



OREGON BALLET THEATRE'S STUDENT PERFORMANCE SERIES 2017-2018

ALICE (in wonderland)

March 1, 2018

Show starts at 12:00

Doors open at 11:15

Kasandra Gruener, MA Ed.
Director of Education Outreach

OREGON **BALLET** THEATRE
OUTREACH



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THANK YOU TO OUR FOUNDATION AND GOVERNMENT PARTNERS!



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The Regional Arts & Culture Council, including support from the City of Portland, Multnomah County, and the Arts Education & Access Fund



Work for Art, including contributions from more than 75 companies and 2,000 employees

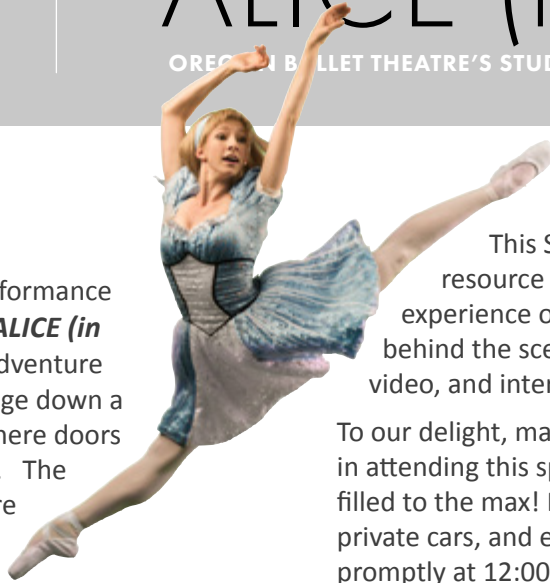


OBT is supported in part by a grant from the Oregon Cultural Trust

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Hello from Oregon Ballet Theatre!

We look forward to seeing you at the next Student Performance Series! OBT will present a modified version of Act I of **ALICE (in wonderland)**. You will be carried away on a madcap adventure as we follow an exuberant young girl named Alice plunge down a rabbit hole into an extraordinary, imaginative world where doors shrink, bicycles fly, and tears collect into flowing rivers. The full length ballet was created in 2012 by Septime Webre with an original score by composer and violinist Mathew Pierce. OBT is proud to be the first West Coast company to perform *ALICE (in wonderland)*. When it premiered at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C., the Washington Post called it a “giddy parade, a pop-art dream, a feat of fevered imagination.” The ballet is filled to the brim with the delightful characters found in Lewis Carroll’s classic works, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, uniquely brought to life with surreal sets, zany costumes, imaginative puppetry, and powerfully expressive dance. We are so excited that your group will take the plunge and join us on this unforgettable journey.



This Study Guide is designed as a resource for educators to enrich students’ experience of the performance complete with behind the scenes information, a sneak peek video, and internet links to related information.

To our delight, many school groups were interested in attending this special one hour performance—in fact the house will be filled to the max! Please allow plenty of time to offload from busses, park private cars, and enter the building. We will open the doors at 11:15 and start promptly at 12:00 noon.

See you in the theater!

PREVIEW

Click on leaping **Alice** at left to watch a 55 second film clip!

Kasandra Gruener



Photo by Joni Kabana



The arts are where learning starts, from a child’s first exploration of meaning on a page by finger painting to an adult’s use of the arts to develop, understand and communicate new ideas.”

~ Oregon Department of Education

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.

Ballet Title: ***ALICE (in wonderland)***

Choreography: Septime Webre

Stagers: Jared Nelson, CeCe Farha, Morgann Rose

Music Composer: Matthew Pierce

Costume Design: Liz Vandal

Lighting Design: Clifton Taylor

Puppetry Design: Eric J. Van Wyk

Scenic Design: James Kronzer

Flying Director: Dylan Trujillo

Rehearsal Assistants: Lisa Kipp & Jeffrey Stanton

World Premiere: April 11, 2012; The Washington Ballet; John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Eisenhower Theater; Washington, D.C.

