

Teacher's Resource Kit

Queensland
Ballet

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR LI CUNXIN



La Sylphide



PRINCIPAL PARTNER



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Queensland Ballet's Education Program

Queensland Ballet is dedicated to enriching lives through dance. We do this through an exciting program of performances, dance workshops, training programs, public talks, industry experiences, children's events, online resources and more.

Dance to Live

Dance can provide a variety of physical, social and creative benefits when integrated into a healthy lifestyle. At Queensland Ballet, we are always seeking new opportunities to encourage our community to get up and dance! Our weekly adult dance classes are a fun way to increase fitness, while the Dance for Parkinson's program offers intrinsic benefits for people living with Parkinson's disease.

Dance to Learn

Queensland Ballet is committed to supporting dance education for both teachers and students, and our School and Studios Program is designed with this in mind. Initiatives such as dance workshops in schools, our Adopt a Dancer program and performance-related teachers' resources, aim to be curriculum-relevant, highly enjoyable and provide pathways for further learning in dance.

Celebrate Dance

We want to help you get the most from your Queensland Ballet experience. You might like to join in with a theatre-based activity, such as watching a class on stage before a performance, or attend a post-performance Q&A. Watch our behind-the-scenes videos on YouTube, explore Backstage on our website or follow us on Facebook to learn what happens in the wings. Take a young dancer to a children's workshop and see how ballet can ignite their passion. Whatever you decide, our aim is to connect you and your students with the art of ballet.

La Sylphide

Context

La Sylphide was first choreographed by Filippo Taglioni in 1832 during the Romantic era. In 1836 August Bournonville choreographed the ballet afresh in his own style, still incorporating elements of Romanticism. In 2015 Queensland Ballet presents the award-winning production of *La Sylphide* from Danish choreographer Peter Schaufuss. The Peter Schaufuss production incorporates many elements of the Romantic ballet, as introduced by August Bournonville.

Genre and Style

Genre and style allow observers to group dances by their similarities (Adshead, 1988). Genres are broader categories that may encompass a number of historical styles. Some examples of genres include ballet, modern dance and post-modern dance. Historical styles are narrower categories and can be used to reference a historical era (Adshead, 1988).

Examples of historical styles within the ballet genre include Court ballet, Ballet d' action, Romantic ballet, Classical ballet, Modern ballet and Post-modern ballet.

Within a historical style there are also choreographic styles, meaning the style of a specific choreographer (Adshead, 1988). An example of a choreographic style is August Bournonville's style, labelled after his own name.



Portrait of Louis Mérante and Emma Livry in *La Sylphide* 1860s

DATE	GENRE	HISTORICAL STYLE	CHOREOGRAPHIC STYLE
1500 – 1600s	Ballet	Court ballet	
1700s		Ballet d' action	
c.1800 – c.1880		Romantic ballet	Bournonville ballet
c.1880 – c.1910		Classical ballet	
Early to Mid 1900s		Modern ballet	
Late 1900s and 2000s		Post-modern ballet	

Note: A ballet can be choreographed in a historical style after the historical period. For example a Classical ballet could be created in 2014, using Classical ballet elements and characteristics. The Classical period (late 1800s) is the time in history when Classical ballets were most prominent.

Historical Context

- The height of the Romantic era in ballet was during the 1830s through to the 1850s. However there were Romantic ballets created as early as 1806, such as *Paul et Virginie*, and as late as 1870, such as *Coppélia* (Anderson, 1986; Au, 1988).
- The Romantic era for ballet was influenced by socio-cultural action of the time. The French Revolution contributed to development of ballet themes, moving from narratives concerning the gods to those that explored the lives of ordinary people (Debney, 1993).
- The Industrial Revolution, in particular the creation of railways, allowed people to travel more easily between countries. As such, Romantic ballet choreographers developed an interest in exotic lands and cultures, particularly countries from the East (Anderson, 1986; Debney, 1993).
- Romantic ballets often blended realism and fantasy, including elements of beauty, passion, emotion, imagination, nature, and the supernatural (Anderson, 1986; Au, 1988; Debney, 1993).
- The movement style was characterised by soft and rounded arms and head positions with their upper body in a forward tilt. This made the dancers' movements very graceful and gentle, contributing to the ethereal atmosphere of Romantic ballets (Steeh, 1982).
- The soft pointe shoe was created, replacing the heeled slippers of Ballet d'action. This allowed female dancers to rise onto pointe for very brief moments, creating a floating, ethereal effect (Debney, 1993).
- The famous white bell-shaped knee-length tutu was also created, allowing the female dancers more freedom of movement (Debney, 1993).
- Newly invented gas lighting was used along with fly wires to assist in portraying supernatural themes (Debney, 1993).



