

Dear Educators,

We welcome you and your students to Oregon Ballet Theatre's *Student Performance Series: Song and Dance* (SPS) and the SPS Study Guide designed to help educators prepare students for the performance. Excerpts of four dance works and one complete work will be shown at the theatre, giving the audience **much to enjoy**. The hour of dance will be divided into two sections, one performed by upper division students and OBT Apprentices, from the School of Oregon Ballet Theatre (SOBT) directed by Damara Bennett, and the other section danced by OBT's professional company of dancers directed by Christopher Stowell.



Photo by Joni Kabana

OBT's Education Outreach efforts are dedicated to helping students of all ages learn about ballet by **observing, participating** and **thinking** about it. We encourage students' fully fleshed out literacy: a literacy that includes an awareness of both verbal **and** physical means of communication; and one that links arts experiences to knowing more about one's self. Expanding upon the title theme for the performance, this Study Guide will look at elements that make up the performance's *Song* and *Dance*, or more specifically, each dance work's sound accompaniment and body movement style, and how these elements interact for our pleasure.

Observe... Think...

The movement vocabulary in the SPS comes from traditional classical ballet, early 20th century ballroom dance, today's street dance and pedestrian ways of moving. Students might even notice poses from the ancient healing system of yoga. The various accompaniments draw from cross-cultural forms of singing, spoken word poetry, and instrumental music. A listing of different elements to notice will help students compare and consider what they like and why.

Participate...

There are so many ways that dance can be enjoyed. Along with observing and thinking about dance, **doing it** is top-ranked and why we encourage schools to invite us to come and dance with students in their schools. But **everyone can try dance in school** with the aide of drawings depicting body movements—a visual language—art! This study guide provides various types of artistic descriptions to try out in the classroom, including accompanying handouts that can also be projected. Have fun playing with the activities that get students up and moving! And if dancing in school brings a little laughter into the school day, here is a quote from poet, e.e. cummings:

The most wasted of all days is one without laughter.

With song and dance in our hearts, we look forward to seeing your smiles at the theatre.

Kasandra Gruener, MA
Director of Education and Outreach

PROGRAM

SCHOOL OF OREGON BALLET THEATRE

La Source

Choreographer: George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust*
Composer: Léo Delibes
Music: Excerpts from *La Source [Naila]* (1866) and *Sylvia, ou la Nympe de Diane* (1876)
Costume design: Karinska
Lighting design: Michael Mazzola

Road to the Yellow Carnival

Choreographer: Robert Henry Johnson
Composer: Zapa Mama
Music: *Adventures in Afropea 1: Zap Mama*
Costume design: Robert Henry Johnson
Lighting design: Michael Mazzola

OREGON BALLET THEATRE

Speak

Choreographer: Trey McIntyre
Spoken Word Artist: Tracy Morris
Costume design: Janet Elam
Lighting design: Michael Mazzola

Left Unsaid

Choreographer: Nicolo Fonte
Composer: Johann Sebastian Bach
Music: Selections from *Partita for solo violin No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004*
Costume design: Kathy Scoggins
Lighting design: Michael Mazzola

Eyes On You

Choreographer: Christopher Stowell
Composer: Cole Porter
Music: *Anything Goes, Just One of Those Things*
Costume design: Mark Zappone
Lighting design: Michael Mazzola

Anne Mueller in Christopher Stowell's *Eyes On You*.
Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert.



*The Balanchine ballet presented in this program is protected by copyright. Any unauthorized recording is prohibited without the expressed written consent of The George Balanchine Trust and Oregon Ballet Theatre. These performances of *La Source*, a Balanchine© ballet, are presented by arrangement with the **George Balanchine Trust** and have been produced in accordance with the **Balanchine Style©** and **Balanchine Technique©** Trust service standards. *La Source* premiered on November 23, 1968.

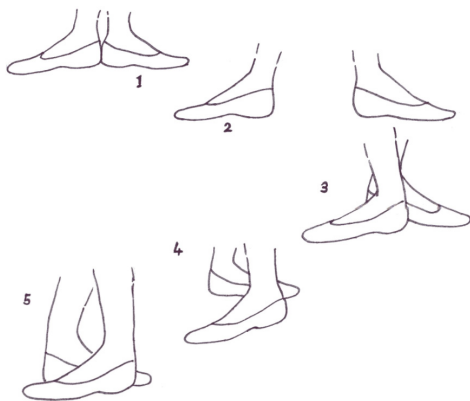
LA SOURCE

We will open with *La Source*, a ballet choreographed by George Balanchine (1904-1983) to music originally composed by Léo Delibes (1836-1891). In *La Source*, Balanchine juxtaposes 100 years of ballet in one piece: Balanchine's modern 1960's, non-narrative, pure movement, approach to ballet joins with Delibes' tuneful, evocative music from historical story ballets of the 1860's and 70's.

