed every year. During that 12 month period they dance 34 weeks. They have to agree to abide by rules that are mutually agreed upon by the dancers and artistic staff. They have to maintain themselves in excellent condition learning three full length or story ballets a year along with one repertory program. They are often required to learn multiple roles.

**How often do dancers train?** Ballet dancers have to train their bodies up to six days a week. In addition to the daily ballet class that the company offers, many dancers choose to cross train with Pilates, yoga and weight lifting. Ballet requires muscle memory, and in order to teach their bodies to move effortlessly, dancers require constant ballet training.

**How do the dancers learn all the steps?** Ballet vocabulary has been around for centuries. Dancers train from an early age to learn the language of dance. When learning a ballet, the steps can be stylized but do come from the same basic vocabulary. Dancers spend many hours in the studio practicing the steps from a particular ballet in the sequence they are given. Most of a dancer's work is spent in this type of rehearsal situation. They work this way to create the muscle memory that is vital to the smooth and natural execution in performance.

**How long can dancers dance?** Professionally, dancers start at about 18 to 20 years of age with a professional company. In addition to the responsibilities that come along with a job, such as arriving prepared for class and rehearsal and representing Ballet West in a positive manner out in the world, dancers must maintaining themselves in good condition. A dancer who has trained themselves well and been free from major injury can dance well in to their 30's and sometimes 40's.

**How many pointe shoes do ballerinas use a season?** The length of one season is usually 10 months. Principal dancers are allotted 8-10 pairs a month, soloists 6-8 and corps 4-5. Of course dancers dance more some seasons and can request more shoes if they need them. Ballet West provides the shoes for the dancers spending over \$100,000 in one year.

**Do men ever dance on pointe?** Very rarely are men required to dance in point shoes. Certain choreographers have put men on point for their character to look awkward or funny. An example is "Bottom" in *The Dream*, choreographed by Fredrick Ashton.

**How many performances does Ballet West do a season?** Ballet West does four (4) fully produced performances in a contract year with seven (7) to nine (9) full performances each. They also perform for student audiences three (3) times during each show. Of course *The Nutcracker* runs the entire month of December with at least 35 full performances, and five (5) student matinees. Twice a year Ballet West tours to Ogden and to perform three (3) more shows for the northern Utah patrons. They also take *The Nutcracker* up there as well performing four (4) full shows and one student matinee. *The Nutcracker* is the only ballet that we perform exactly as it is in an evening performance. The other student audience performances get to see portions of an evening length performance but also get to learn about what happens back stage, and behind the scenes.

**What is Ballet West II?** Ballet West II is our second company which is made up of 6 male and 6 female young dancers that are still students but aspiring to dance professionally. They work 19 weeks of the season with the main company and 12 on their own. They are responsible with touring into schools and performing a program called Ballet West for Children that reaches 1000's of children a year.

**Do the dancers get to keep the costumes?** No, the costumes and sets are property of Ballet West. Dancers have costumes that are made for them specifically, but if they leave the company, the costume stays and is tailored to fit another dancer.

**What is male dancer called?** A male dancer is called a danseur or premier danseur. It is a title that is earned after achieving the highest level of consistency on the stage.

## Ballet by the Numbers

If there are 35 dancers in Ballet West and 15 in Ballet West II, how many dancers are there total?

How many additional weeks does the main Ballet West Company work than Ballet West II?

Can you name three things dancers do to train their bodies?

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## Problem solving

If a dancer has an 18 year career and he retires at the age of 41, how old was he when began?

If a Ballerina retires at age 39 and danced for 21 years, how long was her professional career?

If a ballerina uses 9 pairs of pointe shoes a month, and she works 10 months a year, how many shoes does she use a year? If she only uses 7 pairs for three of those months, what is the amount now?

Ballet West spends how much a year on pointe shoes?

How many point shoes does Ballet West buy every year when they have one (1) principle, three (3) soloists and seventeen (17) corps artists. A single pointe shoe costs \$75 a pair.