The writer Charles Nodier, whose views influenced the narrative of *La Sylphide*

Historical Context Continued

August Bournonville & the Bournonville Ballet Style

- Although France was seen as the leader in the evolution of the Romantic ballet style, ballet was being performed throughout Europe (Au 1988). This includes Copenhagen, Denmark, where August Bournonville created his personal choreographic style titled after his own surname.
- August Bournonville (1805–79) was born in Copenhagen, Denmark. He studied dance under his father, a French ballet master, as well as Italian choreographer Vincenzo Galeotti, and French choreographer Jean Georges Noverre. After finishing his training, he became a soloist dancer for the Royal Ballet in Copenhagen. He later choreographed for the Royal Danish Ballet where he created more than 50 ballets (Walter, 1979).
- The Bournonville ballet style was influenced by the Paris Opera Ballet and Romanticism. The ballets still featured romantic tutus, soft and rounded arms and an ethereal atmosphere (Walter, 1979).
- In contrast, Bournonville's choreography places equal emphasis on male and female roles and is characterised by quick and precise footwork, fluid phrases, natural grace, light jumps and beauty (Ballet Austin, 2011b; Walter, 1979).
- Rather than portraying exaggerated emotions (a prominent characteristic of Romantic ballets), Bournonville ballets portray a more balanced human nature (Walter, 1979).
- Bournonville developed his own technique and created his own training program to teach it (Ballet Austin, 2011a).
- Many of Bournonville's ballets were preserved by the Royal Danish Ballet. They were not well known outside of Denmark until the Company began touring them after World War 2 (Au, 1988).



The young August Bournonville

Historical Context Continued

August Bournonville's *La Sylphide*

The oldest Romantic ballet to have been performed continuously since its premiere at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen in 1836, Bournonville's *La Sylphide* was first presented by the Royal Danish Ballet.

- *La Sylphide*'s narrative was influenced by the views of French writer Charles Nodier who described life as fluctuating between "bliss and despair" (The Ballet Bag, 2010). This concept inspired the idea of an unfortunate hero, forever chasing an elusive, supernatural force and ultimately facing a tragic destiny – an underlying theme in Bournonville's *La Sylphide*.
- Bournonville developed the characters of Filippo Taglioni's original ballet, delving deeper into their relationships with each other (Ballet Austin, 2011c).
- The ballet incorporates elements of both Romanticism (knee-length tutus) and Bournonville ballet style (quick and precise footwork, fluid phrases and light jumps).
- The original score was composed by 19-year old nobleman Herman Severin von Løvenskjold. In this score, Løvenskjold combines a sense of narrative and character leitmotifs with lively dance sequences (The Ballet Bag, 2010).
- It is said that Bournonville's decision to use Løvenskjold as the composer for his new ballet encountered some opposition. Some detractors had even planned to boo at the premiere! Ultimately the music was so lovely that the protest never materialised (The Ballet Bag, 2010).
- Bournonville's *La Sylphide* was performed by Queensland Ballet in 1978 under the direction of Hans Brenaa. In this performance, Queensland Ballet's Artistic Director Harry Haythorne cast himself as the witch Madge, the role he had also taken in the Scottish Ballet 1974 season (Trove, 2010).



Marie Taglioni, *La Sylphide*, Alfred Edward Chalon (RA), Richard James Lane (A.R.A). lithograph, coloured by hand, London. Museum no. S.2610-1986

Context

Queensland Ballet's production of *La Sylphide*

Choreographed by Peter Schaufuss after August Bournonville, this production is a winner of an Olivier Award and Evening Standard Award. It has been presented by many of the world's leading ballet companies.

- Peter Schaufuss altered and extended some of the Bournonville's choreography and choreographed an additional pas de huit, pas de trois and a couple of solos.
- Music composed by Herman Severin von Løvenskjold, conducted by Andrew Mogrelia and performed by Queensland Symphony Orchestra.
- Set and costume design by David Walker.
- Lighting design by Steen Bjarke.
- Queensland Ballet will tour to London in August 2015 to perform Peter Schaufuss' production of *La Sylphide* at the Coliseum Theatre.

Photo by Christian Tiger



The Story of La Sylphide

Act I

A Scottish manor house

It is the morning of James's marriage to Effie and he sleeps in his armchair. The Sylph, a winged figure, is kneeling by his side. She kisses him on his forehead and as he wakes James catches sight of the Sylph. He is instantly entranced and tries to capture her. The Sylph eludes his grasp and she disappears up the chimney. Troubled, James wakes his companions but none of them have seen the Sylph. Gurn, James's rival, arrives and soon realises that James is infatuated with someone other than Effie. Gurn sees an opportunity.

The preparations for the wedding are in full swing. James hardly notices Effie and she is unimpressed by Gurn's efforts to win her heart. As James reluctantly joins in the wedding preparations he starts to realise that as Effie dreams more and more of their marriage, his own dreams go far beyond the walls of the manor-house.

Meanwhile an old woman, Madge, has in secret slipped into the hall. She warms herself by the fire. James, sensing that she is a sinister presence, takes an immediate dislike to her. He cannot bear to see her sitting in the place where he last saw the Sylph. He orders her to leave but Effie calms him. Instead she persuades him to let Madge entertain the guests by telling their fortunes. Madge prophesies that Effie will marry Gurn, and James furiously threatens Madge. The old woman curses him. Effie runs off to dress for the wedding leaving James alone and in turmoil.

The Sylph once again appears. She declares her love for James and insists they belong together. As Gurn enters the Sylph vanishes. Believing that he may have caught James with another woman, Gurn tries to reveal the situation to Effie, but fails.

The wedding festivities begin. The Sylph reappears and James is unable to resist her allure. He follows the Sylph into the forest, leaving Effie broken-hearted.

Act II

A glade in the forest

Deep in the forest, shrouded in mist, Madge plots her revenge on James. In a magic cauldron she makes a veil that is irresistible to all. As the fog lifts, the sylphs of the forest dance in *joie de vivre*. James enters with the Sylph, who shows him her realm. She brings him berries and water but still evades his embrace. To lift his spirits, she calls on her sisters and the forest fills with sylphs, who dance for him. But, try as he might, James is unable to catch the Sylph in his arms.

