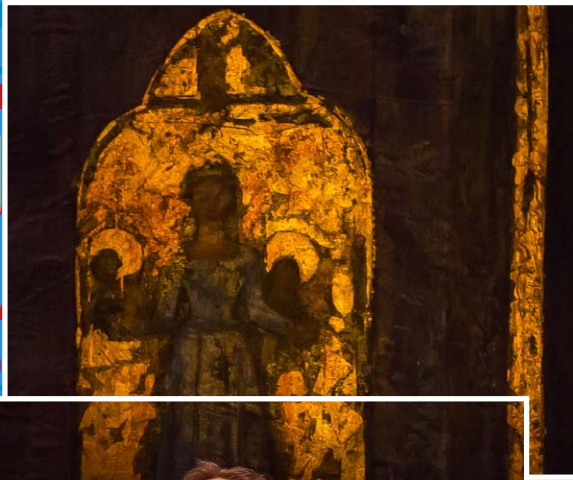


2018

WorldClass[®] Education Program



Romeo and Juliet

Birmingham Royal Ballet

Friday, April 20, 2018

10:40AM – 12:10PM

Chrysler Hall, Norfolk

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The acclaimed Birmingham Royal Ballet of England was formed in 1990 when Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet moved from London to Birmingham. The company's roots reach back six decades, though, when Irish-born dancer Ninette de Valois founded a ballet company at Sadler's Wells Theatre in the capital city of London in 1931. After World War II, during which the venue was bombed but not destroyed, the Sadler's Wells Ballet was invited to become the resident dance company of the Royal Opera House, also known as Covent Garden.

To continue performances at the Sadler's Wells Theatre, de Valois founded a second company, the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. In 1956, a Royal Charter—a formal document issued by a king or queen to establish and fund an important organization—was granted to both companies. The original troupe at the Royal Opera House became the Royal Ballet, and the second troupe was renamed the Touring Company of the Royal Ballet. In 1977, the Touring Company changed its name to Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet, and in 1987, this company was invited by the city of Birmingham to relocate there.

In 1990, the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet made the move to Birmingham, the most populous British city outside of London, and changed its name to Birmingham Royal Ballet. In 1997, the company became fully independent of the Royal Opera House, but it retains its royal connections: Prince Charles—the eldest son of Queen Elizabeth II, the current monarch of England—is president of Birmingham Royal Ballet.

Try This:

(Grades 4-12)

Research ballet and other types of dance companies in your area. Are there any amateur or professional troupes in Hampton Roads? In Virginia? What kind of dance do they perform? Write about or discuss with your class what you learned.

Sources:

www.brb.org.uk

www.princeofwales.gov.uk



What's It About?

At this performance, you are going to see the most famous excerpts from *Romeo and Juliet*, including the marketplace, the party where Romeo and Juliet meet, and the iconic balcony scene. Here is a full synopsis of the story to help you contextualize what you are going to see.

Feuding families fighting in the streets, a secret teen wedding, a potion, some poison, and a love-fueled double suicide—*Romeo and Juliet* is no hearts-and-flowers romance. Sure, there's that sweet balcony scene—but there's a whole lot more. That's why *Romeo and Juliet* is the most famous love story in the world. William Shakespeare's play has been reinterpreted in a slew of movies, musicals, and books. And with its high drama, tender moments, and grand passions, the many ballet versions of *Romeo and Juliet* present dance at its most poignant and beautiful.

The Birmingham Royal Ballet's production uses choreography, or the pattern of dance steps, created by British ballet dancer and choreographer Sir Kenneth MacMillan in 1965. Set in Verona, Italy, the drama begins with a major brawl in a busy street market. Romeo, of the Montague family, and Tybalt, of the Capulet family, begin to quarrel. The two families are sworn enemies; the argument erupts into an all-out fight, quelled only by Verona's prince.

Meanwhile, at the Capulet home, the young Juliet reacts with displeasure when her parents enter her bedroom with Paris, a young man they wish their daughter to marry. Juliet's not thrilled with the idea of marrying so young, but to please her father, she promises to give Paris a chance. Juliet's nurse points out to her that her childhood is now over, much to Juliet's dismay.

Outside the Capulet palace, guests are arriving for a masquerade ball. Romeo and his friends are there, disguised in masks. Romeo flirts with the beautiful Rosaline, then he and his friends follow her inside—into enemy territory. Inside, Romeo sees



Juliet dancing with Paris and is transfixed. Juliet sees Romeo and is visibly shaken. As the party continues, Romeo dances for Juliet, then tries to join her as she dances. Romeo's friend Mercutio, sensing trouble brewing with this infatuation, dances to distract attention away from his friend. Later, Tybalt recognizes Romeo and demands he leave, but Juliet's father intervenes and allows Romeo to stay as a guest in his house. As the guests exit the ball, the fight-hungry Tybalt follows Romeo out, only to once again be thwarted by Lord Capulet.

