

CANADA'S ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET

The Sleeping Beauty

RWB The Company in *The Sleeping Beauty*
photo: David Cooper



STUDY GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

NAC 2012-2013 DANCE SEASON

Cathy Levy, Dance Producer

Dress Rehearsal, April 4th, 2013



CANADA'S ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET

André Lewis

Artistic Director

Jeff Herd

Executive Director

Johnny W. Chang

Senior Ballet Master

Tadeusz Biernacki

Music Director & Conductor

ARTISTIC CREDITS - *THE SLEEPING BEAUTY*

Marius Petipa

Choreography

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Music

Shannon Lovelace, Anne Armit

Costume Design

Michael Eagan

Set and Properties

Michael J. Whitfield

Lighting Design

DURATION: 2 hours 25 minutes (including one 20-minute intermission)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
THEATRE ETIQUETTE.....	4
CANADA'S NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE.....	5
DANCE AT THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE	6
ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET - <i>THE SLEEPING BEAUTY</i> SYNOPSIS	7
BIOGRAPHIES.....	10
THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE ORCHESTRA.....	13
CANADA'S ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET	14
<i>THE SLEEPING BEAUTY</i> : A FÊTE OF FAIRIES	15
INTERVIEW WITH THE SLEEPING BEAUTY'S COSTUME DESIGNERS, ANNE ARMIT AND SHANNON LOVELACE:	17
ABOUT BALLET	19
BALLET TRAINING.....	22
BASIC BALLET POSITIONS	23
BALLET TERMS.....	24
WATCHING AND APPRECIATING DANCE.....	25
STUDENT ACTIVITIES	26
AFTER THE PERFORMANCE.....	28
INTERNET RESOURCES.....	29

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

For your students to have the best experience possible, we have prepared a small outline of what is expected of them as audience members. As a teacher bringing your students to a performance at the NAC, please keep in mind that you are responsible for their behaviour.

Being an audience member is as essential to the ballet performance as the dancers themselves. What helps to make a show a success is in part how the audience reacts to it, whether through applause, laughter or surprise. Discuss proper audience etiquette with your students before the performance. Arrive approximately half an hour before show time to get settled in to enjoy the show.

AUDIENCE ROLE ACTIVITY CHECKLIST

Children should be encouraged to:

- ✓ Freely react to the performance within reason (please no yelling). Dancers love to hear applause for something done well, or something you enjoyed seeing. There is no right or wrong time to show your appreciation for what you see on stage.
- ✓ Clap at the end of a dance (when there is a pause in the music) if you feel like showing appreciation.
- ✓ Watch in a quiet concentrated way. This supports the dancers so they can do their best work on stage.
- ✓ Enjoy the music and look at the sets and costumes.
- ✓ Consider that constructive criticism is always appreciated more than purely negative criticism.
- ✓ Remember, to turn off cell phones and that no recording devices are allowed.

Children should not:

- x Move about in the seats or get up to leave during a performance (except in an emergency situation).
- x Eat, drink, speak aloud, or otherwise cause a disturbance to those around you (these things are not only a distraction to other audience members, but also to the performers on stage, which can be dangerous for them.).

CANADA'S NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE

Officially opened on June 2, 1969, the **National Arts Centre** was one of the key institutions created by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson as the principal centennial project of the federal government.



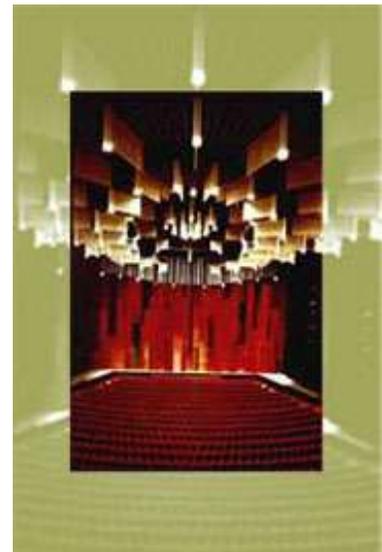
Built in the shape of a hexagon, the design became the architectural leitmotif for Canada's premier performing arts centre. Situated in the heart of the nation's capital across Confederation Square from Parliament Hill, the National Arts Centre is among the largest performing arts complexes in Canada. It is unique as the only multidisciplinary, bilingual performing arts centre in North America and features one of the largest stages on the continent. Designed by Fred Lebensold (ARCOP Design), one of North

America's foremost theatre designers, the building was widely praised as a twentieth century architectural landmark.

A programme to incorporate visual arts into the fabric of the building has resulted in the creation of one of the country's most unique permanent art collections of international and Canadian contemporary art. Pieces include special commissions such as, *Homage to RFK* (mural) by internationally acclaimed Canadian contemporary artist William Ronald, *The Three Graces* by Ossip Zadkine and a large free standing untitled bronze sculpture by Charles Daudelin. In 1997, the NAC collaborated with the Art Bank of the Canada Council of the Arts to install over 130 pieces of Canadian contemporary art.

The NAC is home to four different performance spaces, each with its own unique characteristics. *The Sleeping Beauty* will be performed in Southam Hall, a 2323 seat theatre.

Today, the NAC works with countless artists, both emerging and established, from across Canada and around the world, and collaborates with scores of other arts organizations across the country. The Centre also plays host to the Canada Dance Festival. The NAC is strongly committed to being a leader and innovator in each of the performing arts fields in which it works - classical music, English theatre, French theatre, dance, variety, and community programming. It is at the forefront of youth and educational activities, supporting programmes for young and emerging artists and programmes for young audiences, and producing resources and study materials for teachers.