Effie and James's companions reach the glade looking for him. Gurn finds James's hat, but Madge convinces him to say nothing. He proposes to Effie and, encouraged by Madge, she accepts. Everyone leaves to prepare for the wedding of Effie and Gurn.

Meanwhile, James desperately looks for the Sylph. The spiteful Madge convinces him that the veil she has made will enable him to catch her. The Sylph appears and is captivated by the sight of the veil. She allows James to place the garment around her shoulders and as he does so, he kisses her. His embrace is fatal. The Sylph's wings fall to the ground. In despair James sees what should have been his own wedding party in the distance. As Madge forces him to see what he has lost, he realises that in trying to possess the unobtainable, he has lost everything. Madge rejoices above the lifeless body of James.

Li Cunxin

Li Cunxin has had a long and diverse career as an internationally acclaimed dancer. He was appointed as Queensland Ballet's fifth Artistic Director in July 2012.

At the age of eleven, Li was selected by Madame Mao's cultural advisors to attend the Beijing Dance Academy. In 1979, he joined Houston Ballet as an exchange student and went on to achieve the rank of Principal in 1982. He moved to Melbourne in 1995 with his wife, dancer Mary McKendry, to join The Australian Ballet as a Principal Artist. Li retired from dancing in 1999, at the age of 38, but maintained his strong ties to the ballet community.

Following his performing career, Li worked in the finance industry as a senior manager at Bell Potter, one of the largest stockbroking firms in Australia. Until his appointment as the Artistic Director of Queensland Ballet, Li sat on the board of The Australian Ballet from 2005 and the Bionics Institute.

In 2003, Li published his international best-selling autobiography, *Mao's Last Dancer*, which has received numerous awards and was adapted as a feature film in 2009. Li was a finalist in the Australian of the Year Awards 2014.



Li Cunxin, Queensland Ballet's Artistic Director
Photo by Christian Tiger

Janette Mulligan

Stager: *La Sylphide*



Janette Mulligan, Queensland Ballet's Ballet Mistress
Photo by David Kelly

Janette Mulligan joined Queensland Ballet in 2013 as Ballet Mistress and performs with the Company as a Guest Artist. Janette is a Stager for the Company's 2015 production of *La Sylphide*.

Janette Mulligan graduated as dux of The Australian Ballet School before joining London Festival Ballet (English National Ballet), where she was promoted to Senior Principal. Janette's extensive repertoire included major classical ballets and contemporary works by Rudolf Nureyev, Ben Stevenson, Glen Tetley, George Balanchine, Alvin Ailey, John Cranko, Natalia Makarova, Ronald Hynd, and John Neumeier, among others. In short ballets created on her, Janette won critical acclaim in works by Ben Stevenson and Christopher Bruce. Janette danced with numerous illustrious partners, including Rudolf Nureyev, Peter Schaufuss, Kevin McKenzie, Patrick Armand and Fernando Bujones, and performed with Dame Margot Fonteyn. She also featured in two films: *La Sylphide* and *The Magic of Dance*.

On retirement, Janette held the prestigious position of Ballet Mistress with the Royal Danish Ballet. As an international guest teacher, Janette taught at the English National Ballet School, Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Ballet Rambert, Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, The Australian Ballet, Royal New Zealand Ballet and Sydney Dance Company.

Q&A with Janette Mulligan

What is your role as a ‘stager’?
Can you tell us about the processes of restaging *La Sylphide*?

Mary Li, my fellow ballet mistress at Queensland Ballet and I will be teaching the choreography and the style of the ballet to the company dancers. At the conclusion of 2014, I acted as the liaison between Queensland Ballet and Peter Schaufuss, organising the delivery of DVDs and music recordings, as well as discussing the stage requirements. In terms of restaging, we’ve been watching these recordings of the performance to assist us in recalling the choreography. The DVDs were helpful for sections of the ballet that we didn’t originally perform. In particular, the pas de huit.

How does Peter Schaufuss’ *La Sylphide* hold personal significance for you?

The whole production was created for and with the English National Ballet to perform at the first Bournonville Festival in Copenhagen. Mary Li and I were principal dancers of the English National Ballet at the time. That’s why we both understand this work so well; we were there when Peter was experimenting with movements and explaining the way he wanted them performed.

Research Task

Research Janette’s career as a performer and create a list of her major roles as a Principal Dancer.

Which character were you cast as?

I was cast as the lead girlfriend coming down the stairs in the first act — Effie’s girlfriend. I was the lead sylph as well as a side sylph, where I performed the sylph pas de trois.

Do you have any particular memories that you are fond of when performing this ballet?

It was such a beautiful ballet to perform. It has such a lovely romantic and charismatic feel to it. One particular moment that I enjoyed was during the second act when I danced the lead sylph. I remember coming out onto the stage and there wasn’t a sound. It’s such a powerful and unforgettably eerie moment.

Class Activity

In pairs, create a 16 count phrase and record it using a video recorder. Swap recordings with another pair and try learning their phrase. What challenges did you notice when trying to learn a phrase from a video recording?

Is Peter Schaufuss involved in the rehearsal process, and if so, how?

Peter Schaufuss will be working with the Queensland Ballet company dancers for 10 days before opening night. He will be looking at it as a whole, and altering either movements or the way it’s performed to ensure our dancers shine.