After the ball, the sleepless Juliet wanders out onto her balcony, thinking of Romeo. Suddenly, he is there in the garden. Juliet runs down to him and together they dance, professing their eternal love.

The ballet's second act opens once again in the busy marketplace, Romeo thinking only of Juliet and the day he might marry her. Juliet's nurse arrives with a letter for him from his new love—she agrees they should marry, but given their families' feud, she insists they must be married secretly. Romeo is overjoyed and rushes off to meet Juliet at Friar Lawrence's

Romeo and Juliet



chapel. With Juliet's nurse as their witness, the monk marries the young couple, hoping their union will end the strife between their families.

Back in the marketplace, Tybalt tries to pick a fight with Romeo, who refuses to battle his new wife's relative. Before anyone can stop him, Mercutio accepts Tybalt's challenge, and the two fight with swords. Romeo begs Mercutio to stop, but it's too late; Tybalt stabs Mercutio. Romeo avenges his friend's death by attacking Tybalt, who also dies. Romeo is banished from Verona.

Before leaving, Romeo visits Juliet's bedroom. They dance with the joy of their love, and then with the sadness of their parting as Romeo rushes away when Juliet's nurse arrives. Juliet's parents follow with Paris, whom Juliet rebuffs, which angers her father. Juliet begs her father to forget the idea of her marrying Paris. The family continues to insist, and Juliet continues to resist; finally, the enraged Lord Capulet whisks his wife and Paris away. Distraught, Juliet rushes off to see Friar Lawrence.

At the chapel, Juliet begs the monk for help. He gives her a vial of sleeping potion that will make Juliet appear as if she's dead. It seems to be a good plan;

obviously, a seemingly dead Juliet can't be married off to Paris. The monk plans to warn Romeo that Juliet is not really dead, that she's only taken a potion but must be rescued from her family's tomb.

Back in her bedroom, Juliet makes amends with her mother and father and dances politely with Paris. Once alone, she drinks the potion and collapses on the bed. When friends and family find her in the morning, apparently dead, they all lament.

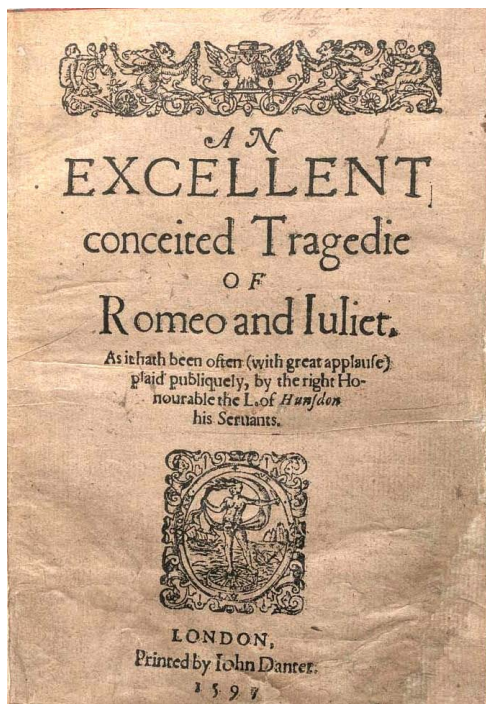
At the Capulet crypt, Juliet's family mourn her, gathered around the bier on which she's been placed. After they depart, Paris remains. Romeo, disguised as a monk, attacks and kills him. Romeo believes his beloved Juliet is really dead; Friar Lawrence's message never reached him. In his anguish, Romeo lifts Juliet's lifeless body from the bier and dances with her, trying to revive her with his love, but it's no use. Romeo places her on the tomb, then pulls out a vial of poison and drinks it. Juliet awakes. When she sees Romeo dead before her, she grabs his dagger, plunges it into her chest, and embraces her beloved Romeo.

Source: Adapted from "Romeo and Juliet" in *Balanchine's Complete Stories of the Great Ballets* by George Balanchine and Francis Mason (New York: Doubleday, 1977).



Where Did It Come From?

Scholars believe William Shakespeare likely penned his tragic play *Romeo and Juliet* between 1591 and 1595. But the story probably wasn't completely his own. Like many playwrights of his time, Shakespeare often incorporated bits and pieces of ancient myths and folktales into his work.