DANCE AT THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE



Join us in making dance a part of your students' lives as we welcome you to a World of Dance in Ottawa at the National Arts Centre. Each year, I have the joy of sharing with you and your students dance works by artists who are considered among the most talented in our country. I invite you to give your students dance experiences that will move and inspire them, as

they have moved me. This year, we offer student matinees by three of Canada's favourite dance companies: Alberta Ballet returns to the NAC with the timehonoured classic *The Nutcracker*; BJM – Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal performs an exciting mixed program of contemporary works; and, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet shares its captivating version of *The Sleeping Beauty*.

When the lights dim and the theatre falls silent with anticipation, each student becomes part of a collective, hushed together, captivated by the artist's exploration. Throughout the world, across all cultures, this powerful language of dance speaks universally, opening young minds and nourishing their imaginations. It draws us in, keeps us connected, transports us through sensory paths... and makes our world a bigger place. We welcome you and your students to your NAC!

Along with our three matinees for schools this year, there are many performances in our regular season that would be educational and entertaining for your students. We invite you to consider returning with your class to an evening show or enjoy a night out with your own family. Visit our dance page on www.nac-cna.ca to learn about our recommendations for young people and families.

A World of Dance in Ottawa awaits you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cathy'.

CATHY LEVY
DANCE PRODUCER, NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE

ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET - *THE SLEEPING BEAUTY*

SYNOPSIS



Photo: Bruce Monk

Prologue

The Christening Day of Princess Aurora

It is the day of the grand gala. Everyone of importance has been invited to celebrate the christening of the Kingdom's new princess - Princess Aurora. Catalabutte, the Chief Steward, is bustling about making sure all the arrangements are in order. Aurora's six fairy god-mothers arrive to bestow upon the infant princess their special graces. The Fairy of Tenderness, in white, personifies beauty and candour. The Fairy of Carefreeness brings grace and the gift of dancing. The gift of the Fairy of Generosity is fertility and a life free from hunger while the Fairy of Mischievousness provides eloquence, singing and laughter. The Fairy of Bravery brings energy and commanding temperament.

Before the Lilac Fairy is able to give her gift, the evil fairy Carabosse enters, furious that she was not invited. In revenge she bestows her "gift" - Aurora will prick her finger and die on her 16th birthday. The court is horrified, but the Lilac Fairy is able to soften the spell - when Aurora pricks her finger she will sleep for one hundred years and be awakened by the kiss of a handsome Prince.

Act I - Princess Aurora's Sixteenth Birthday

In celebration of Princess Aurora's sixteenth birthday, young villagers dance a spirited waltz. As the excitement mounts, Aurora enters the courtyard with delicate footsteps and youthful eagerness. She is presented to four princes; each seeks her hand in marriage. Aurora dances with each suitor, and they in turn present her with a gift of roses in the famous Rose Adagio.

Carabosse, disguised as an old woman, arrives at the birthday celebration and gives Aurora a bouquet of flowers, which Aurora willingly accepts. Hidden in the flowers is a spindle; Aurora pricks her finger on it and collapses. Carabosse triumphantly reveals her true identity. The Lilac Fairy appears in the garden and assures the court that Aurora is not dead, but will sleep until awakened by the kiss of a handsome prince. Aurora is carried into the palace by the courtiers and the Lilac Fairy casts a spell over the entire court, causing everybody to fall asleep and a thick forest to grow around the palace.



Act II - The Awakening

One hundred years later, Prince Désiré becomes melancholic while hunting in the forest and wishes to be alone. The Lilac Fairy visits him and learns that he is sad because his heart is devoid of love. She tells him of the enchanted palace and the beautiful sleeping princess, and guides him through the thick forest to the palace.

Once inside, Prince Désiré discovers the sleeping Aurora and recognizing his true love, kisses her. Aurora awakens from her enchanted sleep. The evil spell is destroyed and Carabosse collapses, overpowered by goodness and virtue. The entire court comes to life and the King and Queen meet Prince Désiré and happily approve his betrothal to their daughter, Aurora.

Act III - The Wedding of Aurora and Désiré

The scene opens with a glorious polonaise, followed by fairy tale characters dancing in homage to the newlywed couple. Aurora and Désiré then perform the Grand Pas de Deux after which the entire court dances an exuberant mazurka bringing the celebrations to a fitting climax.



PHOTO : BRUCE MONK

BIOGRAPHIES



André Lewis, Artistic Director

Approaching nearly 38 years with Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, 17 of them as artistic director, André Lewis has spent the majority of his career with Canada's first professional dance company. A native of Gatineau, Québec, Lewis began his dance training in Ottawa before being accepted into the Professional Division of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School in 1975. He joined the RWB company in 1979 where he enjoyed an accomplished career as a dancer for over ten years.

