



Kathi Martuza and Chauncey Parsons in George Balanchine's *Emeralds* / Photo by Andy Batt

Dear Educators,

This year Oregon Ballet Theatre celebrates two decades of presenting exciting and exacting ballet to local, statewide and national audiences, with a Fall performance at the Keller Auditorium entitled *Emerald Retrospective*. The Student Performance Series matinee will open with an excerpt from George Balanchine's French-flavored masterpiece, *Emeralds*, and will show six other excerpts from work created for OBT in the last twenty years, displaying OBT's broad repertoire. This Study Guide includes information about the dances—the choreographers, music, dance movement style, and some key things to look for in the dances. A list of essential vocabulary is included for use in thinking and writing about the performance. The Study Guide also provides links to the Internet and our website's Educational Resource page where we have recently added articles written about Portland's dance history. My hope is that the Study Guide and its resources will assist teachers as they nurture students' cultural literacy while preparing for the performance.

A word of encouragement: This SPS Study Guide is packed with content—feel free to choose one or two pieces to explore that relate well with your students.

See you at the theater!
Kasandra Gruener, MA
Director of Education and Outreach

PROGRAM

EMERALDS

Music: *Pelleas et Melisande, Op. 80: Suite* (1898) and *Shylock* (1889) Gabriel Fauré

Choreographer: George Balanchine

RETROSPECTIVE FILM: PART ONE*

GLORIA

Music: *Gloria in D, R.589: Domine Fili Unigenite* and *Qui Sedes Ad Dexteram* Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Choreographer: Dennis Spaight

ELLINGTON SUITE

Music: *Rockin' in Rhythm* (1932) Duke Ellington

Choreographer: Dennis Spaight

RETROSPECTIVE FILM: PART TWO*

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Music: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1842) Felix Mendelssohn

Choreographer: Christopher Stowell

IL NODO

Music: Various Renaissance dances

Choreographer: Julia Adam

A CERTAIN DEPTH OF HEART, ALSO LOVE

Music: Sound collage

Choreographer: Bebe Miller

EYES ON YOU

Music: *Anything Goes* (1934) Cole Porter

Choreographer: Christopher Stowell

*Produced by Linda Besant with Thyra Hartshorn, and Carol Shults. Video production by Dan Green, Portland Public Schools Television Services.

EMERALDS / GEORGE BALANCHINENew York City Ballet performing George Balanchine's *Emeralds*.

George Balanchine choreographed a full-length, **plotless ballet**, entitled *Jewels*, in 1967 for New York City Ballet. *Jewels* is made up of three parts—three acts—each based on, and named for, three types of gems—emeralds, rubies, and diamonds. OBT will be showing a ***pas de trois*** and the finale from *Emeralds*. Balanchine was inspired by the artistry of jewelry designer Claude Arpels and chose music revealing the essence of each jewel. Balanchine spoke of his inspiration, saying, “Of course, I have always liked jewels; after all, I am an Oriental, from Georgia in the Caucasus. I like the color of gems, the beauty of stones, and it was wonderful to see how our costume workshop, under Karinska’s direction, came so close to the quality of real stones (which were of course too heavy for the dancers to wear!).” OBT dancers will be wearing costumes based on the original designs.

Balanchine considered *Emeralds* “an evocation of France — the France of elegance, comfort, dress, [and] perfume.” The choreography presents a balletic expression of Fauré’s music embellished with lavish ***port de bras***, in the French style. It is likely that the beautiful ballerina, Violette Verdy, who was trained in France and held principal roles in Balanchine ballets, inspired his choice of movement style.

**TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES**

Look for **symmetrical floor patterns** created by the dancers and watch for precise, yet graceful, arm movements.

Ask students to think about jewels or one of their favorite found stones. Help them to figure out how to move like their stone by describing it first- smooth, jagged, brilliant, etc. This will help students select movements that match their stone.

