

# THE GREAT GATSBY



# Teacher's Handbook

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Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's

Production

*Of*

# THE GREAT GATSBY

Concept by **John McFall**

Choreography by **John McFall and Lauri Stallings**

Music – **Original Period Recordings**

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# INTRODUCTION

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Dear Educator,

As a teacher of children and adolescents you can have a profound effect on the rest of your students' lives. You not only give them knowledge of the world around them, but also the tools and the inspiration to create a meaningful life for themselves that can have a positive impact on the world around them. The State of Pennsylvania took its stand on the value of the Arts when the Department of Education adopted Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities.

Experience and knowledge of the arts are an essential component in the educational process. In a tribute to playwright Vaclav Havel, actor Ron Silver reminds us that “...*art matters...artists speak to people in ways that politicians cannot...art has the power to define us, to challenge us, and to make us explore the frontiers of human existence.*”

We are proud to present this production of *The Great Gatsby*, a ballet that has been adapted from F. Scott Fitzgerald’s novel. It provides a unique opportunity for interdisciplinary study in the classroom. We hope this experience at the theater and the educational information in this Teacher's Handbook will provide you with the knowledge, tools, and inspiration to make the art of ballet and theater live in the hearts, minds, and souls of your students. Thank you for continuing to keep Arts Education as a vital part of your school curriculum.

We'll see you at the Benedum!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terrence S. Orr". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Terrence S. Orr  
Artistic Director

## How to Use This Handbook

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This handbook is designed for teachers whose students will be attending Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's special school performance of *The Great Gatsby*.

The activities and exercises included in this handbook are designed to prepare your students for the performance and to encourage critical thinking on the aesthetics of ballet. The discussion questions do not have right or wrong answers. Rather, they engage thinking in a new direction and illustrate that dance is a form of language.

The activities have been carefully created to be integrated into classroom discussion. Several of the activities have been adapted from those designed by teachers who have participated in previous seasons' programs. In their evaluations, these teachers observed that those students who had received some preparation for the performance demonstrated a higher level of interest and response.

The activities in this handbook are grouped according to narrative, technical and choreographic elements. There is also a section that suggests ideas for follow-up activities. Each activity is designed to meet one or more of the stated objectives, which are essential to understanding the function and integrity of the ballet art form. In addition, the suggested Classroom Activities and the background information that support them also address the Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities put forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. *These activities are offered as springboards to the creative imaginations of teachers and students for adaptation to individual instructional needs.*

There is great opportunity for using this handbook in an interdisciplinary curriculum. Most high school students study *The Great Gatsby* in their English classes, which give an opportunity to compare the novel with the ballet interpretation. In the Music, Movement and Mime section the Physical Education Department could teach the basic positions of ballet while the Music Department looks at how the positions are incorporated into different styles of dance portrayed by the characters. Since popular social dances of the 20's and 30's are used in *The Great Gatsby*, there is a collaborative opportunity for music, dance, and history. Perhaps the art teacher and Home Economics Department could collaborate by designing and drawing costume ideas. A discussion on the techniques for sewing on the variety of fabrics used in making the costumes for the ballet could follow.

## **How to Use This Handbook (continued)**

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Below is information related to the grouping of our activities. Most of the "Activity" pages, are designed to be student ready for copying and may be used alone as an activity or in support of another activity.

### **PLOT, THEME AND CHARACTER**

Dramatic structure in its strictest definition does not exist in ballet, though a story ballet does share the elements of plot, theme, and character. The exercises relating to these elements focus on familiarizing students with the story and characters of *The Great Gatsby*.

The Synopsis is the basis for our activities in this section. The original story by F. Scott Fitzgerald is a classic of literature. It is often found in the English and Literature curriculum for high school students to read.

### **MUSIC, MOVEMENT AND MIME**

Music and movement are the essence of dance and in classical ballet there is the added dimension of pantomime, gestures which can be literal or symbolic. In this section you will find activities designed to acquaint your students with the ballet's music and to introduce them to the choreographic process.

