

ORLANDO BALLET

JORDEN MORRIS | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Moulin Rouge

THE BALLET
PATRONS GUIDE

IN THE SPIRIT OF
THE MOULIN ROUGE
OF PARIS


MOULIN ROUGE

LIVE MUSIC PERFORMED BY


30th Orlando
philharmonic
ORCHESTRA
ERIC JACOBSEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

GENEROUSLY FUNDED BY

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About Orlando Ballet

Founded in 1974, Orlando Ballet is Central Florida's only fully residential professional ballet company. Orlando Ballet produces year-round main stage productions at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts and Harriett's Orlando Ballet Centre, featuring timeless masterpieces and innovative contemporary world premieres, achieving the highest level of professionalism and artistic excellence. Orlando Ballet promotes dance education through community enrichment programs, performance lecture demonstrations, the renowned Orlando Ballet School, and Orlando Ballet II, a second pre-professional company to train and support dancers as they approach the start of their dance careers. For information about Orlando Ballet, please visit our website at OrlandoBallet.org.

Did You Know?

Jorden Morris, Orlando Ballet's Artistic Director is the creator of this work. He is the only person in the world who holds the rights to the choreography from the *Moulin Rouge*®.

The 2023 engagement will include an additional 40 minutes of dancing that was not included when the Orlando premiere happened in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Orlando Ballet will be performing to live music played by the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra.

Opera Orlando's Raphaella Medina will be singing "La vie en Rose" accompanied by the accordion for the opening of *Moulin Rouge*®The Ballet.

Visit OrlandoBallet.org to see a full list of programs and performances.



Photo: Zavesco Photography

Preparing to See the Ballet

What to watch for:

- Watch the athleticism of the dancers: their balance, fluidity, and strength. Look for how their costumes are designed to allow and highlight their movements.
- Sometimes choreography tells a story through arm movements, much like sign language does. What sorts of 'signs' do you see that help tell the story?
- Look at the distance between dancers on stage at certain points in the dance. Do they seem close or distant? Does it seem like their characters are working together or creating opposition to each other?
- Look at the costumes. What information do they convey about the characters?

What to listen for:

- As the music begins, listen for the mood of the piece. Think about what sorts of movements might go along with this mood. When the dancers enter, think about how their movements match (or contrast) what you imagined. Are the dancers moving to the music in an obvious way or in a way that juxtaposes the score?
- How would you describe this music in words? What clues in the music do you think the choreographer picked up on when designing this dance?

Like all live performances, each ballet performance only happens once. It is a combination of the performers on stage and the audiences in front of them that make up each unique performance.

For this reason, it is in the audience's best interest to be visibly and audibly attentive and appreciative – the better the audience, the better the performance on stage will be.

- During the performance: Enjoy the ballet! As part of the audience, your attendance is as essential to the ballet performance as the dancers themselves. It is very important to arrive on time or even early for the performance in order to allow enough time to settle in and focus on the show.
- Concentration: Always sit still and watch in a quiet, concentrated way. This supports the dancers so that they can do their best work on stage.
- Quiet: Auditoriums are designed to carry sound so that the performers can be heard, which also means that any sound in the audience can be heard by dancers and other audience members. Checking your phone disrupts the performance for everyone, so always ensure that phones and other electronic devices are turned off during the performance.
- Respect: By watching quietly and attentively, you show respect for the dancers. The dancers show respect for you (the audience) and for the art of dance by doing their very best work.
- Appreciation: Tell performers you enjoyed the show by clapping at the end of a particular dance (when there is a pause in the music) and at the end of the performance.

* Majority of text content was supplied by Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet

About the Ballet

The First Ballet

In 16th century France and Italy, royalty competed to have the most splendid court. Monarchs would search for and employ the best poets, musicians and artists. At this time, dancing became increasingly theatrical. This form of entertainment, also called the ballet de court (court ballet), featured elaborate scenery and lavish costumes, plus a series of processions, poetic speeches, music and dancing. The first known ballet, *Le Ballet comique de la Reine*, was performed at court in 1581 by the Queen of France (and her ladies) at her sister's wedding.

The Sun King

In the 17th century, the popularity and development of ballet could be attributed to King Louis XIV of France. He took dancing very seriously and trained daily with his dance master, Pierre Beauchamp. One of the King's famous roles was the Rising Sun which led him to become known as the "Sun King." King Louis also set up the Academie Royale de Danse (Royal Academy of Dance) in 1661, where, for the first time, steps were structurally codified and recorded by Beauchamp. These are the same steps

that have been handed down through centuries, and which now form the basis of today's classical ballet style.

The First Professional Dancers

At first, ballets were performed at the Royal Court, but in 1669 King Louis opened the first opera house in Paris. Ballet was first viewed publicly in the theatre as part of the opera. The first opera featuring ballet, entitled *Pomone*, included dances created by Beauchamp. Women participated in ballets at court, but were not seen in the theatre until 1681. Soon, as the number of performances increased, courtiers who danced for a hobby gave way to professional dancers who trained longer and harder. The physical movement of the first professional dancers was severely hindered by their lavish and weighty costumes and headpieces. They also wore dancing shoes with tiny heels, which made it rather difficult to dance with pointed toes.

