

The origin of the *Cinderella* story

he story of *Cinderella* can be traced back for centuries and individual elements of the story can be found in almost every world culture. There are more than 1,500 variations on the story estimated worldwide, each adding something unique. The earliest version of the story comes from China circa 850 AD. In that tale, a young princess is captured and taken to live as a servant in another province. Eventually she is rescued and her true identity is revealed because her foot is small enough (having been bound in traditional Chinese fashion) to fit into the Princess' shoe. The first written version of the story comes from a 1501 German sermon and it has more in common with Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet than with the modern-day Cinderella. In this tale, the daughter of a merchant falls in love with the son of a rival merchant. Her mother, thinking to stop the marriage of the two young lovers, tells the daughter that she must empty a bushel of barley, one grain at a time and using only her tongue, before she can wed. The daughter completes the task, with the help of ants, and the marriage takes place despite the Parent's objections. The story appeared next in a collection of Italian folk tales published in five volumes by Giambattista Basile between 1624 -1636. In this version of the tale, a young orphan girl sleeps among the ashes, and earns the name "The Cat Cinderella" for curling up like a cat at the fire. Our modern-day story owes a great deal to the French version of the tale, titled Cinderella and the Glass by Charles Perrault (1628-1703) first published in 1697. This version introduced the characters of the stepmother and stepsisters, and also introduced the plot device of the royal ball. There were two different versions of the story, called Aschputtle, created by The Brothers Grimm and published in 1812 and 1856. These stories introduced the magical fairy godmother.

The story that we know today is a combination of all of these versions.

Write your own version!

Like many fairy tales and legends, the story of *Cinderella* has a tradition of being passed along from generation to generation. While the story has essentially remained the same, through the years some elements have been altered to reflect the values of other cultures, or even to appeal to a new generation. How would you retell the story? What sort of chores would your Cinderella do? Would your Cinderella be a girl or a boy? Would the kind of chores she or he does change his or her name?

Share your story with the dancers of New York Theatre Ballet by emailing it to: dianabyer@nytb.org

An Introduction to Theatre

Theatre is an art that has existed as long as man has walked the planet. Primitive man acted out his dreams and his rituals. As myth and religion developed, storytelling and worship evolved into theatrical presentations. The ancient Greeks used choral hymns and dance in their worship. Later, an actor was added along with the chorus, then a second actor was added and drama as we know it was born.

What makes a theatrical experience? Actors on a "stage" (which might be anything from a huge amphitheatre to the front of a classroom) portray characters and tell stories through their movement and speech. But even though there are actors playing characters and telling stories, it is still not a theatrical experience until one more very important element is added. It is the presence of an audience – watching, participating, imagining – that makes it a true theatrical experience. Theatre enables us to collectively experience that which we may know and feel within, but which may be unspoken and unacknowledged in our outward lives. Theatre is the coming together of people – the audience and the actors – to think about, speak of, and experience the big ideas that connect us to our inner and outer worlds. What does the audience bring to the theatre? They bring attention, intelligence, energy and, above all, they bring imagination.

In film and television every bit of the screen is filled and editors tell the audience where to look and what to see. The audience sits back and watches something that was filmed or taped previously, which is always the same and upon which they have no effect. Theatre, on the other hand, is a live experience – the audience is right there as the play happens. Their energy is part of the energy of the whole event. Their imagination is free to play and soar with the images and ideas presented to it. In that empty space that is the stage, anything can happen. It is a magical place of possibility and transformation.

An Introduction to Ballet

Ballet, as we know it today, began during the Renaissance around the year 1500 in Italy. In fact, the terms "ballet" and "ball" as in masked ball, come from the Italian ballare, to dance. When Catherine de Medici of Italy married the French King Henry II, she introduced early dance styles into court life in France. At first, the dancers wore masks, layers upon layers of brocaded costuming, pantaloons, large headdresses and ornaments. Such restrictive clothing was sumptuous to look at but difficult to move in. Dance steps were composed of small hops, slides, curtsies, promenades and gentle turns. Dancing shoes had small heels and resembled formal dress shoes rather than any contemporary ballet