### **COSTUMES, SCENERY AND LIGHTING**

In his book "Perceiving the Arts" Dennis Sporre suggests that dance is essentially a visual and theatrical experience and part of our response is to those theatrical elements of dance that are manifested in the performance.

In dance, as in theater, technical elements come together to create the spectacle of a production; therefore, we should look at costumes, scenery and lighting as an important part of dance. The activities in this section should encourage students to consider these technical elements of producing a dance performance.

# Academic Standards and Objectives

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*The Pennsylvania Department of Education Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities are the guidelines for what students should know and be able to do in both the performing and visual arts, in addition to understanding the arts in relation to the humanities. Below we have included the Dance Content Standards developed by the National Dance Association, which are specific to dance in the Standards' unifying themes of production, history, criticism and aesthetics in addition to the components that yield an overall knowledge of the Arts and Humanities.*

## **DANCE CONTENT STANDARDS:**

1. Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance
2. Understanding choreographic principles, processes, and structures
3. Understanding dance as a way to create and communicate meaning
4. Applying and demonstrating critical and creative thinking skills in dance
5. Demonstrating and understanding dance in various cultures and historical periods
6. Making connections between dance and healthful living
7. Making connections between dance and other disciplines

## **Knowledge of the Arts and Humanities incorporates carefully developed and integrated components such as:**

- Application of problem solving skills
- Extensive practice in the comprehension of basic symbol systems and abstract concepts
- Application of technical skills in practical production and performance
- Comprehension and application of the creative process
- Development and practice of creative thinking skills
- Development of verbal and nonverbal communication skills

This handbook is designed to aid you in your task of enabling your students to experience the arts while at the same time having a useful, educational experience. The content and activities within this book focus on at least one of the above content standards and can be used as components to achieve knowledge in the Arts and Humanities as a whole.

## **Academic Standards and Objectives (*continued*)**

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The "Introduction" to the *Pennsylvania Department of Education Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities* states that "Dance Education is a kinesthetic art form that satisfies the human need to respond to life experiences through movement of the physical being." Becoming educated about the classical art of ballet even extends beyond dance education into music, theater, visual arts and humanities.

At the very least, the experience of attending a ballet performance will help your students develop an appreciation of their cultural environment, and through the activities outlined in this handbook, the students should be able to –

- 9.1** Production, Performance and Exhibition of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts
  - ❖ Demonstrate how a story can be translated into a ballet.
  
- 9.2** Historical and Cultural Contexts
  - ❖ Demonstrate how a choreographer uses music, movement and mime to help create a ballet.
  
- 9.3** Critical Response
  - ❖ Demonstrate how costumes, scenery and lighting help support plot, theme and character in a ballet.
  
- 9.4** Aesthetic Response
  - ❖ Write a thoughtful, informed critique of a performance.

# **What to Expect at the Benedum Center**

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It is a special privilege to attend a live performance at the Benedum Center. Polite behavior allows everyone, including the dancers, to fully enjoy and concentrate on the performance. Discuss with your students the following aspects of audience etiquette:

1. Once inside the Benedum Center you will not be permitted to leave and re-enter the building.
2. Program books will be available for students at the theater. These playbills may be used for follow-up classroom activities. Please have a teacher pick them up at the Patron Services table. The playbill includes a synopsis, historic information on the ballet, casting and biographies of Pittsburgh Ballet artists.
3. Be sure to sit in the section assigned to your school. An usher will be happy to help you find where your school's seats are located.
4. You may talk to your neighbor in a normal speaking voice prior to the performance and during intermission. During the performance, however, even the softest whisper can be distracting. **DO NOT TALK DURING THE PERFORMANCE.**
5. There will be one intermission. This allows the dancers time to rest or make elaborate costume changes, the production staff time to make major set changes, and students time to stretch their legs and use the rest rooms.
6. The taking of pictures is prohibited during a performance, so it is best to leave your cameras at home.
7. Applause is the best way to communicate with the dancers. It tells them that you are enjoying the performance. If you see something you like, feel free to applaud!
8. Remain with your class. The Benedum Center is very large, and it is easy to get lost.
9. Chewing gum, food and drink are not acceptable in the theater.
10. The Benedum Center is considered a Historic Landmark. There are a lot of different things that students can look for when they arrive. In the next section, there are different items listed with some interesting facts about each.

