

OREGONBALLETTHEATRE
KEVIN IRVING / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAMS OF
OREGONBALLETTHEATRE
WHERE DANCE AND ACADEMICS MEET

OREGON BALLET THEATRE'S STUDENT PERFORMANCE SERIES 2016-2017



Kasandra Gruener, MA Ed
Director of Education Outreach

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THANK YOU TO OUR FOUNDATION AND GOVERNMENT PARTNERS!

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Welcome from Oregon Ballet Theatre!

All of us at OBT are thrilled to present Act I of Kevin Irving's *Swan Lake* to a record high number of students, teachers and their chaperons (over 2700 attendees!) This study guide is designed to help teachers and students get the most out of the performance. Since we will only be showing Act I of the three act ballet, I have divided the synopsis of storyline into two parts, thinking that it might be fun to read the synopsis, see the performance, and then imagine how it would end. I have provided the synopsis for Act II and III at the end of the Study Guide.

The performance will start at noon. Please allow time for parking as there are 37 school buses as well as private cars converging in the neighborhood. Doors usually open at 11:30, but we are planning to open them by 11:15. An email a few days before the show will tell you which door to use to enter the Keller Auditorium.

You must go through tradition, absorb it, and become in a way a reincarnation of all the artistic periods that have come before you.

George Balanchine

Groups are identified by the name of their school, or in the case of homeschool groups, by the name of the group and organizing contact person. At the door, ushers will ask the name of the group, so as to send the group off to the correct entrance aisle for seating. All groups will be asked to create single file lines to enter the theatre. Back packs are not allowed in the house—people will be asked to leave backpacks in the lobby of your seating level. The company will be taking their warm-up class onstage, so there will be something extra to see as people enter the theater.

There is no place for so many people to eat lunch or a snack in the Keller—there is a park across the street if the weather is pleasant. Please remember that cell phone use, including camera use, is not allowed during the performance. Thank you for your cooperation.

Enjoy the performance!
Kasandra Gruener



Photo by Joni Kabana

Would you like to further expand your students' experience with dance? OBT teaching artists go out to local schools and dance with students, linking dance with other academic topics -- like science, math, language arts, or life skills! We bring the "A" to "STEM!" YAY STEAM! We have several types of Dance Residency programs that explore ballet along with other genres of dance – even hip-hop! Dance is something everyone can do.

WELCOME!

Our February full-length ballet is a chance for us to tell stories, to create with ballet and dance tales you want to experience and want to share. This year we unveil a completely new and updated Swan Lake, featuring the most iconic music ever written for ballet.

In taking on this new Swan Lake, we have sought to retain all of the traditions that have been passed down generation after generation—but to also look at ways to make the story even more compelling, more touching. Since this is a fairytale, we also took pains to be sure the lessons we are teaching are ones we truly believe in. Rest assured, most, if not all, of the familiar scenes of the famous ballet are here (although some may not be in the places where you are used to seeing them) because our goal has always been to reinvigorate, not replace, our wonderful balletic traditions. And so once again OBT presents a full-length ballet

that includes not only our main company, but OBT2, as well as many students from The School of Oregon Ballet Theatre.

Each evening of ballet is a journey of sorts—we hope you take this journey with us with your hearts open and your eyes as keen for new discoveries as Prince Siegfried's are! And we hope you will get ready for a new season of unforgettable journeys in dance as we announce our performances for next year on February 23rd. Without giving too much away, I can guarantee there will be wonderful, heart-stopping dancing and all the beauty and delight you have come to expect from your ballet company, OBT.

Enjoy!

Kevin Irving
Artistic Director
Oregon Ballet Theatre



Photo by Joni Kabana



SWAN LAKE

Music: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, *Swan Lake*, Op. 20

Original Concept & Libretto: Kevin Irving

Choreography: Nicolo Fonte, Kevin Irving, Anthony Jones, Lisa Kipp

Set Design: Filippo Sanjust

Additional Scenic Design: Bill Anderson

Costume Designer: Sandra Woodall

Additional Costume Design: Christine Meyers

Lighting Designer: Michael Mazzola

World Premiere: February 18, 2017; Oregon Ballet Theatre; Keller Auditorium; Portland, Oregon

What to know before you go!