How much time will you spend working with the dancers in the lead-up to the *La Sylphide* season?

Queensland Ballet will have five weeks in total to restage *La Sylphide*, which is slightly longer than the regular time we have to restage a work.

Q&A with Janette Mulligan Continued

How would you describe the characteristics of Bournonville technique?

Bournonville ballets were originally performed at The Royal Danish Theatre in Copenhagen (first named The Kings Theatre). This theatre has a very small stage and so Bournonville was unable to choreograph movements that travelled too far or jumped too high. For this reason Bournonville ballets involve many petti allegro movements and very few lifts. It is also a Romantic ballet and so many of the arm positions are soft and rounded, with their upper body in a forward tilt — the sylph roles especially feature these characteristics.

Class Activity

In pairs, create a short non-locomotor phrase (movement that doesn't travel through the space). Combine with another pair and join the two phrases together to create a single phrase. Work as a group to develop the movement so that it travels through the space. Consider your relationship to each other in the space, including your use of group formations and floor patterns.

What are the challenges associated with learning Bournonville technique/ballets?

Bournonville style movements often involve quick and intricate footwork which can tire the dancers' calves. This includes brises, petti allegro and the occasional grand allegro. As such, these movements require a lot of detail and can be quite demanding with regards to cardio endurance. The style requires dancers to maintain gracefulness and charm while concealing any of the physical demands of the movements.

How will the company dancers be prepared for these challenges?

We will prepare the dancers through the process of teaching the choreography. This process involves marking the choreography, spacing it out, marking it to the music and then performing it. Mary and I have to be very specific and clear about the technical characteristics of the style. For instance where the eye-line is at any given movement.

How have the company dancers been cast for the ballet?

At this point, all of the dancers are learning as much as they possibly can because the choreographer always has the final say on casting. However Li Cunxin, our Artistic Director, works very closely with the choreographers to finalise casting so any last-minute changes tend to be quite minor.



Artist's impression of Maria Taglioni in *La Sylphide*, 1832

Q&A with Janette Mulligan Continued

Is Peter Schaufuss' *La Sylphide* much different from August Bournonville's and if so, how?

Many of the ballets created around this time were short, for example *Giselle* and *La Sylphide*. Bournonville's original *La Sylphide* was very short, consisting of two acts, each 25 minutes in length. As such, the ballet was usually programed alongside another production.

I've seen it a few times, once in London where a short all-male piece was performed before it. Schaufuss lengthened the original ballet, allowing it to be performed by itself. He altered and extended some of the Bournonville's choreography but also choreographed an additional pas de huit, pas de trois and a couple of solos. Schaufuss choreographed these sections to music created by the original composer Herman Severin von Lovenskjold which wasn't used in the original ballet.

Research Activity

La Sylphide has been created and adapted by many different choreographers. Some include Filippo Taglioni, August Bournonville, Peter Schaufuss, Marius Petipa, Pierre Lacotte and Matthew Bourne. Create a timeline of when the different versions of *La Sylphide* were created, and identify key traits, similarities and differences between them.

What do you see as being the key themes in *La Sylphide*? Are these themes still relevant to contemporary Australian audiences?

La Sylphide's narrative is incredibly rich and conveys many themes that I believe are still relevant to contemporary Australian audiences. One theme that I find particularly pertinent is the idea of unobtainable love. The Sylph and James fall in love with each other but James is never able to touch the sylph. When he finally catches her with the magical veil that Madge gave him, she dies. It's a tragedy where James is left at the end of the ballet in pain. They were forever unable to share their love for each other. The emotions portrayed in this ballet are emotions that are still felt by people today and this is what makes the themes relevant to contemporary audiences.

If you had to provide one piece of advice to the Queensland Ballet dancers, that you learned from when you performed *La Sylphide*, what would it be?

La Sylphide is a beautiful ballet and is very enjoyable to perform. I would encourage them all to have fun with it!