### Extra Credit:

Can you figure out how many performances Ballet West does in a contract year? Hint: The number can vary but only by a few.

# GLOSSARY OF BALLET TERMS

French is the international language for ballet terms since much of the ballet technique was developed in France during the 17th and 18th Centuries.

**A la seconde:** (ah-lah-seconde). To the side. For example you would do a battement degagé a la seconde, to the side.

**Adagio:** (ah-DAH-gee-o). Slow sustained movements; also refers to a series of slow moving exercises or choreography in which the male danseur lifts, supports or carries the ballerina (partnering). This is actually one of the few Italian ballet terms.

**Allégro:** (ah-LAY-grow). Another Italian word to describe quick lively steps or fast movement; also refers to the part of ballet class or combinations that includes fast steps, beats, jumps or turns.

**Arabesque:** (ah-ra-BESK). One of the basic poses in ballet in which the dancer stands on one leg with the other leg extended straight behind the body.

**Assemble:** (AH-sahm-blay). Literally meaning to assemble. Usually during a jump, the seconde leg chases the first to assemble while still airborne.

**Attitude:** (a-tee-TEWD). A classical position similar to the arabesque, except that the knee of raised leg is bent.

**Ballerina:** (ba-ler-EE-na). A female dancer.

**Ballet:** (ba-LAY). A theatrical piece in which a choreographer shows ideas in group or solo dancing to music, complete with costumes, scenery and lighting.

**Ballet Mistress/Master:** A person associated with a dance company who trains, rehearses, and teaches choreography to the dancers.

**Balletomane:** A devotee of ballet

**Barre:** (bahr). A wooden or metal, horizontal rail that dancers use for light support during their daily ballet class; usually attached to a wall just below chest height.

**Battement:** (BAT-moh). A *Kicking* movement of the working leg (the leg that is doing the action.) Examples include; battement degagé battement fondue and grand battement

**Batterie:** (baht-REE). Any quick movement where the legs or feet beat together, or one foot beats against the other.

**Bourrée:** (boo-RAY). Small, quick and even steps, usually done en pointe, that give a gliding impression.

**Brisé:** (BREE-say). A movement that is similar to an assemblé except it's generally performed pitched forward at the waist with the legs angled diagonally forward. Also can be done to the back (derrière) with an arch in the back. An example of continuous brises is the coda the Bluebird divertissement in Act III Sleeping Beauty.

**Chaines:** (shin-ayes). A series of rapid turns executed in a straight line or circle en point or demi-point.

**Character dance:** Any national or folk dance based on movements associated with a particular country, profession, personality or mode of living. Examples include the Mazurka, Czardas, or Spanish dances.

**Choreography:** (cor-ee-OG-ra-fee). The creation of dances, steps, groupings and patterns using any movement, including traditional ballet steps. This is usually done to music.

**Choreographer:** (cor-ee-OG-ra-fur). The person who has the ideas and arranges and creates the choreography.

**Classical ballet:** (1) The traditional style of ballet, which stresses the academic technique developed through the centuries of the existence of ballet. (2) A ballet in which the style and structure adhere to the definite framework established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Examples include The Sleeping Beauty, The Nutcracker and Swan Lake.

**Corps de ballet:** (cor duh ba-LAY). The dancers in a ballet who dance as a large group or ensemble.

**Danseur:** (dahn-SUHR). A male dancer.

**Director (Artistic):** The leader of a dance company who hires the dancers and chooses the company's repertoire.

**En Pointe:** (on pwent). On the points; to dance on the tip of the toes. This must be done in specially built ballet shoes, usually only worn by women.

**Entrechat:** (ahn-truh-SHAH). A step in which the dancer jumps into the air and rapidly crosses the legs and feet in front and behind each other; usually followed by a number indicating the number of beats. For example: entrechat trois (three beats); entrechat quatre (four beats).

