

Unit: **Dance as Narrative:** **The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

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Teacher Observations

Ani Udovicki, Educator

Frank Sinatra School of the Arts

Dance as Narrative: the Ballets of Petipa is an umbrella term I use for the course of study of our junior dance majors. Our curriculum at Frank Sinatra School of the Arts is a continuum that spirals and builds constantly on prior knowledge. Technically, it is not divided in units. Dance as Narrative includes lessons in classical ballet, modern dance, dance history and dance composition. All of them build on material covered during the freshman and sophomore years and it is meant for intermediate/advanced students. However, with some modification, the lessons can be adapted for a different student population. Each lesson takes several classes to accomplish. For the sake of uniformity in this project I will use the word “unit” but please keep in mind that I mean a very large and flexible unit of study. Also, for the sake of keeping the scope of this presentation manageable, I will not focus on and explain the part of the curriculum that refers to modern dance.

At Sinatra we are fortunate to have three periods back to back with each dance class. Juniors spend the first two periods with one teacher, the ballet and modern teacher, and the third period with the Jazz and Tap teacher. This gives the first teacher enough time to teach a dance class and complement it with mini-lessons in history and/or composition. The format is rather flexible. On some days the students have a longer dance class and on others more time is spent with dance composition, watching a video or in-group discussions that span the scope of history and composition. When we are close to performances, in December, and early in the spring, most of class time is spent rehearsing and the pace of introducing new concepts slows down. However, by the end of the year students have successfully completed the goals set out in the curriculum.

Junior year represents a big leap in terms of technique and dance composition. As dancers students progress from beginner/advanced to intermediate/advanced. The whole lexicon of classical ballet is introduced, beats in petit allegro, complex leaps in grand allegro, consecutive turns, and the like. In modern dance, students start doing pitch turns and tilts turning, long off-balance adagios and complex rhythms. Both in ballet and modern dance classes students learn repertory from the classical ballet canon and masters of modern dance such as Weidman, Limon, Ailey, and others.

Dance composition progresses from the study of single choreographic elements during their freshmen and sophomore years, such as pathways, levels, contrasting dynamics, theme and variation, ABA, and so on, to more sophisticated assignments, which combine several choreographic devices and incorporate character development and a narrative. Also, during their junior year students for the first time use music for their studies and experience choreographing on someone else other than themselves. In general, for the first choreographic assignment their musical choices are not surprising. They chose something they are familiar with. However, the advantage of allowing them to use any piece of music they wish, as long as it has no lyrics, is that they show a lot of enthusiasm choreographing to music they love. Later, when searching for the right score for their libretto they tend to be more creative and willing to explore.

Perhaps more significantly for their development as young artists is that they are asked to choreograph using other dancers. This helps them develop coaching skills and become more precise and articulate when conveying movement ideas. Every attempt is made to offer them a broad range of experiences to better prepare them for the challenges of producing their own concert as seniors.

Unit: Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa

Overview

Teacher:
Ani Udovicki

School:
Frank Sinatra
School of the Arts

Grade Level:
11th Grade

Number of Class Sessions:
3x/wk 90 min.
classes over one
year

Unit Dates:
Sept-June

Big Ideas of this Unit

- Dance can express ideas and feelings, and through most of its history it has told a story.
- Narrative ballet achieved a high point in the work of choreographer Marius Petipa, during the latter part of the 19th century at the Court of Russia.
- Today, narrative dance is still a viable means of expression for many choreographers.

Project Description

Students will research and learn to perform excerpts from Petipa's ballets (ladies not on point). They will explore large choreographic structures and create their own libretto for a narrative dance.

Instructional Goal

- To provide students with skills to perform increasingly challenging and complex ballet sequences.
- To provide students with an understanding of the main characteristics of classical ballets through the study of Petipa's legacy.
- To provide students with the opportunity to create their own libretto and to choreograph a scene from it.

Indicators of Student Learning

Students will know:

- That performance of the classical ballets requires a strong technique and the ability to impersonate a character.
- That narrative structure is the foundation in the process of creating a narrative dance, music and choreography come later.
- That the story of a ballet or opera is called a libretto and that Petipa collaborated with his librettists and composers, most notably with the composer P. I. Tchaikovsky

Students will be able to:

- Perform long choreographic passages and variations from the classical repertory.
- Identify and analyze elements of technique and style using the appropriate vocabulary.
- Write a libretto based on a folk tale and to create choreography that depicts action and characters.

Students will understand that:

- After the Romantic period the development of ballet shifted from Paris, France, to St. Petersburg, Russia, where it continued to evolve under the vision of Marius Petipa. The legacy he created working for over six decades for the Imperial Court constitutes what we today consider the Classical Ballet repertory.
- The aesthetic principles that guided Petipa differ from the Romantic Ballet in form and style, but in content as well as musical choices they remain firmly rooted in romanticism.
- In narrative dance much is expressed through body language, gestures, and the use of port de bras. Mime and pantomime have lost much of their significance in dance over the years and are no longer key in conveying the action.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Overview *continued*

Pre-Assessment/Planning

- Students will review The Romantic Ballet, which they covered during their sophomore year. They will also review choreographic devices they explored as freshmen and sophomores

Have I taught these students before? For how long?

- All juniors will have had two years of instruction in dance making and dance history. Teacher assignment depends on the administration

What do students already know and understand about this area of Dance Making?

- Junior students have spent two years as dance majors in our program. They are versed in the routine and expectations of dance classes, dance composition and dance history lessons.

What skills related to this unit have students already developed?

- Students are technically proficient at a beginner/intermediate level; they have studied the history of Western Theatrical Dance from the Renaissance through the Romantic Era. They are able to improvise and choreograph short dance composition studies and are familiar with the basic choreographic elements of time, dynamics and space. Their only experience of creating a character was during their freshmen year when they explored Commedia dell'Arte.

How will the students' needs be addressed?

- Regular ballet classes with increasing difficulty will help students get stronger and achieve a higher proficiency level. Special attention will be paid to classical style. When possible the instructor will provide a simpler version of a complex step so that individual needs are met. Students will work individually, with partners and in groups, with time to improvise and experiment in class in order to accomplish dance composition assignments. Students will receive individual feedback and assistance on their performance, libretto and choreography.

Unit Assessment Strategies

WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING?

Self-Assessment

- Students complete a Self-Evaluation form twice a year. The form is included in the Appendix.

Peer Assessment

- Students are asked to give notes and corrections to each other during class and in rehearsal.
- Students give feedback after each dance composition presentation.
- Students give written feedback to their peers' libretti.

Teacher Assessment

- Students' work in class and in rehearsal is assessed on an ongoing daily basis.
- Performances for Final Exams are assessed using the DoE scoring rubric for Movement Replication, created for the Exit Exam. An example of the rubric is included in the appendix.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Overview *continued*

- Students' performance on stage is not graded but the instructor evaluates the performance as the class views a recording from the performance.
- Their Final Dance Composition is graded using a rubric especially created for grading this project. An example of the rubric is included in the appendix.
- Dance History assignments are assessed by grades, numeric or letter, or simple checks. Students have written tests for their Midterm and Final exams. Examples of tests are included in the appendix. Individual Student-Teacher conferences are held half way through the school year.

TEACHER SELF-ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

What is working well? How do I know this?

- Students are able to perform variations from the classical repertory with proficiency in technique and style.
- Students successfully complete their dance history assignments; they are able to compare and contrast the aesthetics of classical ballets with those of the Romantic Ballet and our time, the contemporary dance scene.
- Students' librettos fulfill the requirements of the task – provide narrative structure and are well written.
- Students choreography is original, has fleshed out characters and a clear narrative arc.

What should be changed? How do I know this?

- Better documentation of the processes of learning and performing classical repertory and of Choreographing. I would like to take more photos in the future.

Learning Experiences	<i>making</i>	<i>literacy</i>	<i>connections</i>	<i>resources</i>	<i>careers</i>
Technique classes in Classical Ballet to develop greater skills in port de bras, petit allegro, adagio work	◆	◆			
Learning variations from the ballets being studied, with a particular emphasis on subtleties of style and quality.	◆	◆	◆		

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Overview *continued*

	<i>making</i>	<i>literacy</i>	<i>connections</i>	<i>resources</i>	<i>careers</i>
Lectures and research about dance history, specifically Petipa, the Romantic period, narrative ballets, collaboration between Petipa and Tchaikovsky, etc.		◆	◆	◆	
Viewing videos of performances of The Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake, Le Corsaire, The Nutcracker (several versions).			◆	◆	
Analysis of librettos for classical narrative ballets.		◆	◆		
Discussion of how Petipa and other classical works have been updated and reimaged by contemporary choreographers.		◆	◆		
Brainstorming and comparison of folks and social dance forms through history, discussion of use of character and folks forms in Classical Ballet, and the crossing over of dance forms from social to theatrical.		◆	◆		
Written work: research paper on Petipa, listing of Petipa ballets in current company repertoires, original student libretto for their own narrative ballet.		◆	◆		
Improvisations using various parameters: stylistic elements related to ballets being studied, narrative elements, limitations of choices related to the narratives, etc.	◆	◆	◆		
Student choreography assignments leading to a finished 2 ½-4-minute original pas de deux.	◆	◆	◆		
Peer critique and feedback of student dance compositions in progress, both verbal and written, using rubrics.		◆			
Performance of final products.	◆				

Unit: Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa

Lesson One – Introduction to Petipa, “The Sleeping Beauty”

Teacher:
Ani Udovicki

School:
Frank Sinatra
School of the Arts

Grade Level:
11th Grade

Goals of this Lesson:

- Students will be able to identify and articulate, through words and movement, the general characteristics of Petipa’s ballets.