**VOCABULARY**

- plotless ballet:** A ballet that does not intend to tell a story
- pas de trois:*** A dance for three people
- port de bras:*** French words for “carriage of the arms,” the fluid movement of the arms and upper torso as they travel through specific positions
- floor pattern:** Designs or formations created by dancers’ placement on stage, or by the path they travel in on stage
- symmetrical:** The same on both sides, for instance three dancers on each side of the stage

George Balanchine rehearsing *Emeralds*.**LISTEN TO MUSIC FOR *EMERALDS***

<http://nmusic1.music.a1.b.yahoo.com/michel-sassoon/tracks/shylock-op-57-vi-finale--21312239>

Or purchase the New York City Ballet’s version of Gabriel Faure’s *Shylock Op.57: Final Allegretto Vivo* from iTunes

IL NODO / JULIA ADAMBrennan Boyer as the marionette in Julia Adam’s *il nodo*. Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert.

OBT will be doing two sections from *il nodo*, a piece choreographed by Julia Adam to music from the Renaissance era. The first section might remind students of a **marionette** who has gotten loose from his strings. The second section—a **trio** for two men and one woman—is danced while attached to **helium balloons**. This presents a challenge for the dancers. While they are dancing, they are thinking, “Will the balloons pop? Will the strings get tangled up?” Watch carefully to see the dancers’ strategy to dance precisely, playfully, and gracefully, while not destroying the balloons. After the performance students might try to make their own dance with balloons.

**VOCABULARY**

- marionette:** A puppet operated by strings attached to its legs and arms
- trio:** A dance for three people
- helium:** Derived from the Greek word for sun—*helios*. It is the second lightest element and second most abundant. It is odorless, colorless, tasteless, and non-toxic. When inflated into a balloon, the balloon rises.

**TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES**

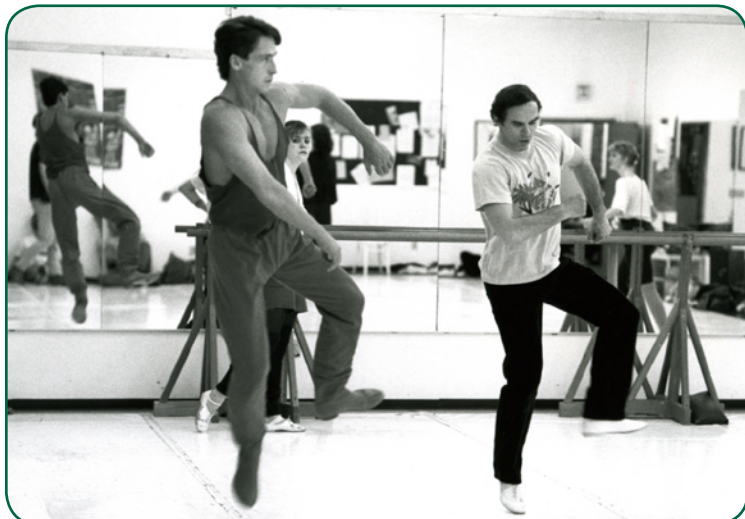
For a detailed description of *il nodo*, Julia Adam and the music, please go to our Educational Resource page and download the GUIDE: Spring 2007.



http://www.obt.org/outreach_links/SPS_Spring07.pdf



GLORIA AND ELLINGTON SUITE


DENNIS SPAIGHT



Dennis Spaight (left) rehearsing Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo* with Paul Sutherland in 1987-88. Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert.

In 1989, two Portland ballet companies, Ballet Oregon and Pacific Ballet Theatre merged to become Oregon Ballet Theatre. Dennis Spaight became OBT's first resident choreographer. Sadly, Spaight died young, leaving his collection of dance works entrusted to dancers who were his friends and knew his work well. A person who is responsible for teaching another person's choreography is called a *répétiteur*. OBT dancers learned Spaight's work from the *répétiteur* Carol Shults. When she was asked what he was like as a choreographer, she replied that he was "musically driven... played the piano, read music, was extremely musical as a dancer... He did a lot of preparation at home. In the studio, he was quite intense." But she said that he would break the tension "with humor, usually in the form of awful puns. He loved the groans of his colleagues!"