**Fouetté:** (foo-eh-TAY). A complete turn on one foot during which the dancer raises up and down using a whipping motion with the other leg to give momentum; usually done in a series of consecutive turns.

**Jeté:** (zhuh-TAY). A jump from one foot to the other. There is a wide variety of jetés, and they may be done in all different directions. A grand jeté is the largest of these jumps.

**Pantomime:** A balletic sign language that uses gestures and facial expressions to help tell a story.

**Pas de deux:** (pah duh DOO). Dance for two; also the traditional focal point of classical ballet.

**Pas de trois:** (pah duh TWAH). Dance for three.

**Pas de quatre:** (pah duh QWA-truh). Dance for four.

**Pas de dix:** (pah duh DEES). Dance for ten.

**Pirouette:** (peer-oo-WET). To spin on one leg, usually done in multiples of two or more complete spins.

**Plié:** (plee-AY). To bend (a bending of the knees while standing). One of the seven basic movements of ballet.



**Polonaise:** A processional dance in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time with which the court ballets of the 17<sup>th</sup> century were opened. The polonaise is a march in which two steps are taken forward on the demi-pointes and then the third step is taken flat with the supporting knee bent and the other leg raised in front.

**Port de bras:** (por duh BRAH). A movement or series of movements made by the arms through various positions.

**Repertoire:** (reh-per-TWAH). The collection of ballets that are performed by a ballet company.

**Romantic Ballet:** A style of ballet produced during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in which the accent was on the conveyance of a mood to tell the story. Examples include Giselle and La Sylphide.

**Spotting:** A term given to the movement of the head in pirouettes in which the dancer chooses a spot in front and, as the turn is made away from the spot, the head is the last to leave and the first to arrive back as the body completes the turn. This helps the dancer with balance and prevents them from getting dizzy.

**Tour en l'air:** (toor ahn LEHR). Turn in the air. Full or double turns in the air are usually only performed by the male dancer.

**Triple Bill:** An evening of ballet most often grouped in threes, but not always. Different styles can be performed in one evening which is both challenging and exciting to dancers and the audience alike.

**Turn Out:** To rotate the legs out from the hips which allows for better speed and flexibility and improves the ability to move in all directions.

**Tutu:** (TOO-too). A short classical ballet skirt made up of layers of tulle or net. The romantic tutu is a long skirt that reaches below the calf.

## Ballet Steps

### Posture

One of the most important things dancers learn very early in their training is good posture. Not only is this important for dancers, but for you as well so that your bodies grow up healthy and strong. Good posture includes having both feet flat on the floor; knees aligned with the feet; hips even and over the knees; shoulders square and over the hips; shoulders down; chin up and stomach held in. Everyone should practice good posture so that his or her bodies will grow up straight, strong and healthy.

### Turn-out

Dancer's feet point out to the side instead of facing straight forward? Dancers train their legs to externally rotate from their hips from the very first ballet class and practice all of our steps with this turnout. Turn-out adds beauty to the line of the body and helps the dancer to balance and move easily.

### The five positions

Over 300 years ago, Pierre Beauchamp, Louis XIV's dancing master, first worked out the five positions of the feet. Because they are the starting and ending points for all ballet steps, they are fundamental to classical ballet. Each position of the feet also has a corresponding arm position that goes with it.

# Five Positions in Ballet

First Position



Second Position



Third Position



Fourth Position



Fifth Position



Dancers in photos:  
First: Heather Thackeray  
Second: Allison Harvey  
Third: Sophia Priolo  
Fourth: Mary Pat Rysdon  
Fifth: Katrina Olson  
All photos by Quinn Farley

# Using Mime in Ballet

Classic story ballets, like *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Nutcracker*, use mime to help the dancers convey certain ideas, emotions and actions without speaking. A standard “mime” language is used by ballet dancers all over the world. Some are standard mime words, and the gestures required to convey their meanings are listed below.