Appreciation Activity 1

Double bubble map

Please refer to the Double bubble map on Page 14

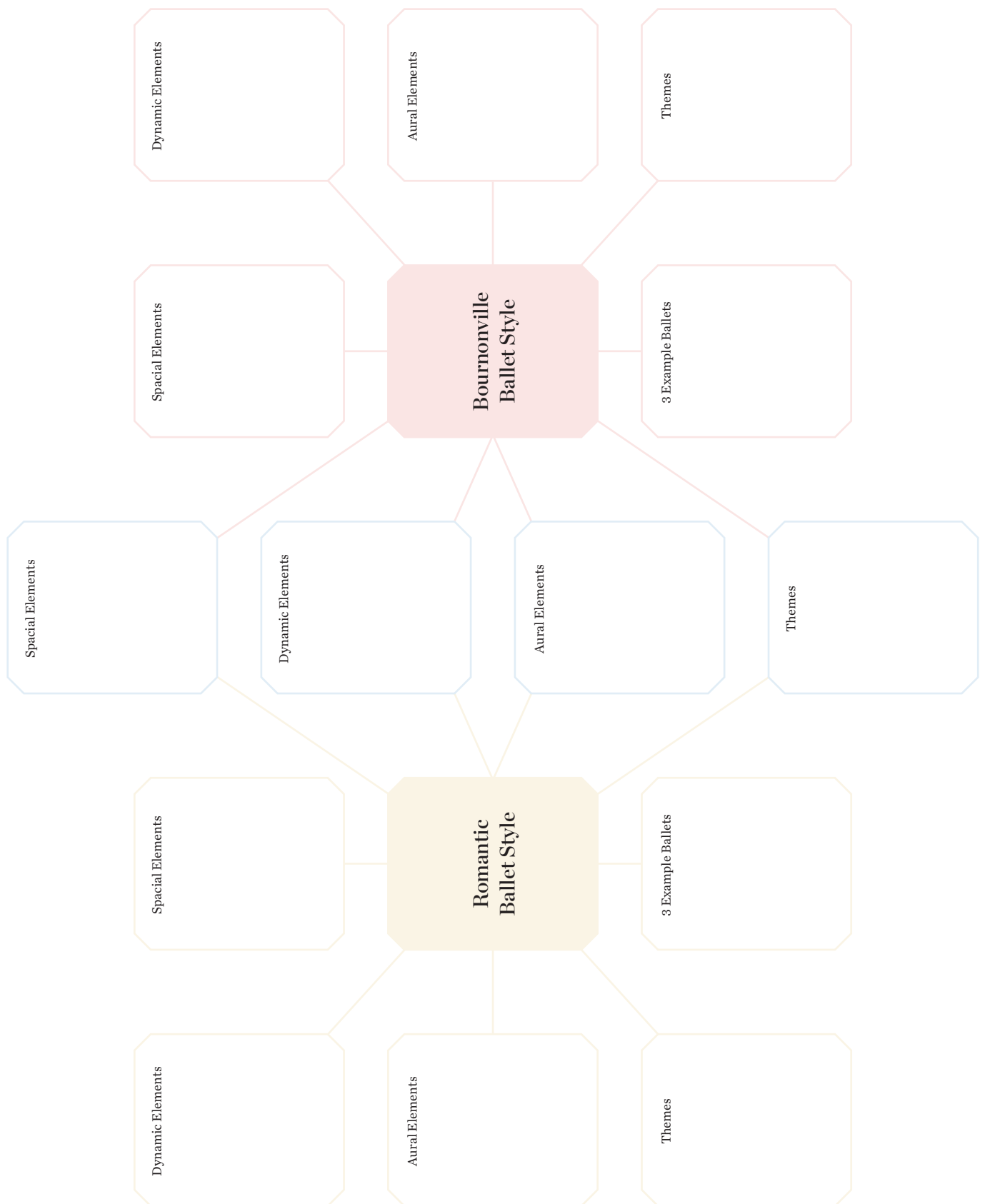
Research individually or in pairs, the characteristics of Romantic ballet and Bournonville ballet styles and complete the Double Bubble Map.

Each bubble focuses on a different component of the ballet including spatial elements (shape, size, levels, directions, floor patterns, group formations and movement motifs), dynamic elements (movement qualities, accents, force and tempo), aural elements (sound and music), themes conveyed, and existing ballets of each style.

Complete the yellow and red bubbles attributing the differences between the two styles and complete the blue bubbles attributing the similarities between the two styles.

Note:

The double bubble map (attached) can be printed onto an A3 page to allow students more space for their responses.



Appreciation Activity 2

Please refer to the PC&Q table on Page 16

Queensland Ballet is restaging Peter Schaufuss' *La Sylphide* which is based on Bournonville's 1836 production. There are many advantages and disadvantages associated with restaging a ballet. Complete the Pros, Cons and Questions (PCQ) table by:

- Listing any advantages, strengths, benefits or positive points in the first column (example: saving time by not having to choreograph new material).
- Listing any disadvantages, difficulties, challenges, or negative points in the second column (example: potentially having to learn material from a video recording).
- Listing any questions that will help determine further advantages or disadvantages (example: how long does it take to learn movement from a video recording? What copy right laws affect the restaging of a production?).

You may use dot points to complete the table.

Pros	Cons	Questions

Appreciation Activity 3

La Sylphide's narrative was influenced by the views of French writer Charles Nodier who described life as fluctuating between bliss and despair. This concept inspired the idea of an unfortunate hero, forever chasing an elusive, supernatural force and ultimately facing a tragic destiny — an underlying theme in *La Sylphide*.

Appreciation Activity 3a: Evaluation Barometer

1) Complete the table by identifying and listing examples (in point form) how the dance components (spatial elements, dynamic elements, form, dancers, visual setting and aural elements) are used to portray themes of temptation, the desire to find true love, and whether love is worth of self-sacrifice in *La Sylphide*.

Dance Components	Examples in La Sylphide:
Spatial Elements (shape, size, levels, direction , floor patterns, group formations, movement motifs)	
Dynamic Elements (force, tempo, duration, rhythm, accent, movement qualities)	
Form (Choreographic and structural devices)	
Dancers (number, gender, role)	
Visual Setting (costumes, props, lighting, sets, multimedia, performance space)	
Aural elements (sound, music, spoken word)	

Appreciation Activity 3 Continued

2) For each component, decide on the evaluation barometer below how effective or ineffective you would rate them in conveying the key themes.

3) From your barometer, summarise your evaluation and rating in the concluding comments box.

Note: multiple components can be written on each scale (example: you may rate dynamic elements and spatial elements as very effective).

75	Very Effective	
50	Effective	
25	Ineffective	
0	Very ineffective	

Concluding comments:

Appreciation Activity 3 Continued

Appreciation Activity 3B: Evaluative Essay

Appropriate for years 10-12

Evaluate how effectively Peter Schaufuss portrays themes of temptation, the desire to find true love, and whether love is worth self-sacrifice in his production of *La Sylphide*.

