

THE  
SLEEPING  
BEAUTY

WITH THE PBT ORCHESTRA



October 24-26, 2014

Benedum Center for the Performing Arts

PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

Audience Production Guide

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## Audience Production Guide

# THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

WITH THE PBT ORCHESTRA

Original Choreography by **Marius Petipa**

Staged by **Terrence S. Orr**

Music by **Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky**

**The Benedum Center for the Performing Arts**

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*Cover photo by Duane Rieder, 2013. Artists: Gabrielle Thurlow and Nurlan Abougaliyev. Guide created by PBT's Department of Education and Community Engagement, 2014.*

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# The Sleeping Beauty Story

The *Sleeping Beauty* story we know today contains parts of oral traditions and recorded stories dating back hundreds of years. Though there were even earlier oral traditions of the story, a 4-volume romance called *Perceforest*, printed in France in 1528, contained a story of a princess who falls into an enchanted sleep. In 1634, Italian soldier and poet Giambattista Basile recorded a book of stories, the *Pentamerone*, that he'd collected. One of them, "Sun, Moon, and Talia," which may have been based on the earlier *Perceforest* story, is thought to be the foundation of the modern *Sleeping Beauty* tale. This version contains details that are not exactly fairy tale-like, including sexual assault, murder and cannibalism.



Illustration by Gustave Doré for an edition of Perrault's book, 1867

In 1697, French author Charles Perrault published a book of fairy tales that would become known the world over: *Tales and Stories of the Past with Morals; Tales of Mother Goose*. Perrault included Basile's story, removing a few of its darker elements and changing the name to "La belle au bois dormant" ("The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood"). The Grimm Brothers' "Little Briar Rose," a slightly modified retelling of Perrault's story, made its appearance in 1812 in their collection of fairytales.

The stories vary, sometimes in small ways and sometimes in significant ways. For instance, when the prince wakes the sleeping princess in both "Sun, Moon, and Talia" and "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," the story continues and includes trouble with an angry wife

(Basile) and an ogre mother-in-law (Perrault). The Grimm Brothers were the first to end the story with the prince waking the princess and the first to use a kiss as the means of waking her. This tradition continued in the ballet, in Disney's 1959 *Sleeping Beauty* animated film, and in most other modern versions.

The heroines in *Sleeping Beauty* stories have had different names over the centuries: Zellandine, Talia, Briar Rose, the Princess—or no name at all. *The Sleeping Beauty* ballet was the first version to name her Aurora (which was actually Sleeping Beauty's daughter's name in Perrault's tale). Disney followed suit in its 1959 movie. The evil fairy had no name in the original tale, but Petipa used the name Carabosse, taken from a different fairy tale. Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* and the 2014 *Maleficent* movie have changed the evil fairy's name to Maleficent (meaning evil-doer).

## About the Ballet

*The Sleeping Beauty* ballet is a tour de force of choreography and music that has become a pillar of the art form and beloved around the world.

The idea for the ballet came from Ivan Vsevolozhsky, the director of the Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A few ballets based on Charles Perrault's 1697 version of the fairy tale had been done before but Vsevolozhsky's concept was grander than the

previous attempts. He envisioned a ballet that would not only tell the story of the sleeping princess, but also would pay tribute to the opulent, 17<sup>th</sup> century court of Louis XIV, the French king who loved ballet and who profoundly influenced the progression of ballet as an art form.



The original cast of *The Sleeping Beauty*, 1890. [Source](#)

In 1888 Vsevolozhsky tasked his ballet master at the Imperial Theatres, Marius Petipa, with creating the ballet. The 70-year old Petipa had had a successful career as a dancer, choreographer and ballet master and by this time had choreographed significant ballet revivals (*Giselle*, 1850; *Le Corsaire*, 1858) as well as original works (*The Pharaoh's Daughter*, 1862; *La Bayadère*, 1877). Vsevolozhsky saw *Beauty* as a way to showcase Petipa's extraordinary understanding of

classical ballet movement and tone. He and Petipa wrote the libretto together.

Vsevolozhsky asked Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky, Russia's preeminent composer, to write the score for the ballet. Tchaikovsky, who had composed *Swan Lake* eleven years earlier, didn't hesitate. In a note to a benefactor he wrote, ". . .the subject is so poetic, so inspirational to composition, that I am captivated by it." The composer and choreographer collaborated closely, with Petipa supplying detailed instructions about what style and tempo of music were needed where. Tchaikovsky, Petipa and Vsevolozhsky met several times to finalize ideas, and Tchaikovsky had the overture, prologue and outlines of Acts 1 and 2 completed in three weeks. Rehearsals began in August of 1889 and the ballet premiered on January 15, 1890.

Some reviewers thought the production was too lavish and the storyline too juvenile. But *The Sleeping Beauty* captivated the hearts and minds of its audiences. By 1892, it had been performed an astonishing 50 times. The dancers marked the occasion by presenting Tchaikovsky with a crown on stage.

## A *Sleeping Beauty* Timeline

**1697** The folk and fairy tale *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* (*La belle au bois dormant*) is published by Charles Perrault in his collection, *Stories or Tales from Times Past, with Morals; Tales from Mother Goose*.

**1812** *Little Briar-Rose*, a version of the Sleeping Beauty story, is published by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in a collection of fairy tales.

**1818** Choreographer Marius Petipa is born.

**1825-33** Three ballets by three different choreographers are created based on the *Sleeping Beauty* story; two at the Paris Opera and one in London.