Word	Gesture	Word	Gesture
<b>ANGER</b>	Shake your fists in the air	<b>ASK/BEG</b>	Clasp hands together in front
<b>BEAUTIFUL</b>	Make a circle around your face with your hand	<b>CRYING</b>	Trace tears down your face with your index finger.
<b>DANCE</b>	Circle your arms high over your head	<b>DIE/DEATH</b>	With clenched fists, cross your arms in front of your body
<b>ENTER</b>	Make a sweeping gesture across your body with both arms	<b>FEAR</b>	Hold your hands in front with palms out; lean upper body back or turned away
<b>HEAR</b>	Hold your hand behind your ear as if trying to hear	<b>I/ME</b>	Point to yourself with your finger
<b>KISS</b>	Touch your lips with your finger	<b>KNOCK</b>	Tap your fist in your hand three times
<b>LOVE</b>	Cross hands over your heart	<b>NO</b>	Turn your head or gesture with your arms
<b>ORDER</b>	Point to the floor with a strong motion	<b>PROTECT</b>	With your body facing the danger, throw back both arms and hold your head high
<b>SEE</b>	Place one hand by your eye, pointing to it	<b>STOP</b>	Hold up your hand with the palm facing out toward the other person
<b>THINK/REMEMBER</b>	Touch your temple with your index finger	<b>TRUE/FAITHFUL</b>	Hold two fingers high
<b>YES</b>	Nod your head up and down	<b>YOU/HE/SHE</b>	Gesture toward the other person with your palm up

## ACTIVITY 1: GIVE IT A TRY

- Objective: Help students gain an understanding of physical demands as well as physical benefits of dance.
- Meets USOE core requirements for physical education and fine arts – dance. PE Standard 1 - Achieve and maintain health-enhancing levels of physical fitness. PE Standard 3 - Demonstrate a variety of movement forms. Dance Standard 1 - Identify and safely demonstrate knowledge of the body and movement skills in performing dance. Dance Standard 2 - Identify and demonstrate the movement elements in performing dance.

**Background:** Every career places certain demands on those that perform the work. A banker must be able to do math and handle money. A police officer must know the law and protect the community. Professional athletes must be able to run, jump, pass and catch among other things. Ballet dancers are much like professional athletes; they must be physically prepared to do their work.

There are many physical demands that a dancer must meet. Most professional dancers have been practicing since they were very young. Every dancer learns very quickly the importance of stretching and warming up before beginning to dance. During a ballet performance, the dancer's body must be able to twist and turn in many ways. Because of this, a dancer's day is filled with hours of practicing and rehearsing so that he/she will be ready to perform when the time comes.

**Exercise:** The core curriculum suggests making students aware of their surroundings before beginning any physical activity. Help students clear an area that will be sufficient for running, jumping, and spinning. Have your students begin by performing basic stretches: Stretch legs and back by placing feet together and bending at waist while reaching fingers toward the floor, then spread feet a little more than shoulder width apart and repeat same stretch. With feet still spread, bend and reach toward one foot, then the other. Stretch torso by standing with feet at shoulder width and reaching fingers toward the ceiling, then bring one hand to side and reach other over head and bend to the side. Perform other stretches as necessary.

Next, have students perform basic movements such as skipping, jumping, spinning, etc. Help students understand that these movements are the basic things that everyone must be able to do before they will be able to dance. After allowing students to warm up and explore, have them attempt the same movements in *relevé* (pronounced reh-leh-VAY), which means with heels lifted, standing on the toes. Ballerinas (female ballet dancers) will also dance *en pointe* (on pwent), which means on the very tips of their toes. They wear special shoes to help them do this. Explain that ballet dancers dance on their toes to make it appear that they are floating. Students may also wish to attempt *pirouettes* and other movements common in ballet. Allow students to try each movement first, then point out that they must keep their heads high and backs straight with hips over their feet and all muscles pulled upward. This gives the dancer a slim line and makes the movements appear more graceful for the ballet. Here are some common movements that your students could practice:

- pirouette (peer-oo-WET) – A complete turn of the body on one leg. Have students attempt the spin, then have them do it in *relevé*. Explain that dancers will often do several consecutive spins, and that they avoid getting dizzy by choosing a spot to focus on as they spin. This is called *spotting*. Each time they turn, they lead into the spin with their eyes focused on that point.
- jeté (zhuh-TAY) – A jump from one leg to the other in which the working leg is brushed into the air and appears to be thrown. Have students practice by pretending that there is a puddle in front of them that they are going to leap over. They will jump from either their right or left leg and land on the opposite leg. Again, emphasis the importance of good posture.
- chainé (shu-NAY) turns – A series of turns while traveling from one point to another. The turns connect in a way that resembles a chain. Have students clear a large area and travel across the room diagonally spotting their destination with each turn.
- tour en l'air (toor ahn lair) – A turn in the air. Essentially a step for male dancers, but some contemporary pieces have females execute also. Have students start with both feet together and jump, attempting a full rotation in the air. If they feel up to it, have them attempt two.

This activity is to help students become aware of the physical demands placed on dancers. Emphasize the fact that dancers train long and hard to be able to do all of this. Also, have your students watch for these steps and identify them when you attend a performance.

## ACTIVITY 2: CAN YOU SPEAK BALLET?

- Objective: Help students understand their ability to communicate without using audible language.
- Meets USOE core requirements for fine arts – theatre and dance. Theatre Standard 2, Objective 1 - Develop body awareness and spatial perception through movement and pantomime. Use pantomime to communicate a person's or a group's ideas. Dance Standard 2 - Identify and demonstrate the movement elements in performing dance and understand the language of dance.

**Background:** In many ballet performances, there is a story that the dancers are telling, but they don't use words. While a portion of the scene is set by the music, it is up to the dancers to speak with their facial expressions and movements of their bodies. The audience must use their eyes, instead of their ears to follow along with what is happening.

Classic story ballets, like *Snow White*, *The Nutcracker*, and *Swan Lake* use mime to help the dancers convey certain ideas, emotions and actions without speaking. Ballet dancers all over the world use a standard "mime" language. Some are standard mime words and the gestures used to convey their meanings are listed in the chart enclosed.

### Lesson: Exploring Non-Verbal Communication

Target Core Area: Theatre

- Discuss non-verbal communication and in particular, mime in ballet
- Practice enhancing movement skills to communicate clear character intentions
- Create a play using only non-verbal communication
- Discuss the types of non-verbal communication used to tell the story

**ANALYZING** Discuss acting for dancers. Many dancers receive acting training specific for acting while dancing. Ballet dancers act without saying any words.

**PRACTICING AND CONSTRUCTING** Have the students choose one of their adapted stories to act out using mime (see attached description of ballet mime), body language, music and dance. The music can be tapping on a drum or empty coffee can, using boomwhackers, a glockenspiel, musical cds etc.

**APPLYING** Discuss which methods of non-verbal communication worked to relay the story. What methods of non-verbal communication would they change if they were to do it again?

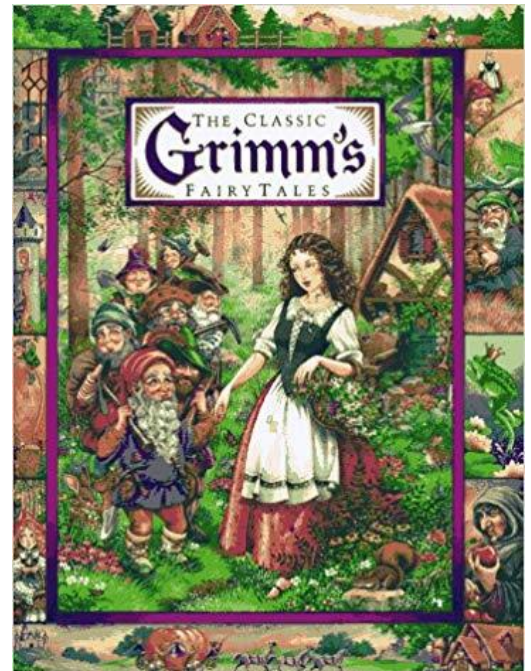
### EXTRA POINTE

*Enhance the non-verbal communication activity with exploration of sign language.*