Blueprint Strands Addressed:

- Dance Making
- Developing Dance Literacy
- Making Connections

Lesson Context

In this lesson students will examine Petipa’s work and legacy. The focus will be on the aesthetics of his repertory with an overview of its specific characteristics. The students will compare and contrast his ballets with those of the Romantic period. The following characteristics of Petipa’s ballets will be discussed in class:

- Advancement of technique: point work, partnering and grand allegro.
- Full-length spectacles.
- Choreography for large female ensembles, corps de ballets.
- The Pas de Deux as a choreographic model.
- Pantomime, highly stylized and codified.
- Stylized folk and social dance forms.
- Visual harmony: rich costumes complementing elaborate sets, technological advances in lighting - from gas to electricity;
- Symphonic music with a strong melodic line, easy to follow and with clearly delineated sections – the epitome of dance music; indeed, many of the staples for ballet class are excerpts from the scores of Petipa’s ballets;
- Collaboration with composer P. I. Tchaikovsky.
- The resurgence of the male principal dancer, who shares the spotlight with the star ballerina.
- Librettos made of fairy tales, some original and some reworking of familiar stories.

Desired Student Outcomes:

Students will

Know: how to identify and use appropriately ballet terminology and spell it in French.

Understand: the evolution that took place in ballet during the second half of the 19th century in Russia.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson One – Introduction to Petipa, “The Sleeping Beauty” *continued*

Do:

- Students will strengthen their ability to perform on half point in order to increase their balance and gain greater control over changes of level. These skills are integral to ballet’s technique and choreography.
- Students will increase their ability to spot, maintain a fixed focus during turns, which facilitates turning and helps prevent dizziness when executing multiple turns.
- Students will begin choreographing with music and on someone other than himself or herself.

Assessments:

Teacher measures student learning by

- their work in class, dancing – technique and style, and ability to explain verbally the evolution of ballet in Petipa’s time.

Materials/Music:

- Music for ballet class and a selection of waltzes from Petipa’s repertory.
- Instructor prepares a 16 count or longer phrase from one of the waltzes from Petipa’s ballets.
- Video (DVD) recording of “The Sleeping Beauty”, preferably by the Mariinsky (Kirov) Ballet.

Activity

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC OR THEME:

Instructor leads discussion on Petipa’s heritage. Students revisit the main characteristics of the French Romantic ballet, which is the background of the choreographer’s dance training and early career. Students look through reproductions of Degas’ paintings and drawings of dancers and photographs of dancers from the Marinsky Imperial Theater. They examine the movement and positions depicted using the correct terminology (ex. The épaulement and positions of the legs).

Introduction to Petipa’s collaboration with Tchaikovsky and the three ballets they created, “The Sleeping Beauty”, “Swan Lake” and “The Nutcracker”. Instructor underlines the significance of having a respected “concert” composer working on a ballet score. It was unheard of at the time!

WARM-UP:

Barre with a special focus on:

- Grand rond de jambe en l’air.
- Frappés on half point (at first just 16 count and to the side, by the end of the year students perform an equal number of measures flat and on half point, in all directions).

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson One – Introduction to Petipa, “The Sleeping Beauty” *continued*

- Développé and grand battements past 90 degrees.
- Balance in attitude front and back.
- Fast, consecutive relevés on two legs and one, facing the barre. This is a good exercise to keep repeating throughout the year, it builds strength of the lower limbs, so necessary for petit allegro and longer balances.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

Center with a special focus on:

- Preparation for grand pirouettes en dedans.
- Consecutive pirouettes en dehors from fifth position.
- Petit allegro with beats from two legs to two legs, échappé and royal.
- Waltz combination with pas valse simple and en tournant, in contrasting tempi and dynamics, including a phrase from any of the ensemble waltzes from Petipa’s repertory. (Waltz of the Flowers from “The Nutcracker”, The Garland Waltz from “The Sleeping Beauty”, Waltz of the Maidens from “Swan Lake”, among many).
- Grand Allegro with grand sissonne.
- Preparation for tour en l’air, quarter and half turns.

COOL DOWN: Every ballet class ends with a révérence. Time permitting, and especially after performing variations, I lead the class through simple stretching and breathing exercises.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Video “The Sleeping Beauty”, excerpts from the Prologue and act I, in particular The Garland Waltz and The Rose Adagio.

Reading Assignment and Homework

- Students research choreographer Marius Petipa and write a one-page paper on his life and work.
- Students are asked to choose at random ten American ballet companies and ten companies from abroad and list all the Petipa ballets currently on their repertory. Generally, this assignment is due before the biography because it is a great introduction to Petipa’s popularity, significance and relevance today.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson One – Introduction to Petipa, “The Sleeping Beauty” *continued*

Dance Composition assignment

- Students are asked to choose a Native American or African American folk tale that they would like to use as inspiration for a libretto.
- Students are asked to choose a piece of music and choreograph a 2-minute solo on one of their classmates. The only requirement is that the music be without lyrics. Sometimes students find a way around this requirement by using their favorite song in an instrumental version. I think this is fine, if they care so much about a certain song they should have the pleasure of choreographing to it. Later, when they look for music for their libretto students are always more adventuresome.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Two – The Ensemble in Petipa’s Ballets, “La Bayadère”

Goals of this Lesson:

- Students will examine and be able to articulate the characteristics of Petipa’s choreography for the ensemble, in particular the female ensemble. They will also explore large choreographic structures, such as acts and scenes, by applying the concept to their own librettos.

Blueprint Strands Addressed:

- Dance Making
- Developing Dance Literacy
- Making Connections

Lesson Context

In this lesson students will examine Petipa’s choreography for the female ensemble, particularly the white acts or scenes. Petipa was a master of formations, the placement – grouping and regrouping – of dancers on the stage. Large female ensembles are a hallmark of each of his ballets, and he devoted to them at least one whole scene, usually an entire act. In these “white acts” rows upon rows of dancers are displayed in ever shifting formations. The effect is mesmerizing.

The dancers typically represent enchanted creatures, otherworldly beings, sometimes a fiction of the hero’s imagination. They move ethereally, depicting their supernatural character by delicate, airy, dancing. Invariably, they wear white or very pale tutus, thus the name “white acts”, inherited from the romantic “white ballets”. The strong technique required from each member of the corps de ballet lies concealed in the service of quality. They move as if by magic, devoid of earthly bonds and limitations. Yet, they imbue their performance with human warmth regardless of the specific setting and personification, be they swans, visions, dreams or snowflakes.

In essence, Petipa’s white scenes were celebrations of the 19th century ideal of womanhood – spiritual, innocent and beautiful. As such, they represented no break with the Romantic tradition. They were realized, however, on a scale far grander and more sumptuous than before and they presage the development of abstract ballet in the 20th century.

Desired Student Outcomes: Students will

Know: how to identify and use the appropriate terminology for large choreographic structures.

Understand: the role of the female ensemble, the corps de ballet, in classical ballets and the evolution of the white acts or scenes; they will understand the romantic origin of the white acts and how they, in turn, influenced the creation of abstract ballets in the 20th century.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Two – The Ensemble in Petipa’s Ballets, “La Bayadère” *continued*

Do:

- Students will build their strength to perform long adagio phrases, slow sustained movement and high extensions. They will apply the principles of classical line to their port de bras.
- Students will work in large group formations, in unison and canons.
- Students will start shaping their libretto in terms of the, large choreographic structure, acts and scenes.

Assessments: I will measure student learning by

- their adagio work in class, technique and style, and ability to explain verbally the quality of classical adagio and the role of the female ensemble in the ballets of Petipa.
- Successful completion of dance composition assignment: a 2 minutes solo on one of their classmates.
- Successful completion of the first draft of their libretto.

Materials/Music:

- Music for ballet class, preferably from ballets by Minkus, Glazunov, Tchaikovsky, composers Petipa collaborated with.
- Music of “The Entrance of the Shades” from “La Bayadère” by Minkus. Easily available on CD or on line.
- Instructor prepares to teach the opening phrase of “The Entrance of the Shades”. This is a simple yet beautiful canon, a masterpiece of ensemble choreography. Although the choreography is exclusively for female dancers I have found that boys also benefit and enjoy the experience of learning and performing it.
- Video (DVD) recording of “La Bayadère”, preferably by ABT or The Royal Ballet, staged by Makarova.

Activity

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC OR THEME:

Instructor collects homework and asks students to share their research experience. They had to make two worksheets, one comprising of ten American ballet companies and another of ten companies outside of The United States, and list all the Petipa ballets on their repertory. Since they were encouraged to choose the companies at random, it is easy to make the point that every major ballet company in the world performs Petipa. Why is he today, a hundred years after his death, the most popular choreographer? Students are asked to answer this question by analyzing his work, examining some of the elements separately.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Two – The Ensemble in Petipa’s Ballets, “La Bayadère” *continued*

One is the power of the story, the libretto. Petipa’s ballets tell mostly romantic stories which appeal to us on a human level like folk tales and fairy tales do. And then, there is the splendor and beauty to behold on stage, of classical proportions and sensibility. Petipa’s choreography embodies the values of classical aesthetics.

Students explore Petipa’s use of the narrative structure to build the large choreographic structure of the ballet, the sequence of scenes and acts that support the story-line. Students are asked to consider what might be the appeal of full-length, all evening, story ballets. No choreographer uses time so luxuriously as Petipa. His ballets are long and very long. Students compare and contrast full-length ballets with one-act ballets in choreographic terms and from the audience’s and producer’s point of view. What might be some advantages and disadvantages of doing full-length productions today?

Students are asked to begin to identify acts and scenes in their own librettos.

- Students review the quality of adagio dancing and its origins in the Romantic Ballet. Students note that in contrast to the romantic style, in Petipa’s classical ballets the torso is held more erect, the port de bras is simpler and clean, the extensions are higher, the lines are longer.

WARM-UP:

Barre with a special focus on:

- Tendus from fifth position changing épaulement (directions of the body, croisé, effacé, écarté, and so on).
- Cambré back standing on one leg, with tendu front and back, after rond de jambe.
- Frappés double, flat.
- Review single frappés on half point.
- Adagio with arabesque penché and allongé-plié positions.
- Balance in arabesque and review attitude front and back.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

Center with a special focus on:

- Tendus, dégagés, and grand battements changing épaulement, combined with pirouettes en dehors from fifth position.
- Adagio with the elements introduced at barre and half turn grand pirouettes.
- Review simple beats in petit allegro, 16 counts combinations.
- Grand allegro, sissonne failli and review grand sissonne.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Two

The Ensemble in Petipa's Ballets, "La Bayadère" *continued*

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Dance Making

- Students learn the opening canon from "The Entrance of the Shades" from "La Bayadere". If possible, instructor teaches in addition to the canon the next 16 counts of the choreography. This adagio passage includes développés écarté, soutenues and changing levels by kneeling. Students perform the excerpt in two groups so that everyone has a chance to see it as well as perform it.
- Students present their dance composition solos. This activity takes more than one class to accomplish.