Some of the story will be projected as supertitles. Supertitles are like subtitles, only they are seen high above the stage on an overhead screen. It is still best to have some idea of the story beforehand.

Act 1, Scene 1

Outside the castle, on the morning before the birthday that will mark his passage into adulthood, Siegfried romps around with the village children, delighting all. Siegfried coaxes the villagers to join in until everyone is laughing and dancing. The ladies and gentlemen of the court emerge, and are drawn into the fun.

Benno, Siegfried's best friend, dashes out to announce the arrival of the King, the Queen, and their retinue. The Queen tells Siegfried that he must grow up and choose a bride the following evening at his birthday ball, reminding him that his father the King is quite old and will soon die. She instructs Benno to prepare the reluctant prince.

Benno tries to teach Siegfried how to woo women, but it's clear that

Siegfried's mind is elsewhere. He can't help but worry that he isn't mature enough to marry, let alone take his father's place.

It's now the villagers' turn to cheer up Siegfried, and they do so with gusto – dancing merrily to celebrate his coming of age.

The dancing continues until the King's valet appears and hands Siegfried a gift from his father - an enchanted crossbow.

Act 1, Scene 2

The old King has created a potent illusion and Siegfried suddenly finds himself in a dreamscape, deep in the forest, beside a lake, while the King watches from the shadows.

A beautiful princess appears – Odette. Her vulnerability and innocence captivates Siegfried. She tells him her story of an evil sorcerer and his diabolical enchantment of her. She will be bound forever to the sorcerer, unless she finds a man who will love only her. Then the spell would be broken, and she and her companions would take their true forms again.

A flock of swans enters, and Siegfried is filled with curiosity and wonder. Odette implores him not to hurt her, or any of her friends. Siegfried cannot understand why anyone would hurt them.

From afar, the king watches as the illusion continues to unfold.

Siegfried becomes entranced by Odette – he longs for her as he has never longed for anything, and as he dances with her, Siegfried falls in love. As the swans leave, Siegfried tries in vain to hold on to Odette, but she flees, leaving a bewildered Siegfried

SWAN LAKE: HISTORY

Russian roots still growing in America

Swan Lake's first version occurred in 1877. Then on January 27, 1895 the choreography of Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov premiered in St. Petersburg, Russia, setting the choreographic template for future interpretations. Countless versions of *Swan Lake* have been performed all over the world since 1895. Preservation of Petipa and Ivanov's choreography has relied mostly upon the ballet equivalent of oral tradition—passing the dance from seasoned artist to the next generation of performers. Kevin Irving continues



MUSEUM OF PERFORMANCE + DESIGN

Jacqueline Martin and Lew Christensen in San Francisco Ballet's production of *Swan Lake*. Photo by Ludé

ballet's great tradition of storytelling by premiering a reimagined *Swan Lake*. He also perpetuates the notion that works of dance, while being national treasures, are not bound by nation's borders.

Swan Lake, danced to Tchaikovsky's score, is one of the major artistic exports of Russia. A two act version of the ballet was seen in Scandinavia and Germany in 1908. In 1909 a more extensive tour of a three-act version was seen in Europe, in 1910 in London and in

New York in 1911. But, the first full-length American production of *Swan Lake* was produced for the San Francisco Ballet by Willam Christensen after Petipa and Ivanov in September, 1940. Jacqueline Martin Schumacher performed Odette, the Swan Queen at the age of 19, in that first *Swan Lake*. She later returned to Portland to become one of Portland's highest regarded ballet teachers. Now in her 90's, she lives here still!

What was going on in the 1940's when *Swan Lake* was first performed in full by Americans? The US President was Franklin D. Roosevelt, and politically, the US Congress passed the Burke-Wadsworth Bill (the Selective Training and Service Act), which provided for the first peacetime draft (conscription) in the history of the United States. Meanwhile Hitler's army was marching in Europe and immigrants were moving to the US for safety. Check out the "[Bound For Glory](#)" online photo exhibition of images of America in the 1940's.

