



CINDERELLA – Study Guide

TEACHER’S GUIDE TO CINDERELLA

State Street Ballet
Rodney Gustafson, Artistic Director

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HOW TO ENJOY LIVE THEATRE

Let’s share the excitement of live theatre together! When young people attend a live theatrical performance for the first time they often do not realize how different it is from watching a movie or television show. Because the performers and audience are together in the same room, they are creating the event together. The performers can see and hear the audience just as the audience can see and hear them.

A live presentation has not been pre-recorded, with the mistakes taken out, which means it’s riskier for the performers and more exciting for the audience. It also means the audience has a real contribution to make the overall experience enjoyable. Audience members affect those around them as well as the performers. The more the audience “gives” to the performers, the more the performers can give back to the audience. Remember, without the audience, there would be no show! Live theatre is successful because of the efforts of many people working together:

The Audience
The Technical Crew
The House Manager and The Ushers
The Performers

- Listening, laughing and applauding in the appropriate places is welcomed and greatly appreciated by performers. They are the signs of a good audience. Talking during a performance is distracting. Ushers have been instructed to ask anyone creating a distraction to leave the auditorium.
- No hats or chewing gum in the theatre; these must be removed upon entering the lobbies.
- Trips to the bathroom should be taken before and after the performance. A chaperone from your schools must accompany the students.
- Please encourage the students to listen to the ushers carefully when being seated and when leaving the theatre. Our ushers are trained to ensure the comfort and safety of the audience.
- Live theatre is a unique and fun-filled experience that is made even better when all work together and show off their best theatre manners.

About State Street Ballet

State Street Ballet is a vibrant, innovative professional dance company based in Santa Barbara, California. The company was founded in 1994 and remains dedicated to promoting original dance through public performances and educational outreach programs.

The company combines the rigors and timeless beauty of classical technique with updated looks, special effects and digital technology, producing original works that satisfy today's diverse audiences. By melding familiar storylines with exciting dance movement and special effects, State Street Ballet gives each tale a modern, passionate and unique twist. This heady meld of movement, music, lighting, scenery and acting is successfully reaching new audiences, introducing dance as mainstream entertainment while honoring classical training, style and tradition.

Cinderella

An original production by State Street Ballet, Choreography by Rodney Gustafson. Music by Sergei Prokofiev. Artistic Associate and Ballet Mistress Marina Fliagina. Additional choreography by Marina Fliagina. Lighting design/Production Manager by Mark Somerfield. Set Design by Jean-Francois Revon. Costume design and construction by Christina Giannini. Animation design by David Bazemore.

Cinderella: Ezlimar Dortolina

Prince: Spencer Gavin

Friend of the Prince: Jose Edwin Gonzalez

Stepmother: Marina Fliagina

Stepsisters: Sergei Domrachev, John Christopher Piel

Fairy Godmother: Alyson Mattoon

Cupid: Sasha Domrachev

Master of Ceremonies: Gary McKenzie

Tailors: Bayaraa Badamsambuu, David Eck, Jose Edwin Gonzalez, Steven Jasso

Spring/Fairy: Leila Drake

Summer/Fairy: Andrea Dawn Shelley

Autumn/Fairy: Jennifer Rowe

Winter/Fairy: Victoria Luchkina

International Princess: Jennifer Rowe, Andrea Dawn Shelley, Bonnie Crotzer, Leila Drake

Grasshoppers: Young Dancers & Mary Tarpley

Waltz of the Fairies: Bonnie Crotzer, Leila Drake, Christine Sawyer, Dana Young

Lead Mazurka Couple: Victoria Luchkina & Jose Edwin Gonzalez

Mazurka Couples: Alyson Mattoon & Jameson Keating, Dana Young & Bayaraa

Badamsambuu, Katie McDermott & Steven Jasso, Christine Sawyer & David Eck

Ballet Trivia

- Cinderella's stepsisters are sometimes played by men
- In the story Cinderella there is no beggar, or seasonal fairies
- The glass slipper is played by a regular ballet slipper