Tales of separated lovers, unkind parents, and handy sleeping potions can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome. For example, the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, two thwarted lovers who die tragically, is told in Roman poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, first published in the year 8 CE. Shakespeare would surely have read this in its original Latin as a boy at school, and an English translation was published by Arthur Golding in 1567, when Shakespeare was a toddler. The influence of Geoffrey Chaucer's great Middle English poem *Troilus and Criseyde*, written in the 1380s, can also be felt in Shakespeare's creation of a tender, passionate intimacy between two secret lovers struggling to exist in a hostile world.

In 1562, English poet Arthur Brooke published *The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet*, the first English version of Romeo and Juliet's tale. His long poem was popular among Elizabethan readers, enjoying several reprints. Brooke's was the latest telling of a well-known story that had long been enjoyed in French and Italian literature. Italian versions, written in the 1530s by Luigi da Porta and in the 1550s by Matteo Bandello, told the story of Romeo and Giuletta and the feuding families of Montecchi and Capelletti, and included the details of the secret wooing and marriage, the helpful nurse, Romeo's escape from the punishment for murder, the monk's potion and his lost message to Romeo, and the suicides in the tomb.

The French version of the same tale, written in 1559 by Pierre Boaistuau, added more exciting details. Interestingly, Boaistuau changed the manner of the lovers' deaths from his Italian predecessors, where the lovers have a short time together in the tomb before they die. Boaistuau's Romeo dies before Juliet wakes, just as Shakespeare's does in his later version.

Brooke's poem in English is a faithful translation from the French, and experts consider Brooke's work the immediate source for Shakespeare's play. Shakespeare, of course, made his own changes, including shortening the time span from a leisurely period of several months, throughout which the lovers enjoy their relationship, to the desperately hurried and headlong energy of his action, all crammed into a few days.

Source: Adapted from "Romeo and Juliet: Dates and Sources" at Royal Shakespeare Company's website:

www.rsc.org.uk/romeo-and-juliet/past-productions/dates-and-sources.



. . . and Why Does He Matter?

William Shakespeare is considered possibly the greatest and most influential writer of all time. Born in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, England, in 1564, he married in 1582, then arrived in London around 1588 and began working as an actor and playwright. By 1594 he was acting and writing for a performance troupe later known as the King's Men, after King James I took the throne upon Queen Elizabeth I's death in 1603. Until 1642, when the religious Puritans closed the theaters, the King's Men troupe was a favorite with both royalty and the public.

Shakespeare's acting company performed at the Globe Theatre, built by the troupe around 1599. Evidence suggests that the venue was a polygonal, three-story, open-air amphitheater that could accommodate an audience of three thousand. From 1609 the King's Men performed at the Globe during the summer months and at Blackfriars, a second indoor theater owned by the troupe, in the winter.

Shakespeare's plays were in such demand that they were published and sold in "penny-copies" to his more literate fans. This was a major accomplishment; no playwright before him had become so popular that his plays were sold as literature. Shakespeare retired from the King's Men in 1611 at age forty-seven and returned to Stratford, where he died five years later.

It's estimated that in his lifetime William Shakespeare wrote thirty-seven plays, 154 sonnets, two narrative poems, and added more than two thousand words to the English language. Today, Shakespeare's works are read, studied, performed, reinterpreted, and enjoyed all over the world.

Those new to Shakespeare may wonder what all the hoopla is about. Sure, he's one of the world's most popular playwrights and poets, but what makes him so special?

Perhaps the most important reason Shakespeare is revered is his ability to capture universal human

emotions. And it doesn't get more universal than love and hate; just about anyone can relate to these powerful feelings. With *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare asks us to reflect more deeply on these common emotions. Though the drama highlights romantic love, Shakespeare presents love as an intense, powerful, even violent force that can overtake a person's loyalties, values, and reason. Shakespeare explores love's apparent flip side, hate, in the play as well. Pride, family honor, and timeworn tradition fuel the two families' ancient grudge, which the teens and the friar hope can be overcome by love. Through the couple's landmark romance, the feud is indeed brought to an end—but at tremendous cost, leaving us to think about how love and hate can often be tragically linked.