Analyse and interpret how he has used movement and two other dance components to do this. Support and justify your evaluation using examples and evidence from the ballet.

Note for teachers

Students could explore

Props and/or sets

Costume

Lighting

Music

Choreographic Activities

Safety note

Ensure students have completed a suitable warm-up and stretches to prevent injury.

La Sylphide is a story ballet where the dancers portray various characters. These characters interact with each other in different ways depending on their relationships. Individually, choose a character from *La Sylphide* with whom you feel empathy (which character do you relate to most?).

Complete the Y chart on the following page by brainstorming and listing in the space:

- At the top of the page, how that character may look and what they would be wearing.
Try to be as creative as you can with your response.
- At the left of the page, how the character might think. Would they be introverts or extroverts? Would they respond positively or negatively to others? Would they be quick to jump to conclusions, or would they consider situations/events deeply?
- At the right side of the page, how the character may feel physically and emotionally. This could include tactile and kinesthetic possibilities.

You may use dot points to complete the Y-Chart.

Use the information that you have brainstormed about your chosen character to create an internal monologue. Create a short phrase that conveys this internal monologue. Consider how the way your character looks, thinks and feels will affect your use of:

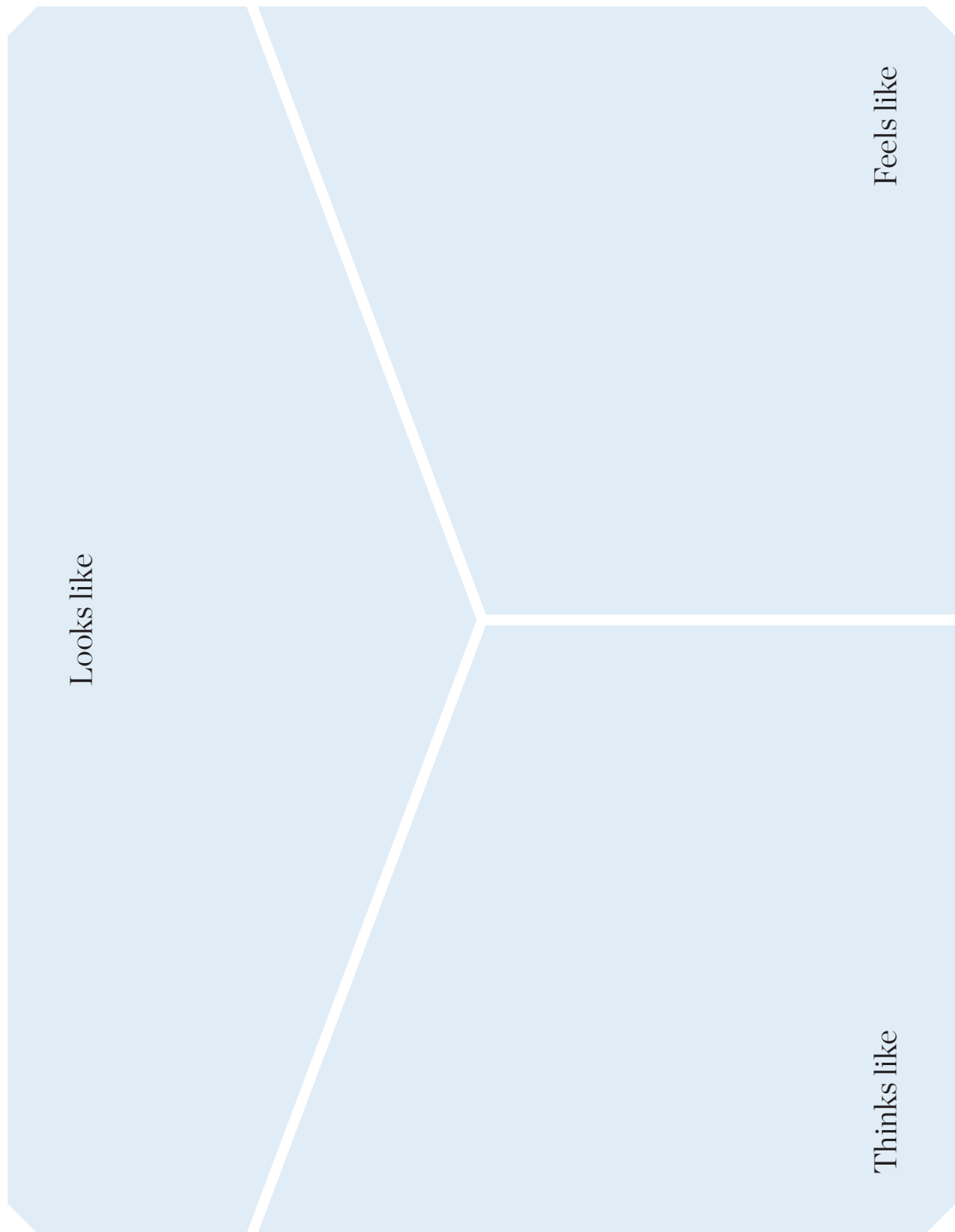
- Gestures/actions
- Shape (curved, angular)
- Size (small, large)
- Level (low, high)
- Floor pattern (curved, angular)
- Movement qualities (percussive, sustained etc)
- Tempo (slow, fast)
- Force (strong, light)
- Duration (long, short)

Assemble into pairs and present your phrases to each other. Perform the two phrases simultaneously and consider how you might create connections between the characters. How might they relate, react and respond to each other? Combine your internal monologues to create a scenario.