Revealing Feet & Ankles

Early in the 18th century in Paris, the ballerina, Marie Camargo, shocked audiences by shortening her skirts to just above the ankle. She did this to be freer in her movements and

allow the audience to see her intricate footwork and complex jumps, which often rivaled those of the men. Ballet companies were now being set up all over France to train dancers for the opera. The first official ballet company (a collection of dancers who train professionally) was based at the Paris Opera and opened in 1713.

The Pointe Shoe

By 1830, ballet as a theatrical art form truly came into its own. Influenced by the Romantic Movement, which was sweeping the world of art, music, literature and philosophy, ballet took on a whole new look. The ballerina ruled supreme. Female dancers now wore calf-length, white, bell-shaped tulle skirts. To enhance the image of the ballerina as light and ethereal, the pointe shoe was introduced, enabling women to dance on the tips of their toes.

Classical Ballet

Although the term "classical" is often used to refer to traditional ballet, this term really describes a group of story ballets first seen in Russia at the end of the 19th century. At this time, the centre of ballet moved from France to Russia. In Russia, the

French choreographer Marius Petipa collaborated with the Russian composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky to create the lavish story ballet spectacles such as *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*. Today, these ballets still form the basis of the classical ballet repertoire of companies all over the world.

One Act Ballets

In 1909, the Russian impresario Serge Diaghilev brought together a group of dancers, choreographers, composers, artists and designers into his company, the Ballets Russes. This company took Paris by storm as it introduced, instead of long story ballets in the classical tradition, short, one-act ballets such as, *Schéhérazade*, *Les Sylphides*, *The Rite of Spring*, *Firebird* and *Petrouchka*. Some of the world's greatest dancers, including Anna Pavlova (1881-1931), and Vasslav Nijinsky (1889-1950), and choreographers Mikhail Fokine (1880-1942) and George Balanchine (1904-1983), were part of Diaghilev's company. About Ballet

See for yourself!

Do a search for images of ballet dancers throughout the ages. Can you notice the differences in costumes over time? What do most dancers wear today?

Life of a Dancer

The career of a dancer is relatively short and it is not unusual to spend more years training than dancing professionally. As in Olympic-level sports, the movements demanded of the human body in ballet are very specific and require great precision and care. For that reason, the physique must be prepared for a professional ballet career at a young age.

The professional training period usually consists of at least seven years of intensive, precise work. Ideally, girls and boys should begin their professional training by age ten. Training is a very progressive process. The young professional student begins with daily classes, practicing the basic ballet positions and movements, learning body placement and how to move through the space with balance and artistry. As the student progresses, time spent in classes each week increases, as do the difficulty and extensiveness of the skills taught. In addition to daily class in classical technique, students also receive instruction in variation (solo) work, pointe (dancing on the toes), pas de deux (a dance for two), character, jazz, and modern dance.

Prior to the introduction of pointe work, a number of criteria must be considered, including the amount of previous training, the dancer's strength and ability, as well as their age as it relates to the bone development in the dancer's feet. Pas de deux and repertoire (the collection of different ballets a dance company performs) are introduced only when the student has adequate strength, ability, and training.

Students who graduate to a professional ballet company usually begin dancing as a member of the corps de ballet (ensemble). After a few years, corps de ballet members whose artistry, technical ability, musicality, and ability to communicate with the audience set them apart may be promoted to first or second soloist. Finally, the highest achievement in the company, the position of principal dancer or ballerina, is attainable by only a few select dancers.



Photo: Zavesco Photography

Moulin Rouge® - The Ballet | Synopsis

Act I

As Paris awakens for another day, Matthew enters and is immediately robbed of his belongings. Nathalie is waiting for the other laundrettes to arrive when she sees Matthew for the first time. As the couple dances together, the spark of love ignites. Zidler, the owner of the Moulin Rouge, enters and everyone knows that he is the man who can take you from the streets to the spotlight, so the women dance for him, hoping to attract his attention. Nathalie outshines all the other girls so Zidler offers her a position at the Moulin Rouge! Nathalie says goodbye to her friends and Matthew, then leaves with Zidler. Toulouse-Lautrec arrives and meets Matthew. Not knowing who Toulouse is, Matthew gets quite upset with the master's critique. Toulouse offers a paintbrush to Matthew and the dueling paint off scene begins with Toulouse's favorite muse as the subject.

Zidler brings Nathalie into the cold, dark and somewhat frightening Moulin Rouge, where she is told to wait before rehearsal begins. The other dancers are not impressed that Nathalie is there and try to intimidate her. La Goulue challenges Nathalie to a Cancan competition and at the end Nathalie is victorious. She wins Zidler's approval and the tower dressing room. Toulouse and Matthew are in front of the Moulin Rouge cabaret with their paintings. Toulouse invites Matthew to the cabaret for the evening, but Matthew is broke and underdressed. Toulouse brings in tailors who transform Matthew into a

gentleman in a tuxedo. After the first Moulin Rouge show, Nathalie sees Matthew and the two of them rekindle the spark from their first meeting. Nathalie takes Matthew away from the Moulin Rouge so they can be alone. Zidler notices that Nathalie is gone and becomes suspicious; after searching the Moulin Rouge he closes it down and leaves to find her.