Cinderella Synopsis

ACT I – The Cottage and the Transformation

After the untimely death of Cinderella's beloved mother, her father has remarried. Unhappily, the choice was not a good one. His new wife was very rich but proud and ill-tempered. With her two spoiled daughters she made Cinderella's life a living hell. Degraded to even the worst of chores, and must always be at her stepmother's beck and call. Just as Cinderella is bewailing her fate, an old woman appears seemingly out of nowhere, begging her for food. The stepmother forbids it but Cinderella slips the grateful beggar a piece of bread. When the beggar has gone a tailor arrives with the most gorgeous garments to dress the mistresses of the house for the lustrous Ball for the Prince. Even a dance instructor has been hired to teach the stepsisters good manners and a few simple dance steps. Cinderella looks on sadly as the sisters feverishly prepare for the grand event. After everyone one has left, the old beggar re-appears and reveals herself as the girl's Fairy Godmother. With her magic wand she magically sends Cinderella to the Ball with a warning that she must leave by the stroke of midnight.

ACT II – The Ball

At the festive ballroom of the palace, Cinderella's stepsisters are zealously trying to make a striking impression. Desperately seeking the Prince's attention, they are interrupted by Cinderella's magical arrival. Entering with exquisite grace, she is an enchanting vision for everyone. Fascinated by the unknown girl's dreamlike apparition, the Prince takes one look at her and falls in love. The Prince and Cinderella dance the evening away, when all of a sudden the clock strikes midnight. As Cinderella dashes from the Ball she loses her slipper. As the Prince tries to chase her he finds the slipper and vows to find the one who fits the slipper. The Prince departs on a journey to find his love and finally ends up at the cottage of Cinderella. As the stepsisters struggle to fit into the slipper, the stepmother calls on Cinderella to help. As Cinderella appears he instantly knows he has found his love and the shoe fits perfectly.

Sergei Prokofiev, Composer

Sergei Prokofiev was born in Sontsovka, Ukraine on April 23, 1891. He left Russia in 1917 to live in the United States and he eventually moved to France. In 1936, Prokofiev moved back to Russia, just as the Communists were coming into power and dictating very strict rules for everyone - even for the kind of music composers were allowed to write! After seeing several other composers in trouble for their works, Prokofiev began writing shorter, safer pieces. Many of these pieces were written for children, including his most famous Peter and the Wolf. On March 5, 1953, Prokofiev died in Moscow. In his lifetime, he wrote at least 132 pieces of music.

Prokofiev began composing Cinderella in 1940 but the war intervened. Later the ballet was put aside in the interests of his opera, War and Peace. He did not take it up again until 1943, during a six-month sojourn in the Urals in the company of the Kirov Ballet artists who had been evacuated from Leningrad (St. Petersburg). Completed in 1944, the work was first performed in 1945 at the Bolshoi in Moscow.

"Essentially, what I wanted to express in the music of Cinderella was the love between Cinderella and the Prince, the birth and evolution of this sentiment, the obstacles and then the dream coming true. I gave great importance to the fairy tale aspect. I imagined the work as a classical ballet with variations, adagios, pas de deux and so on and so forth. Musically, Cinderella is characterized by three themes: the first represents aggravation, the second is pure and thoughtful and the third expresses being happy and in love. I also attempted to describe with the music, the characters of the charming and dreamy Cinderella, her retiring father, her exigent stepmother, her authoritarian and self-willed sisters and the young ardent prince so that spectators would not remain indifferent to their difficulties and their joys."

Ballet Terminology

Adagio (A-daj -ee-o) - A dance designed to enable a female dancer, generally assisted by a male partner, to display her grace, sense of line, and perfect balance.

Arabesque (Air-Rah-Besk) - An elongated classical position when the dancer balances on one leg with the other extended behind the shoulder.

Ballerina - Originally an Italian word meaning female dancer. Usually refers to a female dancer of principal or soloist status.

Choreographer – “Someone who makes dances. The choreographer is best compared to the poet: He is a man who uses the material of the classic dance that has been developed over hundreds of years, just as the poet uses language. And like the poet, the choreographer finds new ways of saying things.”
--Mr. George Balanchine

Classical - A term used to describe ballet technique: also used to describe ballets of the latter half of the 19th century which display classical ballet in its purest form.