Present to the class.

Audience Reflection:

- Ask for statements of meaning, i.e. what did you notice, appreciate or find interesting?
- What movement components did they use and how did they use them to convey their characters and their relationship with each other?
- How effectively was their scenario conveyed?
- How could the movement vocabulary be further developed to enhance what they were conveying?



Attending a Queensland Ballet performance

It is important to prepare your students for their excursion to the ballet, as they might not be aware of the particular protocol expected when going to the theatre. The theatre experience is very different to the movies, watching TV and other entertainment events, therefore we have created a checklist to help your students know what to expect before, during and after the performance.

Before the performance:

- Discuss the difference between a live performance and a movie/TV show.
- People on stage can see and hear the audience, so noise and movement might distract them. The dancers need to focus on dancing for your enjoyment therefore you need to prepare yourself for sitting quietly in your seat for a long period of time.
- Outline your school's expectations regarding appropriate attire for this excursion.

School uniforms are appropriate for matinee performances but you may allow your students to dress up for an evening performance. Smart casual attire is appropriate for an evening performance. Tell your students to make sure they wear something comfortable so they can enjoy the performance.

- Please explain to your students that you plan to arrive at the theatre at least 30 minutes prior to the performance. Latecomers may not be able to enter the theatre once the performance has begun.
- Depending on the purpose for attending the ballet, you may want to give your students some guidelines of what to look and listen for during the performance.

This might be to purely enjoy the movement, music, setting, etc. or it could be more task-specific such as trying to identify the dance components, etc. It is a skill to be able to watch something and remember different aspects of the performance and students need to practise this skill. Some schools do allow their students to bring notebooks into the theatre, however we encourage your students to be mindful of the other audience members and therefore watch and enjoy the show – then discuss their assessment task and make notes after the show.

- Outline to your students what they should not bring to the performance.
- Bringing school bags is not encouraged, but if you need to, please arrive early enough to check these into the cloakroom. Students should not bring their iPhones, cameras, iPods, headphones, etc. into the theatre itself. All electronic devices should be turned off before entering the theatre. Food (including chewing gum) and drink are also prohibited inside the theatre.
- Please ensure your students visit the restrooms before the performance begins.
- Queensland Ballet shows are often sold out, therefore the foyer will be very busy. Please encourage your students to stay with your group and be aware of the people around them.

Attending a Queensland Ballet performance Continued

During the performance:

- Explain to your students that they will know when the performance is about to begin as the lights dim, the music starts and everyone in the audience becomes quiet.
- Let your students know that they can clap when they enjoy something – in a ballet performance it is customary to applaud when the dancer takes a bow and this often happens throughout the performance.
- Explain to your students that they should try and let themselves to be taken on a journey, to another time and place and to enjoy the movements, music, sets and costumes.

After the performance:

- Ask your students to remain seated until you ask them to leave. When leaving, be mindful of other patrons trying to exit the theatre.
- If you are attending a performance with a Post-Performance Q&A (Tuesday 24 March), please encourage your students to use the time between the conclusion of the show and the start of the Q&A to think of some great questions to ask the creative team. These may relate to the assessment task they are doing or something about the life of a dancer. When they ask the questions, try to be clear and concise.



Hans Beck as James in *La Sylphide*
(courtesy Royal Danish Ballet)

Ballet Vocabulary

Allégro

[a-lay-GROH; Italian:
al-LAY-groh]

Brisk, lively. A term applied to all bright and brisk movements. All steps of elevation such as the entrechat, cabriole, assemblé, jeté and so on, come under this classification.

Arabesque

[a-ra-BESK]

One of the basic poses in ballet, it is a position of the body, in profile, supported on one leg, which can be straight or demi-plié, with the other leg extended behind and at right angles to it, and the arms held in various harmonious positions creating the longest possible line from the fingertips to the toes. The shoulders must be held square to the line of direction.

Assemblé

[a-sahn-BLAY]

Assembled or joined together. A step in which the working foot slides well along the ground before being swept into the air. As the foot goes into the air the dancer pushes off the floor with the supporting leg, extending the toes. Both legs come to the ground simultaneously in the fifth position.

Attitude

[a-tee-TEWD]

A position on one leg with the other lifted in back, the knee bent at an angle of 90 degrees and well turned out so that the knee is higher than the foot. The arm on the side of the raised leg is held over the head in a curved position while the other arm is extended to the side.

Balancé

[ba-lahn-SAY]

Rocking step.

Ballon

[ba-LAWN]

Bounce. Ballon is the light, elastic quality in jumping in which the dancer bounds up from the floor, pauses a moment in the air and descends lightly and softly, only to rebound in the air like the smooth bouncing of a ball.

Battement

[bat-MAHN]

Beating. A beating action of the extended or bent leg. There are two types of battements, grands battements and petits battements. The petits battements are: Battements tendus, dégagés, frappés and tendus relevés: stretched, disengaged, struck and stretched-and- lifted.

Battement tendu

[bat-MAHN tahn-DEW]

Battement stretched. The working foot slides from the first or fifth position to the second or fourth position without lifting the toe from the ground. Both knees must be kept straight. When the foot reaches the position pointe tendue, it then returns to the first or fifth position. Battements tendus may also be done with a demi-plié in the first or fifth position.