As people are leaving the cabaret, Nathalie and Matthew are on their way to a bridge by the Eiffel Tower. Zidler comes searching for her, but Toulouse distracts him to help the couple escape to the bridge where they dance a romantic pas de deux.



Photo: Michael Cairns

ACT II

Toulouse dances with his favorite green fairy after consuming absinthe.

Meanwhile, Nathalie is getting ready to meet Matthew at the Tango Café. She is happy and in love. Zidler has now become obsessed with Nathalie and does not want her to go out. He tries to seduce Nathalie and only Toulouse entering saves her. Zidler has no idea she is meeting Matthew at the Tango Café but follows and finds the couple together. Zidler threatens to kill Matthew so Nathalie leaves with him in an attempt to appease the tyrant and save Matthew from harm. But Matthew is left brokenhearted and confused. He drinks absinthe with Toulouse and encounters the green fairies. After he wakes up, Toulouse creates a plan for Matthew to disguise himself as a waiter and get back into the cabaret.

At the show that evening, Matthew finds Nathalie and they try to escape through the mayhem of the Cancan. Zidler discovers them together and becomes enraged, stopping the show. He intends to kill Matthew, but Nathalie is mortally wounded instead. Matthew holds Nathalie as she takes her last breath.



Photo: Michael Cairns

Classroom Activities



Photo: Michael Cairns

Visual Arts:

- Research artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and his works for the Moulin Rouge.
- Create a poster yourself, in the Latrec's distinct style.

Social Studies

- Watch Baz Luhrmann's 2001 film *Moulin Rouge!* and compare it with the ballet.
- Write a review of the afternoon's performance, acting as an on-the-spot reporter and send it to the Orlando Ballet.

History

- Study the history of the Moulin Rouge. Research one of the characters based on real-life people: Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Charles-Joseph Zidler, or La Goulue (Louise Weber). What was their life experience like? How does it compare to their portrayal in the ballet?

Telling Stories Through Gesture

Dance sometimes tells a story or conveys a mood through movement on stage. Get your students thinking in a movement vocabulary with this fun and accessible exercise. Do this exercise before seeing the ballet and ask your students to look for storytelling gestures from the dancers during the performance.

Students will translate a familiar story into a series of gestures and explore different ways to present those gesture-stories to an audience.

Divide students into small groups and have each group select a well-known story (a favourite story book from class, a fairy tale, a familiar legend, etc). Have each group create 3–5 gestures (specific movements) that highlight key elements of the story.

ex. The story of Rapunzel:

1 “locked in a tower”: fists crossed in an ‘x’ by student’s chest

2 “long hair”: head tilted to one side, braiding long hair

3 “prince rescues her”: climbing a rope ladder, then raising both arms in celebration

Once groups have decided on their gestures, instruct them to try performing them in different ways (“like robots”, “smoothly”, “as big as you can”, “as small as you can”, “joyously”, “nervously”, “fast”, etc.). Consider adding in music to these and presenting each to the class.

Modifications:

For less-advanced students, create gestures for a story read to the class as a group. Pause at intervals in the story and select a student to share a gesture for that moment, allowing all students to try the gesture before continuing on. Repeat the entire story adding in the created gestures.

For more-advanced students, create longer sets of gestures to music and focus on transitions between each gesture. Remind them to include facial expressions and think about the quality of each movement in relation to the story.

Instead of different stories, divide one story into 7 to 10 sentences. Divide into groups of 2 or 3 and number groups 1 through 7 (or 10). Give each group their corresponding sentence for the story. Practice to the same piece of music then present the whole story chronologically, one group after the other.

Glossary of Ballet Terms



Photo: Michael Cairns

ballet – (“bah-LAY”) 1. an artistic dance that usually tells a story or expresses a mood, performed by either a soloist or a group of dancers in a theatre, concert hall, etc. 2. a dramatic or representational style of dancing to music 3. a particular piece or performance of ballet.

balletic – (“bah-LET-tic”) of or having to do with ballet.

balletomane – (“bah-EToh-main”) a person who is enthusiastic about ballet.

ballerina – a female ballet dancer. Male ballet dancers are simply called “male dancers”.

barre – a horizontal bar at waist level, used in dance exercises.

choreography – the art of inventing and composing dances. A choreographer is the person who sets the dance and often teaches it to the dancers.

pas de deux – a dance for a couple

pas de trois – a dance for three people

rehearsal – 1. a trial performance or practice of play, music, dance, etc. 2. the process of rehearsing.

repertoire – a collection of pieces that a company or dancer knows or is prepared to perform.

score – in music, the written form of musical composition

Did you know that Ballet uses French words because it was popularized and standardized in the royal court of King Louis XIV in 17th century France? See page 3 to find out more of ballet’s history and the balletic reason that gave Louis the “Sun King” nickname.



Photo: Zavesco Photography

Five Performances Only!
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