Contemporary Dance - A neo-classic style of dance less rigid in structure than classical ballet.

En pointe (On point) -Standing or dancing on the tips of the toes in pointe shoes.

Grand jete (Gron Jet-Tay) -A leap through the air with legs outstretched.

Mime -A set of gestures with meanings which tell a story.

Pas De Deux (Pa-Duh-Duh) -Steps where a male and female partner each other.

Pirouette (Pee-Rou-Et) - A complete revolution on one leg.

Premier Danseur (Pre-Mer Dan-Sur) -A title which can be given to a principal male dancer.

Romantic - A term used to describe the style of ballet created during the Romantic era in the first half of the 19th century.

Technique - The skill required to perform ballet movements.

Turnout - The distinguishing characteristics of the classic dance: knees that are turned out from the hip at an angle of ninety degrees, allowing the body to move more easily in more directions.

Multicultural Cinderella Stories

The Cinderella story is perhaps one of the most well-known fairy tales in our culture. But did you know that the story has more than 3,000 variations around the globe as well? The version most Americans know best first appeared in Frenchman Charles Perrault's *Tales of Mother Goose*, a collection of fairy tales for children, in 1697. The popular Walt Disney animation was based on this version. Perrault simply wrote down a story that had been well-known all over the world for more than 1,000 years. The story is known as "Ashputtle" in France, "Yeh-Shen" in China, "Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters" in Africa and "Vasilisa the Beautiful" in Russia.

A few important details stay the same in all of the stories. The Cinderella character's mother has usually passed away, and the father has remarried. She is forced to perform menial tasks for her stepmothers and stepsisters, like starting fires and cleaning. In some stories, the girl's name (Cinderella or Ashputtle) refers to her daily chore of cleaning up the cinders and ashes. The stories usually mention the stepmother and stepsisters' jealousy of Cinderella's natural beauty and gentle personality. Then, when a prince or king begins searching for a wife, competition develops between the sisters. Because of Cinderella's kindness, though, she is given help from fantasy-like people: a fairy godmother, magical animals, etc. Below are a few Cinderella stories from around the world.

France

In the French version, "Ashputtle," the fairy godmother takes on the form of a little white bird. The bird perches on a tree near Ashputtle's mother's grave and grants wishes to the young woman. On the night of the prince's ball, Ashputtle is left at home because of her filthy, messy appearance, while the stepmother and stepsisters travel to the party. The bird dresses Ashputtle in a gold and silver dress with silver and silk shoes, and she sneaks off to the palace. At the ball the prince falls in love with her beauty, but her stepfamily does not recognize her in her pretty clothing. After the ball the prince searches for the woman who lost the slipper. The stepsisters try to fit their feet into the tiny slipper by cutting off a toe or a chunk of one's heel, but neither attempt works. Then Ashputtle tries on the shoe, and the prince realizes she was the woman he had fallen in love with.

China

The Chinese fairy tale involves a cave chief's young daughter, Yeh-Shen, and a secret pet fish. Yeh-Shen's stepmother is angry when she finds out the girl has kept the fish secret, so she kills it and cooks it for dinner. A spirit tells Yeh-Shen what happened to the fish and that the fish's bones contain magical powers. After taking the bones out of the garbage, Yeh-Shen asks the bones to dress her nicely for the spring festival. The spring festival is where young men and women find husbands and wives. Her wish is granted, and she gets a pretty gown, a feather cloak, and golden slippers. Yeh-Shen loses one of the slippers at the festival, but a merchant finds it. The merchant takes it to a king as a gift. The king then looks for the owner of the slipper, and when he finds Yeh-Shen, they get married.