The music for Balanchine's *La Source* comes from two distinct ballet scores. In its original use, the music supported stylized enactments of far fetched stories about European peasants or mythological nymphs. Fast forward to the 1950's and 60's. At this time, choreographer Balanchine was more interested in the purest form of ballet, stripped from old-world fantasy and courtly trappings uncommon to the modern American experience. Clearly, Balanchine knew Delibes' music as it was intended in the original ballets, yet chose to reinterpret the music, bringing it anew to present day audiences, referencing ballet's early blooms with new 20th century flowering.

👍 When an artist reinterprets a past work of art, does it matter whether we know the past work? Does it matter whether we know the original use of the music when we see the new use of it?

👍 In the 1970's, hip-hop music and dance emerged on the scene and music "sampling" became a hot topic. Sampling, in its simplest definition, is taking an excerpt from one piece of music and using it as is, or somewhat altered, in another work of music. Lawsuits and court debates have occurred over the rights of ownership of "pieces of art". What do your students think about this topic?



The drawing above illustrates the first 5 positions in ballet technique. Students will see these positions on stage.

👍 Ask students to look at the pictures and try to do what the drawing indicates, starting at #1—First Position and finishing with #5—Fifth Position



George Balanchine's *La Source*. Photo by Christian Johnson.

Students will see four parts of *La Source*: a pas de deux (a man and a woman dancing together), a solo for a man, a solo for a woman, and a finale utilizing a large group of dancers. Balance, a concept in artistic design, can be seen in the choreography, such as when a lifted right leg is visually balanced by a lifted left arm or in the placement of the dancers on stage, such as in the picture above. In the finale, students will see groupings of dancers that show diagonal and curved lines and various groupings that are symmetrical.

👍 Divide students into groups of 5 or 6 and ask them to arrange their group in a pleasing configuration. Take turns presenting to the class and discuss what makes each configuration interesting.

The costumes for *La Source* (seen above), designed to evoke thoughts of a former era, allow the audience to see the dancer's precise, articulations of foot, leg, torso and arm.

👍 Ask students to flex and point their feet, noticing how the muscles in the foot and leg feel during the motion. (See picture below for example.) It works best to do this in stocking feet. Do this with the legs turned out at the hip, having the knees and toes point away from the midline of the body.



Alison Roper and Brennan Boyer in Twyla Tharp's *Known By Heart Duet*. Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert. May not be used without permission.

ROAD TO THE YELLOW CARNIVAL

Robert Henry Johnson's *Road to the Yellow Carnival*. Photo by Christian Johnson

California based choreographer Robert Henry Johnson created *Road to the Yellow Carnival* in 1993 to music of Zap Mama. The individual pieces of music meld European and African rhythms and polyphonic vocal music together. The music is other worldly, evoking imaginations of bird calls, droning drums, and people on a journey with horns beeping. The dance movements are fluid and energetic. In a July 17, 1996 article for SF Weekly, Katie Noyes wrote: "*Road to the Yellow Carnival*, commissioned by Ballet British Columbia in 1993, showed Johnson's eclectic movement imagination at its best. The dancers teased together signature moves from African, street, modern dance and ballet into a goofy narrative of a road trip taken by a traveling trio and a soothing chorus of four female dancers. The four women stretched into a row of arabesques, but also got down on the beat by slapping their standing heels in syncopation. They snapped elegant, balletic arms into flexed reaches, contracted into curved, modernist bundles of potential energy, broke into full-hipped, African jumps. Each move had as much finesse as the next; nothing in the mixture of dance styles seemed out of place."

The African born, Belgian raised, leader of Zap Mama, Marie Daulne, gains inspiration from the beats and rhythms around her, whether she is visiting Africa or the United States.

Daulne says, "I'm always looking for sounds. Most of the time, I work with colors. Each sound needs different colors of voices. I dissect sounds, cut them in little pieces, order them, and reassemble them."

👍 People travel a lot these days. They go on vacations, move from one house, city, or country to another. They encounter new sounds. Ask students to take a walk and really listen to the sounds around them. Write a list of the sounds, imagining what color each sound might be. Make a poem about the walk.