Other reasons Shakespeare remains timeless include his remarkable storytelling—his works still inspire modern authors, playwrights, filmmakers, musicians, dancers, and artists—his complex and dimensional characters, who are fun to read and challenging for actors to play, and his ability to turn an elegant or colorful phrase. Many of the best-known phrases in the English language, words we hear every day, came from the mind of Shakespeare: *for goodness' sake, neither here nor there, the short and long of it, dead as a doornail, in a pickle, love is blind, heart of gold*, plus many more. And from *Romeo and Juliet*, *wild goose chase, star-crossed lovers, parting is such sweet sorrow*, and the age-old question: *What's in a name?*

Try This:

(Grades 4–12)

What causes grudges? Can you think of any long-held grudges in your family, school, community, the country, the world? How might these grudges be ended without a tragic result? Write down your thoughts or discuss your answers in class.

(Grades 9–12)

The universal themes of love and hate in *Romeo and Juliet* consistently show up in popular music. Create a playlist of songs that relate to the love and hate themes. Share your favorite song from your playlist with the class and explain how it relates thematically to *Romeo and Juliet*.

Kenneth MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet*, the Ballet

Playwright William Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* has been transformed into dance by many different choreographers over nearly eight decades. Though the creator of the music, Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev, wrote the score in 1935, the first full-length ballet wasn't performed publicly until 1940, when it premiered at the Kirov State Theatre of Opera and Ballet in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), Russia.

Choreographer Kenneth MacMillan of the British Royal Ballet had been longing to create his own *Romeo and Juliet* after seeing a version presented by the Stuttgart Ballet that premiered in 1962. Luckily, the Royal Ballet wanted a lavish new three-act production based on the play, to help commemorate the four-hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's birth in 1964 and to take on its 1965 American tour. *Romeo and Juliet* would be the first three-act ballet MacMillan would create.

MacMillan and his dancers endlessly discussed ideas about the characters as he choreographed the key pas de deux—or dance for two—in each act. These pas de deux were the starting point around which he built the rest of the ballet. MacMillan envisioned Juliet as a headstrong, passionate girl who makes all the crucial decisions: the secret marriage in defiance of her parents' wishes, taking Friar Lawrence's potion, joining Romeo in death. MacMillan's Romeo was a young man swept off his feet by love, dancing in dizzy delight.



The choreographer gave Romeo and his close friends, Mercutio and Benvolio, daring, showy steps to distinguish them from the street fighters in Verona's marketplace and the stately aristocrats in the ballroom scene. And only Juliet and her girlfriends are en pointe, dancing on their toes: their choreography is contrasted with folk dances and crowd scenes. MacMillan broke the ballet conventions of the time by having the dancing evolve from naturalistic action. Unlike other productions, there are no picturesque poses for applause at the end of set pieces; there are no spotlight entrances for the leading characters. Indeed, Romeo is discovered in semidarkness at the start of the ballet, and Juliet's arrival at the ball in her honor goes unnoticed at first.



A Labor of Love

MacMillan wanted to show the lovers as teenagers at the mercy of a powerful patriarchal society (one controlled by men). The large-scale scenic designs—unusual then for a ballet—emphasized the oppressive might of Juliet’s surroundings. She is a small, vulnerable figure within the imposing Capulet household and, finally, laid out in the family vault. MacMillan and his scenery/costume designer took their inspiration from fifteenth-century Italian paintings and architecture of the Early Renaissance, as well as from Shakespeare. Director Franco Zeffirelli’s 1960 stage production of *Romeo and Juliet* for the Royal Shakespeare Company was another influence, with its fortress of a palace guarding the Capulet family’s treasures—including their beautiful daughter.

Kenneth MacMillan’s *Romeo and Juliet* for the Royal Ballet premiered in February 1965 at London’s Royal Opera House. With well-known dancers Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev in the leading roles, the performance earned forty-three curtain calls (when performers appear onstage after a show to acknowledge the audience’s applause); the safety curtain eventually had to be brought down to persuade the audience to leave the theater.

MacMillan’s *Romeo and Juliet* soon became a signature work of the Royal Ballet’s repertoire, and the best-known version of the Prokofiev ballet in Britain and the United States. During his lifetime, MacMillan mounted it for the Royal Swedish Ballet in 1971, American Ballet Theatre in 1985, and Birmingham Royal Ballet in 1992, with new scenery and costume designs by Paul Andrews, which we see today.



Try This:

(Graes 4–12)

Romeo and Juliet’s story has been reinterpreted in a wide variety of media. Film versions include director Franco Zeffirelli’s Oscar-winning 1968 *Romeo and Juliet*, director Baz Luhrmann’s 1996 *Romeo + Juliet* (starring young Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes), and the late singer/actress Aaliyah’s 2000 movie debut, *Romeo Must Die*, also starring martial artist Jet Li. The Tony-winning musical *West Side Story* (made into a movie in 1961) was based on the play, as was Taylor Swift’s 2008 song “Love Story.” In 2010, members of the Royal Shakespeare Company took to Twitter to improvise a five-week “performance” of a contemporary *Romeo and Juliet* titled *Such Tweet Sorrow*.