**1840** Composer Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky is born.

**1888** Ivan Vsevolozhsky, director of the Imperial Theatres in St. Petersburg comes up with the idea of a Petipa and Tchaikovsky collaboration on a new *Sleeping Beauty* ballet.

**1890** *The Sleeping Beauty*, by Petipa and Tchaikovsky, premieres at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia

**1896** The first full production of *The Sleeping Beauty* with Tchaikovsky's music is staged outside of Russia, at La Scala in Milan.

**1916** The ballet is seen for the first time in the U.S. at the Hippodrome Theatre in New York—a shortened version produced by Anna Pavlova.

**1921** Sergei Diaghilev presents the first full-length ballet in England, with adaptations to the score by Igor Stravinsky.

**1937** Philadelphia Ballet presents the first full-length version in the U.S.

**1946** The Royal Ballet (formerly Sadler's Wells Ballet) selects *The Sleeping Beauty* as its first performance when reopening the Royal Opera House in London after World War II. Margot Fonteyn dances the role of Princess Aurora. The choice symbolized the reawakening of London after the long nightmare of war.

**1959** Walt Disney's animated movie, *Sleeping Beauty*, premieres.

**1979** Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre presents its first full-length production of *The Sleeping Beauty*.

### Did You Know? *Beauty's* Affect on Ballet Icons



**Anna Pavlova** was the frail little girl of a single mother who worked as a laundress in 1890s Russia. At 8 years old, her mother took her to see *The Sleeping Beauty* at the Maryinski Theatre. Anna was so captivated by Aurora that she vowed to become a ballerina. After two failed auditions she was finally accepted by the Imperial Ballet School. She went on to become one of the most acclaimed ballerinas in history.



**George Balanchine's** first role in a ballet was at 12 years old—he was a Cupid in *The Sleeping Beauty*. A giant of 20th century choreography, Balanchine later said that because of *The Sleeping Beauty*, he “fell in love with ballet.” His life dream was to create his own *Beauty* production—plans were finally in the works just before his death in 1983.



**Rudolf Nureyev** defected from Russia in Paris in 1961, while he was on tour with the Kirov Ballet. His first performance as a “free” dancer was one week later as the Prince in *The Sleeping Beauty* with the Ballets du Marquis de Cuevas. A dancer in the company recalled a riotous response from the audience, with patrons standing on their chairs. Nureyev went on to create four of his own versions of the ballet. He considered it ballet's “perfect accomplishment.”

**Watch** footage of Nureyev's 1961 performance in [this documentary](#) (start at 10:47)

# At a Glance: The Setting and Characters

## Cast List

### Prologue

King

Queen

Carabosse— a bitter fairy who curses Princess Aurora

Catalabutte— the King's Squire

Court Couples

Fairy of Grace

Fairy of Beauty

Fairy of Abundance

Fairy of Song

Fairy of Energy

Lilac Fairy— a good fairy who lightens Carabosse's curse

Cavaliers for the six Fairies

Lilac Fairy Attendants

Pages with Gifts

Carabosse Monsters

Nurse

### Act I

Aurora—a sixteen year old princess who is cursed by Carabosse.

Garland Dancers

Garland Children

Aurora's Friends

Prince of the East

Prince of the West

Prince of the North

Prince of the South

### Act II

Gallison

Prince Desire— a lonely and kind prince.

Marchioness

Royal Hunting Party

Peasants

Nymphs

### Act III

*Precious Jewels*

Diamond

Opal

Ruby

Gold

Silver

Puss n' Boots

The White Cat

Bluebird

Princess Florine

**The Setting:** A faraway kingdom

**Prologue:** The palace of King Florestan XXIV, Princess Aurora's baptism celebration

**Act I:** The palace of King Florestan XXIV, Princess Aurora's sixteenth birthday party

**Act II:** The forest

**Act III:** The palace of King Florestan XXIV, Princess Aurora and Prince Desiré's wedding celebration



Photo: The Lilac Fairy guides Prince Desiré to Princess Aurora. Artists: Christine Schwaner and Christopher Budzynski. Photo by Rich Sofranko. 2009.

# The Synopsis

## Prologue

The court of King Florestan XXIV is celebrating the christening of Princess Aurora. The courtiers are assembled around her cradle as the festivities begin. The king and queen enter, followed by six fairies and their cavaliers. Each fairy dances, offering her special gift to the infant princess. Suddenly, before the Lilac Fairy presents her gift, the wicked Fairy Carabosse interrupts the ceremony. Angry because she was not invited, Carabosse delivers a curse upon the princess: she will grow up to be beautiful, but before her sixteenth birthday she will prick her finger and die. The Lilac Fairy intervenes, promising that the princess will only sleep until awakened by the kiss of a prince.



A prince offers a rose. Artists: Stephen Hadala, Kumiko Tsuji, Kwang-Suk Choi.

## Act One

It is Princess Aurora's sixteenth birthday and it seems as though she has triumphed over the evil curse of Carabosse. Her father informs her that she must select one of four visiting princes as her husband. Aurora dances with the princes, each of whom offers her a rose and declares his love. As the celebration continues, the disguised Carabosse hands Aurora a bouquet in which a spindle is concealed. Aurora pricks her finger. As she falls, the Lilac Fairy appears and casts her spell – putting the entire court to sleep.