shoe we might recognize today. The official terminology and vocabulary of ballet was gradually codified in French over the next 100 years, and during the reign of Louis XIV the king himself performed many of the popular dances of the time. Professional dancers were hired to perform at court functions after King Louis and fellow noblemen had stopped dancing. Gradually, over time, the court dances grew in size, opulence and grandeur to the point where performances were presented on elevated platforms so that a greater audience could watch the increasingly pyrotechnic and elaborate spectacles. From Italian roots, ballets in France and Russia developed their own stylistic character. By 1850 Russia had become a leading creative center of the dance world, and as ballet continued to evolve, certain new looks and theatrical illusions caught on and became quite fashionable. Dancing en pointe (on toe) became popular during the early part of the nineteenth century, with women often performing in white, bell-like skirts that ended at the calf. Pointe dancing was reserved for women only, and this exclusive taste for female dancers and characters inspired a certain type of recognizable Romantic heroine - a sylph-like fairy whose pristine goodness and purity inevitably triumphs over evil or injustice. In the early twentieth century the Russian theatre producer Serge Diaghilev assembled some of the most talented dancers, choreographers, composers, teachers and designers to form a company called the Ballet Russes. Eventually, the Ballet Russes toured Europe and America, presenting a wide variety of ballets. In the 1930's, some of Diaghilev's dancers, choreographers, and teachers left his company to work with and settle in the U.S. Of these, Margaret Craske, a dancer with the Ballet Russes trained by Enrico Cecchetti, came to the U.S. to become ballet mistress of American Ballet Theatre. Later. she became the ballet mistress and coach for New York Theatre Ballet, which was patterned on the Cecchetti/Diaghilev tradition of the Ballet Russes.

Meet the Composer

Born on April 23, 1891 in Sontsovka, Ukraine, Sergei Ergeyevich Prokofiev is considered one of the greatest composers of the twentieth century. He was also an accomplished pianist and conductor. He attended the St. Petersburg Conservatory from 1904 to 1914, winning the Anton Rubinstein prize for best student pianist when he graduated. Like other great composers he mastered a wide range of musical genres, including symphonies, concerti, film, music, operas, and ballets. At the time, his works were considered both ultra-modern and innovative. Some of his more famous ballet works include: *Cinderella*, *Peter and the Wolf*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. He traveled widely, spending many years in London and Paris, and toured the United States five times. He gained wide notoriety and his music was both reviled and triumphed by the musical press of the time. He returned to his homeland permanently in 1936. He died in 1953 in Moscow.

Terminology

Ballet: a theatrical art form using dance, music, and scenery to create a story.

Classical Ballet: A traditional style of ballet, which stresses the academic technique developed through the centuries of the existence of ballet.

Modern Ballet: A type of ballet from the twentieth century. To this day, *Modern ballet* looks to re-invent itself and reach out in an ever-increasing facet of creation and movement.

Artistic Director: The head of the ballet company who makes all final and creative decisions.

Choreographer: The person who creates all movement and dances for the ballet.

Choreograph: To design or plan movements of a dance.

Costume Designer: The person who designs the costumes and supervises the costume construction.

Composer: The person who writes the music score for the ballet. **Set Designer**: The person who designs all the sets and scenery and supervises its construction.

Stage Manager: The person who is in charge of all that happens backstage during performances.

Lighting Designer: The person who plans the design, colors and frequency of the light changes on-stage.

Cast: All the performers on stage.

Dancers: Performers who dance or move to tell the story.

Ballerina: A female dancer. **Premiere Danseur**: A male dancer.

Soloists: Any dancer who performs a dance alone on stage.

Pas de deux: A dance for two people used to display their beautiful technique.

Corps de Ballet: A group of dancers who move in various patterns. Sometimes, the *corps de ballet* can represent a flock of birds, happy villagers, or a gathering of party guests.

Pantomime: Acting by body movements and gestures without speaking.

Balletomane: (bal•LAY•toe•mane): A ballet fan or enthusiast. **Pointe shoes**: The satin ballet shoes used by dancers when dancing on their pointes (toes). *Pointe shoes* are reinforced with a box constructed of numerous layers of strong glue in between layers of material. *Pointe shoes* are not made of cement or wood.

Tutu: The short classical ballet skirt made of many layers of net. A romantic tutu is a long net skirt reaching below the calf.

Adagio (*uh*•*DA*•*zhe*•*o*): Is a succession of slow, soft, lyrical and continuous movements. *Adagio* creates the illusion that the positions flow from one into another.

Allegro (a•LAY•grow): Allegro in ballet involves fast and dynamic movements, usually jumping steps and sequences.

Arabesque (*air•uh•BESK*): A position on one leg with the other leg raised behind the body and extended in a straight line.

Grande Jeté (grand zhe•TAY): A big jump from one foot to the



other in which the working leg is brushed into the air. **Plié** (*plee•YAY*): Means bent, bending - of the knee or knees. **Pirouette** (*peer•o•WET*): A rotation or spin - a complete turn of the body on one foot, on point or demi-pointe (half- pointe). **Tour en l'air**: A turn in the air - usually a male dancer's step, although sometimes ballerinas do them as well.

Creating a Ballet

Select a story the class has read or will read together and create a ballet from that story. Be sure to tell the story through movement and dance only. Do not use words.

Now that you have studied some of the people involved in creating and performing a ballet, you can...