OBT Premiere: February 24, 2018; Keller Auditorium; Portland, Oregon

Flying by Foy

Synopsis

Act I

PROLOGUE

Alice daydreams as her family swirls around her chaotically. She is mesmerized by the mysterious and quirky Lewis Carroll, a family friend, who takes Alice on a boat ride and picnic in the country.

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

During their picnic, Lewis Carroll begins telling Alice an astounding story of a little girl's adventures in a wonderland. As Alice drifts to sleep a White Rabbit hops by. The nervous Rabbit checks his pocket watch because he's late. He quickly leaps into a rabbit hole; Alice follows. She falls for what seems like miles.

Alice lands with a thud in a hallway filled with closed doors. She drinks a potion and grows quite tall; she fans herself and shrinks quite small. Through a keyhole, the tiny Alice catches her first glimpse of the evil Queen of Hearts. When Alice eats a bit of cake and returns to normal size she can no longer fit through the tiny door that leads to the wondrous world.

POOL OF TEARS AND THE CAUCUS RACE

Frightened and confused, Alice cries a pool of tears. The Dormouse swims by and befriends Alice. Then a Dodo Bird, an Eaglet and a flock of Flamingos plop into the pool. The Dodo Bird decides the best way to get everyone dry is to dance a Caucus Race.

PIG AND PEPPER

Alice comes upon a Fish footman who is delivering an invitation to the Queen of Hearts' croquet game to the Frog footman who works for the Duchess. Inside the Duchess' cottage bedlam reigns. The Duchess is agitated because the Cook has put too much pepper into the soup.

THE CHESHIRE CAT/ADVICE FROM A CATERPILLAR/ THE MAD HATTER'S TEA PARTY

While walking along, Alice comes upon a Cheshire Cat, who appears and disappears on a whim. Later, when Alice looks up to the sky she finds he has become the moon. She then meets a peculiar Caterpillar who smokes a hookah pipe before metamorphosing into a butterfly before her eyes. Next, Alice stumbles into a puzzling tea party with the Mad Hatter, the March Hare and the Dormouse.

THE CHOREOGRAPHER: *Septime Webre*



Photo courtesy of Hong Kong Ballet

An internationally recognized ballet director, choreographer, educator, and advocate, he recently joined Hong Kong Ballet as its artistic director after 17 years as artistic director of The Washington Ballet in Washington D.C. Previously, he served as artistic director of the American Repertory Ballet, based in Princeton, New Jersey. In addition, Webre serves as the artistic director of Halcyon, a Washington D.C.-based foundation, launching an annual international *Festival for Creativity* in Washington D.C. in June 2018.

He holds a degree in History/Pre-Law from

the University of Texas at Austin, and is the seventh son in a large, boisterous Cuban-American family.

Learn more about Mr. Webre Here is a recent article about Mr. Webre in the [South China Morning Post](#).

Mr. Webre's Program Notes

I have always been intrigued by the circumstances surrounding the beginnings of Lewis Carroll's creation of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865) and his subsequent book Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There (1871). Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (who later took on the nom de plume of Lewis Carroll) was an interesting fellow; mathematician, logician, Anglican deacon and photographer, whose love of wordplay is evidenced throughout both books. He was a great friend of real-life Alice and her family, The Liddell's. One rainy day, Dodgson took Alice and her twin sisters on a picnic at Folly Bridge near Oxford, England where they took a boat ride. It was on that ride that Dodgson began to spin the tall tale of a special girl named Alice, which he subsequently published as Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

I have chosen to create a prologue to this adaptation of Lewis Carroll's work by presenting a fictionalized version of the Alice Liddell and her odd-ball family members, who reappear as other characters throughout her journey in Wonderland: Alice's overbearing mother becomes the Queen of Hearts; her hen-pecked father, the ineffectual King of Hearts; her kooky twin sisters, Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum; her narcoleptic Grandmother, the always sleeping Dormouse; her befuddled Grandfather, the perplexed March Hare; the nervous and rushed butler becomes the White Rabbit; and Lewis Carroll himself returns as the MadHatter.... On behalf of the army of passionate people who've created this new production together, it's an honor to share this special tale of a little girl and her amazing adventure with you.