In 1996, Lewis was appointed artistic director of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet after having served as associate artistic director for the previous five years. He has been the driving force behind the new and innovative works that have dramatically rejuvenated the company's repertoire. In 1998 he commissioned Mark Godden's blockbuster production *Dracula* and was instrumental in the 1999 creation of a new *Nutcracker* for the company. In 2002, Lewis brought to Winnipeg the thrilling and passionate *Carmina Burana* by Argentinean choreographer Mauricio Wainrot and presented a new version of *The Sleeping Beauty*. In 2003, he commissioned Mark Godden to create a new ballet based on the opera *The Magic Flute* and in 2004 brought in choreographer Val Caniparoli to create *A Cinderella Story*, a retro retelling of the beloved fairy tale set to jazz and swing. Lewis commissioned choreographer and RWB alumnus Jorden Morris to create *Peter Pan* for the company in 2006 and in 2009, for RWB's 70th anniversary, Lewis commissioned Morris to create *Moulin Rouge— The Ballet* after the famous Parisian cabaret, which set record attendance levels at every performance and is the highest grossing show in RWB's history. Lewis also recently commissioned Mark Godden to create *Svengali*, an explosive new look at the original master of mind control, which premiered in Winnipeg in October 2012.

In 2012, Lewis and Atlanta Ballet Artistic Director John McFall co-commissioned a new creation by celebrated choreographer Twyla Tharp titled *The Princess & The Goblin*, based on the children's fantasy novel of the same name by Victorian author George MacDonald. The ballet had its World Premiere in Atlanta in February 2012 and was met with high praise; with The New York Times labeling it as "*Enchanting and funny...*" while the Wall Street Journal called the production "*Intriguing and moving...*"

In addition to his position as artistic director, Lewis is a sought-after ballet instructor and has guest taught throughout Europe and in Japan.

Marius Petipa, Choreographer

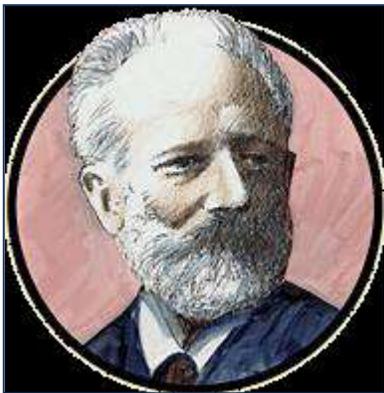
Source: The National Arts Centre's www.ArtsAlive.ca



Marius Petipa, the “father of classical ballet,” was born in Marseilles, France, in 1819. He became the pre-eminent choreographer of Imperial Russia in the 19th century. He received his early training from his ballet-master father and was a principal dancer in France, Belgium, and Spain before joining the Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg in 1847. There he created several ballets, including *The Pharaoh’s Daughter*, which led to his appointment as chief choreographer in 1869. By his retirement in 1903, he had produced more than 60 ballets for the imperial theatres in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Petipa was able to combine entertainment with artistry, creating works that have remained popular over time, including *La Bayadère* (1877), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890), *The Nutcracker* (1892) and *Swan Lake* (1895). (Lev Ivanov assisted Petipa in creating these last two ballets.)

Peter Tchaikovsky, Composer

Source: The National Arts Centre's www.ArtsAlive.ca



Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky was born in Russia in 1840. He loved and created great music all his life. Music was a big part of Peter Tchaikovsky's schoolwork. His class often went to plays and operas together. He sang in the school choir and took piano lessons. Tchaikovsky was born in Russia where music was not considered a proper profession. It was only encouraged as a pastime for young ladies from wealthy families. The only Russian music that was really heard was the folk songs of the peasants and the choral singing in the church services. At first there weren't many schools that even offered training for Russian musicians. That all changed during Tchaikovsky's lifetime.

Peter Tchaikovsky became a full-time music student when he was 22 years old. He enrolled in the Russian Musical Society. It was like going to university. When he graduated, he moved to Moscow to become a professor at the Music Conservatory there.

Peter Tchaikovsky composed operas, ballets, orchestral music, fantasy overtures, chamber music, piano music and vocal music as well. Tchaikovsky is famous for using Russian folk themes in many of his works.

Here is a list of some of Tchaikovsky's compositions you may know or want to listen to:

Romeo and Juliet

Swan Lake

The Sleeping Beauty

The Maid of Orleans

Queen of Spades

Piano Concerto No.1

The Nutcracker Suite

The 1812 Overture

When Tchaikovsky was 51, he left Russia to do a very successful music tour in North America. He even came to see the Canadian side of Niagara Falls. In 1893, two years after that North American tour, Peter died. His funeral was held in St. Petersburg. Huge numbers of people attended Tchaikovsky's funeral. Everyone wanted to show their respect for a great musician. Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky was buried in a little Russian village that he loved.

THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE ORCHESTRA

Consistent praise has followed this vibrant orchestra throughout its history of touring both nationally and internationally, recording, and commissioning Canadian works. Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra, now under the direction of renowned conductor/violinist/violist Pinchas Zukerman, continues to draw accolades both abroad and at its home in Ottawa where it gives over 100 performances a year.

The NAC Orchestra was founded in 1969 as the resident orchestra of the newly opened National Arts Centre, with Jean-Marie Beaudet as Music Director and Mario Bernardi as founding conductor and (from 1971) Music Director until 1982. He was succeeded by Franco Mannino (1982 to 1987), Gabriel Chmura (1987 to 1990), and Trevor Pinnock (1991-1997). In April 1998, Pinchas Zukerman was named Music Director of the NAC Orchestra.

In addition to a full series of subscription concerts at the National Arts Centre each season, tours are undertaken to regions throughout Canada and around the world. Since the arrival of Pinchas Zukerman, education has been an extremely important component of these tours. Teacher Resource Kits have been developed for distribution to elementary schools in the regions toured and across Canada, and the public has been able to follow each tour through fully interactive websites which are now archived on the NAC's Performing Arts Education Website at www.ArtsAlive.ca.