👍 People go places where they don't understand the language. Ask students how they might communicate to people that do not speak their language. Suggest using their body language to express themselves saying: Hello. I am lost, where is the bus? Can I help? I am hungry. Thanks!



👍 GO to iTunes and listen to Zap Mama's album: *Adventures in Afropea 1: Zap Mama*. Johnson choreographed dances to the selections, *Mupepe*, *Abadou*, *Plekete*, and *Ndge Mukanie*. Ask students to imagine the kinds of movements they might do to the pieces of music. Record (write or video) the movement ideas for this activity so that after the performance students can discuss how their ideas compared to Johnson's.


For more about Zap Mama:  www.myspace.com/zapmama

SPEAK

OBT will perform a woman's solo from *Speak*. This dance is dramatically different from the other works on the program because it is accompanied by a recording of sound artist and award winning slam poet, Tracie Morris, in a performance of her poem, *Princess Project*.

Poetry is to language what ballet is to people's general ability to move. Both can set the audience's mind on a quixotic journey. We might ask ourselves, "What is going on here?" In *Speak* the choreography relates to the rhythmic beat of the spoken words, the mood of the recitation, and meaning of the words.


To read and hear the artist recite her poem, go to the extensive World of Poetry website

 www.worldofpoetry.org/usop and click on *The United States of Poetry*. *The Princess Project* is in the section entitled *The Land and the People*. [If you click on the section *The Word*, you can read a poem by humanitarian and former President, Jimmy Carter.]



Anne Mueller and Lucas Threefoot in Trey McIntyre's *Speak*. Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert.

Shortcut to *The Princess Project*:

 www.worldofpoetry.org/usop/land.htm

In a July 26, 2005 interview for the blog, *Here Comes Everybody*, Morris was asked what poem was the first that she fell in love with. Her reply:

After the poems that socialized me as a child (Dr. Seuss, Mother Goose and other classical European children's poem and the 23rd psalm and other biblical poems as well as African American song lyrics -- an important racially socializing phenomenon) I think it was "The Raven" by Edgar Allen Poe. It taught me to feel satisfied with poems that don't have "happy endings." This was a very important element in teaching me to love all types of poetry."

👍 Read poetry aloud in class. Notice the rhythm and how the poem might be interpreted in movement.

Tracie Morris holds an MFA in poetry from Hunter College and a PhD in Performance Studies from New York University. She has written *Brave New Voices: The Youth Speaks Guide to Teaching Spoken-Word Poetry*

LEFT UNSAID

Nicolo Fonte's *Left Unsaid*. Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert.

We will see the opening section of *Left Unsaid*. The piece begins with two men sitting on chairs. A woman later joins them. The dance, choreographed to a solo violin partita by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750), is not intended to tell a specific story. Along with ballet steps, the dancers do movements that, for just a moment, look like something a person might do while sitting on a park bench or on a dining room chair. The dancers do movements that are like yoga poses or people walking down the street. This type of dance movement is called pedestrian movement since it is the kind of thing people do during the course of their day.

Many ballet dancers, including *Left Unsaid* choreographer Nicolo Fonte, practice yoga to increase their strength and flexibility. They also benefit from the way that yoga helps to create a feeling of calm in the body.

Nicolo Fonte's *Left Unsaid*. Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert.

Students might look at these drawings below or check a book out about yoga and then try to do the poses.



Create Present Reflect

Ask students to choreograph a 3-part dance that includes pedestrian movements or yoga poses, and a chair. A dance, like a good story or song, needs to have a beginning, middle and end. The beginning could be a unique way to "sit" on the chair—try something unusual like sideways or upside down. The middle could be some form of traveling movement (like walking, skipping or slithering) around the chair or an interesting way to move the chair to another place. Part three is the ending—perhaps repeating the beginning shape with a new twist added or doing something surprisingly different. Play a selection of Bach music while the students dance. Ask students to give their dance a title and, either one at a time or in small groups, take turns showing the dance. When the students hold their last shape, fade the music down. Allow time for students to talk about what they saw the other students do.

For information about Johann Sebastian Bach please go to

www.obt.org/outreach_resources.html

and download "Guide: Left Unsaid," found in the 2008-2009 collection of "STUDENT PERFORMANCE SERIES STUDY GUIDES AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS"

At the theatre: Encourage students to let their imaginations wonder about this quiet dance.