Literary reworkings of the story include the children’s picture book *Romeow and Drooliet* by Nina Laden, the middle-grade novel *Star-Crossed* by Barbara Dee, and the young-adult novel *Son of the Mob* by Gordon Korman.

After seeing the Birmingham Royal Ballet’s production of *Romeo and Juliet*, read, view, or listen to an interpretation of the story in another medium, such as those listed above. What’s similar? What’s different? Why do you think the artists made the creative choices they did? Write down your thoughts or discuss them with your class.

Sources: Adapted from “Romeo and Juliet,” Kenneth Macmillan website: www.kennethmacmillan.com/new-page-90



Sergei Prokofiev

Sergei Prokofiev is one of the greatest composers of the former Soviet Union. You may already be familiar with his music: his amusing musical fairy tale *Peter and the Wolf*, which pairs spoken-word storytelling with a symphonic score, is often used to introduce young people to the various instruments of the orchestra. Prokofiev composed in many musical genres, including symphonies, film scores, opera, and ballet.

Born in the small village of Sontsovka, Ukraine, Russia, on April 23, 1891, Prokofiev began his musical training at the age of three, studying piano with his mother. Soon he began to compose his own music, and completed his first opera at the age of nine. When he was thirteen, he entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory, a prestigious music school. At the conservatory, he studied with the famous Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Prokofiev's experience there gave him a solid knowledge of traditional music composition, but he was more interested in innovation, in exploring new sounds and styles influenced by modern trends in theater, literature, art, and dance, particularly ballet.

In 1914, Prokofiev left the conservatory to travel Europe and continue studying and composing music. After the Russian revolution broke out, Prokofiev journeyed to the United States in 1918, but stayed only briefly. Disappointed by the poor reception to his music—American audiences there didn't appreciate his innovative new sounds—he decided to return to Europe to explore opportunities there. Settling in Paris, Prokofiev found great success as a composer and pianist; his operas and ballets were especially well received.

Fame, fortune, and the esteem of leading figures of Western culture were not satisfying enough for Prokofiev, however. He began to miss his homeland and decided to return to Russia—which had become the communist Soviet Union—in 1932, relocating there permanently in 1935. Over the next eighteen

years, he created some of his most famous music, including *Peter and the Wolf* and his ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. He often incorporated themes taken from Russian folktales and history into his modernistic work.

Although Prokofiev is considered today to be one of the most famous composers of the twentieth century, his music was unpopular with Soviet government officials. In 1948, he and other important Soviet composers, including Dmitri Shostakovich and Aram Khachaturian, were denounced for writing music the government considered too advanced and too Western-influenced for the masses to enjoy; much of Prokofiev's work was banned from performance in the Soviet Union. After a long battle with illness and financial hardship, Prokofiev died on March 5, 1953, in Moscow.



Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)



Prokofiev & *Romeo and Juliet*

When Sergei Prokofiev accepted the commission from the Kirov (now Mariinsky) Ballet in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) to compose a *Romeo and Juliet* ballet in 1935, it was a musical homecoming. The composer had lived outside Russia since 1918, and was ready to return for good. But Russia was now the communist Soviet Union, and *Romeo and Juliet*'s rocky road to production proved hardly a warm welcome home for Prokofiev.

The Kirov, following the Soviet government's call for a return to more traditionalism and less modernism in the arts, was looking to create a "drambalet," a dramatized ballet focusing more on story than flashy innovations and experiments in movement and music. What better tale than Shakespeare's time-honored tragedy of two doomed lovers?

But Prokofiev and the dramatic writer Adrian Piotrovsky, who helped adapt the play for the dance stage, made a most unlikely change to Shakespeare's story. They gave it a happy ending. Romeo wants to stab himself and Friar Lawrence tries to stop him. While they struggle, Juliet starts to breathe. The stage then fills with people, and Romeo and Juliet dance away happily ever after.

Management shakeups at the Kirov meant that Prokofiev's fledgling ballet project was moved to the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow. But Soviet cultural officials were not happy with Prokofiev's happy ending, so the entire production was put on hold. Then the head of the Bolshoi was arrested as part of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's Great Purge, in which more than a million people were detained and at least 600,000 were executed. Adrian Piotrovsky, Prokofiev's writing partner, was among the victims.