Africa

An African version of the story, "Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters," is different than most other versions in that there are only two daughters, and their father is the only parent alive. Nyasha is the Cinderella character, Manyara is the evil sister, and Mufaro is their father. A serpent appears in Nyasha's garden one day, and she treats it nicely but thinks nothing about it until much later. When word arrives that the king is searching for a wife, the family gets ready to go see the king. Manyara sneaks off during the night before everyone leaves so she can meet the king first. On her trip through the woods by herself, she meets a hungry little boy, an old woman and a strange man. Manyara is rude to all of them. When Nyasha follows the same trail later that day, she meets the same three people and is polite and helpful to them. When she finally reaches the kingdom, she finds Manyara, who has been frightened by a serpent in the king's chambers. Nyasha enters the chambers and realizes the serpent cornering her sister is the same one that she helped found in her garden. The serpent then changes into the king, and he tells Nyasha that he was also the little boy, the old woman and the strange man in the woods. Because of the kindness she showed him when he was in different forms, the king chooses to marry Nyasha.

Russia

The Russian tale is called "Vasilisa the Beautiful." This version is different than most other Cinderella stories because there is no prince or king and no glass or golden slipper. Vasilisa's evil stepmother sends the girl to get a needle and thread from her aunt, but it is a trick: the aunt is not an aunt at all – it is

Baba Yaga, a witch whose house walks around on chicken legs and is surrounded by a fence made of bones. Inside the house is Baba Yaga's pet, a talking cat. Out of kindness, Vasilisa feeds the cat, who rarely gets any food from the witch. When Vasilisa meets Baba Yaga, she is locked in the house and told that she will be eaten the next morning. To thank Vasilisa for the food, the talking cat gives her a towel and a comb and helps her run away. If she is close to getting caught, she should throw down the towel and it will turn into a wide river. If that doesn't stop Baba Yaga, Vasilisa should throw down the comb and it will become a thick forest. Vasilisa runs home and throws down the towel and comb on her way. When she gets home safely, Vasilisa tells her father what happened and he kicks the stepmother out of the house for her evil actions.

Books

Walt Disney's Cinderella : A Read-Aloud Storybook by Della Cohen, Mary Hogan (Editor)
Cinderella : A Creative Tale from the collection Once upon a Time by Charles Perrault
Cinderella : The Story of Rossini's Opera by Alan Blyth
The Gift of the Crocodile : A Cinderella Story by Judy Sierra, Reynold Ruffins (Illustrator)

Alternative Cinderella Stories:

Cindy Ellen : A Wild Western Cinderella by Susan Lowell, Jane K. Manning (Illustrator)
Smoky Mountain Rose : An Appalachian Cinderella by Alan Schroeder, et al
Little Gold Star : A Spanish American Cinderella Tale by Robert D. San Souci, Sergio Martinez
Cendrillon : A Cajun Cinderella by Sheila Hebert Collins, Patrick Soper (Illustrator)
Petite Rouge : A Cajun Twist to an Old Tale by Sheila Hebert Collins (Narrator)
Sumorella : A Hawaii Cinderella Story by Sandi Takayama, Esther Szegedy (Illustrator)
Domitila : A Cinderella Tale from the Mexican Tradition by Jewell Reinhart Coburn
Angkat : The Cambodian Cinderella by Jewell Reinhart Coburn, Edmund Flotte (Illustrator)
Abadeha : The Philippine Cinderella by Myrna J. De LA Paz, Youshang Tang (Illustrator)
Kongi and Potgi : A Cinderella Story from Korea by Oki S. Han (Illustrator), Stephanie H. Plunkett
Tam Cam : A Vietnamese Cinderella Story by Nguiyen Nhuan
Yeh Shen : A Cinderella Story from China by Ai-Ling Louie, Ed Young (Illustrator)
Naya, the Inuit Cinderella by Brittany Marceau-Chenkie, Shelley Brookes (Illustrator)
The Golden Sandal : A Middle Eastern Cinderella Story=20by Rebecca Hickox, Will Hillenbrand (ill.)
The Persian Cinderella by Shirley Climo, Robert Florczak (Illustrator)
Cendrillon : A Caribbean Cinderella by Daniel San Souci, et al
Fair, Brown and Trembling : An Irish Cinderella Story by Jude Daly (Illustrator)
The Egyptian Cinderella by Shirley Climo, Ruth Heller (Illustrator)
Rough-Face Girl by Rafe Martin, David Shannon (Illustrator)
Sootface : An Ojibwa Cinderella Story by Robert D. San Souci, Daniel San Souci (Illustrator)
The Turkey Girl : A Zuni Cinderella by Penny Pollock, Ed Young (Illustrator)

Grades K-1:
Introduction to Ballet

BEFORE THE BALLET

Dance and Theatre: What Is A Ballet?