Video

- Instructor tells the story of "La Bayadere" and shows as much as possible from the ballet leading to and including "The Entrance of the Shades". Students usually insist on seeing more over several days.

Homework

- Students research the ballet "La Bayadère" and write a one page paper, including date and place of premiere and first performances in the West (no plot summary, please).

Dance Composition Assignment

- Students start making choices about the dance form and style they would use for their libretto.
- Students create a break down of their libretto in acts and scenes. One-act dances are a choice. They briefly describe each scene in terms of who is dancing, soloist, couple, group, and so on.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Three – The Pas de Deux and Variations in Petipa’s Ballets, “Don Quixote”

Goals of this Lesson:

- Students will be able to identify and understand the choreographic structure of the classical pas de deux. They will focus on the variations and learn to perform one from a Petipa pas de deux.

Blueprint Strands Addressed:

- Dance Making
- Developing Dance Literacy
- Making Connections

Desired Student Outcomes: Students will

Know: the elements that make up the pas de deux –entrance, adagio, variations and coda.

Understand: the role and significance of the pas de deux, including the variations, in classical ballets.

Do: Students will be able to learn and perform in class a variation from a Petipa ballet. Typically, the first variations I teach are from “Don Q”, the wedding pas de deux (Act III).

Lesson Context

The pas de deux, as established by Petipa, is the high point of every ballet, the jewel in the crown. It is performed by the featured principal dancers and it invariably takes place at the dramatic climax of the work. If we envision Petipa’s choreography as monumental architecture then the pas de deux is the apex of the structure. A ballet may contain several pas de deux but only one is considered *the* Pas de Deux. There are rare exceptions such as “Swan Lake”, which has two, The White Swan Pas de Deux, Act II, and The Black Swan Pas de Deux, Act III.

The formula varies slightly from ballet to ballet but typically a pas de deux begins with an allegro introduction, the entrée — both dancers dancing together. It is followed by the adagio, in which the ballerina on point is supported by her partner while performing slow, large and supple movements. The adagio demands great balance and flexibility of the limbs and of the torso of the female dancer. The male dancer, on the other hand, must remain discreet and at all times be at the service of his ballerina. The challenge for both dancers is to achieve a seamless coordination.

After the adagio come the variations. The male dancer performs first, which allows the ballerina to rest before her turn. Each variation exemplifies the character of the role portrayed and requires an involved interpretation as well as solid technique. Purity of line – clear and harmonious movement – is the overriding aim as far as execution is concerned. And, for dramatic purposes, each variation requires the dancer to bring a personal experience to the performance. In classical ballet there is no such thing as

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Three – The Pas de Deux and Variations in Petipa’s Ballets, “Don Quixote” *continued*

impersonal dancing. One cannot fulfill the canons of academia only by dancing “clean”. It is never too early to stress this point with students.

At the end comes the coda, fast and brilliant, full of technical display or as the students say “tricks”. The coda is examined in the following lesson.

Assessments: Teacher will measure student learning by

- their work in class, their dancing, and later performing. Students give peer feedback as well. In addition, material covered in this lesson is included in their mid-term and/or final examination – both written and performance components.

Materials/Music:

- Music for ballet class, preferably by Minkus.
- Music for “Don Q’s” variations, Pas de Deux, Act III.
- Spanish fans, the kind that close and open. Ideally each female student should get one but they can share them. It is easy to find very inexpensive fans on line.
- Video (DVD) recording of “Don Q”, preferably by ABT with Cynthia Harvey and Mikhail Baryshnikov.

Activity

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC OR THEME:

Instructor shows the entire “Don Q” pas de deux and writes out the sequence of its sections - Entrance or Entrée, Adagio, Variations, and Coda.

- Students brainstorm suggesting steps and movement quality for each of the sections. For example – grand allegro for the male coda, multiple consecutive turns for the female coda, fouettés, diagonals and turns en manège (on a circular path); in the adagio section the female dancer displays her balance, flexibility, high developpes; the variations, especially, show the individuality of the dancer, petite allegro and grand allegro steps are employed, the tempo is usually lively, and so on.
- Students analyze the specific steps, quality and style of the two “Don Q” variations. Who are Kitri and Basil? How can we tell that they are young, happy, in love and Spanish? How does Petipa convey meaning and technical brilliance?

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Three – The Pas de Deux and Variations in Petipa’s Ballets, “Don Quixote” *continued*

WARM-UP:

Barre with a special focus on:

- Dégagés with pas de cheval.
- Rond de jambe en l’air, slow at 90 degrees and faster at 45 degrees.
- Frappés, single, changing level, plié - relevé.
- Review adagio with développés allongé.
- Review balance in attitude front and back at 90 degrees.
- Grand battements développé.
- Assemblé and jeté battu facing the barre.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

Center, with a focus on simple partnering principles. Students make the necessary connections to exercises done in class that prepare the dancer for partnering, adagio work. For example a promenade on a flat foot, executed by moving the heel helps the dancer do a promende on point because the supporting leg is trained to control the “inside line” (from crotch to heel). Students may also try partnering each other in passé or with a single turn; giving palm-to-palm support, and partnering jumps in place.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Dance Making After warming up for jumps with petit allegro instructor teaches the variations. Both Kítrí’s and Basil’s variations are short, they basically have each four movement ideas, which are repeated 3 or four times, but the transitions are particular and attention must be paid to the details of the port de bras. It usually takes four classes to cover the material if there are boys and girls in the class. I like to give my students much longer to work on these variations. I find the technical challenges appropriate for their level and working on the Spanish character of the roles is a fun and valuable experience. Always, students love to learn, rehearse and to perform these “Don Q” variations. In the past, I have included these variations on their mid-term examination.

Video Repeat viewing of the variations just learned in class. If there is time instructor shows another Petipa pas de deux. Students identify a place where they might choreograph a pas de deux in their libretto. Not all of their librettos will have a place for it but they could perhaps include partnering among some characters.

Homework

- Students research the ballet “Don Q” and write a one-page paper, including composer, date and place of premiere and first performances in the West (no plot summary, please).

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Four – The Coda in Classical Ballet, “Don Quixote”

Dance Composition Assignment

- Students choreograph a short phrase (30 seconds) as a movement sample from their libretto.
- Students keep working on the structure of their libretto. They start fleshing out their scenes in terms of characters, length of dances, mood, quality, and so on.

Goals of this Lesson:

- Students will be able to identify and explain the nature of the coda in classical ballet. They will be able to perform technical challenges appropriate for the coda of a pas de deux or a variation.

Blueprint Strands Addressed:

- Dance Making
- Developing Dance Literacy
- Making Connections

Lesson Context

The coda, at the end of the pas de deux, is the closest classical ballet ever comes to sheer technical spectacle. Within the established aesthetics, it offers each principal a chance to display technical virtuosity. Because the alternating entrances are fast and the dance combinations short, there is not much time for dramatic development. Technique, for once, is revealed in all its glory. Male dancers usually perform flying leaps across the stage and consecutive turns, en l’air and par terre. The ballerina executes multiple turns spinning across the stage on a diagonal, en manège (a circular path) or on one spot - as in the famous 32 fouettés in the coda of the Black Swan pas de deux. Like fireworks at the end of an evening, the coda is really a celebration of the individual dancer’s skill and of classical ballet’s technique.

The line between sheer technical exhibitionism and virtuoso dancing is a fine one. Therefore it is important to keep in mind that only the most accomplished artists are entrusted with performing technical feats, lest they turn the act into a vulgar exhibition of athletic tricks.

Desired Student Outcomes: Students will

Know: what is the meaning of coda in music and dance.

Understand: the development of ballet technique under Petipa; that the performance of virtuoso steps for the sake of displaying technique is characteristic of Petipa’s codas; that codas must be performed with style and artistry.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Four – The Coda in Classical Ballet, “Don Quixote” *continued*

Do:

- Students will become proficient in performing virtuoso steps. They will add beats to their jumps and do several combinations of turns, in place and on different pathways.
- Students will create their own codas for dances in their librettos.

Assessments: I will measure student learning by

- their ability to perform on different pathways, their ability to spot and perform consecutive turns (doubles and up to four consecutive single pirouettes).
- their ability to identify and write ballet vocabulary characteristic of codas.
- Their ability to create a coda in their own movement.

Materials/Music:

- Music for ballet class, preferably from Petipa’s ballets.
- Video (DVD) recording of “Don Q”, cued to the coda of the Pas de Deux, act III.

Activity

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC OR THEME:

Instructor leads discussion about the role and form of the coda in Petipa’s ballets. Students examine the significance of creating a finale for every choreographic self-contained structure. They discuss codas at the end of variations, the pas de deux, or a whole scene. They brainstorm and write on the board the names of steps, in French that might appear in a coda, they create two lists, one for the female dancer and another for the male dancer. They discuss, walk through and compare two pathways distinct of the coda, the diagonal and en manège (circular path). They compare and contrast consecutive turns on one spot versus traveling turns. They discuss how Petipa uses pathways for the display of technique.

WARM-UP:

Barre with a special focus on:

- Rond de jambe en l’air on half point.
- Review frappés changing level, plié - relevé.
- Frappé, double, to the side, facing the barre.
- Fondu with preparation for fouetté turns.
- Review développés past 90 degrees.
- Slower relevés facing the barre, alternating à la seconde (at 90 degrees) and passé (start with 4 and build up to 8).