It wasn't until 1940 that *Romeo and Juliet* had its first performance in the Soviet Union, at the Kirov, with its ending revised to match the tragic conclusion of Shakespeare's play. Suites—or selected pieces—of just the ballet's music had been performed in Moscow and the United States before then, and a single-act ballet production with a pared-down score had premiered in Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic) in 1938.

The Kirov's full-length 1940 production starred Galina Ulanova and Konstantin Sergeyev dancing Leonid Lavrovsky's choreography. The Bolshoi Ballet was the first to perform the ballet in the United States, at New York City's Metropolitan Opera House in 1959. In the US premiere, Galina Ulanova again danced the role of Juliet, nineteen years after first performing it in the Soviet Union premiere, and six years after Prokofiev's death.



Galina Ulanova dances *Romeo and Juliet* in 1959.
Credit: RIA Novosti archive, image #11591 / Ummov / CC-BY-SA 3.0

Try This:

(Grades 4–12)

Imagine you're a composer who's been asked to write the music for a "drambalet." Which story would you choose to interpret in music and dance? Why? Make a chart to diagram your drambalet: On one side, briefly describe the main plot points of the story. On the other side, describe what kind of music would work best to convey each plot point—would the tempo be slow or fast; would the volume be quiet or loud; which instruments would you use?

(Grades 10–12)

What do you know about Joseph Stalin's Great Purge? Why and how did it happen? Could something like that happen today? Why or why not? Research, then write down or discuss your answers in class.



Ballet 101: A Bit Of History

Ballet emerged in the late fifteenth century Renaissance court culture of Italy as a dance interpretation of fencing, and further developed in the French court from the time of Louis XIV in the seventeenth century. This is reflected in the largely French vocabulary of ballet. Ballet went into decline in France after 1830, though it was continued in Denmark, Italy, and Russia.

Ballet was reintroduced to western Europe on the eve of World War I by a Russian company, the Ballets Russes of Sergei Diaghilev, who came to be influential around the world. Diaghilev's company was a destination for many Russian-trained dancers fleeing the famine and unrest that followed the Bolshevik revolution. These dancers brought with them exciting choreographic and stylistic innovations.

In the twentieth century, ballet continued to develop and exerted a strong influence on broader concert dance. For example, in the United States, choreographer George Balanchine developed what is now known as neoclassical ballet, a less rigid but complexly structured form.

The early ballet dancers were not as skilled as dancers today. Ballet has become a highly technical form of dance with its own vocabulary. It is mainly performed with the accompaniment of classical music. It has been influential as a form of dance globally and is taught in ballet schools around the world, which use their own cultures and societies to inform the art. Ballet dance works (ballets) are choreographed, and also include mime, acting, and are set to music (usually orchestral but occasionally vocal).

Classical ballet is the most formal of the ballet styles; it adheres to traditional ballet technique. There are variations relating to area of origin, such as Russian ballet, French ballet, and Italian ballet. The most well-known styles of ballet are the Russian Method, the Italian Method, the Danish Method, the Balanchine Method or New York City Ballet Method, and the Royal Academy of Dance and Royal Ballet School methods, created in England.



Marie Taglioni as Flore in Charles Didelot's ballet *Zephyre et Flore*. Hand colored lithograph, circa 1831.

Ballets Russes, scene from *Apollon musagète*. 1928.

The first pointe shoes—which female dancers wear to dance on their toes—were actually regular ballet slippers that were heavily darned at the tip. They would allow the ballerina to briefly stand on her toes to appear weightless. They were later converted to the hard box used today.

Ballerina Marie Taglioni popularized pointe work when she performed the ballet *La Sylphide*, the first to feature dancing en pointe for aesthetic purpose, in 1832. Before then, dancing en pointe was merely an acrobatic stunt. Today, pointe work is a central part of a ballerina's training, requiring great strength and skill.

Source: Adapted from Washington Ballet
www.washingtonballet.org/ballet-101



Ballet Glossary

Ballet is a specific dance form that can also include mime and acting. Ballet is best known for its virtuoso techniques such as pointe work and grand pas de deux, or dances for two.

Ballet terminology is the same the world over. French is the primary language of ballet because the first academy of ballet was based in Paris, France, over three hundred years ago. In 1661, King Louis XIV established the Academie Royale de Danse. Ever since, ballet dancers and teachers have been using the same terminology.