St. Petersburg has changed its name several times due to political reasons:

May, 1703 - August, 1914 St. Petersburg
August, 1914 - February, 1924 Petrograd
February, 1924 - July, 1991 Leningrad
July, 1991 – Present St. Petersburg

Citizen's lives were affected when each of these names changed. Access to arts and education reflected the changing times.



Students might find it interesting to research the impact of politics on education and the arts.

SWAN LAKE: MUSIC



Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's
Swan Lake score

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky risked ridicule from his colleagues when he accepted the commission for *Swan Lake* from the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow in 1875. At that time, ballet scores were composed by specialists who worked according to a choreographer's dictates. Music made for ballet was not considered to be substantial in its own right. But, as a life-long devotee of ballet, Tchaikovsky had "long cherished a desire to try my hand at this type of music."

He proceeded in spite of the disdain of those who judged ballet scores as trite and without inspiration.

Students might consider times when they created something simply because the idea appealed to them.

The score that ultimately grew from that earlier seed was well ahead of its time. The choreographers and dancers who first tackled Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* in 1877 were bewildered by the complexity of its melodies and its lush orchestration; they declared much of it not danceable. From today's perspective, it is clear that Tchaikovsky advanced music for the ballet in quantum leaps, and continued to do so with *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*. Ever since, dancers have gloried in his ballet scores.



Image depicting a floor pattern from an earlier production of *Swan Lake* by Sadler Wells (England)



Tchaikovsky - *Swan Lake* Op. 20, Act I No. 1
<https://youtu.be/n4AzA-JmD4U>

Tchaikovsky - *Swan Lake* - Act II - No. 10
https://youtu.be/do6Ki6kMq_o

Listen to a recording of *Swan Lake* by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, paying special attention to Act I and Act II. Ask students if the music feels "danceable."

In Scene II of Act I, the swans enter the stage with a series of steps that are repeated over and over again. The resultant floor pattern brings to mind a vision of swans swimming urgently across a lake in a serpentine path. The steps that they repeat include *arabesques* and *attitudes*.

Before going to the theater, ask students to watch for the designs made by the swans. There will be diagonal lines, straight lines, pairs of lines, crossing lines, circles and more.

Make a Floor Pattern! It is a mathematical problem to work out the music's phrasing with the number of steps needed to create the designs. Students could try to draw a design on paper and make up their own walking path to go with it, deciding how many steps it takes to get to their destination and what path they will take to get there. Students could work in groups and show their floor pattern work to each other.

Dictionary of ballet vocabulary: <http://www.abt.org/education/dictionary/>

SWAN LAKE: CHOREOGRAPHERS

Kevin Irving



Nicolo Fonte



Anthony Jones



Lisa Kipp



PROGRAM NOTES

With only two scenes (two very important scenes!) preserved according to tradition and hours of music for the ballet by Pyotr Tchaikovsky – creating this production became a puzzle. It was crucial to figure out how to incorporate both these scenes in a framework that would honor the traditions embedded within them, while at the same time open up the narrative in a way that would make sense in the 21st Century. At all times I found myself looking to the incredible score for clues as to how to proceed – and it has been a joy to approach this iconic work with so much inspiration from not only Petipa & Ivanov, but also from Tchaikovsky as well.

If there is one thing we stand for at Oregon Ballet Theatre it is that ballet can be as robust and as thrilling as any other form of entertainment – that it is inherently more moving than almost any other art form because our incredible dancers bring not only steps, but also passion, wonder, and delight to life for you at every performance. In this new *Swan Lake* therefore, the pristine classicism of the “white act” stands in contrast to more quotidian scenes, the journey of our hero is based on a situation familiar to all – and the characters all have emotions and motivations that make sense. In shifting the weight of the narrative to Prince Siegfried, I have sought to honor the emotional tenor of Tchaikovsky’s music without diminishing the importance of the central ballerina, our Odette/Odile. The other main imperative for me was to find a way to hope at the ballet’s climax – to take it completely away from an ending that usually includes at least one suicide. However much pathos and drama Tchaikovsky infused into the music, he also created the musical equivalent of sunshine, especially at the end of the work, and I wanted us all to experience that fully.