*See attached alphabet in sign language.*

*<http://www.aslonline.com/> and*

*<http://www.answers.com/topic/american-sign-language-alphabet>  
offer resources for teaching sign language.*

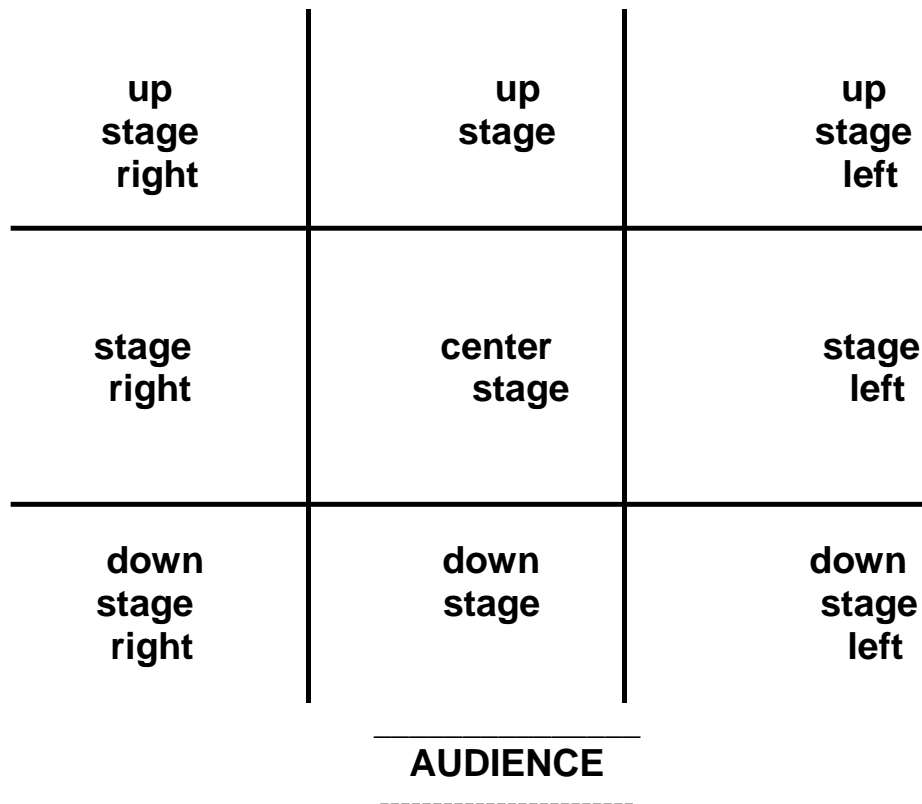


<p><b>NOTE TO TEACHERS:</b></p> <p>Projects vary in level of difficulty. Please adapt to your grade level.</p> <p>Describe the differences in energy and spatial qualities between the dances.</p> <p>Demonstrate by moving, drawing, or writing, an awareness of how dance can communicate an idea, feeling or purpose.</p> <p>Discuss the difference between social dancing and a theatrical dance performance. (Participation vs. audience; dance with and without choreography; costumes, orchestra etc.)</p>	<p><b>Pantomime</b> expresses dramatic action or emotions without talking or singing. Dancers use Pantomime in the ballet to help tell the story.</p> <p>Cut out the words at the side and fold these slips of paper into a box.</p> <p>Select a child to go first. Have them pick out one of the slips of paper and think of the word without saying it out loud. The child then acts out the word using pantomime and facial expressions.</p> <p>A child who correctly guesses the word gets to be the next person to pick a word out of the box. Add other words to lengthen the exercise.</p> <p>Make sure that the students know that they are performing pantomime and communicating ideas.</p> <p>For older students add to the vocabulary and combine an emotion into a situation and/or with an object. For example: surprised by a present; lonely in an airport; waiting in line; proud of a good accomplishment; laughing with a friend; or discovering something new and wonderful in the world, in art, in music.</p>	<b>HAPPY</b>
		<b>SCARED</b>
		<b>TIRED</b>
		<b>EXCITE</b>
		<b>SAD</b>
		<b>WAITING</b>
		<b>SURPRISED</b>
		<b>LONELY</b>
		<b>PROUD</b>
<b>LAUGHING</b>		