Discuss what a ballet is. Are there speaking parts? How is a story told? Who decides how the dancers tell the story? How do the dancers learn their parts?

Dance, Music, and Theatre: Audience Etiquette

Students should be introduced to basic audience etiquette before attending the performance. Some important things to remember include the following:

- Remain seated throughout the performance so that everyone can see
- Remain quiet so as to not distract the dancers and fellow audience members
- Clap politely at the end of a performance

Dance: Basic Ballet Steps

Introduce a small sample of commonly used steps to the class. Some familiarity with basic steps will provide students reference points through which to enjoy the performance. Some impressive steps that are used frequently in ballet performances include:

Pirouettes: turns, sometimes consisting of several revolutions, performed by both male and female dancers.

Bourrées: tiny rapid steps performed by female dancers while en pointe that give the illusion of floating above the ground

Grande Jeté: an impressive split leap performed by both male and female dancers.

FOLLOWING THE BALLET

How did the story that you saw differ from the ones that you know? What other Cinderella stories have you seen or read? Was this what you expected?

1. Discuss several different types of dance from other cultures. How was this ballet different from other kinds of dance? Was it faster or slower? Did they use a lot of energy? Did the costumes help them dance? Did the music fit the movement? Do you do any of these moves while you are in school playing or learning?
2. Using the basic dance vocabulary that was discussed before the ballet: What ballet steps did you see the dancers perform? Were they used to communicate ideas, moods, etc? Were they used to tell the story? How?
3. Math: Do you think that dancers use math to help them? Do they count the rhythms? Do they make circles and squares and other shapes in their dance?
4. Listening and responding with movement to music: Play different music for your students and ask them to move to the music. Feel the mood of the music and dance fast, slow, silly, serious. Discuss: Why do artists create dance, music, theatre and visual arts? Is this a job? Can all of these things be used together to tell a story? Give examples. Do you think that you get better the more you practice or perform?

Kindergarten

Dance Content Standards. 4.1, 5.1

Music Content Standards. 5.1, 5.2

Grade One

Dance Content Standards. 3.1, 4.1, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2

Music Content Standards. 4.1, 4.2, 5.2

GRADES 2 – 3:
Thinking of Themes

BEFORE THE BALLET

Introduction: Objective: Using CINDERELLA, students become familiar with recognizing themes in a story. Discuss the meaning of theme. A theme is an underlying message meaningfully created and connected to the story's plot, characters, and setting. Ask students to take five minutes to think about the theme of the story in CINDERELLA.

Language Arts: Story Familiarity

Read a version of Cinderella to the class. Encourage students to relate the story to other stories that they are familiar with. In addition, encourage students to relate aspects of Cinderella to their own lives.

FOLLOWING THE BALLET

1. *Themes & Literature:*

- How did the story that you saw differ from the ones that you know?
- What other Cinderella stories have you seen or read? Was this what you expected?
- Was there a theme to the ballet in terms of movement, music, costumes?
- Identify similar themes in stories, songs, and art forms (e.g. patterns, texture).
- Describe how literature is often used to inspire dance ideas and don't forget poetry and nursery rhymes.

2. *DANCE*

- Describe this ballet in terms of rhythm and energy.
- Name some other kinds of dance, and describe the similarities and differences.
- Describe how choreographers create dances.
- How are some dance movements like punctuation marks: !!!!, ?????? ...
- Were these performers professional, focused, trained? How can you tell?
- Talk about how these performers rehearse, practice, stretch. Also talk about how they schedule their rehearsals so as not to waste time.
- Do you think that all of the dancers are at every rehearsal?

3. *MUSIC*

- Describe the music in this ballet in terms of rhythm, mood, tone, instruments.
- What kind of music do you like to listen to, and how is it different.
- What parts of the music communicated ideas or moods in the ballet?
- Discuss Prokofiev, his music and his life.
- Who writes and performs music? What kinds of music?
- Can you say if the music was good? Why?