## Act Two

One hundred years have passed. Prince Desiré and his hunting party stop beside a lake. As the hunt moves on, the prince is left alone. To his amazement, the Lilac Fairy appears and conjures a vision of Aurora. Enchanted by this vision, he begs the Lilac Fairy to lead him to Aurora. As they reach the castle, they are confronted by Carabosse, who does battle with the prince. He overcomes Carabosse with help from the Lilac Fairy. Once inside the castle, Prince Desiré discovers the sleeping princess and awakens her with a kiss.



Bluebird Pas de Deux. Artists: Alexandre Silva and Alexandra Kochis



## Act Three

The court is celebrating the wedding of Princess Aurora and Prince Desiré. Fairytale characters from all over the kingdom join in the celebration.

At their wedding. Artists: Christopher Budzynski and Kumiko Tsuji.

All photos on this page by Rich Sofranko from PBT's 2009 production.

## The Composer: Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born in Kamsko-Votinsk, Russia on May 7, 1840. He was a precocious child who could read French and German at the age of six and at age seven was writing verses in French. He began taking piano lessons when he was seven years old. He showed an ultra-sensitivity to music and had a delicate musical ear.

In 1850 his family moved to St. Petersburg; mildly interested in music, he began composing at age 14. He attended the School of Jurisprudence and in 1859 had started work as a clerk first-class.

At age 21 he began to study music seriously at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, becoming one of their best students. He moved to Moscow to be a harmony teacher for the Moscow Conservatory. He led a quiet life there, teaching and composing. In 1877, a wealthy widow started to subsidize Tchaikovsky, a relationship that was to last fourteen years. However, there was one strange condition to the widow's financial support—they were never to meet. With this financial independence, he was able to resign from the Conservatory in 1878. Tchaikovsky ended up making a great deal of money during his life, but gave away much of it and freely spent the rest.



Tchaikovsky at 25, photo by Zakharin.

[Photo source](#)

When Tchaikovsky first began composing for ballet, ballet music was considered unimaginative: the music world was astonished that such a great composer would "stoop so low." But he showed an unprecedented mastery of the art, creating vivid orchestrations, effective themes and melodies that flawlessly matched physical movements.\* He went on to compose three full-length ballets that would become enduring masterworks of the genre: *Swan Lake* (1877), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890) and *The Nutcracker* (1892). Tchaikovsky died from cholera less than a year after the premiere of *The Nutcracker*.

\**The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, p. 152-3

## The Music

Tchaikovsky composed *The Sleeping Beauty*, his second of three ballets, over the course of about eight months, but devoted only 49 days in all to the work. He was busy with other projects as well: during this time he composed his *Fifth Symphony*, the overture for *Hamlet*, and *Six French Songs* (Opus 65), and he also conducted numerous concerts. When he finished the orchestration for the ballet in August 1889 he wrote, "a whole mountain has fallen off my shoulders."

Petipa gave him detailed instructions about timing, tempo, themes, etc., and Tchaikovsky delivered. He was famous for over-doing it: for the "Garland Waltz" in the Prologue, Petipa requested 166 bars and Tchaikovsky gave him 297!

*The Sleeping Beauty* score is a work of overwhelming beauty and depth. Tchaikovsky himself thought it some of his best work. Its complexity and richness challenged the dancers—and Petipa himself—to greater heights. Ballet historian Jennifer Homans credits Tchaikovsky with the ballet's enduring appeal, a result of the way his music "works on the human body and spirit."\*

\*Homans, *Apollo's Angels*. NY: Random House, 2010. p. 278.

**Petipa's directions to Tchaikovsky included great detail for the scene in which Aurora pricks her finger:**

*Suddenly Aurora sees an old woman who plays with her knitting needles, in 2/4 time. Gradually this turns into a highly tuneful waltz in 3/4 time. A pause. She says nothing. Then pain. Cries. Blood flows (eight strong beats in 4/4 time). She dances giddily. Dismay. It is no longer a dance, but a frenzy, madness. She turns as if she had been bitten by a tarantula and collapses. At the end I would like a tremolo (a few beats) like cries of pain. 'Father... Mother...'*

Quoted in "The Sleeping Beauty," by Olga Maynard, in *Dance Magazine*, Dec. 1972

## The Sleeping Beauty Listening Guide

Use this guide to familiarize yourself with the music of the ballet. See the Glossary of Musical Terms on page 23 for definitions of underlined words.

### Introduction, Prologue (Carabosse motif)

Tchaikovsky created themes or motifs for the story's main characters that recur throughout the ballet, both in simple melodies and more complex orchestrations. In the opening of the prologue of *The Sleeping Beauty*, the orchestra sets the tone for the ominous occurrences in the ballet by immediately introducing the motif for Carabosse. The curtain has not yet risen at this point as the allegro vivo music draws us with an adrenaline rush right into the fairytale's world. Carabosse's motifs draw upon a long tradition of utilizing lower-sounding instruments to denote the villain, exemplified here by shrieking, bursting trombones and tubas in a forte fortissimo (see excerpt below) and the consistent murmur of the bows across the lower strings of the cellos and basses. The rhythm of her theme builds in intensity over the course of the phrase, starting with two short eighth notes, a longer held note, then several eighth notes in swift succession. This is followed by a chromatic run starting in the timpani working up through the winds and ending on a cymbal crash at the end of the phrase.