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Four – The Coda in Classical Ballet, “Don Quixote” *continued*

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

Center with a special focus on:

- Grand pirouette, full turn if students are ready. Begin with grand pirouette en dedans, attitude back. Continue with arabesque and à la seconde.
- Fouetté turns with preparation from fourth to passé.
- Brisé to the front on the diagonal.
- En manège turns and jumps. It takes a lot of time to have every student try the combination en manège since they must do it one at a time. However, it is worth giving each student a chance to experience it. This activity usually takes several lessons to complete.
- Tour en l’air.
- Entrechat quatre.
- Entrechat six facing the barre.
- Grand Allegro, introduce grand cabriole devant, to the front, and derrière, to the back.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Dance Making

- Students create a coda for the phrase they choreographed as “movement sample” of their libretto. They perform for the class and receive feedback from instructor and peers. They may or may not use the material in their final project. .

Video

- Repeat the viewing of the coda of the pas de deux from “Don Q” and watch the ballet to the end. Notice the coda for the whole ensemble at the finale of the ballet.

Homework

- Students research the Mariinsky (Kirov) Theater history and create a timeline.
- Students research composer P. I. Tchaikovsky and write a one-page paper on his life and work.

Dance Composition Assignment

- Students chose music for their libretto; they prepare to show a “movement phrase” with music.
- Students write a first draft of their libretto.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Five – Character and Social Dances in Petipa’s ballets, “Swan Lake”

Goals of this Lesson:

- Students will be able to identify and explain Petipa’s use of character and social dance forms in his ballets. Students will be able to perform the basic step unit of a character dance and of a social dance.

Blueprint Strands Addressed:

- Dance Making
- Developing Dance Literacy
- Making Connections

Lesson Context

Petipa’s ballets are full-evening events with multiple acts and several scenes.

In addition to the white scenes which feature exclusively the female ensemble, there are many other opportunities for the entire ensemble to perform. In order to provide diversity, and contrast, Petipa regularly devised numbers of stylized folk and social dancing. Depending on the story-line these dances were of European origin or inspired by the Orient. Although not authentic, they included characteristic steps, rhythms and port de bras. At school, dancers were prepared to meet the demand in this genre by having lessons in character and historical dance. The former is derived from folklore, the latter from social dance forms. Today, character and historical dance (in the US – baroque or period dance) are still considered integral to professional ballet training.

Desired Student Outcomes: Students will

Know: how to identify the principal forms of character and social dance as they appear in classical ballets. – Polonaise, Mazurka, Czardas, Tarantella, Spanish Dance, Polka and the Waltz.

Understand: that character dance evolved from European folk dances and that they originated with the rise of nationalism after the French revolution and became popular in classical ballets during the second half of the 19th century.

Do: Students will learn and become proficient performing the polonaise, mazurka, and the waltz. (These are the forms I usually teach at this level but one could substitute others such as polka, czardas, which are easier and more suitable for an introductory course. At Sinatra we teach them to Sophomores)

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Five – Character and Social Dances in Petipa’s ballets, “Swan Lake” *continued*

Assessments: Teacher will measure student learning by

- their work in class, their proficiency in performing elements of folk and social dance forms: their skill in spelling the names of dances and identifying them by country of origin and time period in which they developed. Some of the material in this lesson might be included in their written examinations or quizzes.
- Students will show understanding of the use of folk and social dance forms in theatrical dance by choosing to include them or not in their own librettos.

Materials/Music:

- Music for ballet class, including a polonaise and a mazurka. It is better to choose music for character dances from recordings meant to be danced, otherwise the tempos might be off and the phrasing irregular.
- A selection of waltzes from Petipa’s ballets.
- Viennese Waltzes, preferably a slower and a faster one.
- Instructor prepares a polonaise to be performed by the whole class. The basic step unit (up, up, down) is simple and it is fun to arrange it with shifting group formations and big floor pathways.
- Instructor prepares a mazurka combination.
- Video (DVD) of “Swan Lake”, cued to the Waltz of the Maidens at the beginning of Act III. After the waltz, comes the entrance of Von Rothbart with Odile, which is a very dramatic moment, followed by the character dances.

Activity

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC OR THEME:

- Instructor leads discussion on Petipa’s use of character and social dance forms. Students review the birth of nationalism and the inclusion of folk dances in theatrical productions in the Romantic ballet. They, also, review the concept that social dance forms have always fed into theatrical dance.
- Students brainstorm names of dances, folk and social, and create a list with the corresponding country of origin next to each dance. For social dance forms, in addition to the country they give approximate time period in which they were popular.
- Students are asked to share their experience of dancing the waltz or observing it in a social situation (a wedding, sweet sixteen, and so on)
- Students work in groups to answer the question: which dance form is presently crossing over from social to theatrical? (The answer is, of course, Hip-Hop).

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**
Lesson Five – Character and Social Dances in Petipa’s ballets, “Swan Lake” *continued*

WARM-UP:

Barre with a special focus on:

- Review grand rond de jambe en l’air and rond de jambe en l’air on half point.
- Review preparation for fouetté turns.
- Frappés, double, flat, en croix, in all directions.
- Frappés double, on half point to the side.
- Review développé allongé (ending in plié).
- Grand fouetté en dedans (front to back) and en dehors (back to front).
- Review grand battement développé.
- Grand battement en cloche with a straight leg and in attitude.
- Review entrechat quatre and entrechat six facing the barre.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

Center with a special focus on:

- Instructor teaches a group polonaise to be performed by the whole class. -Adagio - review grand pirouettes and arabesque penché.
- Mazurka combination. Students first work on the basic mazurka step traveling on the diagonal. Once the students feel comfortable performing it, the instructor teaches a longer mazurka combination (16 counts).
- Waltz with consecutive pirouettes in place and fouettés.
- Diagonals with alternating turns (piqué en dedans, piqué en dehors, so called “lame duck”, soutenus and chaînés).
- Petit allegro, a combination with several, different, beats.
- Brisés traveling front and back.
- Viennese Waltz, in couples. Students perform four couples at a time, en manège.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Video “Swan Lake” Act III, Waltz of the Maidens and all the character dances – Spanish, Neapolitan (Tarantella), Czardas, Russian and Mazurka.

- Time permitting students should also see the Polonaise from Act I.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Five – Character and Social Dances in Petipa’s ballets, “Swan Lake” *continued*

Dance Making

- Students present their “movement sample” with music. Instructor and peers give feedback. This activity takes more than one class to complete.
- Students give their librettos to a partner. Upon reading it the partner gives written notes.
- Students identify places in their librettos where they might want to include folk or social dance forms.

Homework

- Students research “The Nutcracker” and write a one page paper including composer, date and place of premiere, first performances in the U.S., and modern versions, such as Mark Morris’ and Donald Byrd’s.

Dance Composition Assignment

- Students keep working on choreography for their libretto. They prepare to show at least 1 minute of their dance.
- Students incorporate peer-feedback into their librettos.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Six – Petipa’s reimagined, contemporary versions of the classics, “The Nutcracker”

Goals of this Lesson:

- Students will examine the concept of creating new choreographic visions of Petipa’s classics.
- Students will experience creating their own interpretation of a dance originally conceived by Petipa.

Blueprint Strands Addressed:

- Dance Making
- Developing Dance Literacy
- Making Connections

Lesson Context

“The Nutcracker” is so well known and beloved in this country that it hardly needs an introduction. However, many students have never seen a live performance of the ballet and a number have never even seen a movie of the entire production but might be unwilling to admit it. Thus, it is worth going over the plot and showing the class as much as possible of the ballet. I feel this is important because our culture is full of references to “The Nutcracker” and dance students deserve to be familiar with it.

Students are often surprised to find out that “The Nutcracker” is performed abroad throughout the year; it is not a holiday staple as it is in this country. Likewise they are largely not aware of the modern reinterpretations of this classic, such as Mark Morris’s “The Hard Nut”, Donald Byrd’s “The Harlem Nutcracker”, which is not to Tchaikovsky’s music but to a jazz collage that includes music by Duke Ellington, and David Parker’s “Nut/Cracked”, which mixes Tchaikovsky’s original score with contemporary music. By an exploration of this classic students can study several elements of Petipa’s choreographic aesthetic and look into his enduring legacy. Specific objectives for this lesson are:

To understand how existing stories inspire librettos, in the case of “The Nutcracker”, Hoffman’s story.

To understand how Petipa’s ballets, with its original librettos and scores, are re-conceived by choreographers who wish to create their own, personal, interpretation of the classic. Sometimes they adapt the libretto to a different place and time, sometimes they just use the story-line and change the music. Less often, a choreographer will choose to use an excerpt of the music to make a dance that has no relationship to the original ballet.

To distinguish between character dances and dances that are in the ballet vocabulary with just a hint of national identity, as are the Spanish, Arabian and Chinese dances of “The Nutcracker”.

- To work collaboratively in small groups to create a new version of the Chinese Dance to Tchaikovsky’s music from “The Nutcracker”.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Six – Petipa’s reimagined, contemporary versions of the classics, “The Nutcracker” *continued*

Desired Student Outcomes: Students will

Know: that choreographers have often been inspired to choreograph new visions of Petipa’s ballets.

Understand: the enduring appeal of Petipa’s ballets, that some of it is due, in addition to the choreography, to the beauty of its scores and the ever human story line.

Do:

- Students will be able to compare and contrast traditional versions, after Petipa, with modern interpretations. They will be able to discuss the question of authenticity in Petipa’s ballets.
- Students will choreograph their own interpretation of a dance from the classical repertory, the Chinese Dance from “The Nutcracker”.

Assessments: Teacher will measure student learning by

- their work in class, dancing: by their proficiency in expressing the different national styles present in “The Nutcracker”, Spanish, Arabian, Chinese.
- In Dance Composition, students will be assessed and have a chance to self-reflect on their ability to follow closely the format of the musical structure and, by their ability to express a clear characterization.

Materials/Music:

- Music for ballet class.
- A selection of dances from “The Nutcracker”, Party Scene, Spanish, Arabian, Chinese and Waltz of the Flowers.
- CD of “The Harlem Nutcracker”.
- Video (DVD) of “The Nutcracker”, cued to the Party Scene, Act I. I recommend Balanchine’s version by The New York City Ballet, which is after Petipa.
- Video (DVD) of “The Hard Nut” by Mark Morris, cued to the Party scene.