The NAC Orchestra offers a number of programs dedicated to fostering a knowledge and appreciation of music among young people. In addition to a highly popular subscription series of *TD Canada Trust Family Adventures with the NAC Orchestra*, the Orchestra presents a variety of opportunities for schools to learn about classical music: *Student Matinees*, and *Open Rehearsals* to allow students to hear the Orchestra perform in its home at the NAC. In addition, *Musicians in the Schools* programs including ensemble performances and instrument sectionals take the music to the students in their schools.

CANADA'S ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET

A Seventy-Four Year History of Excellence

Versatility, technical excellence and a captivating style are the trademarks of Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, qualities that have garnered both critical and audience acclaim. These qualities keep the RWB in demand as it presents more than 70 performances every season.

Founded in 1939 by Gweneth Lloyd and Betty Farrally, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet holds the double distinction of being Canada's premier ballet company and one of the oldest ballet companies in North America. In 1953, the company received its royal title, the first granted under the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. In 1958, Arnold Spohr was appointed artistic director. Under his direction the Royal Winnipeg Ballet grew and developed to take its place among the world's internationally renowned companies. To further the company's development, a professional school was created in 1970 under the direction of David Moroni. Today, two-thirds of the company's dancers are graduates of the School. On March 7, 1996, André Lewis was named artistic director of Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet. A native of Gatineau, Québec, Mr. Lewis has had a nearly thirty-seven year association with the RWB.

Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet began to tour Canada in 1945; it completed its first American tour in 1954. Today, the company spends 15 or more weeks a year on the road, performing in centres large and small. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet is compact in size, with 24 dancers, a production crew of seven and a semi-trailer that carries approximately 55,000 pounds of equipment. For full-length ballets, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet travels with two semi-trailers and an expanded company. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet has performed in the United States, South America, Europe, the Middle East, Russia, Japan, Asia, and Mexico and in every province of Canada.

Throughout its history, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet has been a dance leader, recording innumerable firsts. It developed the concept of the regional ballet festival in the 1940s. It was the first Western company to perform in Cuba after the Revolution. It received Gold Medals at the International Ballet Festival in Paris in 1968 and that same year became the first Canadian company to tour Russia and Czechoslovakia.



Gweneth Lloyd



Betty Farrally

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY: A FÊTE OF FAIRIES



The Sleeping Beauty is a fairy tale or, as the Russians say 'feerie' tale. The most obvious component of fairy tales is that they all begin with the famous line "Once upon a time...". They also usually deal with a struggle of an individual. In the case of *The Sleeping Beauty*, it is good against evil and is told through events and individuals not of this world.

Tales of otherworldly creatures are not uncommon in ballet, as the medium allows for their presence through dancing and costumes that represent both the ethereal and fanciful. You may recall The Willis in *Giselle*, the dryads in *Don Quixote*, the fairies in *The Dream*, the naiads in *Napoli* and the bayadères in *La Bayadère*. For this rendering of *The Sleeping Beauty*, Marius Petipa brought to his spectacle an array of fairies, both good and evil.

Dance critic Olga Maynard writes of these creatures:

“Beings and things that are free, the word (Sleeping Beauty author Charles Perrault used) are ‘of the fairies’ and, like them, are enchanted. The benevolent creatures among the fairies had designated places and roles. They were water, tree and air spirits, resident in every sea and river, lake and waterfall, living in forests and in the air. One usually saw such spirits as beautiful and as benevolent toward mankind. Fairies of less comely appearance [dwarfs, gnomes and their ilk] were driven underground and were supposed to exert baleful influences on men. Thus, there was a choice between benign and disagreeable influences among the *fées*, as in the epics there was between the noble and the base. Aspects of Good and Evil were pitted against each other, in the allegorical images of beautiful and kindly fairies and malignant and vindictive ones. If much of the source was superstitious, the roots were clearly religious.”

Fairies occupied a very important function in human affairs. They presided at christening and weddings (but never at funerals, as they did not belong to the death cult). They always brought gifts to the newborn child and by knowing what gifts the fairies brought we can tell what were the most admirable and enviable qualities in a society. The ‘obstetric’ *fée* is not to be confused with the Christian godmother, but rather belongs to a pre-Christians faith that survived long after the Middle Ages in the French countryside. This *fée* may well have been the deification of the ordinary midwife.

Heading the list of fairies in *The Sleeping Beauty* are the good Lilac Fairy and the evil Carabosse. Carabosse stands alone with her retinue of monsters while the Lilac Fairy is supported by an entourage of delightful, shimmering fairies of good will. The role of Carabosse was originally danced by a man and will be danced as such by the RWB, though today many female character dancers perform the role. Both Carabosse and the Lilac Fairy are identified by musical leitmotifs (recurring themes introduced in Tchaikovsky’s introduction) that denote their characters.

The Lilac Fairy is instantly recognized by music and movement that is full of calm, grace and warmth. We hear the Lilac Fairy waft in on a harp glissando, played in a hushed pianissimo as she sets our fears to rest. The Lilac Fairy’s gift to Aurora is that of wisdom and knowledge. Russian folklore states that a child placed under a lilac bush acquires wisdom, thus the association with the Lilac Fairy.

Evil beauty is necessary to convey Carabosse’s vile conspiracy. She appears to fantastic music and her mocking laughter. Also for Carabosse there is angry, ominous music that is heightened by growling, irritable sounds. When she spoke, there was satirical and diabolical music.