~ Septime Webre, 2012



Sona Kharatian and Luis R. Torres in The Washington Ballet's *ALICE (in wonderland)*.
Photo by media4artists | Theo Kossenias

THE COSTUME DESIGNER: Liz Vandal

“Those costumes are freaking phenomenal.”
~ Leah Zipperstein,
Cincinnati Refined

futuristic super heroes, insects, and medieval armor, was helpful in creating the costumes for *Ovo*, a show that brings different insects to life. Vandal was born in Montreal, Canada in 1965.

As a child, Vandal wanted to be a dancer, and in college she majored in computer science, but came back to fashion after “gaining some logic”. She has a son named Leonard. Cirque du Soleil contacted Vandal twice before *Ovo* to design their costumes, but both times fell through.

She began her career as a fashion designer in 1988. She has designed costumes for

Liz Vandal is a French Canadian fashion/costume designer best known for designing the costumes for the Cirque du Soleil show *Ovo*. Her style, which is inspired by

several companies and organizations such as the National Ballet of Canada, the Backstreet Boys, The Washington Ballet, as well as 3000 costumes for the closing ceremony of the Baku 2015 European Games.

Learn more about her work at her [website](#).



Photo by Alexandre Donato



THE COMPOSER: Matthew Pierce

Mr. Pierce, who came to be a composer of music following his formal studies as a violinist, is celebrated for his new classical scores commissioned by major American ballet companies. His work has been performed around the country and around the world at City Center in New York, Covent Garden in London, the Palais Garnier in Paris, and now here in Portland, Oregon.

He came to the world of ballet through his brother, a former principal dancer with San Francisco Ballet.

Mr. Pierce shares his love of music with the next generation of musicians.

He presently conducts for the *Gemini Philharmonia*, one of the ensembles within the *Gemini Youth Orchestras* in Melville New York. The *Gemini Philharmonia* is an intermediate preparatory orchestra open to string, wind, and percussion players in the New York State School Music Association's level 5 and 6 category.

Learn more about [Mr. Pierce](#).



Photo by Alexandre Donato

“The cherry on top: Pierce’s visionary result, a shimmering landscape that weaves together bits of our own world — Asian, Middle Eastern, pop riffs, jazz — with a contemporary edge and a spirit of discovery. And, yes, wonder.” ~ Sarah Kaufman, Washington Post 2012