### Act 1, Rose Adagio

The stately held notes of the lower brass provide a solid foundation for the soaring, legato melody of the violins in this adagio, some of the most recognizable music from the ballet. The 12/8 meter gives the piece a lilting musicality—because every beat has 3 eighth notes—while at the same time fitting squarely into the more typical four counts used in many dances. Towards the end of the excerpt, the

violins have short chromatic runs that provide a whimsical texture contrasting the earlier fluidity of the main melody. During this section, Aurora performs one of the most famous technical feats of all ballets—her balancing *en pointe* in an attitude (one leg lifted and bent backwards at a 90 degree angle to the standing leg). She performs one of these balances with each of her four suitors.

[Act 1 Finale](#) (Lilac Fairy motif)

In the moments after Carabosse furiously returns to celebrate the success of her spell on Aurora, the Lilac Fairy reenters to the light, calm piano notes of the English Horn. Her motif (see excerpt below), in a 6/8 time signature, is lilting and punctuated by effervescent harp plucks on the downbeat of each measure. As she floats over to the Queen, who pleads with her to do something, the Lilac Fairy pantomimes that Aurora is not dead, only sleeping. As the upper strings begin an undercurrent of staccato sixteenth notes, the Lilac Fairy motions with her wand for guests to carry the sleeping princess to her bed. A chromatic run in the flutes signals when the princes lift Aurora onto their shoulders and the guests process out of the ballroom.



[Act 3—Bluebird female](#) (start YouTube at :58)

As the opening excerpts of this piece showcase (see above), the underlying pizzicato strings are paralleled by *pique* (“pricking”) steps, while the flute melody, with its bouncing rhythm and extensive use of grace notes, are mirrored by Princess Florine’s quick *bourrées*, or fluttering of her feet, on pointe. Halfway through the clarinet picks up a countermelody in clarinet. Then, as Princess Florine showcases a variety of breathtaking turns, a steady eighth note rhythm builds in intensity to rising pizzicato flourish at the end of the piece.



[Act 3, Sapphire variation](#) (start YouTube at 1:51)

While most dance music is based on rhythms of twos or threes, the Sapphire variation is written in a 5/4 meter (delineated into a 2/4 beat and a 3/4 beat as seen in the time signature) because sap-

pires in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were cut in a five-sided pentagon style. Low brass and piano supply this driving vivacissimo 5/4 rhythm—two half-notes followed by a quarter note—under a pizzicato strings melody that reflect the points of the sapphire. Later, chimes bring in the legato bowing of the violins and violas during the second section of the piece. After repeating the first musical phrase,

bold violins carry the rest of the orchestra in unison into a final crescendo towards the dramatic ending in forte fortissimo. (Note that this piece is danced at nearly half the speed as the recording).

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ВАРИАЦИЯ III

Фея-Сапфиров  
La Fée-Saphir

### [Act 3—Grand Pas de Deux](#) (start YouTube at 2:22)

While the entire Grand Pas de Deux of *The Sleeping Beauty* is renowned for the vast range of passion and emotion that it encompasses, this section of the Grand Pas de Deux in Act 3 is every bit as dramatic as the blaring, heavily accented, exuberant horns and low brass proclaim. As Aurora and the Prince showcase stunning precision in footwork and breathtaking lifts (including the “fish lift” that is noted by “fishes” in the excerpt), the music finally resolves into a more pleasant legato phrase in the violins that immediately begins to build back up. As the music intensifies, Aurora spins several times as the music descends before she lands in a supported arabesque on the downbeat, symbolizing the harmony between her and her Prince.

# The Choreographer



[Picture source](#)

**Marius Petipa**, the “father of classical ballet,” was born in Marseilles, France in 1818. He began dance training at the age of 7 with his father Jean Petipa, a French dancer and teacher. Marius was educated at the Grand College in Brussels and also attended the conservatoire, where he studied music. In 1831 he made his debut in his father’s production of Gardel’s *La Dansomanie*.

Jean Petipa became the Maitre de Ballet at the theatre in Bordeaux, and it was here that Marius completed his education. At sixteen he became premier danseur at the theatre in Nantes, where he also produced several short ballets. He toured North America with his father and in 1840 he made his debut at the Comedie Francaise, partnering the famous ballerina Carlotta Grisi in a benefit performance. He spent a few years dancing in Spain and Paris: in 1847 left for Russia. He had signed just a one-year contract but was to remain there for the rest of his life.

Considered an excellent dancer and partner, his acting, stage manners, and pantomime were held up as examples for many generations. In 1854 he became an instructor in the Imperial Theatre school, while continuing to dance and restage ballets from the French repertoire. Sources differ on the first original work he staged for the Imperial Theatre, but all agree that his first great success was *The Daughter of the Pharaoh*. This work resulted in his 1862 appointment as Choreographer-in-Chief—a position he held for nearly fifty years—and in 1869 he was given the added title of Premier Ballet Master of the Imperial Theatre. The value of his accomplishments is inestimable: he produced more than sixty full-evening ballets, including *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*, *La Bayadère*, and *Don Quixote*, as well as many other works. He is considered to have laid the foundation for Russian ballet and for ballet itself in the 20th century. Petipa died in 1910.

## What Makes it Classical Ballet?

- Women dance on pointe
- Precision, exactness
- Ethereal: in leaps and jumps a quality of floating on air
- Turn-out of the legs and hips
- The “architecture” of the dance is balanced, symmetrical
- Upright torso
- Graceful, flowing movements

## The Choreography

Petipa’s *The Sleeping Beauty* has been called the standard by which all classical ballets are measured. It captivates the audience with its fairytale love story and sweeping score—and some of the most pristine, “pure” dancing in all of ballet. On the following pages are just a few things to know about the choreography.