### ACTIVITY 3: STAGING A GAME OF TIC-TAC-TOE

- Objective: Help students understand the basic layout and direction of a stage.
- Meets USOE requirements for fine arts – dance and theatre. Dance Standard 4, Objective 3 - Make connections between dance and other disciplines. Theatre Standard 3 - The student will compare, connect, and incorporate art forms by describing and analyzing methods of presentation.

**Background:** There are terms used in a theatre that are unfamiliar for many people. As performers on a stage (dancers as well as actors) are learning their parts for a production, there are certain directions that they must follow. In the case of ballet, a choreographer plans the action on stage in a very specific way. As dancers move across the stage, they must be familiar with nine areas. The nine areas of the stage are down stage, up stage, center stage, up stage right, up stage left, stage right, stage left, down stage right, and down stage left. The directions are given from the dancers' point of view when facing the audience, for example stage right is the audience's left. Draw a rough diagram on the board to illustrate this for the children.



Theatre performances have been staged for centuries, and things have changed a lot over the years. Years ago, performances were done on what is called a *raked* (inclined) stage. These stages were built on an incline to allow the audience to see the entire stage, from front to back. It is because of this style of inclined stage that the part of the stage closest to the audience is referred to as down stage. In modern theatres, the stage is built flat and the audience seating is on an incline, which allows them to see the entire stage. Even though the stages have changed, the names for the areas of the stage are still the same.

**Exercise:** In order to make the students familiar with basic stage directions, they will need to see a mock stage layout. Take some tape that will stick to your classroom floor (masking tape should work well) and put down a basic layout of nine sections. This will look like what the children will recognize as a tic-tac-toe board. Not marking the areas on the floor will force the students to remember what they are called. Students will take turns being either the players or the game pieces. The child that is playing will tell his/her Xs or Os (you may want to have students either make an X or O with their arms or mark them on their shirts with the tape) where they will be placed using the nine areas of the stage. If your class is larger, you may wish to divide the children into groups and let them play on a few different boards.

#### **ACTIVITY 4: Visual Art Connection 1: Costume Design**

Objective: Have students create a piece of art that represents one character in the story of **Snow White**

Discussion:

Q: When designing a costume for a dancer what types of things should be considered?

A: The costumer designer should consider the time period and place or setting of the piece. This will help to determine the types, style and design of the costume. A 21<sup>st</sup> century Romeo and Juliet would look very different from a 16<sup>th</sup> century version of Romeo and Juliet. The costume designer also considers the choreography or movement of the body. A costume should compliment the choreography enabling the dancer to reach a full range of movement and not restrict the movement in any way. The costume design should support rather than distract the audience from the movement.

Costume designs also help further plot lines and character development.

In **Snow White** there is the challenge of costuming some of the dancers to look like animals, magical creatures and even plants, and yet still be able to move like a dancer. How would you create the costume to represent any one of these, yet still allow dancer could perform their choreography?

Invite students to become Costume Designers: After reading a version of the **Snow White** story, ask students to create one costume design for a character from the ballet. Costume designs should then be compared and contrasted allowing students and teachers to reflect on the differences.

#### **Visual Art Connection 2: Set Design:**

Objective: To introduce students to the elements of set design.