He created several works for OBT, employing various movement styles. This variety is well seen at the Student Performance Series in the excerpts of two of his works—*Gloria* and *Ellington Suite*. When Shults was asked what she remembered of the creation process of *Gloria* and *Ellington Suite*, she recounted, "*Gloria* was a work that sprang organically from Dennis's upbringing, years of going to mass and Catholic school, and was triggered by the early death of his mother. I watched him create several of the sections, including the solo being done by OBT for this  **retrospective**. It flowed out of him with almost no need for editing. *Ellington Suite* is the other end of the spectrum - it came out of love of the  **'big-band'** sound and the jazz and tap dancing of the movies, and of Den's youthful dance lessons."

Gloria premiered in 1983 when Spaight was twenty-eight years old. Martha Ullman West wrote a review of a 1994 performance of *Gloria* for Dance Magazine, describing it as "his expression of agape--spiritual love--and a heartfelt  **visualization** of Vivaldi's work of the same name." The music by Antonio Vivaldi is entitled *Gloria in D*, R.589. OBT will be dancing two sections: *Domine Fili Unigenite* and *Qui Sedes Ad Dexteram*. *Gloria* is often sung and played by high school choirs and orchestras. It is both exhilarating and passionate—and it is sung in Latin!



LISTEN TO MUSIC FOR GLORIA

To learn more about Antonio Vivaldi go to:

 <http://www.baroquemusic.org/bqxvivaldi.html>

Find the music at iTunes: Antonio Vivaldi, Gloria in D (my personal favorite is Academy of Ancient Music, Choir of Kings College Cambridge)



VOCABULARY

- retrospective:** Looking back at a group of artistic works created during a period of time
- visualization:** Creating a clear picture of something within the mind, physically expressing an idea, to make something become visual
- big band:** Refers to popular music of the mid 20th century, performed by groups of musicians playing horns, drums, piano with some string, specialty instruments and often a solo singer



TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

Listen to any piece of music and imagine how you would move to that music. Try it.


Ellington Suite is quite different from *Gloria*. Set to the jumping music of Duke Ellington's *Rockin' in Rhythm*, dancers switch from balletic lifts to shimmies and high kicks reminding us of the 1930's when jazz was swingin' and everybody went out to dance to the sounds of "big bands."






Duke Ellington's big band



LISTEN TO MUSIC FROM ELLINGTON SUITE

Google **last.fm** and in the search box, type in: Duke Ellington *Rockin' in Rhythm*. This will take you to a page that allows you listen to the music for free. Here is a short cut to the site  http://www.last.fm/music/Duke+Ellington/_/Rockin'+In+Rhythm




A CERTAIN DEPTH OF HEART, ALSO LOVE / BEBE MILLER

In the 1999 book, *Fifty Contemporary Choreographers*, author Martha Bremser said of choreographer and dancer Bebe Miller, "Her work, steeped in  **urban** sensibility, frequently employs everyday movement...In Miller's best works, the atmosphere may be charged with feeling, yet some mystery is preserved...Her choreography, which could be called  **semi-narrative**, is never merely  **abstract** for its own sake. She devises movement that is deeply rooted in recognizably human dynamics."



Bebe Miller

Born in Brooklyn, Miller has been creating dances for over 20 years. As a youth she studied with modern dancers Murray Lewis and Alwin Nikolais, was an Art Major at Indiana's Earlham College and held a dance Fellowship at Ohio State University College. Her work has been performed internationally and she has received many awards, including two Bessie Awards and the American Choreographers Award.

OBT will perform a duet excerpted from *A Certain Depth of Heart, Also Love* which was created for OBT in 1994. It is a  **minimalist**,  **post-modern** piece that explores relationships. Dancers will be wearing everyday clothes and moving with  **pedestrian** movements, reflecting a style of choreography that seeks to draw the audience in by employing commonly experienced elements. Two years after creating *A Certain Depth of Heart, Also Love*, Miller became the first American choreographer to work in post-Apartheid South Africa, reflecting her thirst for breaking barriers. Bremser noted that Miller's resultant work, entitled *Yard Dance*, was "inspired by the percussive boot dances of street children she observed in Soweto and Johannesburg."



TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

Like Bebe Miller, students could listen to the sounds and look at the motion in their own playgrounds and high school common areas to hear the rhythms and then imagine matching movements.

During this piece at the theatre, look for everyday movements and think about whether this dance provokes some ideas about a story or some other meaning.



VOCABULARY

- urban:** Relating to the city or city life
- semi-narrative:** Employing some literal interpretations, but not telling a cohesive story
- abstract:** Not narrative, representational, or concrete, it is appreciated through intellect
- minimalist:** In dance, the movement is devoid of embellishment and storytelling, employing a minimal amount of movement ideas
- post-modern:** A phase of artistic expression that emerged in the late 20th century that distrusts and questions the assumptions of the "modern" movement that came before. It focuses on situational, temporary ideas and events, with no claim to expressing universal themes. Post-modern dance is difficult to describe—it can include silence, randomness, dialogue, and improvisation and it can occur at places other than a theater.
- pedestrian:** In terms of dance, refers to movement that is not stylized or artificially motivated, movement that is found in every day activities



ONLINE RESOURCES

For more on information about Bebe Miller check out the PBS website and her company's website:

-  <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/freetodance/biographies/bmiller.html>
-  www.bebemillercompany.org



Bebe Miller's *A Certain Depth of Heart, Also Love*

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM & EYES ON YOU / CHRISTOPHER STOWELL

Christopher Stowell, Artistic Director of Oregon Ballet Theatre since 2003, will be showing two very different styles of his choreography. The first piece, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is based on the Shakespeare story of the same name and employs lush classical ballet technique. The second work, *Eyes on You*, comes from Stowell's love of Cole Porter music and dance styling from Hollywood movie musicals of the 1930's and 1940's.



Christopher Stowell
Photo by Joni Kabana


OBT premiered *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Fall of 2007. At that time we performed the entire work for students at the Student Performance Series and dedicated an entire Study Guide to it. To read that, go to:

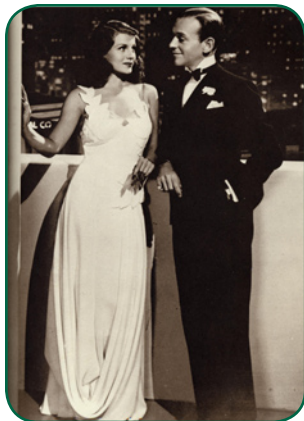
 http://www.obt.org/outreach_links/SPS_Germanic07.pdf

Eyes on You is a ballet that plays with Cole Porter's lyrics and the upbeat dancing highjinks seen in early Hollywood



Cole Porter

musicals. The SPS will show the  finale from *Eyes on You*. Audiences in the past who have seen this ballet have left the theater tapping their toes, sporting smiles on their faces—and we expect the same for the SPS audience.



Rita Hayworth and Fred Astaire
in *You'll Never Get Rich*.



VOCABULARY

movie musicals: A movie that uses songs and dances to help convey the story

finale: The ending of a performance such as a musical or dance work that sends the audience out feeling uplifted



Christopher Stowell's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert.


COLLABORATION— OBT AND PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS


In hopes of creating a retrospective film, dance historian Linda Besant dug into OBT's photo and video archive to find special images of the company from the last twenty years. Portland Public Schools Television Services department agreed to take on the project of converting the historical documents into a film. We will see the outcome of this collaboration at the theatre, but it will also air on channel 28 in the future. We thank Dan Green and Portland Public Schools for helping viewers learn more about OBT's history in Oregon and the nation.