Artist: Nurlan Abougaliyev; Photo: Rich Sofranko, 2009

## Aurora, Will You Accept This Rose?



Petipa created his own “rose ceremony” more than a century before the premiere of TV’s *The Bachelor*. In Act I’s “Rose Adagio,” Aurora is greeted by four suitors (cavaliers) who all offer her a rose to show their love. During the dance, the ballerina

poses in long balances in attitude (on pointe on one foot with the other leg extended to the back, bent and parallel to the floor). Each suitor takes her hand for a moment, and when she lets go she holds her balance independently. This is a hold-your-breath moment for the audience—and for the ballerina, a display of strength and willpower. At the end of the adagio, she again balances in attitude with each cavalier, who slowly turns her as he walks around her in a circle. This “promenade” allows the audience to see the beauty and strength of her posture and line from all angles. Petipa designed Aurora’s choreography to show perfection on all levels. For the ballerina, it is one of the ultimate tests of skill and stamina.

Watch a [video from the Royal Ballet](#) in London, looking at the technical demands of the roles of both Aurora and Prince Desire.

## Paper Dolls

As Petipa created the choreography for *The Sleeping Beauty*, he asked Tchaikovsky or a pianist to come to his house to play the music for him. Petipa would move little papier-mâché figures around on a table to help him visualize the movements as the music played.

## En Travesti

Petipa created the role of Carabosse to be *en travesti*, a term that means that a male performs the role of a female character (or vice versa). PBT casts both male and female dancers in the role.



## The Wedding Pas de Deux

In this exciting, last dance of the ballet, Aurora and the Prince display their technique to the fullest. It is in a traditional pas de deux (dance for two) format: Aurora and the Prince dance together (entrée and adagio); the Prince and Aurora each dance alone (called variations); and they dance together again at the end (coda). The choreography demands speed, strength, control, power, precision, and passion. It’s often performed separately as a show-piece. Watch for the fish dives (shown below)!



Learn about the detail that goes into rehearsing for the Grand Pas de deux in this [Royal Ballet rehearsal](#), with renowned British dancer Anthony Dowell instructing the dancers.

## The Fairies

The fairies give the baby Aurora the gifts of grace, beauty, abundance, song and energy. Though brief, their dances are models of classical precision and technical ability. Be sure to notice:

- **the Lilac Fairy.**

Her gift is wisdom. Her movements are ethereal yet powerful and majestic—she is a guiding force of the ballet’s action.



- the dainty hops on pointe by the **Fairy of Abundance.**

This is meant to imitate the Russian custom of sprinkling breadcrumbs in a baby’s cradle to bring prosperity. She is also known as the “Breadcrumb Fairy.”

- the “Finger Variation.” The **Fairy of Energy’s** dance is sometimes called this because of the dancer’s pointed fingers, which accentuate the brisk and sparkling choreography.

## The Italian Connection

Italian ballet dancers in the late 1800s were famous for performing difficult “tricks” — multiple turns, long balances, jumps en pointe. French and Russian critics called them circus-like. Though he too disliked the Italian style, Petipa embraced it in *The Sleeping Beauty*. He refined the movements, giving them clear lines and an elegant geometry. Through Petipa the “stunts” became the virtuoso technique that is now a hallmark of Russian classical ballet. Petipa cast two Italians in major roles in original production: Carlotta Brianza as Aurora and Enrico Cecchetti as Carabosse and the Bluebird.



## The Bluebird

The Bluebird Pas de Deux in Act III is known for its airborne choreography for the male dancer (the Bluebird), who is teaching Princess Florine how to fly. Petipa’s tricky steps mimic how a bird springs, bounces and soars. It is still considered some of the most difficult choreography in the classical male repertory. (See the Signature Step on page 15 for a look at the Bluebird’s *brisé vole*.)

## Why is Puss-in-Boots in *The Sleeping Beauty*?

Act III, devoted to the grand wedding of Aurora and the Prince, is a chance to show off the dancers’ skills. Petipa decided that the wedding guests would be fairytale characters from Perrault’s (and other) stories. They perform divertissements—short dances that entertain and have nothing to do with the actual story. In PBT’s version, Puss n’ Boots, Blue Bird, and the White Cat perform, though Petipa’s original choreography also included Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, the Wolf, and others. The “jewel” fairies—Diamond, Opal and Ruby—also perform divertissements at the wedding.



# Decoding the Mime in *The Sleeping Beauty*

*The Sleeping Beauty* uses pantomime to convey some of the ballet's story. Look over these terms and movements before seeing the ballet to help you understand the mime scenes.

## Prologue

Carabosse tells the court that Aurora will grow up to be beautiful, but will prick her finger on a spindle and die. The Lilac Fairy steps in to amend the spell so that Aurora will not die, but will sleep until a handsome prince awakens her with a kiss. To see this scene “decoded” by Nashville Ballet, click [here](#).

**Think**—touch your temple

**Beautiful/Handsome**—circle your face/draw hand down face

**Enter**—sweeping gesture with both arms across your body

**Die/dead**—cross arms-hands clenched in fists

**Yes**—nod head

**No**—turn head or gesture with arms

**Please**—clasping hands in front of chest

**Sleep**—placing arms on top of each other and rest cheek on them

**Prince/Princess/King/Queen**—gesture to top of head, hand upright, touching each side of the top of the head to indicate a crown

**Kiss**—two fingers touch the mouth then pull away



Carabosse motions to the Lilac Fairy that Aurora will die. Artists: Stephen Hadala and Julia Erickson. Photo by Rich Sofranko, 2009.