Activity

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC OR THEME:

Video – “The Nutcracker”, Party Scene, act I. Follow the traditional version with “The Hard Nut” by Mark Morris. For the sake of comparison show the Party Scene in Mark Morris’ version too.

- Instructor leads class discussion on the phenomena, the desire to create new versions of well-known classics. Students consider the enduring appeal of the myth, the story, the libretto, and the original score. Examples are mentioned of choreographers who have chosen to follow only the libretto, providing new music, as “The Harlem Nutcracker” by Donald Byrd and music by a jazz collage, including Duke Ellington. Students are also asked to consider instances when choreographers chose to use the music for their own personal interpretation irrelevant of the original meaning of the ballet.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Six – Petipa’s reimagined, contemporary versions of the classics, “The Nutcracker” *continued*

WARM-UP:

Barre with a special focus on:

- Dégagés with changing accents.
- Review tendus and dégagés with changing épaulements.
- Rond de jambe jeté.
- Petit battements sur le cou de pied, flat.
- Review grand fouetté slow.
- Grand fouetté in two counts, with relevé.
- Review développés and grand battements past 90 degrees.
- Review balance in attitude front and back.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

Center with a special focus on: All music is to Tchaikovsky’s “The Nutcracker” but it may be substituted by selections from “The Harlem Nutcracker”. Better yet, students can dance the same combination to both musical selections.

- Tendus, dégagés and grand battements to music from The Party scene, Act I. There are several nice dances and marches for the parents and the children in this scene.
- Grand pirouette combination traveling across the floor with port the bras in Eastern, Petipa-Arabian style, to the corresponding music.
- Waltz combination to the “Waltz of the Flowers”.
- Petit Allegro - emboité en tournant to the music of The Chinese Dance.
- Grand Allegro to the music of The Spanish Dance with entrelacé, grand jeteé with attitude back, pas de chat and saut de chat, and multiple turns.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Dance Making

- Students work in groups of three to choreograph the Chinese Dance from “The Nutcracker”, Act II. This is a very short dance with a simple musical structure, easy to hear and count. For this activity students should be encouraged to follow the musical structure, in the manner of Petipa. Repetitions in the music are mirrored in dance, each new musical idea ushers a new movement idea, and so on. Students should, on the other hand, imitate Petipa’s style. They should choreograph in their own voice in any style or genre they would like. They may chose to stay “Chinese” or decide to give it a completely different cultural reference.
- Students perform their trios one at a time and receive feedback from instructor and peers.
- Students reflect on their experience of choreographing a piece that has a tradition behind it, is widely recognizable and the audience has preconceived expectations.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Six – Petipa’s reimagined, contemporary versions of the classics, “The Nutcracker” *continued*

Video “The Nutcracker”, dances from “The Land of the Sweets”, Act II.

- Students typically like to see the entire act, which is possible over two or three classes.

Note - *Students are asked to show their dance compositions assignments once the above activities have been accomplished. Due now: from their libretto, 1 minute of choreography with music. Movement should reflect a specific character and context.*

Homework

- Students research the ballet “Swan Lake” and write a one-page paper, including composer, date and place of premiere and first performances in the West (not plot summary, please).

Dance Composition Assignment

- Students read the short story “Style” in *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien and prepare one movement idea to depict the woman in the story. This is a powerful story in which a woman dancing is the only character. It is also a very short story, barely one and a half pages long.
- Students make sketches for costumes and sets for their libretto.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Seven – The expressive use of port de bras in “Swan Lake”

Goals of this Lesson:

- Students will experience through dance and observation the stylized, swan-like, port de bras associated with the white acts of “Swan Lake”. They will become familiar with choreographer Lev Ivanov, Petipa’s collaborator and the creator of the white acts.

Blueprint Strands Addressed:

- Dance Making
- Developing Dance Literacy
- Making Connections

Lesson Context

Among all the classical ballets “Swan Lake” has the most distinct, stylized port de bras, created by choreographer Lev Ivanov to depict swan maidens dancing lyrically and soulfully under the moonlight by a lake. Ivanov took liberties with the academic port de bras and devised movements for the arms and torso that are swan-like, with supple backs and arms that move as wings. The choreography is imbued with the delicate nature and quality of the swans, their beauty and their plight. They glide and jump lightly, their chest lifted, shoulders pulled back, arms reaching far to the side and back. They pose in lunges, fourths allongé, and cross their arms, folding them like long wings, one to hug the waist and the other to frame the face. Their port de bras shows an unusually large articulation of the elbows and wrists: the palms are often upturned. Their focus sometimes changes briskly, sharply in an avian way, as does their neck when it flutters, brushing off droplets from their cheek. The formations are beautiful, ever-changing circles and spirals sweeping across the stage. Technique is disguised in the service of quality. There are no open displays of virtuosity and there are no showstoppers in the second and fourth acts (although the “little swans” quartet seems to be a humorous nod to the possibilities of academic vocabulary and it will, sometimes, briefly interrupt the flow of the scene by a round of applause from the audience). The choreography for the second act is a seamless exposition of plight, longing, mistrust, love, and hope. The fourth act is all pathos, no hope is left but tenderness and a deep love remain. The stage seems aglow with the eerie calm of those that have made peace with their fates. Throughout, ballerinas reach up, bend over front and back, their arms often leading the movement, as a flock of birds might take off, fly, land, and go on gliding. At times the dancing is vigorous but the edges are always soft, the energy contained. The ballerinas are at all times unmistakably swans, albeit with a human heart.

By contrast Petipa’s third act of “Swan Lake” is all brilliance, classical technique and style at its most exciting. His Black Swan Pas de Deux is passionate, dazzling, and unapologetically virtuosic. Within the tight model of the pas de deux, entrance, adagio, variations and coda, Petipa tells the story of seduction, passion, and betrayal. It is a masterpiece of efficiency. With great fanfare, in the music, and a sure

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Seven – The expressive use of port de bras in “Swan Lake” *continued*

choreographic hand, Patina delves into the story from the first opening steps of the duet. The dramatic encounter unfolds at break neck emotional speed. Technique is used not only as a means to expression but also as an expression of character itself. Thus, Oldie’s prowess on stage is an expression of her inner strength and determination. For example, when she holds everyone on stage and off under her spell by the power of her 32 fouettés.

Petipa did not create a new style of port de bras for his dances in “Swan Lake”, acts one and two. His courtiers dance in a courtly manner, which means in pure classical style, and his character dancers move with aplomb in the best tradition of that form. Only Odile has her own particular port de bras, part glamorous woman, part swan. It is a combination of the classical line with hints of the swan in sudden poses and details. But, because her swan is only a pretense, a put-on role to deceive the Prince, the quality of her swan is less gentle and more assertive. She exudes self-confidence, and slips with ease – playfully, teasingly – from one style to the other.

For the ballerina the dual role of Odette/Odile, the White and Black Swans, is probably the most challenging among the classics. Only the role of “Giselle”, a romantic ballet, is comparable in its complexity and dramatic demands. The ballerina who takes the challenge must have extraordinary technique, it goes without saying, but she must also be able to act.

“Swan Lake” provides many wonderful opportunities for the study of the demands of style, acting and technique in classical ballet.

Desired Student Outcomes: Students will

Know: that Lev Ivanov was the choreographer of the white acts of “Swan Lake”, Acts II and IV.

Understand: that the port the bras is an expressive choreographic tool, it can portray a character, an emotion, an idea and help carry the action.

Do: Students will be able to use port the bras, the movement of the arms and torso, to convey character and support the narrative.

Assessments: Teacher will measure student learning by

Their work in class: by their proficiency performing stylized port de bras in the manner of “Swan Lake”.

- Boys will perform grand allegro with port de bras inspired by Von Rothbard. His use of arms is wing-like but not as delicate as the swans’.
- In Dance Composition, students will be assessed by their ability to create a very short phrase, perhaps just a few gestures, to depict the emotional state of the woman in Tim O’Brien’s story “Style”. Further, they will be assessed by their ability to repeat their phrase and make it travel on a straight path.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**
Lesson Seven – The expressive use of port de bras in
“Swan Lake” *continued*

Materials/Music:

- Music for ballet class, preferably by Tchaikovsky.
- A selection of music from “Swan Lake”, in particular the White Swan Pas de Deux, adagio and variation, from Act II; Waltz of the Maidens, Black Swan Pas de Deux, coda, from Act III.
- Video (DVD) of “Swan Lake” cued to the beginning of Act II. My favorite DVD is of the Royal Ballet’s production with Natalia Makarova and Anthony Dowell.
- Video (DVD) of “Swan Lake” by Mathew Bourne, cued to the beginning of Act II. This is the male swans’ version and it is wonderful.

Activity

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC OR THEME:

- Instructor and students review the story of “Swan Lake”. Instructor makes a special note of the choreographer Lev Ivanov and the composer Tchaikovsky.
- Students brainstorm in answer to the question: How do you imagine the swan’s dancing will be like in terms of movement quality/dynamics? They create a list of expectations.
- Students improvise swan-like movement, beginning with movement of the arms and torso and gradually take it through space. This is a short, 5 min, activity that can be done in silence or to any accompaniment but it is very appropriate to do it to the music of “Swan Lake”, Act II. It brings the spirit of the ballet right into the studio.

Video – “Swan Lake”, Act II.

- Students, compare their impressions of the performance with their pre-performance list of expectations.