4. *Extra Subject*

HEALTH

Cinderella is bullied by her Stepsisters and Stepmother. If you had been a main character in Cinderella, what would you have done differently to not be picked on? Discuss possible situations and solutions, grade-appropriate, that students might encounter.

Grade Two

Dance Content Standards. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3
Music Content Standards. 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2

Grade Three

Dance Content Standards. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4
Music Content Standards. 4.1, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2

GRADES 4 – 5:
Cinderella Theme and Plot

BEFORE THE BALLET

Language Arts: Story Adaptations

Read Charles Perrault's Cinderella aloud. Compare Charles Perrault's version of Cinderella with some of the other versions of the story. Compare and contrast the two stories from a variety of angles including the role of Cinderella, the role of the Prince, the problem, the setting, the resolution, etc.

Show the class any image of Cinderella being fitted with slipper. Ask students if they can identify the story from the picture. Most will know immediately. How is it that virtually everyone can identify that this illustration is from Cinderella? What's happening at this point in the plot of the story? What plot elements from the Cinderella tale with which they are familiar can students list? Brainstorm as a class and write down what students say. Do they recall where the plot elements they've listed come from? Which plot elements that the students mentioned were in this version? Which were not?

Discuss stories that experts have categorized as Cinderella variants. The goal is to help students see that a plot element can seem quite different yet accomplish the same purpose in the narrative. In the other versions, what replaces the familiar identity test of the slipper while accomplishing the goal of allowing the heroine to be recognized? What essential elements of the plot (such as a test of identity) are accomplished, even if in a quite different way?

FOLLOWING THE BALLET

Language Arts: Compare and Contrast This version of Cinderella is different from what you saw on stage. Create a Venn diagram to illustrate the similarities and differences between the two versions of the same story. Why do you think that the ballet version of Cinderella was performed as it was, and not as it was originally written by Perrault?

Ballet is the integration of several art disciplines (dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts) into a well-organized presentation or performance. Name the musical accompaniment and explain how it relates to dance. Use dance vocabulary to describe unique characteristics of the dance. (e.g., rhythms, spatial patterns, gestures, intent). Name and use specific criteria in assessing personal and professional dance choreography (e.g., contrast, phrasing, unity). Describe ways in which a dancer effectively communicates ideas and moods (strong technique, projection, and expression). List the expectations the audience has for a performer and vice versa.

Explain how dance practice relates to and uses the vocabulary of other art subjects (e.g., positive and negative space, shape, line, rhythm, character). Discuss the choreographic process and its relation to the writing process (e.g., brain-storming, exploring and developing ideas, putting ideas into a form, sequencing). What is a work of art?

Grade Four

Dance Content Standards. 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.4

Music Content Standards. 4.1, 4.2, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4

Language Arts Standards. 3.1 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5

Grade Five

Dance Content Standards. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.3

Music Content Standards. 4.1, 4.2. 5.2

Language Arts Content Standards. 3.1 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7

GRADES 6 – 7: **Advanced Review of Dance**

Mathematics: Shape and Line Geometry, and Patterning. Discuss a variety of shapes and line patterns that are frequently used in ballet choreography. Some line patterns include diagonal lines, parallel lines, perpendicular lines, grid formation, and staggered formation. Some shape formations include circular, square, triangular (or angled), hexagonal and pentagonal. Sometimes, formations may also resemble an object like a flower, a bicycle wheel, or a snowflake. Students can watch for a variety of these patterns and formations throughout the performance.

General Facts about Ballet

I. Ballet is an art of movement. Movement is vertical and horizontal on stage movement is organized in space and follows time in rhythmical patterns as indicated by the music. Movement sequences can convey a story without the use of words or even mime. Movement can establish mood, make statements and develop a good story line. A good ballet does not need an explanation; it visually illustrates a piece of music.

II. As a performing art, ballet combines a number of elements to create an overall theatrical spectacle: music, lights, costumes and scenery all help to convey the story.

III. The teaching language of ballet is French, a universal language understood by all dancers. Dancers can learn from teachers and choreographers, even though they might not speak the same language because the names of the steps are the same no matter where they are used.