THE COSTUMES: Sublimation

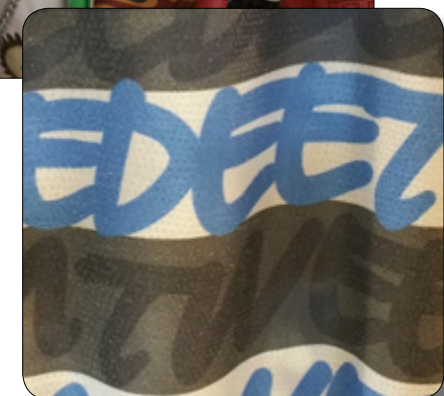
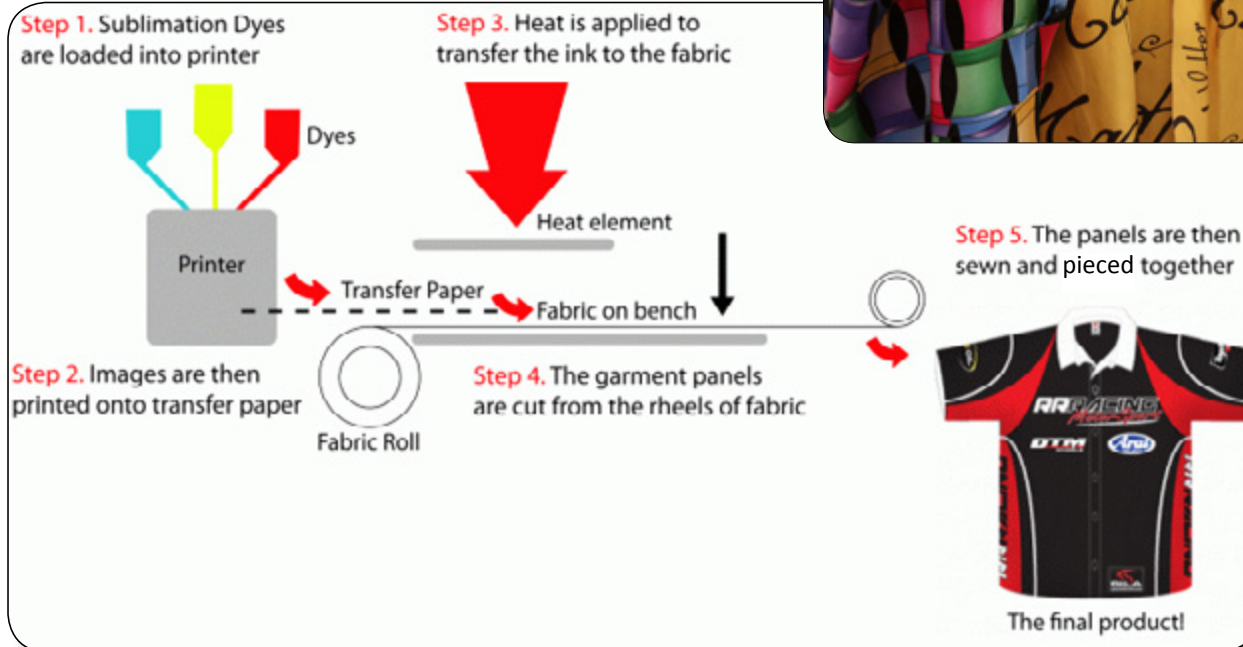
Ms. Vandal collaborated with artists from her design company as well as specialists in graphic arts and fabric transformation technology. One such artist was Julie Castan who created the graphic designs that are printed on the fabric of the costumes.

Go [here to see the designs for the prints](#) on some of the fabrics for the ballet.

The process used to create the print on the fabric is called “sublimation” which is a new printing method allowing for maximum ‘wicking’ property of performance fabrics. The end product is full of artistic detail, long lasting, and great for active wear—like sports jerseys and ballet costumes! Check out [this video](#) of how fabrics are sublimated.



Clockwise from top: A pattern of multicolored hats and scrawled words adorn the Mad Hatter jacket inside and out. Clocks, frogs, and mini doors are sublimated onto the fabric for the White Rabbit, Frog, and Door. The stripes of the Tweedle costumes are actually colorful writing.



Diane Beaudoin, MTI
Masking Technologies & Innovations

FLYING: Alice meets Tweedle Dee & Tweedle Dum

Theatrical designers have long been fascinated with wowing their audiences with special effects. As long ago as the 5th century, the Greeks devised a crane system, the *Deus ex machina* (god from the machine), to lower a speaker onto the stage. *Peter Pan* flew in the 1950's Broadway musical by the same name, and rock stars up their game by performing on wildly elevated

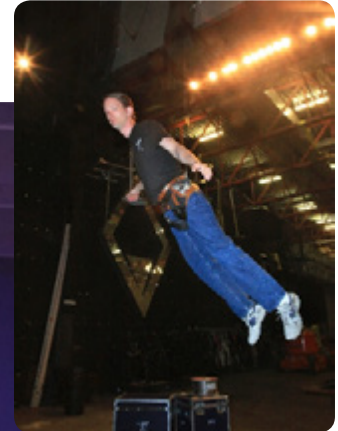


stages. Ballet usually imitates flight at a more human level, when strong male dancers lift graceful ballerinas high into the air, or soar through the air with high leaps. But, ballet has also defied gravity with the use of machinery and rigging, as chronicled in the late 1800's drawing above. *ALICE (in wonderland)* includes many special effects including breathtaking moments when dancers actually fly high above the stage! The mechanics of this feat are made possible by a company called **Flying by Foy**.