WARM-UP:

Barre with a special focus on:

- -Review tendus and dégagés with changing accents and épaulements.
- Review rond de jambe jeté and grand rond de jambe en l’air.
- Frappés, double, en croix on half point.
- Petit battement sur le cou de pied on half point.
- Grand fouetté promenade through relevé.
- Review arabesque penché with balances in arabesque and attitude.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

Center with a special focus on:

- Adagio with port de bras inspired by the adagio of “Swan Lake”, Act II. Include promenade en dedans in attitude back, grand fouetté, single, slow pirouette en dehors. The opening phrase of the White Swan variation is beautiful and technically appropriate.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Seven – The expressive use of port de bras in “Swan Lake” *continued*

- Pas de chat and emboité traveling on the diagonal.
- Review allegro across the floor with vals en tournant and balances in all directions, music Waltz of the Maidens, Act III. Include relevés with high extensions, chassés, piqué arabesque and pirouettes.
- Fouettés and tour en l’air. Students enjoy doing fouettés to the music they were originally choreographed to - Black Swan Pas de Deux, coda.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Dance Making

- Students present their movement idea inspired by Tim O’Brien’s story. They are instructed to manipulate the movement so that it can be repeated, with ease, several times and travel on a straight path. When they are ready they perform their phrase in a continuous canon, one student after the other on the diagonal. This works nicely with the class divided into just two large groups.
- Students reflect on the choreographic effect of repeating a short phrase, in particular one composed of arms gestures.

Video “Swan Lake”, Black Swan Pas de Deux, act III.

“Swan Lake” by Mathew Bourne, opening of second act and Black Swan Pas de Deux.

- Students analyze the nature of acting in narrative dances. What is the balance between body language, gesture, and facial expression? How much acting is required of dancers in classical ballets? How should a dancer prepare for a role? Students compare and contrast the need to be a good actor for a dancer in the late 19th century and the present day.

Note - *Students are asked to show their dance compositions assignments once the above activities have been accomplished. Due now: from their libretto, 1 minute of choreography with music. Movement should reflect a specific character and context. Also due now are their sketches for costumes and sets. Ideally, they should share them with the class when they present their choreography.*

Homework

- Students research choreographer Lev Ivanov and write a one-page paper on his life and work.
- Dance Composition Assignment – Students expand their 1-minute phrases from their libretto to include other dancers. Naturally, this assignment takes longer to accomplish than when they work by themselves. It is, nevertheless, a valid project because students gain the experience of looking at their work from the outside, developing a vocabulary to direct rehearsals and coach.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**
Lesson Eight – Petit Allegro in classical ballet, “Swan Lake”,
“The Nutcracker”

Goals of this Lesson:

- Students will discover and gain the necessary strength and stamina required to perform petit allegro choreography.
- Students will practice the skill of learning choreography from a recording.
- Students will learn that the absence of movement for the arms can have a strong dramatic impact.

Blueprint Strands Addressed:

- Dance Making
- Developing Dance Literacy
- Making Connections – Utilize Technology in Connection with Dance.

Lesson Context

Petit Allegro – small jumps and quick steps at a fast tempo are at the heart of classical ballet. It would seem that all ballet dancing emanates from it, in one direction to the andante and even slower adagio, and in the other direction to the grand allegro, grander perhaps but not faster. Petit allegro is the fastest, most intricate and challenging of all technical dancing. To paraphrase Vaganova, a dancer is judged by her petit allegro. She might have been biased, famous for her clean, fast dancing, but there is truth in that statement. Nothing like petit allegro reveals the inner strength of a dancer’s technique, the mastery of form and the command of energy to move at a tempo faster than one can think. That is why it is so important, and especially for petit allegro, to build muscle memory, because at a galloping tempo the dancer cannot think – what comes next and how to do it, the dancer’s body literally takes over. The dancer, if comfortable with the technical challenge, has fun, paying attention to phrasing, port de bras and small personal inflections, for the most part the legs know what to do.

Petit allegro is difficult to teach and become proficient in. Students learn sooner to do clean turns and big leaps. The material of petit allegro requires more perseverance, and mastering the simpler forms first, almost to perfection. Of course this goes for all dance vocabulary but I find that it is more so for petit allegro than adagio and grand allegro.

Desired Student Outcomes: Students will

Know: that petit allegro is an integral part of the classical ballet vocabulary.

Understand: how petit allegro developed from baroque dance and reached its present form in the late 19th century.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Eight – Petit Allegro in classical ballet, “Swan Lake”, “The Nutcracker” *continued*

Do:

- Students will become stronger in performing petit allegro. They will gain the necessary technique and stamina to perform dances from the classical repertory notable for their brisk tempo. Girls will learn the Little Swans Pas de Quatre from “Swan Lake”, act II. Boys will learn the Candy Cane, or Russian Dance (sometimes called Trepak), from “The Nutcracker”, act II.
- Students will become more experienced and skilled in reconstructing choreography from video recordings.

Assessments: Teacher will measure student learning by

- their work in class, dancing: by their proficiency in performing petit allegro choreography. Three criteria will be employed in assessing their progress:
 - » Attention to choreographic details – veracity in reconstruction.
 - » Technical proficiency. At this level students are expected to master most of the petit allegro steps in their simple form and in phrases up to 32 counts. Thus, they are not expected to be able to perform on a consistent proficient level the entire choreographic excerpt, the dance from beginning to end. Trying to do it is, nevertheless, very beneficial, a tonic to their training.
 - » Endurance.
- In Dance Composition, students will receive feedback from instructor and peers on their expanded dance from their libretto, which now must include at least one other dancer. They will self-reflect on the challenges and advantages of choreographing on someone other than oneself.

Materials/Music:

- Music for ballet class.
- Music for the Little Swans (Sygnettes) Pas de Quatre from “Swan Lake”, act II.
- Music for Candy Canes (also known as The Russian Dance or Treppak) from “The Nutcracker”, act II, if there are boys in the class.
- Video (DVD) of “Swan Lake” cued to the Little Swans Pas de Quatre.
- Video (DVD) of “The Nutcracker”, cued to the dance thought to the boys. Instructor should find a version for a trio or quartet. Many solo versions are too difficult.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**
Lesson Eight – Petit Allegro in classical ballet, “Swan Lake”,
“The Nutcracker” *continued*

Activity

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC OR THEME:

- Students brainstorm about the quality and vocabulary of petite allegro. They create two lists, one with words describing the quality and the other with names of steps in ballet terminology or any other dance vocabulary.
- After discussing the quality and many examples of fast, brisk, dancing, students create a list with exercises that prepare them for the performance of such a repertory.
- **No Video** is shown before barre in this lesson because students will work at length reconstructing choreography from a tape (or DVD).

WARM-UP:

Barre with a special focus on:

- Tendus in fifth with relevés.
- Dégagés in fifth with sousus (fast springs to fifth on half point).
- Slow and quick pas de cheval.
- Rond de jambe with développé soutenue and passé balance.
- Flic-flac.
- Fondu with grand fouetté.
- Review arabesque penché, and balance in fourth arabesque.
- Facing the barre: entrechat quatre, passé relevé, closing back, 3 times, pique front to fifth position, repeat starting with the other leg. This exercise prepares them for a phrase from the Little Swans Pas de Quatre. Start at a moderate allegro tempo and increase to faster as the original choreography is quite fast.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

Center with a special focus on:

- Adagio with grand pirouette en dehors in attitude back and à la second.
- Petit allegro, Pas de Quatre, Little Swans, Act II. Students enjoy the particular challenges of this choreography. They must hold on very close to each other, move in total unison and have the endurance to move fast for the duration of the dance. However, even doing the opening sequence is quite unique and rewarding. Boys like to do it too!

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**
Lesson Eight – Petit Allegro in classical ballet, “Swan Lake”,
“The Nutcracker” *continued*

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Video “Swan Lake”, Pas de Quatre, Act II.

“The Nutcracker”, Candy Canes / Russian Dance, Act II.

Dance Making

- Students work in groups to reconstruct choreography from the recording. Girls, in groups of four, continue working on the Pas de Quatre and boys start reconstructing the Candy Canes/ Russian Dance in whatever formation the taped version is. Both dances are rather short and can be reconstructed in its entirety over two or three of classes. However, if there is not time to finish the reconstruction it is worth performing just an excerpt.
- Students perform their dances for each other and receive feedback from instructor and peers.
- Students reflect on the effect and feeling of dancing holding to each other, without movement for the arms as in the Pas de Quatre.
- Students reflect on the process of reconstructing a dance from a recording.
- Students reflect on the process of collaboration on the reconstruction project just accomplished. Further, they comment on process of collaborating between choreographer and dancer, as they are currently engaged working on the dance from their libretto. Lastly, they reflect on the process of collaboration when two or more choreographers work on separate sections of the same ballet, as Petipa and Ivanov did on “Swan Lake”.
- Students improvise movement from their libretto performed with smaller or no movement for the arms.

Note *Students are asked to show their dance compositions assignments once the above activities have been accomplished. Due now: from their libretto, 1 minute of choreography that includes other dancers.*

Reading Assignment and Homework

- Students research the myth of Orpheus and the theatrical works it inspired. Students are asked to write a one-page paper briefly summarizing the story and its origin, and provide a list of composers and choreographers who have created works on that theme.

Dance Composition Assignment

- Students identify places in their libretto where they could create up-tempo choreography and passages with little or no port de bras. They don’t have to decide to use these ideas in their final work but they should prepare as homework a “movement sample” based on either concept or a combination of both.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Nine – Sources of Inspiration for Petipa’s ballets, “Le Corsaire”

Goals of this Lesson:

- Students will understand that the sources of inspiration for Petipa’s ballets were many and diverse but always derived from literature.
- Students will choreograph a duet based on the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice- their ascent from the Underworld, Orpheus leading Eurydice back to life.

Blueprint Strands Addressed:

- Dance Making
- Developing Dance Literacy
- Making Connections

Lesson Context

Many of Petipa’s librettos were original, created for him and his new ballet by an author. Sometimes though, he based his work on existing librettos or simply “lifted” the entire concept, the story and the setting, providing his own choreographic vision. This was not unusual during the 19th century; on the contrary it was common practice to reinvent works by others, to change some or all the production elements, to interpolate, to eliminate and to substitute. Ballets appeared and reappeared with new choreography and often new music over the span of many decades. “Le Corsaire” is among several ballets that had such a trajectory. It premiered in London, Paris in and St. Petersburg each time with completely new choreography and a different score. Petipa’s version is the one we know today.