- Assign each student (or group of students) a job. The teacher should be the Artistic Director.
- Select the scenes. Which scenes will be dances by a soloist? Which by the corps de ballet? Is there a scene that should be danced as a pas de deux?
- Select the characters.
- Select the music for each scene (classical music is suggested).
- Put the ballet together.

This should take the class a few days to accomplish. Make sure you keep their choices (music, etc.) to a minimum or it will take them too long.

An alternate idea for older or more advanced students:

Divide the room into groups. Let each group select their own story and complete the same tasks. Before performing for each other, be sure to review audience etiquette. Have the "audience" try to guess what story each ballet was based on.

Helpful hints:

Creating a dance is just like writing a story. It must include a beginning, middle, and an end.

You can use the next section on pantomime to help creative movement sequences.

Pantomime

Pantomime (sometimes called just mime) is the art of using ac tions or gestures without words as a means of communication. It plays an important role in ballet as it helps the audience better understand the story and what the characters are feeling. A dancer must use the arms, hands, fingers, head and eyes as well as the feet to make a role "come alive". Here are descriptions of some of the most familiar gestures used in ballet:

Anger: Fist shaken.

Ask: Hands clasped together in pleading gesture.

Beautiful: Hand circling face.

Call: Hand or hands cupped around mouth.

Dancing: Hands rolling/circling each other as arms follow port

de bras from front of body to high overhead.

Death: Arms straight in front, crossed at wrists with hands in

fists.

Fear: Body leaning away with hands open and palms out.

Hear: Hand pointing to or cupping ear. **I/Me/Mine**: Hand to chest indicating oneself.

Love: Hands over heart.

Marriage: Index finger pointing to ring finger on left hand. **Money**: Pretending to count coins from one hand to another and/ or rubbing thumb and fingers of same hand together with hand facing up and toward another person.

No/Never: With palms down, hands waving over each other

crossing at wrist.

Obey/Come Here: Strong point to the floor with index finger. **Pray**: Hands flat, palms together in front of chest with arms

Quiet/Don't Speak: Finger pressed against lips or hand clasped over mouth.

Remember/Think: Touch or point to temple.

Royal: Hand circling top of head to indicate crown.

Sad: Finger tracing tears down face or wiping tears away off cheek.

See: Finger pointing to eyes.

Shoot: Pretending, or using prop, to aim bow and arrow or holding fingers in the shape of a handgun.

Sleep: Hands in praying position, held on side of face with head inclined as though resting on a pillow.

Why/Where/What: Hands open, palms up, arms opening from in front of body to demi-second.

You: Arm extending to another person with hand open, palm up or direct point with finger.

Excerpted from The Ballet Books (© 1995/1996) by Donna Jones Carver and Sally E. Weatherford.

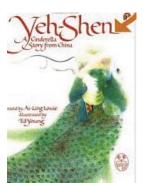
Suggested Resources



CD: Prokofiev: Cinderella
The Bolshoi Symphony Orchestra
Label: Empire Musicwerks
ASIN: B000BVKXF0
Available on Amazon.com



More Resources



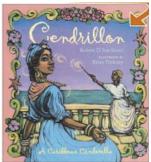
Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from

Reading level: Ages 4-8

Paperback

Publisher: Putnam Juvenile; Reissue

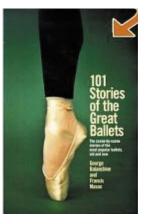
edition (May 7, 1996) Language: English ISBN: 0698113888



Cendrillon : A Caribbean Cinderella

Reading level: Ages 4-8 Paperback: 40 pages Publisher: Aladdin; Reprint edition (January 1, 2002)

Language: English ISBN: 0689848889

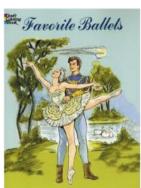


101 Stories of the Great Ballets: The scene-by-scene stories of the most popular ballets, old and new

Paperback: 560 pages Publisher: Anchor;

Reissue edition (June 20, 1975)

Language: English ISBN: 0385033982



Favorite Ballets Coloring Book

Reading level: Ages 4-8 Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications;

Coloring edition (September 14, 2004) Language: English ISBN: 0486436462

More Activities

Write a Review

Have your students write a review of New York Theatre Ballet's production of *Cinderella*. Be sure to discuss the many elements which must come together to make a ballet (sets, lights, costumes, props, music, choreography, etc.). Also discuss how a really good review takes all these elements into consideration.

Suggest a Ballet

Have your students imagine they are the Artistic Director for New York Theatre Ballet. What story would they most like to see turned into a ballet? How would they tell the story? Have them draw set designs, costume designs, and even suggest music.

Share your Experience

After your students have seen our production of *Cinderella*, have them send us their reviews, suggestions, renderings, or even fan letters to the dancers of New York Theatre Ballet!