Check out this [archival article from Peter Foy](#), the founder of Flying by Foy, which describes the art of suspending people on high during theatrical productions.



Maki Onuki, Corey Landolt and Daniel Roberge in The Washington Ballet's *ALICE (in wonderland)*. Photo by media4artists | Theo Kossenias



Flying by Floy workman in rigging.



Illustration by John Tenniel



An engraving of Alice and The White Rabbit taken from an original 1866 print of 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' written by Lewis Carroll and illustrated by John Tenniel.

ALICE BIG & SMALL

In Lewis Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," the protagonist Alice constantly grows and shrinks as she encounters new experiences. The choreographer therefore had to solve the puzzle of making the dancing Alice appear to change sizes. Mr. Webre employs more than one trick to create the illusion of a tall and small Alice. One technique is to make the props around her change sizes—like the red doors in the picture on this page. The doors, designed by James Kronzer, are moved about by dancers. The doors vex Alice from passing as they twist and turn. First the doors are very big, making Alice seem small and then the doors shrink, such that Alice appears to grow larger. In the original book the illustrator John Tenniel drew the White Rabbit much smaller than Alice in a room that seems to extend behind her into infinity. This effect is made manifest by the ceiling beams receding down a diagonal line to an imaginary vanishing point. In the ballet, the actual door props and the "door dancer" costumes have ever smaller doors printed on them, reminding us that Charles Dodson (Lewis Carroll's true name) was fascinated with puzzles and mathematics, including the concept of fractals in which similar patterns recur at progressively smaller scales—doors within doors within doors.