Carabosse’s was a mimed role, as was the Lilac Fairy’s. They were co-equal, each a powerful force; one black and wicked as the other bright and good.

INTERVIEW WITH *THE SLEEPING BEAUTY*'S COSTUME DESIGNERS, ANNE ARMIT AND SHANNON LOVELACE

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet can proudly boast that there were 131 debuts in their premiere of *The Sleeping Beauty* in 2002. We are speaking about the whole cast of new costumes that graced the stage when *The Sleeping Beauty* opened.



Shannon Lovelace

Why all the new costumes, we ask? “*Basically, we wanted to own our own show,*” said Anne Armit, Wardrobe Director for the RWB. Armit along with Shannon Lovelace began the process of designing these new costumes in October 2001. The entire Wardrobe Department was hard at work, labouring over all the little details of the costumes, right down to the last ruffle.

“*It’s very fulfilling, to see [a costume] go from a flat two-dimensional image to a moving piece,*” commented Lovelace. A large amount of time and energy went into research for the costumes. The duo met with Galina Yordanova, (who staged the premiere production of *The Sleeping Beauty* based on Marius Petipa’s original ballet) to get a feel for the time period, as well as the characters involved in the piece. Armit and Lovelace spent hours watching tapes of other companies’ productions of *The Sleeping Beauty* to get a feel for the costumes used, as well as the dance itself. “*You might be inspired by what you see on the stage; the movement,*” said Lovelace.

Another huge piece of the puzzle was to go through Petipa's original version of *The Sleeping Beauty*. Armit said it was a major influence because he went over all the details of the story line, sets, and costumes. Petipa also explained what colours were used in the production and why. More work was put into researching the colours from that time period, as well as looking into the clothing from a Napoleonic wedding. With all of this newly-gained knowledge Armit and Lovelace set to work, discussing their visions for the costumes.

Creating costumes from scratch is a luxury that hasn't always been there for the RWB. In the past years they rented their *Sleeping Beauty* costumes from Ballet West, in Salt Lake City, Utah. All costumes were sent to the RWB at a specific size and it was the Wardrobe Department's responsibility to alter them for the dancers. When the production was over, the costumes had to be returned to their original size, before being sent back. After all these hours of work, the costumes weren't even theirs. This sparked the decision for the RWB to create its own costumes.



Anne Armit



Anne Armit

According to Lovelace the job of designing costumes for *The Sleeping Beauty* was divided evenly between the two. “[We designed] the pieces we would enjoy doing the most,” said Lovelace. Armit has had the responsibility of Director of Wardrobe for almost two decades now, and has overseen countless productions – from the gothic feel of *Dracula* to the ethereal look of *Swan Lake*. Lovelace received rave reviews for her costume design in the production of *Butterfly*, which is even more impressive as it was the first full-length that she had created for. Not unlike the dancers, these two are constantly striving for perfection. The wardrobe staff will still be fussing with the costumes just hours before they are to go on stage. Since their debut, the costumes have had venerable careers in *The Sleeping Beauty*.

ABOUT BALLET

ballet – (noun) an artistic dance that usually tells a story or expresses a mood, performed by either a soloist or a group of dancers in a theatre, concert hall, etc.

balletic – (adjective) of or having to do with the ballet

balletomane – (noun) a person who is enthusiastic about ballet

The word ballet refers to a specific dance technique that has evolved over the last 350 years. Its roots lie in the royal courts of the 16th century. Ballet involves a combination of movement, music and design where emotions and stories are translated through precise body movement and facial expressions.

A Short History of Ballet

People have always danced. The first dances were part of religious and community ceremonies, but by the time of the Ancient Greeks and Romans, dancing had also become a form of entertainment. In the Middle Ages, the church in Europe claimed that dancing was sinful, but when the Renaissance arrived in the 1400s, dancing had become popular once again. It is in the European courts of the 16th and 17th centuries that the true origins of ballet lie.

The First Ballet

In 16th-century France and Italy, royalty competed to have the most splendid court. Monarchs would search for and employ the best poets, musicians, and artists. At this time, dancing became increasingly theatrical. This form of entertainment, also called the *ballet de cour* (court ballet), featured elaborate scenery and lavish costumes, plus a series of processions, poetic speeches, music and dancing. The first known ballet, *Le Ballet Comique* was performed in 1581 at the wedding of the Queen of France's sister.

The Sun King

In the 17th century, the popularity and development of ballet can be attributed to King Louis XIV of France. He took dancing very seriously and trained daily with his dance master, Beauchamp. One of his famous roles was the Rising Sun and this led him to become known as the “Sun King.” King Louis also set up the Académie Royale de Danse (Royal Academy of Dance) in 1661, where for the first time steps were structurally codified and recorded by Beauchamp. These are the same steps that have been handed down through centuries, and which now form the basis of today’s classical ballet style.

The First Professional Dancers

At first, ballets were performed at the Royal Court, but in 1669 King Louis opened the first opera house in Paris. Ballet was first viewed publicly in the theatre as part of the opera. The first opera featuring ballet, entitled *Pomone*, included dances created by Beauchamp. Women participated in ballets at court, but were not seen in the theatre until 1681. Soon, as the number of performances increased, courtiers who danced for a hobby gave way to professional dancers who trained longer and harder. The physical movement of the first professional dancers was severely hindered by their lavish and weighty costumes and headpieces. They also wore dancing shoes with tiny heels and pointed toes, which made it rather difficult to dance.