Here are a select few ballet terms. How many of these can you spot at the performance? Make a list and discuss with your class. How did you feel or what did you think when you observed certain movements and positions?

adagio (a-DAHZH-ee-o): a slow dance movement.

allegro (al-LAY-groh): quick and lively dance movement.

arabesque (ah-ra-BESK): the position in ballet where the dancer stands on one leg with the other leg stretched out to the back, usually at a right angle to the body. There are many types of arabesques depending on the direction of the body, height of the leg, and position of the arms.

artistic director: the person at a ballet company who is in charge of choosing ballets to perform, hiring dancers, rehearsing the company for performances, and other artistic decisions.

ballerina (bahl-lay-REE-nah): the female dancer in a ballet company who is usually an exceptional performer and performs many leading roles. The best ballerina is called the prima ballerina.

barre (bar): a wooden or sometimes metal handrail placed around the walls of the ballet studio. The dancers begin their daily classes using the barre for support.

choreographer (core-ee-AH-grah-fer): the person who arranges movements and patterns of dancers in order to form entire dances. They may also develop the concept or idea of a ballet.

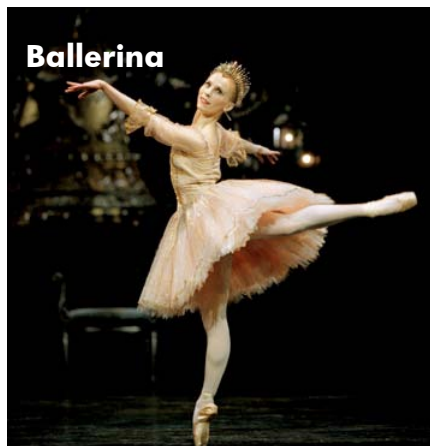
corps de ballet (core duh bal-LAY): the group of dancers, other than principals and soloists, who make up a ballet company. They work much like a chorus would for an opera.

divertissement (dee-vehr-tees-MAHN): a short entertaining dance.

jeté (zhuh-TAY): a jump in the air. There are many different types, but the most common is the grand, or big, jeté. In this movement, both of the dancer's legs are split in midair.



Birmingham Royal Ballet, Joseph Caley; photo: Andrew Ross.



Birmingham Royal Ballet, Carol-Anne Millar as 'Dawn'; photo: Bill Cooper.



Birmingham Royal Ballet, Artists of Birmingham Royal Ballet; photo: Bill Cooper.

pas (pah): in French, means step.

pas de deux (pah de duh): a dance for two people, usually a man and a woman. Deux in French means two.

pirouette (peer-o-WET): a turn or spin on one foot. Performing multiple pirouettes takes very good balance and coordination.

plie (plee-AY): a bending of the legs where the knees point directly to the side. Most ballet steps such as jumps and turns begin and end with a plie.

pointe (pwent): the tip of the toe. Most female ballet dancers dance on the tips of their toes wearing special shoes, called pointe shoes.

port de bras (poor duh brah): the five basic positions of the arms corresponding to each of the five positions of the feet.

premier danseur (pruh-MYAY dahn-SUHR): a male ballet star or leading dancer of the ballet company. He is the male version of the prima ballerina.

tour en l'air (toor ahn lehr): a step in which the dancer jumps straight up in the air and performs one or more turns of the body.

tutu (TOO-too): a ballet costume made of a bodice and layers of netting forming a skirt.

Try This:

(Graes K–5)

Do you or any of your classmates study ballet? Describe and demonstrate for your class some of the basic positions and movements of ballet. Then have your classmates try!

(Grades 6–12)

Before the performance, reflect on your perceptions of professional athletes and professional dancers. How are they similar? How are they different? Research the career paths of each profession. What kind of education and training does each require? What is daily life like for each? After the performance, reassess your perceptions. Did you see anything that made you think differently? Write about or discuss with your class what you learned.

Source: Adapted from Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University General Ballet Study Guide:

www.auditoriumtheatre.org



Grand Jeté

Birmingham Royal Ballet, Momoko Hirata; photo: Bill Cooper.



Pointe

Birmingham Royal Ballet.



Port de Bras

Birmingham Royal Ballet, Angela Paul with Artists of Birmingham Royal Ballet; photo: Bill Cooper.

Audience Etiquette at the Ballet

Imagine the cafeteria at lunchtime—students chatting, wrappers crinkling, trays banging, and utensils clinking. Now imagine trying to share a story or joke with the entire room. Would anyone hear you? Notice you? Probably not, right?