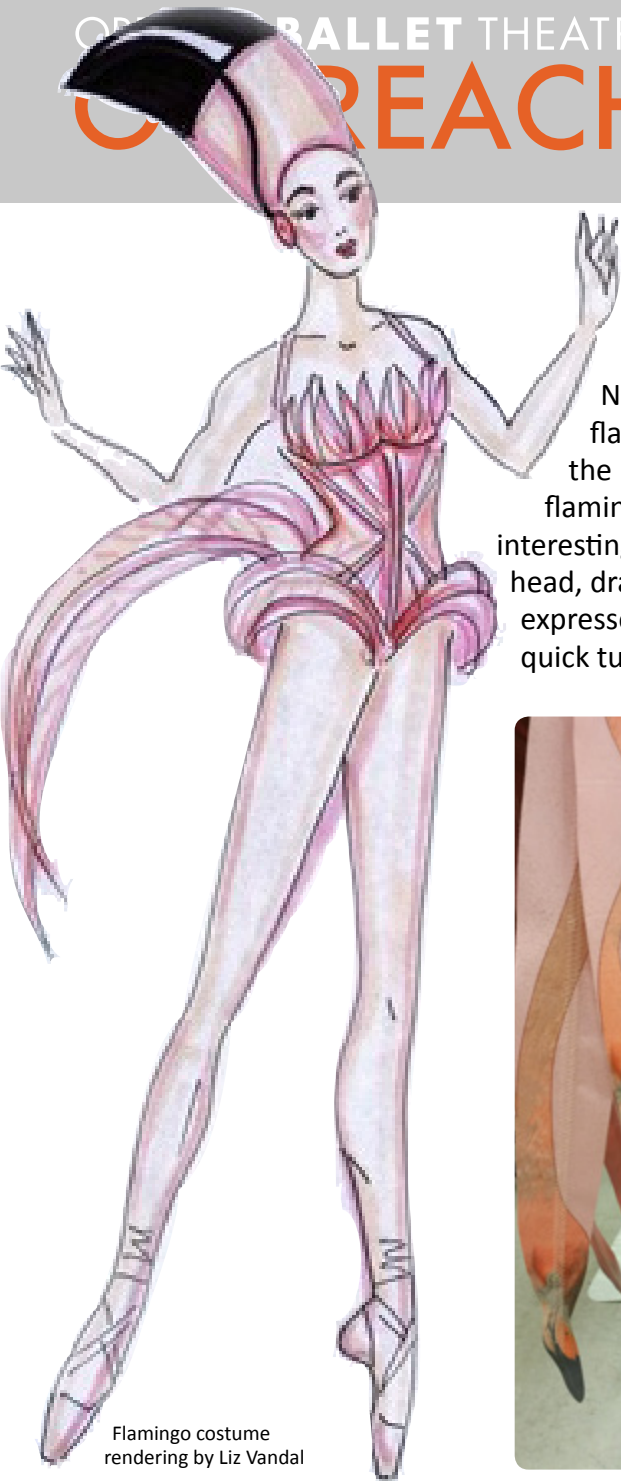


INSPIRATION: Flamingos

Not long after Alice swims in her own tears a flock of flamingos join her. The flamingos' costumes reflect the costume designer's depth of detail. From afar, the leotards, head pieces and feathers look to be the markings and colors of flamingos. But look closer and you will see an amazing attention to detail. It is interesting to see that a pink and black line is actually a rendering of a flamingo neck and head, drawn smaller, as seen in the photo of the flamingo costume. The choreography expresses the essence of the flamingo's movements by doing sharp, quirky gestures, quick turns, sharply bent knees, and group oriented traveling patterns.



John Tenniel



Flamingo costume
rendering by Liz Vandal



Check out these beautiful real flamingos from around the world, captured as they perform their own amazing dances [high in the Chilean Andes](#), in [Argentina's Laguna Brava](#), and in [Kenya's Rift Valley](#), where more than a million Lesser Flamingos join the dance!



John Tenniel 1871

PUPPETS!

Many of Alice's playthings show up as marvels in her Wonderland journey. The ballet includes the use of many puppets designed by Eric J. Van Wyk to help create a dreamlike journey. Some puppets reach to the full height of the stage and some are small, such as the Rocking-horse Fly, a fanciful play-on-words insect from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*.

MATH & MADNESS!

At the end of act one, Alice goes to a ridiculous tea party hosted by the Mad Hatter. The phrase “mad as a hatter” is likely to have come from a real-world toxic medical condition that effected hat makers starting in the 1700’s, who used a mercury solution in the felting of the fur for the top hats. Students interested in the convergence of fashion and environmental safety might appreciate reading [this article](#).



John Tenniel

There was a wave of interest in all things Alice when Tim Burton produced *Alice in Wonderland*. Older students might be interested in this [2010 National Public Radio piece](#) aired on Weekend Edition Saturday to learn more about the hidden math in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*.



Jared Nelson as The Mad Hatter (without his hat!) in The Washington Ballet’s *ALICE (in wonderland)*

Photo by media4artists | Theo Kossenass



Chauncey Parsons and Xuan Cheng in George Balanchine's, *The Nutcracker*.

Photo by James McGrew

BALLET!

ArtsEdge is a resource for educators. When you go to [this site](#) and type in your grade and your interest, you will find lessons about dance to try with your students. Here are two lessons that introduce students to ballet for [grades 3-4](#) and [grades 6-8](#).



The Washington Ballet

WHAT TO KNOW ON THE DAY OF THE SHOW

The Keller Auditorium is located at:
222 SW Clay St, Portland, OR 97201



The doors to the Keller Auditorium will open at 11:15. Please plan to arrive early so that you can settle in. The dancers may still be warming up onstage—a real treat to see.

If traveling on a school bus, please follow directions for parking from the parking attendants. If driving a personal vehicle, give time to find parking. Public transportation is close by.

There are no tickets to this show—the usher has your registration information. You will be directed, in an email a few days before the show, to enter through a specific door. Please tell the door usher your group's school name so that you can hear which aisle you will be seated in. Homeschools should also know the organizer's name as well. An usher will direct you to your seat.

Please leave backpacks (and bunnies!) behind—if you must bring them, the ushers will ask that they be left in the lobby of your seating level. You will be asked to secure your seat before visiting restrooms.



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.