## Act I

The King tells Aurora that she looks beautiful and must choose a prince to marry. With this news Aurora runs to her mother who tells her she only has to dance with the princes.

**Marry**—point to your ring finger

**Beautiful/Handsome**—circle your face/draw hand down face

**Dance**—circling hands overhead

## Act II

The Lilac Fairy asks Prince Desiré why he is crying. After the Lilac Fairy shows the vision of Aurora to the Prince, the two travel to Aurora's castle. Carabosse orders her minions to kill Prince Desiré. When the Prince defeats Carabosse, he kisses Princess Aurora, and asks the King for her hand in marriage.

**Dance**—circling hands overhead

**Why**—gesturing hands out in front of body

**Cry**—gesture with all fingers in front of eyes

**Prince/Princess/King/Queen**—gesture to top of head, hand upright, touching each side of the top of the head to indicate a crown

**Kill**—gesturing pointer finger across neck

**No**—turn head or gesture with arms

**Love**—two hands on heart

**Marry**—point to your ring finger

## Signature Step—Brisé volé

A *brisé* in ballet is a fast action, brisk step in which the legs beat in the air. With *brisé volé* [bree-ZAY vaw-LAY] the dancer travels across the stage as if he's flying.

The step begins in fifth position (figure 1). The dancer brushes out the back leg, touching the floor with his foot from fifth position into the air, and beating the calves together. Let's say the right leg is the supporting leg and the left leg is in front. It is in *coup de pied devant* (figure 2). The left leg brushes backwards to beat the calves. The left leg closes briefly behind in *coup de pied derrière* (figure 3), then beats again to the front. Once the dancer has beaten his legs to both the front and back, he has completed **one** *brisé volé*.

In *The Sleeping Beauty*, the Blue Bird does this extremely difficult move multiple times (*enchainement*—in a chain) across the stage to create the illusion that he has taken flight.



The Blue Bird beats his calves together in a *brisé volé*. Artists: Lisa Carroll and Alexander Nagiba. Photo by Ric Evans, 2000.



1. fifth position feet



2. coup de pied devant



3. coup de pied derrière

## The Costumes

The sets and costumes for *The Sleeping Beauty*, designed by David Walker, are being rented by Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre from Boston Ballet, which purchased them from the Royal Ballet in London. Ballet companies often rent productions from other companies because of cost: *The Sleeping Beauty* is so big and so spectacular that it would be very expensive to mount this production from scratch. The costumes are beautifully constructed and trimmed in exquisite detail—right down to the snakes and jeweled spiders on the evil Carabosse's costume.

Backstage there will be a lot of costume changes: dressers will help the dancers get into and out of costumes, sometimes in just two minutes!

Snakes on Carabosse's costume. Photo by Rich Sofranko, 2009.





After the production is over, PBT will clean and repair the costumes, and major alterations done for PBT's dancers will be "undone" before they are returned to Boston Ballet.

Even "minor" characters have elaborate costumes to illustrate the grandeur of the royal court: Catalabutte and the King and Queen. Artists: Robert Vickery, Steven Annegarn and Janet Popeleski. Photos by Rich Sofranko, 2009.

## Using Scenery to Tell the Story

The ballet set designer's goal is to help the choreographer and composer tell the story of the ballet.

In *The Sleeping Beauty*, when the curtain rises on the Prologue, the huge columns, gold thrones, and rich curtains tell us immediately that this is no ordinary baptism ceremony. This is the ruling family of the land, with wealth and power enough to command the presence of the entire kingdom. By contrast, the appearance of Carabosse in her coach is ominous. The skies flash with lightning, the theater darkens, and the audience immediately feels her power.



In Act I, notice the feeling of airiness and light during the sixteenth birthday of the Princess.

Her vibrancy and energy are echoed everywhere in the setting: flowers, garlands, young folks dancing, and sense of brightness. We know that all is in balance in the world, and that Aurora is loved and admired by her subjects. When she pricks her finger on Carabosse's spindle, the mood of the lighting changes to one of gloom and despair. The movement of the scenery causes an enchanted forest to grow on the stage, as the princess is put to sleep for a hundred years.



In Act II, the Prince fights his way through the tangled greenery to reach Aurora sleeping in the castle. Notice how first one section of leafy scenery and then another moves. Each piece is manually pulled on cue by a stagehand. The scene grows brighter as the Prince fights his way through vines and trunks. We begin to see the bedroom of the princess glowing faintly in the distance. When the last leafy drop has been swept aside, the lighting is full bright again.

In Act III all is restored to its former glory. We find ourselves in an even richer ballroom setting than we saw in the Prologue. The brightness and grandeur of the scene confirm that good has triumphed over evil, and that the world is once again in balance.

*Adapted from "Using Scenery to Tell the Story" by Bob Neu. Mr. Neu was Production Manager for Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre from 1989-1998. Left photo: an eerie tone is set with the help of scenery and lighting; artist: Julia Erickson. Top: the palace. Photos by Rich Sofranko for PBT's 2009 production.*

## The Disney Difference



The 1959 Disney animated movie is probably the *Sleeping Beauty* that many Americans know best. Walt Disney took elements from the ballet, and the Perrault and Grimm Brothers' stories, to create his famous version. One of his most important decisions was to use the Tchaikovsky ballet score: he originally commissioned an entirely new one but soon realized the ballet's music could not be matched. The score was adapted to the film by George Bruns.