# Things to Look for at the Benedum Center

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**1. The Marquees** - When you arrive at the theater, note the marquees on the front and the Penn Avenue side of the theater. They were designed in 1928 to showcase the "new" electric lights. By the terms of the Historic Landmark agreement there is only limited reference to the new name of the theater – Benedum Center. See if your students can find all of the references to the Benedum Center and to the original name, the Stanley Theater.

**2. Grand Lobby** - All but one of the murals on the ceiling of the Grand Lobby were destroyed over the years. Celeste Parrendo, the painter who recreated them, worked from photographs of the designs and from one well-preserved mural for the colors. Much of her work was done with Q-Tips. She tried to lie on her back and paint as Michelangelo did with the Sistine Chapel; however, the blood ran out of her hand, and she couldn't paint. She quickly found ways to kneel or stand on the scaffolding in order to finish her painting.

**3. Orchestra Pit** - It is divided into two sections, each of which can be raised or lowered by the built-in hydraulic lift. When there is a smaller orchestra, half of the pit is raised and additional seating is installed. If an orchestra is not required, the entire pit may be raised for seating.

**4. Proscenium Arch** - The opening around the stage is the proscenium. In accordance with the guidelines of the Historic Landmark restoration, the original elaborately painted plaster arch has been restored. (You can see the top of the arch from the balcony.) An exception to the restoration guidelines was made for the wooden acoustical arch that your students will see. The panels in the arch can be adjusted to change the acoustics of the theater, or they can be opened to accommodate vocalists, actors or musicians.

**5. Chandelier** - Believe it or not, this beautiful centerpiece to the theater's elaborate dome weighs 2 tons or 4,000 pounds and has over 50,000 pieces of crystal. When it is cleaned, the chandelier is lowered to a certain point and then scaffolding is built around it. Each crystal is washed in soapy water, rinsed, dried, and replaced.

**5. The Stage** - This is the third largest stage in the country. The first is the Metropolitan Opera in New York City and the second is the Indiana University School of Music in Bloomington. The full stage measures 144 feet wide by 78 feet deep. The performance space that you will see is 56 feet by 56 feet. The wooden floor is covered with Marley, a black rubber-like, non-skid surface.

## **History of the Benedum Center for the Performing Arts**

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre performs in the Benedum Center for the Performing Arts. Built in 1928, the theater was originally called the Stanley Theater and was constructed in conjunction with the Clark Building, housing offices and stores. Over the years many famous entertainers and a host of big bands and rock-and-roll groups have performed at the Stanley.

When the theater opened, there was a Wurlitzer organ in the orchestra pit that had been purchased for \$125,000. It was used for sing-a-longs and silent movies until 1936. That year the St. Patrick's Day flood destroyed the organ. The water rose to the edge of the balcony before leveling off. Three men were trapped in the theater for three days before being rescued in pontoon boats by the police.

Two other companies owned the Stanley prior to the Benedum Foundation. In 1976, the Cinemette Corporation bought it. Then, DiCesare Engler Productions purchased the building in 1977 and used it for rock concerts until 1982.

In 1984, The Benedum Foundation bought the run-down theater and decided to restore it to its 1928 grandeur. The budget for the project was \$42 million. This figure includes both the restoration and the purchase of the property behind the theater.

Special rules had to be followed in the restoration because the building is considered a Historic Landmark. No major structural changes could be made to the building unless special permission was given. The colors, fabrics, and materials used had to be as close to the original as possible. The painters scraped down through the layers of paint to find the original colors. The colors of the carpeting were discovered when a workman found a small piece in a heating duct. The murals on the ceiling of the Grand Lobby were restored using photographs.

Every effort was made to have as many of the materials as possible made in Pittsburgh or Pennsylvania. The carpet was woven in England, but the drapery fabric was made in York, Pennsylvania on one of the two remaining jacquard looms in the United States. It took seven weeks to make the 400 yards needed.