Revealing Feet and Ankles

Early in the 18th century, the ballerina Marie Camargo shocked the audiences by shortening her skirts – to just above the ankle. She did this to be freer in her movements and to allow the audience to see her intricate footwork and complex jumps, which often rivalled those of the men. At this time, female dancers also began to dominate the stage over their male counterparts. Ballet companies were now being set up all over France to train dancers for the opera. The first official ballet company (a collection of dancers who train professionally) was based at the Paris Opera and opened in 1713.



Photo: Bruce Monk

The Pointe Shoe

By 1830, ballet as a theatrical art truly came into its own. Influenced by the Romantic Movement, which was sweeping the world of art, music, literature and philosophy, ballet

took on a whole new look. The ballerina reigned supreme. Female dancers now wore calf-length, white bell-shaped tulle skirts. To enhance the image of the ballerina as light and elusive, the pointe shoe was introduced, enabling women to dance on the tips of their toes.

Classical Ballet

Although the term “classical” is often used to refer to traditional ballet, this term really describes a group of story ballets first seen in Russia at the end of the 19th century. At this time, the centre of ballet moved from France to Russia. In Russia, the French choreographer Marius Petipa collaborated with the Russian composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky to create the lavish story ballet spectacles such as *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*. Today, these ballets still form the basis of the classical ballet repertoire of companies all over the world.

One Act Ballets

In 1909, the Russian impresario Serge Diaghilev brought together a group of dancers, choreographers, composers, artists and designers for his company, the Ballets Russes. This company took Paris by storm, introducing short, one act ballets such as *Schéhérazade*, *Les Sylphides*, *The Rite of Spring*, *Firebird* and *Petrouchka*. Some of the world’s greatest dancers, including Anna Pavlova (1881– 1931), Vasslav Nijinsky (1889–1950) and choreographers Mikhail Fokine (1880–1942) and George Balanchine (1904–1983) were part of Diaghilev’s company.

Establishing Dance in North America

Almost all contemporary ballet companies and dancers are influenced by Diaghilev’s Ballet Russes. The first visit by the company to North America in 1916–1917, stimulated great interest in ballet. Dancers from the Ballets Russes were instrumental in furthering this new interest in ballet. For example, dancer George Balanchine went to the United States and founded the New York City Ballet (originally called the American Ballet). He became renowned for perfecting the abstract ballet and for establishing neo-classicism through his choreographic masterpieces such as *Serenade*, *Agon* and *Concerto Barocco*. Ninette de Valois and Marie Rambert also went on to found, respectively, England’s Royal Ballet and the Rambert Dance Company.

BALLET TRAINING



The career of a dancer is relatively short and it is not unusual to spend more years training than dancing professionally. The movements demanded of the human body in ballet are of a very specific nature, requiring great precision and care. As a result, the physique must be prepared for this future at a young age. A student aspiring to be a classical ballet dancer must undergo much preliminary work in order to become accustomed to the demands that will be imposed upon the body when dancing the many hours required of a professional dancer. The professional training period usually consists of at least eight or nine years of intensive, precise work. Ideally, girls and boys should begin their professional training at the age of nine. Training is a very progressive process. The young professional student begins with daily classes, practicing the basic ballet positions and movements, learning body placement, correct carriage, balance and artistry. As the student

progresses, time spent in classes each week increases, as does the difficulty and extensiveness of the skills taught. As well as the daily class in classical technique, students are required to receive instruction in variation (solo) work, pointe (dancing on the toes), pas de deux (a dance for two), character (ethnic), jazz and modern dance.

Prior to the introduction of pointe work, a number of criteria must be considered. These include the amount of previous training, a student's strength and ability, as well as age as it relates to the bone development in the dancer's feet. Pas de deux and repertoire (the collection of different ballets that a dance company performs) are introduced only when the student has adequate strength, ability and training. Students who graduate to a professional ballet company usually begin dancing as a member of the corps de ballet (ensemble). After a few years, corps de ballet members who demonstrate growth in artistry, technical ability, musicality and ability to communicate with the audience may be promoted to the rank of soloist or second soloist. Finally, the highest achievement in the company, the position of principal dancer or ballerina, is attainable by only a few gifted dancers.

BASIC BALLET POSITIONS

Every new step you will learn will make use of the basic positions. All dancers, even the greatest, use exactly these positions every day.

Positions of the Feet

FIRST POSITION: turn your feet out to the side with your heels touching – turn your whole leg out at the hip, not just the foot.