Here are just a few of the differences and similarities between the film and the ballet. [Image Credit](#)

	Ballet	Disney
<b>Year premiered</b>	1890	1959
<b>Music</b>	Tchaikovsky	Tchaikovsky
<b>Good Fairies</b>	6—Grace, Beauty, Abundance, Song, Energy, Lilac	3—Flora, Fauna, Merryweather
<b>Evil Fairy</b>	Carabosse	Maleficent
<b>Princess's name</b>	Aurora	Aurora as a baby; the fairies change her name to Briar Rose
<b>Prince's name</b>	Desire	Philip (after Prince Philip of England, married to the young Queen Elizabeth II)
<b>Aurora grows up with . . .</b>	Her parents	The fairies
<b>Has a vision / dream of a true love</b>	Prince Desire	Aurora/Briar Rose
<b>Evil Fairy turns into a dragon</b>	No!	Yes!
<b>How Aurora wakes from sleep</b>	With the Prince's kiss	With the Prince's kiss

[Watch](#) Disney's animators sketch the character of Aurora from the live action dance of actress Helene Stanley.

### Did You Know? “Once Upon a Dream”



The 1959 Disney film included a new song using the “The Garland Waltz” tune from the Prologue of Tchaikovsky’s ballet score. “Once Upon a Dream” became the movie’s signature song. The 2014 Disney film *Maleficent*, a sleeping beauty story told from the Evil Fairy’s point of view, uses “Once Upon a Dream” again as its main theme; singer Lana Del Rey gives it a modern, haunting twist. Listen to the different versions—what is the tone and character of each? What does each version convey about the stories they are a part of? How does a 125-year old tune become a modern hit?

[Tchaikovsky’s “Garland Waltz”](#) (tune starts at :33)

[Once Upon a Dream](#), 1959 version

[Once Upon a Dream](#), 2014 version

[Image credit](#)

## References and Resources

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“The Sleeping Beauty” at *The Ballet Bag*: <http://www.theballetbag.com/2011/10/22/the-sleeping-beauty/>

## How the Critics Responded

“Certainly “Beauty” might be the most difficult production that PBT has to offer, requiring massive human resources to fill the roles in a production of this size. . . .

Like any classical production, there is a historical standard to be upheld, one in which the best dancers of each generation have filled this ballet’s shoes. In “Sleeping Beauty,” virtually every member of the company is exposed, with individual stretches of choreography that require unparalleled clarity from an effortless technique. This is a ballet with an unfolding cascade of solos and the PBT dancers, unlike a large company like the Royal Ballet, often have to cover a number of roles within it. ”

[Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#), 2005

“This ballet, lovingly encased in David Walker’s lavish sets, transports its audience back to a time during the 17th and 18th centuries, when a fairy tale could have been a reality. Coupled with Walker’s luscious costumes, the fairies all gossamer and the aristocrats heavily bewigged and draped in luxurious fabrics, the PBT production was ornate as any that the company has offered over the years. . . .

The company fielded three casts, each as distinctive as the ballerinas playing the title part. It’s one of the top roles for any ballerina to achieve, an Aurora that requires a feather-light technique on top of steely pointe work and a sublime delicacy of porte bras hovering over fast-paced footwork. But above all, the ballerina must have an unflappable center line that keeps her balanced much of the time on the tips of her toes.”

[Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#), 2009

## For Further Thought

1. The character of Aurora changes through the ballet, from that of an innocent, giddy young girl to a mature woman in love. Watch her choreography and see how it changes and expands during the course of the performance. Note how the ballerina in the role of Aurora creates this transformation through Petipa’s choreographic devices, and her own technique and dramatic skills. Does she successfully portray this process?
2. A ballet historian, Jennifer Homans, suggests that Tchaikovsky’s music pushes dancers to move with “a fullness and subtlety that few other composers” inspire—that his music works on the “human body and spirit” in a profound way. Watch the ballet with this idea in mind. Do you see this notion carried through in PBT’s dancers and in the performance as a whole? What movements / dancers in particular strike you as perhaps illustrating the qualities Homans describes? Does live music make a difference in how a dancer moves?
3. *The Sleeping Beauty* ballet retells one of our most beloved fairytales through the medium of dance. How does dance contribute to or enhance such a familiar story? Does it detract at all? Without words to tell a story, what do we lose and what do we gain?

# Children's Guide to *The Sleeping Beauty*

## Prologue

A king and queen are celebrating the birth of their daughter, Princess Aurora. The king and queen enter and are followed by six fairies. Each fairy dances and gives Aurora a special gift. Before the Lilac Fairy presents her gift, the evil fairy, Carabosse, interrupts the party. She is angry because she wasn't invited. Carabosse curses Princess Aurora. She tells the court that when Aurora is sixteen years old, she will prick her finger on a spindle\* and die. The king and queen are afraid, but the Lilac Fairy promises to protect the princess. Aurora and her court will sleep for one hundred years. After one hundred years have passed, Aurora will be awakened by a prince's kiss.



Carabosse showing the spindle to the court. Artist: Julia Erikson. Photo by Rich Sofranko, 2009.