The architects were given permission to add the wooden acoustical arch that is directly in front of the original proscenium. It has special panels that can be moved to change the acoustics of the hall to accommodate vocalists, instrumentalists or actors.

## **History of the Benedum Center for the Performing Arts** ***(continued)***

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The size of the Stanley stage and the dressing rooms were considered very inadequate; therefore, the architects requested special permission to add a support building. Permission was given and The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust purchased the block of land adjacent to the theater for the addition. The additional space also allowed the construction of one of the largest stages in the country. The first is the Metropolitan Opera House stage in Lincoln Center, New York City. The second is the stage at the Indiana University School of Music in Bloomington, Indiana.

The Benedum Center for the Performing Arts is owned by The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. Constituents that perform there regularly include Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Opera, Pittsburgh CLO and the Pittsburgh Dance Council.

# What is Ballet?

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Ballet is a way of telling a story using music and dance instead of words. Ballet consists of movements that have been developed over the centuries. Classical ballet is found all around the world: Europe, the United States, China, Japan, Russia and South America.

The earliest ballets were created using themes and stories from classical literature and mythology. In the first half of the 19th century the "Romantic Movement" influenced art, literature, music, and ballet. The movement was concerned with the supernatural world of spirits and magic. It often showed women as passive and fragile. These themes are reflected in the ballets of the time and are called "romantic ballets." *Giselle* and *La Sylphide* were created during this time.

Ballets created during the latter half of the 19th century such as *Don Quixote*, *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker* and *The Sleeping Beauty* represent "classical ballet" in its grandest form. Their main purpose was to display classical technique to the fullest. Complicated sequences that show off demanding steps, leaps and turns are choreographed into the story.

During the 20th century "contemporary ballets" were created. Although there is no definite story line, these ballets often have a theme and concentrate on emotions and atmosphere, attempting to arouse feelings in the audience. Emotions and reactions differ from person to person when viewing this style of ballet.

There are also new ballets which are being created that are patterned after traditional ballets in their structure and form. These ballets incorporate contemporary choreographic innovations while using classical forms and traditional stories and fairy tales such as Derek Deane's *Alice in Wonderland* and Septime Webre's *Peter Pan* and *Cinderella*. *The Great Gatsby* follows the template but is a more sophisticated story.

# What Are Pointe Shoes?

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Founder of New York City Ballet and famous choreographer George Balanchine once said that if no pointe existed, he would not be a choreographer. Pointe shoes allow a ballerina to create the illusion of lightness and to project an increased sense of daring. Without pointe shoes, much of the magical quality of ballet would be lost.

Ballerinas began dancing on pointe between 1815 and 1830 using soft shoes reinforced by stuffed toes and starch. Since then, pointe dancing and the toe shoe have evolved considerably. Today pointe shoes provide comfort and support for a dancer, whether she is on pointe or in a flat position.

The contemporary pointe shoe is handmade by American and European manufacturers. The tip is made of a hardened box or block made of densely packed layers of fabric and paper hardened by glue. This box of glue and fabric encases, protects, and supports the toes, giving them a small platform on which to perch. The rest of the shoe is made of a leather outer sole, a sturdy insole and a supple shank. The side and top of the shoe are covered with a cotton lining and an outer layer of satin, canvas or leather.

Dancers don't just put on pointe shoes and begin dancing. Selecting and preparing shoes is a very involved process. Dancers usually have a favorite cobbler who makes their shoes to very exacting specifications, including measurements, materials and finishing elements. Dancers know their cobbler by the mark put on the bottom of the shoe. But because of the handmade nature of each pair of shoes, no two pairs are ever identical. To ensure a proper fit, a dancer must have a fitting for each new pair of shoes.

Once a dancer has selected new pointe shoes, she must prepare them for dancing. It takes an hour or longer to "ready" a shoe for dancing. Each dancer has her own personal way of preparing her shoes. Dancers will darn the shoes to provide traction and to prevent the satin from fraying. Some pound the pointe with a hammer or squeeze the box in a door to soften it. Some cut the satin off the tips and use a carpenter's file to rough up the sole. To mold the shoes and prolong wear, dancers sometimes line the inside with floor wax or shellac. Finally, each ballerina attaches elastic and ribbons to hold the shoe in place.