New York Theatre Ballet 30 East 31st Street, 5th Floor New York, NY 10016

Vocabulary Matching Quiz

1. Tutu 2. Adagio 3. Pas de Deux 4. Ballet 5. Tour en l'air 6. Pantomime 7. Choreograph	
8. Plié 9. Balletomane 10. Allegro	
	Fast, dynamic movements.
	Theatrical art form using dance.
	The short classical ballet skirt made of many layers.
	Bending of the knees or knee.
	A turn in the air.
	A ballet fan.
	Slow, soft, lyrical and continuous movements.
	To plan the movements of a dance.
	———Acting by body movements and gestures without speaking
	A dance for two.

Who Am I?

I make up all the dances in the ballet. Who am I?
I write all the music for the ballet. Who am I?
I am a female dancer in the ballet. Who am I?
I am in charge of all that happens backstage. Who am I?
I am the head of the ballet and make all the creative decisions. Who am I?
I am a fan of the ballet. Who am I?
I create the clothing worn by the performers. Who am I?



Cinderella Word Search

Down, diagonal, and left to right Find all the words before midnight!

Α	С	Α	S	T	L	Е	w	Н		Х	0	T	I	Z	С	0	М	Р	0	S	E	R	K
В	ı	Q	L	U	S	T	E	R	G	Р	L	I	E	G	С	Н	ı	V	E	D	ı	N	G
w	N	D	ı	R	E	T	Н	Α	Y	L	0	G	I	С	Α	L	0	N	G	E	М	0	Р
U	D	I	Р	K	R	E	E	N	D	S	Α	V	E	R	L	Α	D	С	Н	ı	N	0	S
F	E	Z	Р	Е	R	Α	Х	Р	I	Т	S	0	0	Y	Q	Z	Н	Е	Р	K	L	G	Α
Y	R	М	E	Y	Q	Z	K	Α	S	K	I	Р	В	N	T	I	G	Н	T	S	М	F	F
0	E	L	R	X	I	T	E	N	w	ı	K	Н	A	Н	U	J	0	Н	S	D	J	I	Р
Е	L	Н	Α	J	V	С	U	T	Е	Х	S	М	L	w	I	U	D	Α	N	С	I	N	G
L	L	D	В	Q	J	Н	T	0	Н	R	С	T	L	Q	E	E	М	X	0	0	N	T	Y
Р	Α	D	Α	G	I	0	D	М	E	R	G	L	E	Z	S	Н	0	E	М	S	T	E	М
K	R	E	L	I	N	R	Н	I	G	F	J	Y	T	R	Q	w	T	Z	Α	T	Α	L	S
Α	С	Е	L	G		E	Y	М	K	М	0	Q	S	U	S	w	Н	Y	T	U	T	U	Z
В	D	F	E	Н	J	0	L	E	L	N	Р	Р	0	I	N	T	E	R	T	М	V	X	Р
Z	Α	В	T	С	D	G	E	F	Н	J	L	R	M	N	Р	R	R	T	V	E	X	W	R
Р	L	Z	0	Y	X	R	W	٧	J	G	R		>	D	В	R	S	C	Α	S	T	Y	0
	T	S	М	R	В	A	L	L	Е	R	I	Z	A	Q	Р	0	N	M	Y	0	T	Н	K
R	Y	L	Α	Z	E	P	A	T	M	Α	C	C	E	I	N	X	T	R	E	E	Α	Z	0
0	P	A	N	Н	T	Н	R	0	Р	N	I	E	C	Α	L	C	L	U	T	Α	U	T	F
U	K	L	E	Α	С	E	0	I	N	D	W	I	D	T	J	T	U	Y	L	0	D	Р	I
E	P	L	U	Н	T	R	K	A	R	E	Α	L	L	E	G	R	0	I	D	С	I	M	E
T	D	0	N	P	L	Y	Н	U	N	J	G	L	E	В	E	E	N	М	L	L	E	S	V
T	Α	J	ı	L	E	Α	R	Α	В	E	S	Q	U	E	В	E	V	I	ı	Н	N	0	J
E	U	Y	Α	T	R	E	W	Q	L	T	K	J	Н	G	F	D	S	Α	N	М	С	В	V
С	X	В	Z	W	S	X	0	K	M	E	R	F	V	I	P	Α	S	D	E	D	E	U	X

Can you find all 30 words?

CINDERELLA	SLIPPER	TIGHTS
ADAGIO	DANCING	PLIÉ
BALLERINA	BALLET	PROKOFIEV
CHOREOGRAPHER	PAS DE DEUX	ARABESQUE
PRINCE	COSTUMES	COMPOSER
CASTLE	ALLEGRO	GRANDE JETÉ
BALLROOM	TUTU	AUDIENCE
STEPSISTERS	BALLETOMANE	PIROUETTE
GODMOTHER	PANTOMIME	SHOE
POINTE	STAGE	CAST