IV. All ballet steps and movements have a common denominator as everything begins or ends in one of five basic feet positions. Steps can be linked together in movement, phases or combinations.

V. Ballet dancers are athletes and professionals. They spend long hours training in order to perform. This training starts at an early age, 8-11 years old. Training hours increase with a dancers physical development ability. Professional dancers train 7 hours a day, 6 days a week, and even longer on performing days.

Advanced Dance Vocabulary

Abstraction: Taking a familiar movement or everyday action and extracting its essential qualities. Transforming or stylizing the movement so that it becomes less literal or mimetic. Common ways of abstracting movement are to exaggerate its size, making it either smaller or larger; transfer it to another body part, for example pointing with the elbow or toe rather than a finger; changing the time element by speeding it up or slowing it down; etc.

Ballet: A highly refined Western European art form dating back to the courts of sixteenth-century France (Catherine de Medici and Louis XIV). Ballet is characterized by a desire to defy gravity (jumps, leaps, and rising on the toes). Balance and verticality, symmetry, clearly defined roles for men and women, and a hierarchical structure (prima ballerina or soloist vs. corps de ballet or chorus) reflect the European court that gave birth to it.

Choreography: The process through which a dance is created. It involves both creativity and craftsmanship. While the choreographer's vision guides the dance, many dances are the result of the combined efforts and ideas of the choreographer and the dancers (performers) with whom they work. Choreographers draw their inspiration from many sources, including everyday life, the natural world, relationships (family, peers, etc.), social and political events, dreams, images, and memories.

Dance Technique: The method which dancers use to develop and maintain their bodies as expressive and articulate instruments. All artists must explore and gain control of their materials. Dance technique involves exercises and dance movements that promote strength, flexibility, balance, control, speed, and articulation. It is also a way for the dancer to test the limits and range of his or her physical abilities and artistic expression.

Improvisation: Moving spontaneously, without thinking or pre-planning. Many dancers, like jazz musicians, use improvisation as part of their training because it develops a quickness of response and sensitivity to their own movement and that of others. Some improvisations are structured like games and have the same serious-play quality that games have. Many dancers enjoy improvising because it gives them an opportunity to get in touch with themselves and their own distinctive movement qualities.

Jazz and Tap Dance: The syncopated rhythms of jazz and tap dance were born in Africa and nurtured in America, in large part by African-Americans who, in the face of great hardship, kept their song and dance alive through slavery and brought it from the plantations to the clubs of Harlem and East St. Louis and finally to Hollywood and the Broadway stage. The earthy vitality and energy of jazz and tap dancing are continually invigorated by their connections to social dance (the Lindy, Jitterbug, Twist, etc.), vernacular and street dancing (Break dancing, Hip-Hop, Vogue-ing, Hammer Time) and popular entertainment (movies and MTV).

Kinesthetic Sense: A real “sixth sense,” the sense of movement and bodily awareness of oneself, others, and the environment. The kinesthetic sense provides feedback about speed, height, tension/relaxation, force, exertion, direction, height, etc. It is the kinesthetic sense that gives an audience access to dance, just as the ability to make sense of the visual world gives a viewer access to visual art forms such as painting and sculpture. The kinesthetic sense is finely tuned in athletes and dancers but often overlooked in modern culture, which traditionally values the verbal over the nonverbal.

Modern Dance: An American and German contribution to the field of dance reflecting the values of rugged individualism, adventurous exploration of frontiers, and democratic principles. It originated as an art form during the early part of the twentieth century when it was called “aesthetic dancing” or “barefoot dancing.” Its most notable proponents were Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis and Mary Wigman, who rejected the artificiality of the ballet of that period and were also catalysts in the dress reform and health-and-fitness movement of the day. Modern dance is characterized by a giving in to gravity, off-balance and asymmetry in movement, a sense of equality among the dancers, individualized movement vocabularies, and a rebellious spirit that often challenges the status quo.

Grade Six

Dance Content Standards. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.3

Music Content Standards. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2

Grade Seven

Dance Content Standards. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4

Music Content Standards. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3