Regardless of their many versions, and stagings, all 19th century librettos have their inspiration in literary sources. In spirit, Petipa’s librettos adhere to the Romantic values and ideals of his youth. His choreography isn’t in the romantic style, but the narratives of his ballets consistently celebrate humanity in all its splendor and frailty, which was very much a romantic preoccupation.

“Le Corsaire”, inspired by Lord Byron’s poem “The Corsair”, originally premiered in 1837, in London, with choreography by Ferdinand Albert Decombe, music by Robert Bochsa. It was restaged for The Paris Opera in 1856 with choreography by Joseph Mezilier and music Adolphe Adam and others. A half century later, in 1899, Petipa made a completely new version for The Mariinsky Theater, St. Petersburg. The basic outlines of the libretto remained, but not in a cohesive whole, and the score became a medley of several composers strung together. Yet “Le Corsaire” is still a very popular ballet, the sum of its parts greater than the single elements. It is, of course, the dancing, Petipa’s vision, which transcends all else and makes this ballet endure despite the mediocrity of the libretto and its score. The audience keeps going back to “Le Corsaire” because of the beauty of the choreography and the opportunities for dramatic interpretation it provides the dancers. The pas de deux for Conrad and Medora is passionate, exciting, moving and arresting. It combines Conrad’s virtuoso dancing and flamboyant expression with Medora’s subtle, pure classicism. In the entire classical repertory the attraction of the opposites was never made more spectacular and breathtaking.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Nine – Sources of Inspiration for Petipa’s ballets, “Le Corsaire” *continued*

Desired Student Outcomes: Students will

Know: that the librettos for classical ballets are in essence romantic in content. They will know that most 19th century librettos were inspired by literary sources.

Understand: how the libretto provides choreographic structure along with the story line of the ballet.

Do:

- Students will strengthen their ability to perform grand allegro steps with turns, such as saut de basque, entrelacé and jété coupé en tournant.
- Students will be able analyze librettos in terms of source, structure and content.
- Students will choreograph in couples a duet representing Orpheus and Eurydice’s ascent from the Underworld.
- Students will gain strong control of their focus during performance.

Assessments: Teacher will measure student learning by

- their work in class, dancing: by their proficiency in performing grand allegro steps that involve turning and jumping.
- Students will be assessed by their ability to engage their focus during performance.
- In Dance Composition students will be assessed by their duet projects. Their compositions will be scored in terms of originality, dynamic variety, and fulfillment of tasks – the phrase should travel, denoting a journey, and partners cannot look into each other’s eyes until the very end.

Materials/Music:

- Music for ballet class.
- Music from “Le Corsaire”, Conrad and Medora’s Pas de Deux, Act II.
- Instructor prepares opening phrases from both variations, even if there are only girls in class.
- Video (DVD) of “Le Corsaire”, cued to Conrad and Medora’s Pas de Deux, Act II. I recommend showing a film of Fonteyn and Nureyev dancing this pas de deux in addition to showing a more recent version of the ballet.
- Video (DVD) of “La Sylphide”, cued to the Pas de Trois, Act I, for the Sylph, James and his fiancée Effie.
- Poem, “Orpheus and Eurydice”, by Czeslaw Milosz, enough copies for all the students (included in the Appendix).
- Article, “Music in London” by Bernard Show (1893), enough copies for all the students. This article may be found in R. Copeland & M. Cohen’s book [What is Dance?](#). It describes the dismal state of ballet in London, and one can assume all of Western Europe, at the end of the 19th century (It should be stressed that Mr. Show had never seen a ballet by Petipa).

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Nine – Sources of Inspiration for Petipa’s ballets, “Le Corsaire” *continued*

Activity

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC OR THEME:

- Instructor leads discussion on the source and content of Petipa’s librettos. Students review the values and aesthetic principles of romanticism and classicism and brainstorm to create two lists with characteristics pertaining to each style. Students are asked to analyze the content of Petipa’s librettos and to decide whether they are expressions of the romantic or classical values.
- Instructor introduces the ballet “Le Corsaire” and asks students to consider its “patchwork” genesis and how it explains its collage-like nature.

Video “Le Corsaire”, Conrad and Medora’s pas de deux, act II.

WARM-UP:

Barre with a special focus on:

- Review tendus and dégagés with relevés.
- Grand rond de jambe en l’air with relevé and balances in high attitudes front and back.
- Review frappés double on half point, en croix, and flic-flac.
- Review petit battements sur le cou de pied on half point.
- Adagio with relevés and développés on half point.
- Grand battements, increase to 6-8 battements in each direction.
- Entrechat trois, with relevés, sautés and changement de pieds.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

Center with a special focus on:

- Tendus and dégagés with pirouettes, include tire-bouchon, with preparation through à la seconde for pirouette en dedans.
- Adagio with consecutive grand pirouettes en dedans, in arabesque, attitude back and à la seconde at 90 degrees. Music, “Le Corsaire” adagio from the pas de deux.
- Waltz, traveling across the floor to music from “Le Corsaire”, Le Jardin Animée, Act III.
- Petit allegro with entrechat trois.
- Medora’s variation, opening phrase with entrechat trois, rond de jambe en l’air sauté or ballonné, piqué arabesque. All work on it, girls and boys.
- Conrad’s variation, opening phrase, with its signature assemblé en tournant with both knees bent. Attention must be paid to the port de bras which is very stylized, exotic and pirate-like, palms up, with fingertips touching the shoulder, and so on. This is an appropriate combination for class even if there are no boys.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Lesson Nine – Sources of Inspiration for Petipa’s ballets, “Le Corsaire” *continued*

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Video “Le Corsaire”, re-view just the variations from de Pas de Deux.

“La Sylphide”, Pas de Trois, Act I. The focus of the three dancers is very interesting because Effie cannot see the Sylph, she is not aware that James is dancing with both of them. “La Sylphide” is shown to students in their sophomore year as an example of the Romantic Ballet. I find it is worth watching this pas de trois again with particular attention paid to the dancers’ focus. And, it provides a good opportunity for a quick compare and contrast discussion between the romantic and classical styles.

Dance Making

- Students review the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice and instructor facilitates finding a common ground among the many versions students will have come across in their research. Students are asked to explore the meaning of the myth and why it has held such a fascination for artists over the centuries.
- Instructor hands out Czeslaw Milosz’s poem “Orpheus and Eurydice” and students volunteer to read aloud one paragraph at a time.
- Working with a partner students choreograph a duet corresponding to the end of the myth – Orpheus and Eurydice’s journey from Hades, the Underworld, to the living world. The only requirements are that the choreography must travel in a linear path and that partners must avoid at all times looking into each other’s faces, except at the end, of course.
- Students perform their duets one at a time and receive feedback from instructor and peers. They reflect on their experience of choreographing and performing movement that must avoid all eye-to-eye contact. This activity can be accomplished within one lesson. Students are always intrigued by the story and the peculiar choreographic task of not looking at each other’s faces. Time permitting, I like to show at the end of the school year the Brazilian movie “Black Orpheus” directed by Marcel Camus (1959). Students respond to it with open applause and lots of excitement.

Note Students are asked to show their dance compositions assignments based on their libretto once the above activities have been accomplished. Due now: a short “movement sample” with restricted arms and/or in a fast tempo. They continue working on their longer composition with music and other dancers.

Reading Assignment and Homework

- Students write a one-paragraph response to Bernard Shaw’s article “Music in London” (1893).

Dance Composition Assignment

- Students keep working on the phrase they were working on with music and other dancers (see lesson # 7) and they expand it to cross the halfway point. Usually students use the musical selection as a framework for the length of their piece, 2 ½ minutes to under 4 minutes.

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**
 Appendix - Self-Evaluation Form

SELF-EVALUATION FORM

	MP 1		MP 2		MP 3		Scoring System: Rating: 5 Excellent 4 Very Good 3 Satisfactory 2 Needs Improvement 1 Very Weak
	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	
POSTURAL CONTROL & ALIGNMENT							TEACHER'S COMMENTS:
Head & Shoulders							
Alignment							
Use of Center							
Line							
Arms							
FOOT ARTICULATION							
COORDINATION							
Opposition							
Smoothness							
TURN OUT/EXTENSION							
Turn Out							
Extension							
Flexibility							
Strength							
ELEVATIONS							
Uses plie							
Height							
TURNS							
Spotting							
Arms							
PICKING UP COMBINATIONS							
Retention							
Speed							
Performance							
MUSICALITY & EXPRESSIVENESS							
On the Beat							
Use of Accents							
Energy/Effort							
CLASS DISCUSSIONS							
Verbal Communication/Comprehension							
CLASS ETIQUETTE/PRESENTATION							
Applies Corrections							
Concentration							
Dress Code							
Follows Directions							
Attendance							
Effort							

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**
Appendix - Self-Evaluation Form, back



Back page of the Self-Evaluation form.

My three personal goals for this year are:

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

I will achieve these goals by:

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**
 Appendix - Rubric for Chorographic Project

RUBRIC FOR THE CHOROGRAPHIC PROJECT - A DANCE FROM MY LIBRETTO

STUDENT NAME _____

Date _____

Scoring Criteria	5	4	3	2	1
Character Realization					
Narrative Development					
Choice of Music Supports the Narrative					
Use of Space, Time and Dynamics					
Length of dance within the assigned parameters – more than 3' but not more than 5'					

Total Score _____

- 5- Excellent, meets the benchmark in all ways
- 4- Proficient, meets the benchmark in most ways
- 3- Fair, meets the benchmark in some ways
- 2- Needs Improvement, meets the benchmark in few ways
- 1- Poor, performs well below the benchmark

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**
 Appendix - Rubric for Performance

RUBRIC FOR PERFORMANCE

STUDENT NAME _____

Date _____

Scoring Criteria	5	4	3	2	1
Accuracy: Order, Timing, Direction of Steps					
Performance Level of Individual Elements					
Movement Quality and Transitions					

Total Score _____

- 5- Excellent, meets the benchmark in all ways
- 4- Proficient, meets the benchmark in most ways
- 3- Fair, meets the benchmark in some ways
- 2- Needs Improvement, meets the benchmark in few ways
- 1- Poor, performs well below the benchmark

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**
Appendix - Dance History Final

Your Name _____

DANCE HISTORY FINAL JUNIORS / June 2009 / Ms. Udovicki

1. What was Petipa's heritage?
2. What is Petipa's legacy?
3. Please give time-line of Petipa's life and work.
4. Who was Petipa's patron?
5. Who was Cecchetti?
6. How did the evolution of costumes and point shoes influence the development of ballet technique?
7. Briefly explain the following terms:
 - Divertissement-
 - Coda-
 - En Manège-
 - Corps de Ballet-
8. Who is the composer of "La Bayadère and "Don Q"?
9. Who is the composer of "Swan Lake, "The Sleeping Beauty" and "The Nutcracker"?
10. Name the home city and country of The Mariinsky (Kirov) Theater. Please give former and current name of the city.
11. What have you learned by doing Petipa's variations in class?