Amy Young, Abigail Diedrich & Aubrey Kazimi | Photo by Yi Yin



Peter Franc & Xuan Cheng | Photo by Yi Yin



Eva Burton & Thomas Baker | Photo by James McGrew

More OBT *Swan Lake* Rehearsal Photos:

<https://flic.kr/s/aHskTHamQK>

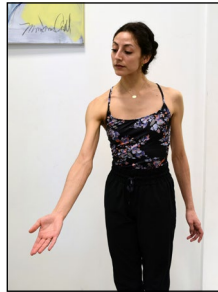
NO WORDS! HOW TO *READ* A BALLET

At certain times in the ballet the dancers convey the story using a series of mime gestures. When the ballet was originally created, most audience members would have known what the gestures meant. Because today's audience members might not be familiar with this dance language, we have provided pictures of Soloist Martina Chavez doing excerpts from the Queen's mime sequence during Act I. In it the Queen finds Siegfried dancing about with his friends from the village on the morning before his birthday. She tells him, with her gestures, that he has grown up so much. She continues: "You are here, dancing, why?...People will be coming from far away, beautiful young women, in gorgeous ball gowns. You must think about getting married. The King will die soon and you will become the King." Siegfried also uses his body to express his thoughts and to convey his feelings throughout the ballet.

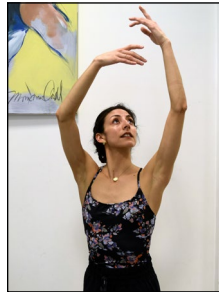
You



Here

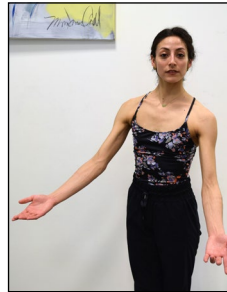


Dancing



(hands swirl above the head)

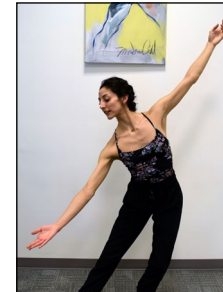
Why?



From far away



People will come



Beautiful girls

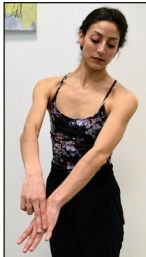


(hand circles the face)

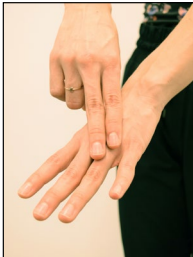
You must think about getting married



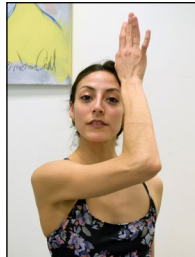
(taps temple)



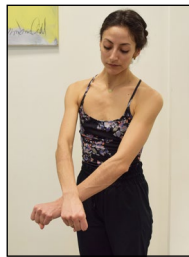
(points to ring finger)



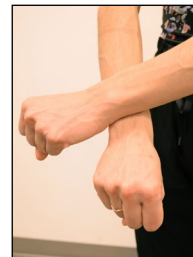
The king will die soon



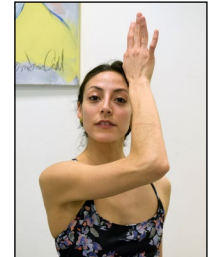
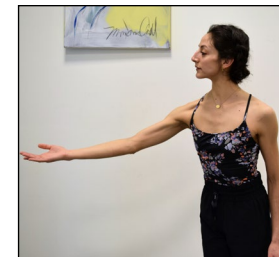
(hand touches both sides of the forehead as if a crown)



(fists cross at wrist)



You will then be King



(hand touches both sides of the forehead as if a crown)



Students could practice these gestures as a way to better understand the ballet.

Students could also notice how people use gestures every day to communicate their feelings or to say something without using their voices.