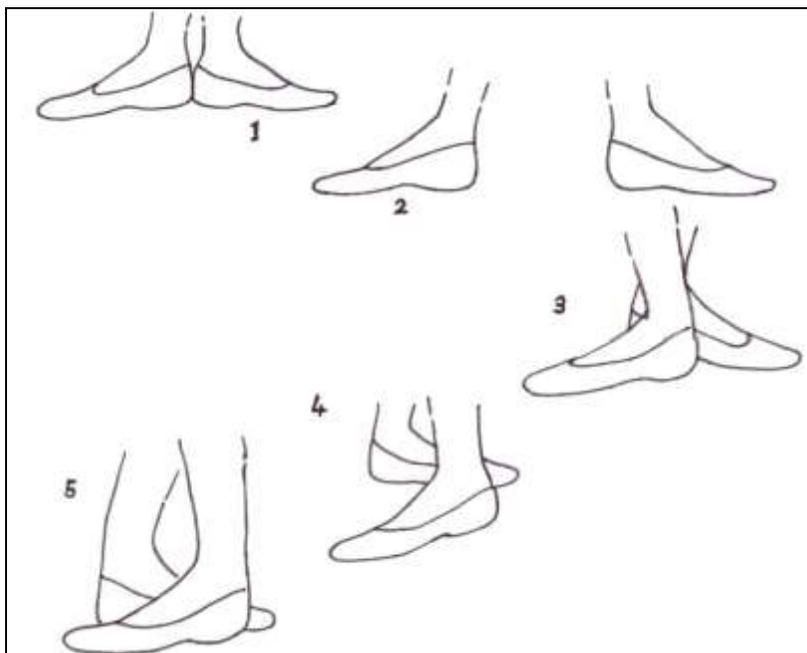
SECOND POSITION: turn your toes out on the same line as first position – stand with feet apart – the space between your heels should be about the length of one of your feet – place the whole of both feet on the floor – don't roll forwards and put too much weight on your big toes.

THIRD POSITION: cross one foot halfway in front of the other – your weight should be balanced evenly on both feet.

FOURTH POSITION: place one foot exactly in front of the other with some space between them.

FIFTH POSITION: your feet should be turned out, fully crossed and touching each other firmly.

Source: Connexions® <http://cnx.org> by Alex Volschenk



BALLET TERMS

<p>Adage: In ballet, a slow section of a pas de deux or an exercise in a dance class focusing on slow controlled movements that highlight balance and extension, and require strength and poise.</p>
<p>Adagio: The part of a dance class where exercises for balance and sustained movement are performed; a musical composition performed at a slow tempo.</p>
<p>Alignment: Creating harmony with the body so that unbroken lines are formed with the arms and legs without displacement of the torso.</p>
<p>Arabesque: In ballet, a pose held on one leg with the other leg and both arms extended away and up from the centre of the body; also, positioning of the arms in relation to the legs. As with positions of the feet, each position is distinguished by a number, such as first, second and third arabesque.</p>
<p>Barre: A horizontal pole, either attached to the wall or freestanding, to support dancers while stretching, warming up or doing exercises "at the barre". Barre exercises like pliés, battements and ronds de jambe form the first part of a traditional ballet class and are the basis for all technique.</p>
<p>Battement: In ballet, the "beating" of either a stretched or flexed leg. The types are : a battement tendu, a battement dégagé, a battement fondu, a petit battement et a grand battement.</p>
<p>Corps de ballet: In ballet, performers who do not have lead roles and perform during group scenes or action. In narrative ballets, members of the corps de ballet will perform roles such as peasants, wedding guests and swans.</p>
<p>Enchaînement: A "chain" or linked sequence of movements.</p>
<p>Turnout: A way of standing and using the legs that is initiated in the pelvis, where both sides of the body rotate outwards from the hips, away from the spine.</p>
<p>Pas de deux: In ballet, a sequence or dance for two dancers.</p>
<p>Pirouette: In ballet, a spin or turn of the body performed on one leg. Pirouettes may be performed en dehors (turning away from the supporting leg) or en dedans (turning toward the supporting leg).</p>
<p>Plié: In ballet, a bending of the knees. This can be done either in demi-plié ("half-plié"), where the heels remain on the floor, or in grand plié (large or full plié), where, except in second position of the feet, the heels leave the floor at the deepest point of the bend.</p>
<p>Port de bras: In ballet, arm movements around the body.</p>
<p>Rond de jambe: In ballet, a movement that goes "round the leg". A rond de jambe may be performed in two ways: À terre ("on the ground"), where the pointed toe of a stretched working leg traces a circular pattern en dehors (from the front of the body to the back), or en dedans (from back to front), passing each time through first position of the feet.</p>
<p>En l'air ("in the air"), either petit, with the working leg raised just a few centimeters from the ground, or grand, where it is raised to 90°. A rond de jambe en l'air may also be performed as an isolated movement with the working leg raised à la seconde (to the side) and the knee bending and straightening as the toe describes quick circular patterns in the air without moving the thigh.</p>

WATCHING AND APPRECIATING DANCE

CURRICULUM CONNECTION – Reflecting, Responding and Analysing

Attending Dance matinees at the NAC, and using questions and activities here and in the Student Activity Section, are intended to develop the students' competency in applying *The Critical Analysis Process* for all grades, in The Arts (Ontario) Curriculum Grades 1-12.

A ballet is a choreographic composition interpreted by the dancers. Each dancer tells a story in movement and pantomime. There are no words spoken in a ballet. Watch the show and look for the choreography, the movement, gestures and facial expressions of each dancer and how they work in relationship to each other. In dance there are basic elements that are always present in this live art form, where the body is the dancer's instrument of expression. Try to recognize the elements of dance such as the placement of the body, whether the body is moving through space or on the spot, type and quality of the movement, the timing and musicality, how space is used, the energy and the relationship between the dancers. Each person watching may have different interpretations about what they saw and how they felt. All are valid.

Relax, breathe deeply and open yourself to the spirit of dance.