Dancers break in shoes by wearing them to class and rehearsal. Once they are broken in, a dancer sets the pair aside for a performance and uses another pair. Dancers may change their pointe shoes several times during a performance depending on the range and difficulty of the ballet. Each female dancer goes through 100-120 pairs of pointe shoes each season at the Pittsburgh Ballet. It's no wonder the Ballet spends about \$80,000 on pointe shoes each year!

## Getting to Know

### Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Dancer Eva Trapp

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Corps de Ballet Dancer Eva Trapp has been a professional dancer with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre since the 2000-2001 Season.

I love to dance. I am very privileged to have met so many inspiring people in this profession. I have a great passion for what I do, and I am very fortunate to be able to share it with you. The world is constantly changing, as is the dance world, but if you have a good foundation, the future will not slip away from your grasp. Don't miss out on any great opportunity that can come your way and change you, like going to see the Ballet.

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**Training:** Rochester School of Dance, Michigan Ballet Theatre, School of American Ballet (SAB) in NYC, Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle, Cleveland San Jose Ballet, American Ballet Theatre (ABT) in New York City and Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School.

**First professional job:** I danced with PBT when I was in the School. My first repertoire was *The Nutcracker*. However, my first full-time job was four years with Ohio Ballet.

**Favorite thing about dance:** I love to let go of reality and become completely free on stage. It's just you and what you love out there.

**Favorite Role:** One of my very favorite roles is the famous *Dying Swan*.

**Family:** I have wonderful parents and two younger sisters – I would not be where I am today without them!

**Any pets?** Two cats – Bean and Bella.

**Greatest influence:** American Ballet Theatre's Julie Kent and my ballet teacher from when I was growing up, Cornelia Sampson.

**Favorite music:** I love music from the 1980's and will stop everything just to dance around to it!

**Favorite food:** Smoked salmon...and I always have hummus in the fridge.

**Other interests besides ballet:** Decorating, crafts, plants, music, hanging out with friends, camping or really anything outdoors and cooking.

**Future plans:** I plan on becoming an interior decorator. It is right up my alley and will allow me to remain artistic.

**Advice to students:** Dream big, work hard, and listen to those that encourage your dreams.

## Getting to Know

### Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Dancer Nicholas Coppula

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Corps de Ballet dancer Nicholas Coppula has been a professional dancer with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre since the 2006-2007 Season.

My two passions are dance and technology. Many people think it is an odd combination, but I have always been that way. When I was young, I tried various extra-curricular activities, but dance was the one that stuck. In my free time I was always taking things apart, or playing with old electronics.

Now that I am older I play with real computers. I have a "studio" in my house with ten computers. I am always tinkering with electronics as well.

I also like photography a lot. I have recently started working with some other Company dancers to stretch my photography into dance as well.

**Hometown:** Pittsburgh, PA

**Number of years as a dancer:** This is my third season as a professional. I started dancing at six and began my serious training at Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School when I was thirteen.

**Favorite role:** *Simply Simon*, because it was the first performance I did with the Company at Hartwood Acres.

**Favorite choreographer:** Marius Petipa – because of *Don Quixote*!

**Favorite music:** My favorite band is *The Classic Crime*.

**Hobbies:** Building things, electronics, computers; photography and film; technical theatre. I am currently building a Tesla Coil.

**Greatest influence:** Steven Annegarn and Roberto Munoz. They both pushed me and encouraged me a lot while I was training at PBT. I learned so much from them.

**Favorite ice cream flavor:** Chocolate

**Favorite Vacation:** Hawaii – I got to see the active volcano.

**What three people from any time or place would you invite to dinner?** Albert Einstein, Steven Hawking and Isaac Newton

**Future plans:** I would like to finish my college education and work in technical theatre. I also might study electrical engineering and go into electrical research.