Luckily, the performance space isn't the cafeteria. And when we enter the theater, we all agree to a certain code of behavior so that everyone can enjoy the show. That's called audience etiquette. Here are a few audience etiquette tips:

- Be quiet. If you talk during the performance, you may disturb other audience members around you and distract the performers.
- Silence your cell phone and other electronics that may make noise during the show.
- Stay in your seat. Use the restroom before the performance begins.
- Enjoy the show! The performers have worked hard to present an exciting event; thank them by paying attention and expressing your appreciation with applause.

And about that applause...

When and how long to clap can be confusing for the first-time ballet goer. Here are some guidelines: feel free to clap when you see something you like, when something is particularly well done, when you are moved, and, of course, at the end of a performance.

Where it gets tricky is during sets of dances called a pas de deux (two people), pas de trois (three people), pas de quatre (four people), and more. Each set is made up of a series of dances; the first one is done by all the dancers, then each dancer does a short one alone, which is generally followed by a final dance (called a coda) where they again dance together. It is appropriate to applaud after each section of dance if you are so moved. This is where the dancers traditionally show off their dazzling technique, so even shouts of "Bravo!" for the man or "Brava!" for the woman are encouraged.



At the end of this type of dance series, the dancers will typically acknowledge the audience with a bow to them. They will then bow to each other, with the male dancer acknowledging the ballerina. Sometimes she will then gesture to the musician or orchestra to acknowledge their role in the performance.

At the end of a full-length ballet, the ballerina will often welcome the conductor onstage to join the dancers in a final bow. It's appropriate to continue clapping throughout this period. If the performance is particularly enjoyable or well done, feel free to yell "Bravo!" and even stand if you wish. When an audience stands up while applauding at the end of an extraordinary performance, it's called a standing ovation. It lets the performers know that you really, really liked the performance!

Source: "Applause" adapted from National Ballet of Canada: <https://national.ballet.ca/NBOC/media/MediaLibrary/Documents/You-dance/Applause.pdf>



ON THE WEB

Washington Ballet's Ballet 101

<https://www.washingtonballet.org/ballet-101>

The Washington Ballet's website makes the art form a bit more accessible with its tabs exploring ballet history, famous ballets and great choreographers, information on pointe shoes and tutus, and a ballet glossary.

BOOKS

Trailblazer: The Story of Ballerina Raven

Wilkinson by Leda Schubert (little bee, 2018) Picture-book biography of the first African American woman to dance with a major American touring ballet company.

Ballerina Dreams by Lauren Thompson (Feiwel and Friends, 2007). Photo essay following a group of girls with various physical disabilities as they prepare for and perform at a dance recital.

Swan: The Life and Dance of Anna Pavlova

by Laurel Snyder (Chronicle, 2015). Picture-book biography of Anna Pavlova, the most famous prima ballerina of all time.

My First Ballet Book by Kate Castle (Kingfisher, 2006). Complete guide for the beginning dancer with color photos depicting a diverse group of children learning the fundamentals.

Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina (Young Readers Edition) by Misty Copeland (Aladdin, 2016). Determination meets dance in this middle-grade adaptation of the memoir by the first African American principal dancer at American Ballet Theatre.

To Dance: A Ballerina's Graphic Novel by Siena Cherson Siegel (Aladdin, 2006). A New York City Ballet dancer's highly illustrated autobiographical story for middle-grade readers.

VIRGINIA STANDARDS OF LEARNING

Dance: DM.19, 24; DI.11–13, 16, 18–20, 23; DII.12, 18, 20

Music: 1.11, 17; 2.7, 8; 3.9; 4.8; 5.8, 11; EI.18; 6.7; 7.7; 8.7; MIB.19; MII. 18; MIAD.8; MG.17; MCB.7; MCI.7; MCAD.7; HG.8; HIB.19; HII.18; HIAD.20; HIAR.20; HGI.17; HGII.17; HCB.7; HCI.7; HCAD.7; HCAR.7

English: K.3; 1.3; 2.3; 3.2; 4.1–5, 7, 9; 5.1–5, 7, 9; 6.1–7, 9; 7.1–7, 9; 8.2, 3, 5–7, 9; 9.1, 2, 4–6, 8; 10.1, 2, 4–6, 8; 11.1, 5, 6, 8; 12.1, 5–8

History and Social Science: WHI.1, 6, 13; WHII.3, 6, 10, 11, 16





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How did your students respond to the performance?

How did you prepare your students for this performance? Did you use the Education Guide? If so, how? Did students enjoy the material?

How did this performance contribute to experiential learning in your classroom?

What role do the arts play in your school? In your classroom?

If you could change one thing about this experience, what would it be?

Please include quotes and comments from your students as well!

(Optional)

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