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa** Appendix - Bernard Shaw, From Music in London 1890-94

BERNARD SHAW **From MUSIC IN LONDON** **1890-94**

...What is wanted to make the ballet more popular is not its wholesale adulteration with comic opera, but its internal reform. It should be recognized that the stock of movements out of which the principal dancers make up their solos is so limited that the frequent playgoer soon learns them off by heart, and comes to regard the solo as a dreary platitude, only to be endured when the dancer has extraordinary charm of person and brilliancy of execution. In order to get even a very conventional round of applause, and that, too, from people who obviously have no more sense of dancing than the oratorio audiences who applaud interpolated high notes have of music, a principal dancer must spoil her solo by a silly, flustering, ugly, teetotum spin, which no really fine dancer should condescend to. Then there is the *corps de ballet*, consisting of rows of commonplace dancers, individually uninteresting (from the artistic point of view), but useful for the production of lines and masses of color in rhythmic motion – for realizing, in short, the artistic conception which was in Mr. Swiveller's imagination when he described the dance as "the mazy." Now in planning the evolutions of the *corps de ballet*, nothing is easier than to ring the changes on mere drill, or harder than to devise really artistic combinations and developments. The natural result is a tendency to give us an intolerable deal of drill with each halfpennyworth of poetic color and motion. The last scene of a ballet is generally a bore, to which some sort of non-artistic interest is occasionally imparted by such desperate devices

as making successive squads of girls represent different nations, or different uniforms in the services, or different periods of civilization, or what not, with the result, generally, of making the whole affair twice as stale and tedious. All such mechanical efforts to make lifeless entertainments attractive invariably lead to frightful expenditure, at the last thousand pounds of which rarely produce sixpenn'orth of effect. Why not, then, call in the services of a dramatic story-teller, with the requisite sense of the poetry of motion and movement and spectacle, and make a clean sweep of all the merely habitual business that has no purpose and no meaning? The monotony and limitation of the dancer's art vanishes when it becomes dramatic. The detestable bravura solos which everybody hates, and which belong to the same obsolete phase of art as the eighteenth-century florid arias written for the singing virtuosi of the Italian stage by Hasse, Porpora, and Mozart in his boyhood, would soon fall into disuse and ridicule; and we could say to our prima ballerina assolutissima, when she attempted a "variation," "Spare us, dear lady. Don't do it. Our cherished Cavallazzi, a superb dancer, never does it. It was not that sort of thing that made the success of Yolande, of Asmodeus, of Excelsior, or of any of the ballets that are still borne in mind years after their withdrawal. Hundreds of forgotten assolutissimas have done it just as well as you are going to do it; and none of them are remembered save those who stamped themselves on our memories in their dramatic moments. Move us; act for us; make our favorite stories real to us; weave your grace and skill into the fabric of our life; but don't put us off for the thousandth time with those dreary pirouettes and entrechats and arabesques and whatd'ye call ems." That is the cry of humanity to the danseuse, the ballet-master, and the manager... (1893)

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Appendix - Orpheus and Eurydice

Orpheus and Eurydice

By Czeslaw Milosz

Standing on flagstones of the sidewalk at the entrance to Hades

Orpheus hunched in a gust of wind

That tore at his coat, rolled past in waves of fog,

Tossed the leaves of the trees. The headlights of cars

Flared and dimmed in each succeeding wave.

He stopped at the glass-paneled door, uncertain

Whether he was strong enough for that ultimate trial.

He remembered her words: "You are a good man."

He did not quite believe it. Lyric poets

Usually have - as he knew - cold hearts.

It is like a medical condition. Perfection in art

Is given in exchange for such an affliction.

Only her love warmed him, humanized him.

When he was with her, he thought differently about himself.

He could not fail her now, when she was dead.

He pushed open the door and found himself walking in a labyrinth,

Corridors, elevators. The livid light was not light but the dark of the earth.

Electronic dogs passed him noiselessly.

He descended many floors, a hundred, three hundred, down.

He was cold, aware that he was Nowhere.

Under thousands of frozen centuries,

On an ashy trace where generations had moldered,

In a kingdom that seemed to have no bottom and no end.

Thronging shadows surrounded him.

He recognized some of the faces.

He felt the rhythm of his blood.

He felt strongly his life with its guilt

And he was afraid to meet those to whom he had done harm.

But they had lost the ability to remember

And gave him only a glance, indifferent to all that.

For his defense he had a nine-stringed lyre.

He carried in it the music of the earth, against the abyss

That buries all of sound in silence.

He submitted the music, yielded

To the dictation of a song, listening with rapt attention,

Became, like his lyre, its instrument.

Thus he arrived at the palace of the rulers of that land.

Persephone, in her garden of withered pear and apple trees,

Black, with naked branches and verrucose twigs,

Listened from the funereal amethyst of her throne.

He sang the brightness of mornings and green rivers,

He sang of smoking water in the rose-colored daybreaks,

Of colors: cinnabar, carmine, burnt sienna, blue,

Of the delight of swimming in the sea under marble cliffs,

Of feasting on a terrace above the tumult of a fishing port,

Of the tastes of wine, olive oil, almonds, mustard, salt.

Of the flight of the swallow, the falcon,

Of a dignified flock of pelicans above a bay,

Of the scent of an armful of lilacs in summer rain,

Of his having composed his words always against death

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Appendix - Orpheus and Eurydice *continued*

And of having made no rhyme in
praise of nothingness.

I don't know - said the goddess -
whether you loved her or not.

Yet you have come here to rescue
her.

She will be returned to you. But there
are conditions:

You are not permitted to speak to her,
or on the journey back

To turn your head, even once, to as-
sure yourself that she is behind you.

And so Hermes brought forth Eu-
rydice.

Her face no longer hers, utterly gray,

Her eyelids lowered beneath the
shade of her lashes.

She stepped rigidly, directed by the
hand

Of her guide. Orpheus wanted so
much

To call her name, to wake her from
that sleep.

But he refrained, for he had accepted
the conditions.

And so they set out. He first, and
then, not right away,

The slap of the god's sandals and the
light patter

Of her feet fettered by her robe, as if
by a shroud.

A steep climbing path phosphorized
Out of darkness like the walls of a
tunnel.

He would stop and listen. But then

They stopped too, and the echo
faded.

And when he began to walk the
double tapping commenced again.

Sometimes it seemed closer, some-
times more distant.

Under his faith a doubt sprang up
And entwined him like cold bind-
weed.

Unable to weep, he wept at the loss
Of the human hope for the resurrec-
tion of the dead,

Because he was, now, like every other
mortal.

His lyre was silent, yet he dreamed,
defenseless.

He knew he must have faith and he
could not have faith.

And so he would persist for a very
long time,

Counting his steps in a half-wakeful
torpor.

Day was breaking. Shapes of rock
loomed up

Under the luminous eye of the exit
from underground.

It happened as he expected. He
turned his head

And behind him on the path was no
one.

Sun. And sky. And in the sky white
clouds.

Only now everything cried to him:
Eurydice!

How will I live without you, my con-
soling one!

But there was a fragrant scent of
herbs, the low humming of bees,

And he fell asleep with his cheek on
the sun-warmed earth.

*Translated from the Polish by the
author and Robert Hass.*

Unit: **Dance as Narrative: The Classical Ballets of Petipa**

Appendix - Style by Tim O'Brien

STYLE

By Tim O'Brien from *The Things They Carried*

There was no music. Most of the hamlet had burned down, including her house, which was now smoke, and the girl danced with her eyes half closed, her feet bare. She was maybe fourteen. She had black hair and brown skin. "Why's she dancing?" Azar said. We searched through the wreckage but there wasn't much to find. Rat Kiley caught a chicken for dinner. Lieutenant Cross radioed up to the gunships and told them to go away. The girl danced mostly on her toes. She took tiny steps in the dirt in front of her house, sometimes making a slow twirl, sometimes smiling to herself. "Why's she dancing?" Azar said, and Henry Dobbins said it didn't matter why, she just was. Later we found her family in the house. They were dead and badly burned. It wasn't a big family: an infant and an old woman and a woman whose age was hard to tell. When we dragged them out, the girl kept dancing. She put the palms of her hands against her ears, which must've meant something, and she danced sideways for a short while, and then backwards. She did a graceful movement with her hips, Well, I don't get it," Azar said. The smoke from the hootches smelled like straw. It moved in patches across the village square, not thick anymore, sometimes just faint ripples like fog. There were dead pigs, too. The girls went up on her toes and made a slow turn and danced through the smoke. Her face had a dreamy look, quiet and composed. A while later, when we moved out of the hamlet, she was still dancing. "Probably some weird ritual," Azar said, but Henry Dobbins looked back and said no, the girl just liked to dance.

That night, after we've marched away from the smoking village, Azar mocked the girl's dancing. He did funny jumps and spins. He put the palms of his hands against his ears and danced sideways for a while, and then backwards, and then did an erotic thing with his hips. But Henry Dobbins, who moved gracefully for such a big man, took Azar from behind and lifted him up high and carried him over to a deep well and asked if he wanted to be dumped in.

Azar said no.

"All right, then," Henry Dobbins said, "dance right."