COSTUME SHOP



Everyone who performs in *Swan Lake* wears a uniquely designed costume that matches their role, sets the mood, and helps to tell the story. All the costumes for the dancers are designed to allow them the greatest range of movement. Some dancers do more than one role and therefore have to wear several costumes. Most of the costumes for Kevin Irving's *Swan Lake* had been created for a previous production of *Swan Lake*. Since this is a new version of *Swan Lake*, additional costumes were designed and sewn. Each dancer must go to the wardrobe shop and try their costume on or be measured so that a new costume can be made for them. Here we see workers (above), called Stitchers, in OBT's wardrobe shop dyeing shoes, sewing new garments and making adjustments to the older ones. Eileen Ehler, OBT's Wardrobe and Shoe Administrator (right), is hand stitching a lining to a bodice. This picture reveals a few important elements found in a wardrobe shop: sewing machines, thread, dress forms (a male version on the left), pins and pin cushions, elastic, safety pins, fancy fabric, and scissors.

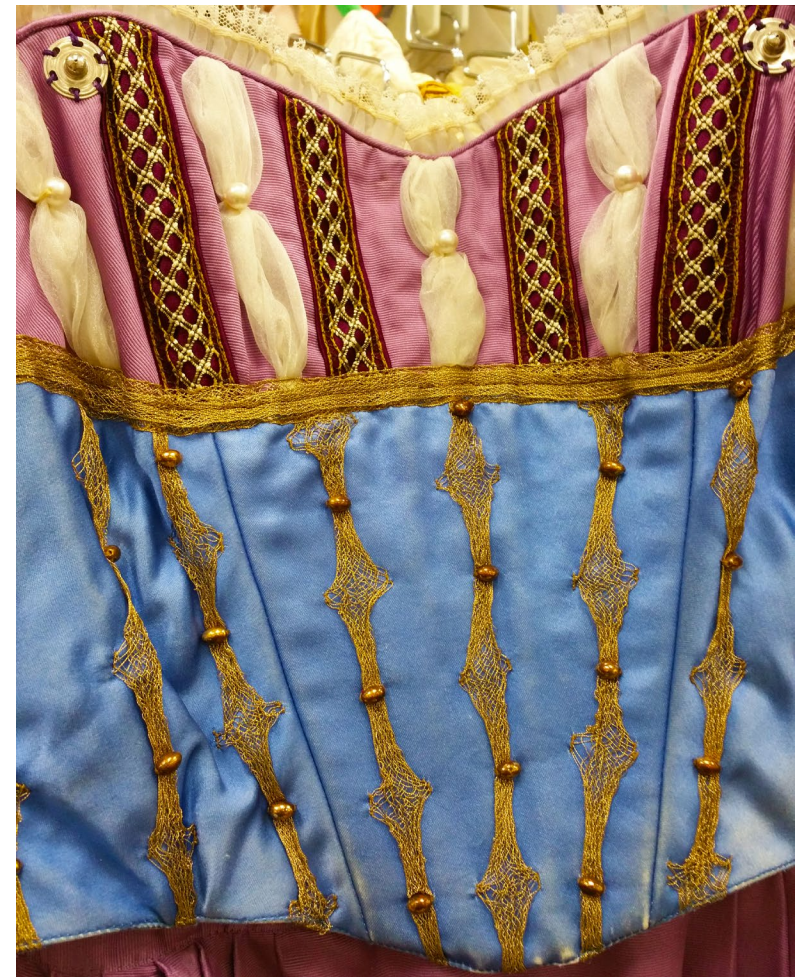


COSTUME SHOP (CONT.)

Detail of the jacket Siegfried wears in Act I



Detail of the gown Siegfried's mother, the Queen, wears in Act I.



COSTUME SHOP (CONT.)

Fitting for a supernumerary

Some of the performers in *Swan Lake*, the supernumeraries, will have roles that require very little, if any, dancing. A supernumerary's job is to help to tell the story by employing expressive facial and arm gestures similar to a non-speaking actor in a film. Like those with dancing roles, supernumeraries wear costumes that describe their character. Here we see Kasandra Gruener, OBT's Director of Education Outreach at her fitting. She has been asked to be a Lady in Waiting for the Queen. This costume was previously worn by a taller dancer, so the hem and waist needed adjustment. Eileen took measurements, while Pam Jett-Goodrich, whose title is First Hand, took notes. The headdress' long veil needed to be repositioned so as to not strangle Kasandra's mouth.