Christopher Stowell's *Eyes On You*. Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert.

EYES ON YOU

The SPS audience will see two excerpts including the finale of Christopher Stowell's ballet *Eyes on You*, a work that looks back to lighthearted, madcap, song and dance musical films from the 1930's. *Eyes on You* is choreographed to the music and lyrics of one of the 20th century's most prolific and popular songwriters, Cole Porter.

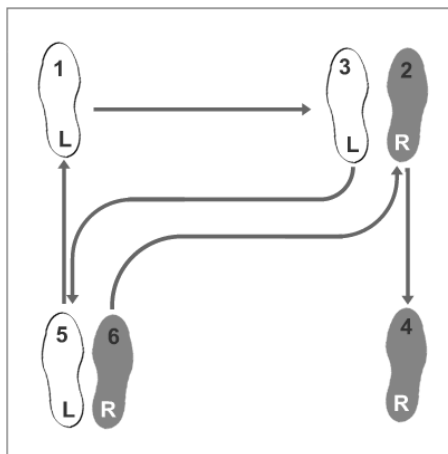
New York Times on the Web writer, Alexander Chancellor wrote, "Porter was possibly the greatest popular song writer of the 20th century. Of the more than 800 songs he produced during his life, dozens have become standards and are still constantly being rerecorded today."

One of the excerpts you will see is danced to an instrumental version of the song *Anything Goes*. *Anything Goes* originally occurred in a musical of the same name. Go to iTunes and search for *Anything Goes*. Listen to versions of the song, some great examples are: Ella Fitzgerald singing a jazz version; Eileen Rogers' musical theater rendition; John Williams' orchestral version with lyrics sung in Mandarin by Kate Capshaw for the 1984 film, "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom"; and a classical yet eclectic version by the esteemed cellist, Yo Yo Ma. Ask students which version they prefer.

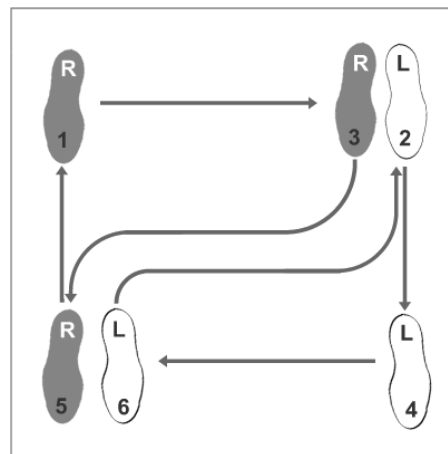
Before the invention of video all forms of dance were passed on from teachers to students directly. Choreographers and teachers created and memorized movements and also devised written descriptions and drawing methods as a way to assist their memory for later. The best way to learn a dance is from someone who knows everything about it—the actual body movements such as the step pattern, the quality of doing the steps, the rhythm, and the way the dancer should feel while doing it, and so on. The choreography in *Eyes On You* is comprised of ballet movements infused with popular dance moves from 1930's social dances, such as the waltz and the fox trot. Below are drawings for the steps of the waltz—it is kind of a code. Ask students to look at the drawings and decipher them. Try the man's version first and then the woman's. Key things to notice:

- What do the arrows suggest? (The direction one moves in when taking the step),
- Why are the feet pointed in different directions for the men and the women? (Women step backward first—as if the arrow's point pushes their toe, men step forward first—as if the arrow's point pushes their heel. When done as a dance with a partner, the man and woman mirror each other.)
- How do you know which foot to move? (several clues: R and shaded color = right foot, L and no shading = left foot)
- How do you know where to start the series of steps? (Start with #1 and finish on #6)

MAN'S STEP



WOMAN'S STEP



Students could create their own series of steps and draw it out and give the steps to another student to do!

Repertory notes provided courtesy of and adapted from New York City Ballet Online Repertory Index. Additional sources: *Choreography by George Balanchine: A Catalogue of Works*, An Eakins Press Foundation Book, published by Viking (1984); and *Repertory in Review: 40 Years of the New York City Ballet* by Nancy Reynolds (1970; The Dial Press). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the SPS SG information to grade level, correlating with Oregon Department of Education's Oregon Arts Content Standards in two arts standards:

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.

Aesthetics and Criticism: Respond to and analyze works of art, based on essential elements, organizational principles and aesthetic criteria.

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, Moldova, and different areas within the United States. There are dancers from California, Texas, Massachusetts, South Carolina, 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 say "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 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.