INFORMATION RESOURCES:

 Information about George Balanchine's *Emeralds* from the New York City Ballet website

<http://www.nycballet.com/company/rep.html?rep=106>

 Ballet dictionary from American Ballet Theatre's website
<http://www.abt.org/education/dictionary/index.html>

 OBT's educational resources web page containing past SPS study guides and links to more information
http://www.obt.org/outreach_resources.html

 Read about Portland's dance history. Download articles at: http://www.obt.org/outreach_sps.html

ARTS EDUCATION IS A HUMAN RIGHT

Article 27 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

For full text go to  <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

CONTENT STANDARDS

This *Student Performance Series* and Study Guide provide opportunity for engaging in Oregon Content Standards for the Arts, especially:

Historical and Cultural Perspective: Understand relationships of works of art to their social, historical, and cultural context, and the influence of arts on individuals, communities and cultures. (AR.05.HC.03, AR.08.HC.03, AR.CM.HC.03) PASS Criteria: Standard B.3

Aesthetics and Criticism: Respond to and analyze works of art, based on essential elements, organizational principles and aesthetic criteria. (AR.03.AC.01, AR.05.AC.01, AR.08.AC.01, AR.CM.AC.01) PASS Criteria: Standard A.1

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BALLET

Why do the guys wear tights?

Almost every activity requires a special uniform of some kind. Just as football players, wrestlers, and baseball players wear stretchy material to help them move with flexibility and speed, ballet dancers often wear stretchy tights so they are able to leap, kick, and stretch as they dance. Another reason tights are worn is so the audience can see the incredible leg muscles that allow them to jump so high.

How do the ballet dancers stand on their toes?

Female ballet dancers wear special shoes called "pointe shoes" to help them achieve dancing on the tips of their toes. Pointe shoes are hard at the ends, and are handmade with layers of satin, glue and leather. Dancers must take several years of ballet lessons before they are allowed to wear pointe shoes. With hard work and good training to develop strong ankles and feet, most young ballet students begin working *en pointe* at age 11 or 12.

This ballet has no plot! Or does it?

Some do, and some don't. Ballets with plots, like *The Nutcracker*, are called story ballets. There are also abstract ballets, with a focus on movement instead of a specific story. Abstract ballets are meant to evoke ideas or emotions, and the audience can interpret them many different ways.

How old are the dancers?

Oregon Ballet Theatre's professional company members range in age from 18 to 34, but most are in their early-to-mid-20s. A few of the apprentices, however, are still in high school. All of the dancers began studying ballet when they were children, as it takes many years of dedication to become a professional ballet dancer.

How often do they practice?

Ballet dancers take class every morning for 1.5 hours, and then they rehearse all day. They have Sundays and sometimes Saturdays off, and they have a lunch break. Dancing is their full-time job.

Where are the dancers from?

Oregon Ballet Theatre dancers come from all around the world: Japan, Russia, and different areas within the United States. There are dancers from Nebraska, California, New York, and several who grew up right here in Portland.

APPLAUSE

DO clap after a really spectacular movement. Laugh if the situation onstage is funny. Applaud and yell "Bravo!" at the end.

DON'T boo, whistle, hiss or make noise during the performance. It is distracting and disrespectful of the performers and to your neighbors in the audience.

FOOD

DO eat before you get to the theater if you think you might get hungry before the performance is over.

DON'T bring food or gum into the seating area. It makes noise, trash, and distractions.

TALKING

DO wait. Make a note on your program or a piece of paper if you want to remember something. Tell your friend at intermission or after the ballet is over.

DON'T whisper or discuss things with other people during the performance. Your friends may want to listen to the music or pay attention to the dancers' movement or the story.

DRESS & BACKPACKS

DO dress neatly as a sign of respect to the artists and the theater.

DON'T wear over-powering perfume, big hats, or jingly bracelets. Leave backpacks at school. If you must bring one, you'll be asked to leave it in the lobby.

CELL PHONES, CAMERAS, IPODS, MP3 PLAYERS, ETC.

DO relax when the lights in the house (seating area) get dark. Sit back and enjoy the live performance with your eyes, ears, and imagination.

DON'T bring electronic devices into the theater. The noise and clicking can be distracting to your neighbors, and camera flashes can be dangerous to the dancers.