## Act 1

It is Aurora's sixteenth birthday. The king and queen are having a big party. The king tells Aurora that she must choose a husband tonight. There are four princes from all over the world attending her party. Each prince wants Aurora to choose him. Aurora dances with the princes and they each give her a rose. The party continues and the wicked Carabosse enters in a disguise. She hands a bouquet of flowers to Aurora. Aurora does not realize that a spindle is hidden inside the bouquet. Aurora pricks her finger and falls to the ground. The Lilac Fairy appears and casts her spell. She puts the entire court to sleep.

## Act 2

One hundred years have passed and Prince Desiré is hunting with his friends. His friends continue to hunt, but Prince Desiré stays behind to think. Suddenly, the Lilac Fairy appears to him. She shows him a vision of Aurora. Prince Desiré falls in love with Aurora. He begs the Lilac Fairy to take him to her. When the Lilac Fairy and Prince Desiré reach the castle, Carabosse is waiting for them. Prince Desiré and Carabosse fight, and Prince Desiré wins. Carabosse is sent away forever. Prince Desiré finds Aurora and wakes her up with a kiss. He has broken Carabosse's curse!

## Act 3

Princess Aurora and Prince Desiré are celebrating their wedding. Fairytale characters dance at the party. Princess Aurora and Prince Desiré live happily ever after.



## *What is a spindle?*

A spindle is a thin rod with a sharp end. It spins thread to create fabric like wool. The spindle has existed since Ancient Greece!

## The Sleeping Beauty Coloring Page

Color Aurora and her Prince Desiré during their wedding dance!



## Explore *The Sleeping Beauty* Together!

**Listen** to Denise Bryers read the story of *The Sleeping Beauty* (from <http://www.artsreformation.com/talespinners/>)

**Watch** as a dancer learns the role of Carabosse in the Royal Ballet's *The Sleeping Beauty* as performed by the Royal Ballet (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q74fEYxMsuk&list=PL8C2272FED513555F&index=2>).

**Discover** how the Royal Ballet designed their Lilac Fairy costume! (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7MBpEdPZAQ>)

# The Benedum Center



The Benedum Center for the Performing Arts is the crown jewel of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and the Cultural District in downtown Pittsburgh. It was renovated in 1987 and is on the National Register of Historic Landmarks. The 2800 seat theatre used to be the Stanley Theater, still visible on the lighted marquees outside. It has the third largest stage in the United States measuring 144 feet wide by 78 feet deep. The Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Opera, and Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera all use the Benedum for their performances.

[Learn](#) more about the Benedum Center. [Investigate](#) the Stanley Theatre's role in music history here in Pittsburgh.

## Accessibility

PBT is committed to being an inclusive arts organization that serves everyone in the greater Pittsburgh community through its productions and programs.

In conjunction with the Benedum Center for Performing Arts, the following accessibility services are provided to patrons:

- Wheelchair accessibility
- Braille and large print programs
- Assistive listening devices
- Audio recordings of select [program notes](#)
- Sign Language Interpretation provided by special request only. Please contact the Education Department (see contact information below) at least 2 weeks in advance. Thank you!
- Audio-described performances (Sunday, October 26, 2014 for *The Sleeping Beauty*).

For more information about all of these programs please visit the [accessibility page](#) on PBT's website. Should you have a special request that is not listed above or have any questions about our accessibility services, please do not hesitate to contact Alyssa Herzog Melby, Director of Education and Community Engagement, at 412-454-9105 or [accessibility@pittsburghballet.org](mailto:accessibility@pittsburghballet.org).

For more information about the accessibility services at the Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, please visit their [accessibility page](#).

# Glossary of Musical Terms

**Accent**—a < symbol underneath a note to indicate playing it very heavily and forcefully

**Allegro**—quick, lively tempo

**Brass instruments**—metal wind instruments, including: trumpet, trombone, euphonium, and tuba

**Chromatic**—use of full tones and semi tones (flat or sharp) within a scale

**Countermelody**—a subordinate melody accompanying the principal line

**Crescendo**—to grow louder

**Double reeds**—instruments whose sound is produced by two joined reeds vibrating, including oboes, English horns, and bassoons

**Dynamic**—volume

***f (forte)***—loud

***ff (fortissimo)***—very loud

***fff (forte fortissimo)***—as loud as possible

**Grace notes**—a musical ornament of a quickly played note before the main note in a phrase; written as a smaller note with a line through the tail that is tied to the main note

**Legato**—in a smooth, even style

**Measure**—one completion of the number of beats indicated in the time signature. The end of a measure is designated by a vertical line in the score.

**Melody**—a musical line or statement comprising a series of notes

**Meter**—a synonym for time signature

***p (piano)***—soft

***pp (pianissimo)***—very soft

**Pizzicato**—played with plucked strings

**Sixteenth notes**—quick notes; four sixteenths per beat

**Rhythm**—a pattern of pulses, or beats, in music

**Staccato**—short articulation

**Strings**—wooden instruments with strings, played by bowing or plucking, including: violins, violas, celli, and double bass

**Tempo**—pace of the music

**Theme**—a brief melody which forms the basis of a passage

**Time signature**—an indication of rhythm and beat.  $2/4$  is felt in two beats that are each divided into even numbers of smaller beats;  $6/8$  is felt in two beats that are each divided into three smaller beats

**Tremolo**—a wavering effect produced by quickly alternating between two notes

**Vivace**—lively and vivacious

**Winds**—instruments whose tones are produced by air being blown through them

**Woodwinds**—wind instruments, most of them made of wood, including: clarinet, oboe, flute, bassoon, French horn, bass clarinet, and English horn