Supplies: Paper, colored pencils, markers, crayons, glue sticks, etc.

Q: Why is it important to use IMAGINATION when designing a set piece?

Discussion ideas: Imagination is a powerful tool in the theater. It is important to use your imagination to create a stage design that will tell the story of the ballet, and help set the place and time period as well. The more creative the design the more interesting it is for the audience

Read the scenes and characters list of **Snow White** for the students. Invite them to close their eyes and imagine what the stage may look like as the summary is read to them.



Illustration by Alexander Zick

#### **Discuss Scenic or Set Design:**

Ask the students to share some of the things that they think would be needed in on the stage to help share this story with the audience.

IE. The Royal Castle or the Dwarf's cottage.

Explain that the set can have the design painted on a backdrop of the stage, and in addition set pieces are placed on the stage to help give depth, scale and texture to the stage.

Ask students to draw a picture of the stage backdrop and set pieces that they imagined when they heard the synopsis. Give students the chance to share their drawings with each other.

Upon returning from the performance discuss the actual set design. Ask students if they noticed what was on the back drop, and what was actually placed on the stage.

Ask students to compare and contrast their own ideas with what they have seen.



# Snow White

Follow Up Projects And Discussions For Teachers Of Kindergarten To Eighth Grade Students  
Core-Curriculum Guidelines In Dance

## Kindergarten - Second grade

1. Express feelings generated by watching the performance. To stimulate exploration, the teacher might use words such as sad or happy, sharp or gentle, noisy or quiet, bright or dark. What was the setting the dancing took place in?
2. What kinds of shapes or patterns did the dancers make on stage? Circles, diagonals, wedges, lines?
3. Can the students repeat any of the dancer's arm positions or movements?
4. Describe what they saw on stage. What were the costumes like?

## Second Grade - Fourth Grade

5. Describe the impression that the ballet created. Agitated or calm, angular or rounded, jerky or lyrical?
6. What does the choreographer want the audience to think or feel?
7. Describe each of the main characters in the ballet; Snow White, the King, the Vain Queen, or the Dwarfs. How are these different characters depicted in the type and quality of their dance steps? Can students portray these characters in movement?
8. In dance people communicate without speaking or singing. How did the dancers express the story to you?
9. What was the beginning, the middle and the end of the story portrayed in the ballet you observed?

## Fourth Grade - Eighth Grade

11. What was the setting of the ballet? Describe the scenery, costumes and props. How did these items contribute to the story?
12. What was the mood of the ballet? How did the lighting help to achieve this mood?
13. Discuss the technical aspects of ballet. What makes ballet different from hip-hop, square dancing, or modern dance? Can students demonstrate any of these differences? [posture, turn-out of the legs from the hips, arm positions: diagrams are included in your information packet].
14. Discuss *pointe* shoes and *pas de deux* [see information packet]. How did these aspects contribute to the dancer's movements and to the story?
15. Describe how the choreography expresses the music.
16. Discuss the difference between watching a ballet on television and going to the theatre and participating in the live theatrical ballet performance. What is the role of the audience? Does a performance exist without an audience?

# Attention Teachers!!!



Lindsey K. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade  
Oakdale Elementary

Ballet West would love to share your student's original artwork

Please scan and email us at: [education@balletwest.org](mailto:education@balletwest.org)

To help us learn how students respond to our presentations, students can include their artwork, inspired by the presentation they have viewed. Please have your students create their artwork on 8.5" x 11" white paper in full color. These art pieces may appear on our website, in publications, and may be used in our annual state report as well as displays we create throughout the year.

Your student's name, grade level, teacher and school should be included (on the back if you mail them to us) so we may properly identify them. If we should use them, we will only identify the students by their first name and last initial.



Bethany D. 5<sup>th</sup> grade  
Grandview Elementary

## Thank you!

Please visit our website at [www.balletwest.org](http://www.balletwest.org)