HOW WILL THE STORY END?



After watching the performance!

Following is the synopsis of Act II and III. Before reading, it might be interesting for students to imagine their own ending to the story



SYNOPSIS OF ACT II & ACT III

Act II

It's the night of the ball, and the knowledge that Siegfried must choose a bride has attracted eligible, and not so eligible, hopefuls from far and wide. In the anteroom, delegates from foreign courts jockey for the best positions. The Court Herald does his best to impose order.

At the ball, each of the guests try to impress Siegfried – ladies, princesses, and gentlewomen present themselves to the prince, hoping to be chosen as his bride.

No one can captivate the prince who has spent his life charming everyone else.

Suddenly, the beautiful Swan Princess from the lake appears, presented to Siegfried by the old King, who shocks the court by finding the strength to stand on his own.

Something is different about her, but Siegfried doesn't stop to look deeper. Instead he rejoices, exuberantly dancing his love for the Swan Princess. The woman before him mirrors his joy in a shallow and calculating manner as the two lovers perform for each other.

The whole ballroom watches as Siegfried declares that he will marry this woman – only to find that this beautiful vision is not the woman from the lake. She is Odile, not Odette. Siegfried has fallen for his father's illusion, and failed himself in the process.

The King tries to speak to his distressed son – he needs to tell Siegfried something important, something about the power of real and abiding love, but it's too late. He falls, clutching his heart, and dies. Siegfried is overwhelmed with grief.

Act III

Siegfried finds himself once again in that same dreamscape by the lake. The old King loved his young son so much that even in death his enchantment lingers to guide Siegfried on.

His father appears as a young man, and the King's own coming of age story begins to unfold, including a vision of the Queen as a young woman, surrounded by swans. The young King and Queen dance, and in their movements Siegfried sees his own experience with the Swan Princess. The swans swirl and disperse, leaving Siegfried alone with the young King.

When the swans reappear, Siegfried spies Odette. Filled with remorse and unsure of his path forward, Siegfried reaches for her. Siegfried and Odette dance one last time – he trying desperately to hold her, she knowing they must part- until Odette is torn from Siegfried's embrace. She and the swans vanish.

The King dances one last time with Siegfried – he tells his son he is ready for adulthood, for the throne. Ready to take his father's place.

Siegfried is left alone. He begins to understand the journey before him, the responsibilities he must carry.

The illusion fades, but the memory remains with Siegfried, giving him wisdom and strength as the court and villagers assemble for Siegfried's coronation.

Siegfried is crowned. As he takes his rightful place as king, he sees a familiar face in the crowd. He's seen her a dozen times before, but something is different now, and he finds himself looking deeper.

He reaches for her, and in that beginning, our story finds its end.

EVALUATE AND REFLECT



What do you think of when you hear the word ballet?

Where was *Swan Lake* first created?

What is mime?

What type of dance do you like to do or to watch?

Which part in *Swan Lake* would you wish to be?

What is the role of a supernumerary?

Do you think it is hard work to be a ballet dancer?

Did anything at the theater surprise you?

CONTENT STANDARDS

This Student Performance Series and Study Guide provide opportunity for engaging in Oregon Content Standards for the Arts, especially: Create, Present and Perform: Apply ideas, techniques and processes in the arts. 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.

Common Core State Standards:

Attending the SPS gives students practice in building literacy across subject matter as suggested in the CCSS. Students notice key ideas central to the work, elements of the craft and structure of the work observed, and make connections or integrate this work (dance) with other curriculum.



Oregon Ballet Theatre's Peter Franc and Xuan Cheng rehearsing William Forsythe's *In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated*.
Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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 Romeo & Juliet, The Nutcracker, or Swan Lake 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 39, but most are in their early-to-mid-20s. 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, China, and different areas within the United States. There are dancers from California, Washington, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, New York, and several who grew up right here in Oregon.

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 use cell phones and other electronic devices in the theater. The noise and clicking can be distracting to your neighbors, and camera flashes can be dangerous to the dancers.