During the show, watch for:

- The dancer's movements, such as the dance technique used in jumps, pirouettes, and ballet positions of the feet, as well as the emotions and facial expressions used.
- How the dancers use the space on stage.
- Your real impressions of the piece during the show. For example: excitement, curiosity, frustration, surprise, sadness, humour etc.
- The combination of sequences (or *enchaînements*) and shapes on stage.
- The relationship between the choreography, the music, the props, costumes and set.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Below are suggested pre- and post-performance activities. These suggestions are concerned with the aspects of visual arts, music, social studies and history. If you have access to a music library it is highly recommended that you and your class get familiar with the music of the ballet before the performance. This helps to create a greater sense of familiarity with the action on stage.

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

MUSIC

- Could you tell that Tchaikovsky's music was made for dancing, rather than having it done the opposite way in which a ballet is set on the music?
- Did the music change in any way when different characters were performing?

DISCUSS

- Discuss the characters and how well they were portrayed.
- Discuss the differences between *The Sleeping Beauty* as a storybook and as a ballet. Because the element of communicating through the spoken word is absent in ballet, how are the emotions, ideas, and information conveyed between characters? What would be an advantage that ballet would have over any other medium of communication when conveying this story?
- Discuss the interpretation of the story through the ballet. Did the choreography get the message across? Could a person watching this ballet for the first time and without any knowledge of the story of *The Sleeping Beauty* still understand what thoughts and emotions the dancers were conveying through their body language?
- Discuss the theatre experience. Suggested questions: Would you go again? Did you like the ballet? Was it what you expected? What were your favourite moments? What were your least favourite moments? What are your thoughts on being part of a production that took many months and many more people to assemble? Write a review of the ballet, detailing the likes and dislikes, suggesting improvements or changes.

VISUAL ARTS

- Research the historical period in which the *The Sleeping Beauty* is set and compare and contrast it to life today.
- Research the life and times of Russia – the homeland of Tchaikovsky and Petipa, during the creation of *The Sleeping Beauty*.
- *The Sleeping Beauty* ballet is based on a popular fairy tale; how do you think this make-believe kingdom would translate onto the stage? What do you think are the possibilities and what are the limitations of creating this make-believe kingdom?
- Design scenery and/or costumes for your own production of *The Sleeping Beauty*. What materials, fabrics, colours and props would you use to represent the characters and feel of the ballet?
- What type of costume would you design for the characters of Carabosse and the Lilac Fairy? How would you express their opposing attributes of Good versus Evil in the design? (Remember, ballet costume design must take the dancers' need for unrestricted movement into account.)

MUSIC

- Listen to Tchaikovsky's music from *The Sleeping Beauty*.
- Research the life and times of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.
- Listen to other popular Tchaikovsky compositions.
- Discuss how music can help tell a story or develop characters.

DISCOGRAPHY

Tchaikovsky: *The Sleeping Beauty*.

André Previn, London Symphony. 4X3S-3812

Richard Bonyngé, National Philharmonic, London. CSA-2316

Tchaikovsky: *The Sleeping Beauty, Op. 66*.

Viktor Fedotov, Leningrad Philharmonic

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

- How did the set design, costume design and lighting lend to the telling of the story?
- What were some of the strongest artistic elements that conveyed the story?
- Were the visual arts consistent with what you thought they should be?
- Was every detail of the visual aspect accurate to the historical setting, from the point of the costume design to the lighting to the scenery?

The Sleeping Beauty is hailed as the greatest collaboration of all time between choreographer Marius Petipa and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Research other ballets that they worked on together and discuss why critics believe theirs was such a perfect marriage of music and dance.

FOR DISCUSSION

- Discuss whether you believe or don't believe in the existence of fairies.
- Discuss the role that fairy tales play in our beliefs of right and wrong.
- Discuss how Good and Evil are represented in this storybook ballet.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Royal Winnipeg Ballet www.rwb.org/sleepingbeauty

National Arts Centre www.nac-cna.ca

DANCE AND ARTS EDUCATION WEBSITES

ArtsAlive, the NAC's performing arts education site www.artsalive.ca

Council of Drama and Dance in Education (Ontario) www.code.on.ca

Kennedy Center (USA) www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org

Canadian Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance www.cahperd.ca

OTHER CANADIAN BALLET COMPANIES

The National Ballet of Canada www.national.ballet.ca

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal www.grandsballet.scom

Ballet BC www.balletbc.com

Alberta Ballet www.albertaballet.com

Ballet Jorgen www.balletjorgen.ca

BALLET RESOURCES

ABT - American Ballet Theatre Library: Ballet Dictionary and Repertory Archive, USA

www.abt.org/education/library.asp

American Ballet Theatre's Ballet Dictionary

www.abt.org/education/dictionary/index.html

Ballet.co, UK

www.ballet.co.uk

CBC.ca: "Into a fantasy world: A history of ballet"

A brief history of the deceptively simple but evocative dance form

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/ballet/>

History of dance from prehistory to 18th century ballet (in French), France and Belgium

www.ladanse.net

Chorème www.choreme.ca

ONLINE DANCE PUBLICATIONS

Dance Collection Danse www.dcd.ca

The Dance Current www.thedancecurrent.com

Dance International Magazine www.danceinternational.org

Dance Magazine www.dancemagazine.com

**The National Arts Centre
Dance Department
P.O. Box 1534, Station B
Ottawa ON K1P 5W1
Fax: 613-943-1401
Email: dance@nac-cna.ca**

This guide was written and created by the National Arts Centre's Dance Department with content from Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

The National Youth and Education Trust is supported by Founding Partner TELUS, Sun Life Financial, Michael Potter, supporters and patrons of the annual NAC Gala and the donors of the NAC Foundation's Corporate Club and Donor's Circle.