Battement, grand

[grahn bat-MAHN]

Large battement. An exercise in which the working leg is raised from the hip into the air and brought down again, the accent being on the downward movement, both knees straight. This must be done with apparent ease, the rest of the body remaining quiet.

Bras bas

[brah bah]

Arms low or down. This is the dancer's "attention." The arms form a circle with the palms facing each other and the back edge of the hands resting on the thighs. The arms should hang quite loosely but not allowing the elbows to touch the sides.

Chainés

[sheh-NAY]

Chains, links. This is an abbreviation of the term "tours chaînés déboulés": a series of rapid turns on the points or demi-pointes done in a straight line or in a circle.

Chassé

[sha-SAY]

Chased. A step in which one foot literally chases the other foot out of its position; done in a series.

Coda (1)

The finale of a classical ballet in which all the principal dancers appear separately or with their partners. (2) The final dance of the classic pas de deux, pas de trois or pas de quatre.

Couru

[koo-REW]

Running. As, for example, in pas de bourrée couru.

Demi-plié

[duh-MEE-plee-AY]

Half-bend of the knees. All steps of elevation begin and end with a demi-plié. See Plié.

Demi-pointes, sur les

[sewr lay duh-mee-PWENT]

On the half-points. Indicates that the dancer is to stand high on the balls of the feet and under part of the toes. Also used in the singular, "sur la demi-pointe."

Devant

[duh-VAHN]

In front. This term may refer to a step, movement or the placing of a limb in front of the body. In reference to a particular step the addition of the word "devant" implies that the working foot is closed in the front.

Diagonale, en

[ahn dya-gaw-NAL]

In a diagonal. Indicates that a step is to be done traveling in a diagonal direction.

Échappé

[ay-sha-PAY]

Escaping or slipping movement. An échappé is a level opening of both feet from a closed to an open position.

Élévation

[ay-lay-va-SYAWN]

Élévation is the ability of a dancer to attain height in dancing. Measured by the distance between the pointed toes of the dancer in the air and the ground.

Ballet Vocabulary

Continued

Entrechat

[ahn-truh-SHAH]

Interweaving or braiding. A step of beating in which the dancer jumps into the air and rapidly crosses the legs before and behind each other.

Épaulement

[ay-pohl-MAHN]

Shouldering. The placing of the shoulders. A term used to indicate a movement of the torso from the waist upward, bringing one shoulder forward and the other back with the head turned or inclined over the forward shoulder.

Fondu, fondue

[fawn-DEW]

Sinking down. A term used to describe a lowering of the body made by bending the knee of the supporting leg.

Fouetté

[fweh-TAY]

Whipped. A term applied to a whipping movement. The movement may be a short whipped movement of the raised foot as it passes rapidly in front of or behind the supporting foot or the sharp whipping around of the body from one direction to another.

Fouetté rond de jambe en tournant

[fweh-TAYrawn duh zhahnb ahn toor-NAHN]

Whipped circle of the leg turning. This is the popular turn in which the dancer executes a series of turns on the supporting leg while being propelled by a whipping movement of the working leg.

Glissade

[glee-SAD]

Glide. A traveling step executed by gliding the working foot from the fifth position in the required direction, the other foot closing to it.

Jeté, grand

[grahn zhuh-TAV]

Large jeté. In this step the legs are thrown to 90 degrees with a corresponding high jump. It is done forward to attitude croisée or effacée, and to all the arabesques. It may also be done backward with the leg raised either croisé or effacé devant.

Pas de bourrée

[pah duh boo-RAY]

Bourrée step.

Pas de chat

[pah duh shah]

Cat's-step. The step owes its name to the likeness of the movement to a cat's leap.

Pas De Huit

[pah duh wheet]

A dance between eight people.

Pas De Trois

[pah duh twah]

Dance between three people.

Penché, penchée

[pahn-SHAY]

Leaning, inclining.

Pirouette

[peer-WET]

Whirl or spin. A complete turn of the body on one foot, on point or demi-pointe. Pirouettes are performed en dedans, turning inward toward the supporting leg, or en dehors, turning outward in the direction of the raised leg.

Plié

[plee-AY]

Bent, bending. A bending of the knee or knees.

Port de bras

[pawr duh brah]

Carriage of the arms.

Relevé

[ruhl-VAY]

Raised. A raising of the body on the points or demi-pointes, point or demi-pointe.

Retiré

[ruh-tee-RAY]

Withdrawn. A position in which the thigh is raised to the second position en l'air with the knee bent so that the pointed toe rests in front of, behind or to the side of the supporting knee.

Rond de jambe

[rawn duh zhahnb]

Round of the leg, that is, a circular movement of the leg.

Sauté, sautée

[soh-TAY]

Jumped, jumping. When this term is added to the name of a step, the movement is performed while jumping. **Tour en l'air**

[toor ahn lehr]

Turn in the air. This is essentially a male dancer's step. It's a turn (single, double or triple) in the air in which the dancer rises straight into the air from a demi-plié, makes a complete turn and lands in the fifth position with the feet reversed.

Tournant, en

[ahn toor-NAHN]

Turning. Indicates that the body is to turn while executing a given step. As, for example, in assemblé en tournant.

Variation

[va-rya-SYAWN]

Variation. A solo dance in a classic ballet.

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