**Advice to students:** Always work hard and do not take anything for granted when you are learning.



## About the Ballet

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In the world of ballet, as well as that of opera and theater, productions rarely remain the same over the years as they are mounted and performed by different companies; even by the same Company. The production sustains adaptations to accommodate different theater venues and different performing artists. It is also a reality that a portion of the production may remain the same while other production elements and values are changed. The most well known example is *The Nutcracker*, with its many variations throughout the world, all of which are built around the beautiful *Nutcracker* music composed by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's production of *The Great Gatsby* has experienced a similar process in its history. In 1987, former PBT Artistic Director Patricia Wilde commissioned a ballet production of *The Great Gatsby*, based on the novel of the same name written by F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1925. It would be a World Premiere that would be performed by Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre in its new home, the newly renovated Benedum Center for the Performing Arts. What excitement! Ms. Wilde chose composer / arranger Gunther Schuller for the music, Andre Prokovsky for the choreography and Peter Farmer for the set design and costumes. All of these artists were world renowned in their fields and Opening Night at The Benedum was full of razzle-dazzle as the Jazz Age of the twenties splashed over Pittsburgh in 1987.

In 1996, *The Great Gatsby* returned to The Benedum in another World Première, It was a World Première because the choreography and musical score were new, thus defining it as a brand new production. Did anything remain constant – yes it did! The story, of course, based on the Fitzgerald novel and the beautiful costumes and scenery that had left an indelible impression on the Pittsburgh arts landscape nine years earlier. The choreography and music had been redone to give a new look to the production. Resident Composer and Company Pianist Michael Moricz was charged with the score and PBT's former Resident Choreographer Bruce Wells returned from Boston to create the dance.

With both productions, 1987 and 1996, integrity and respect of the story and the era it represents are maintained. The music reflects the 1920's and the choreography incorporated the signature dance of the Jazz Age, the Charleston.

Now in 2008, twenty-one years after the original commission, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre presents a new production of *The Great Gatsby*. This production took a circular path from Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre to Atlanta Ballet and back again. In 2007, Atlanta Ballet rented the production from PBT to stage it at the Fox Theater in Atlanta, Georgia. Renting scenery and costumes from one company to another is common in ballet, opera, and theater. The high cost of these beautiful productions, considering design, materials and labor makes it prohibitive for any ballet company to own every production it

performs. With this rental to Atlanta Ballet and the vision of using original music from the period, an entire process began which resulted in the current production of *The Great Gatsby*. It premiered in Atlanta in 2007 and will be presented by Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre in 2008.

***The Great Gatsby***

Novel, published in 1925

F. Scott Fitzgerald

Ballet Concept and Production

John McFall, Atlanta Ballet Artistic Director

Choreography

John McFall and Lauri Stallings

Selected Costumes and Sets

Peter Farmer

Costumes

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Costume Shop

Music Consultant

Paul Chihara

Curator for Jazz at Lincoln Center

Phil Schaap

Sound Engineer

Clay Benning

Dramaturg

Nichole Gantshar

## Characters of the Story

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**Jay Gatsby** – a fabulously wealthy man who lives in a Gothic Mansion in West Egg. He is famous for his lavish parties, but no one knows where he comes from, what he does, or how he made his fortune.

**Daisy Buchanan** – a beautiful socialite, who lives in the fashionable East Egg district of Long Island. Daisy is charming, but also fickle and bored with her shallow way of life.

**Tom Buchanan** – the immensely wealthy husband of Daisy. Tom is an arrogant, hypocritical bully who never considers living up to the moral standard he demands from those around him.

**Nick Carraway** – a young man from Minnesota. Nick is honest, tolerant and inclined to reserve judgment.

**Jordan Baker** – the best friend of Daisy. Jordan is a beautiful, competitive golfer who is fiercely independent.

**Myrtle Wilson** – Tom's lover who possesses a passionate vitality and is desperately looking for a way to improve her situation.

**George Wilson** – the loving husband of Myrtle who is also the exhausted owner of a run-down auto shop at the edge of the valley of ashes.

# Synopsis

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## Act I

### Prologue

Jay Gatsby is reminiscing about his lost love, Daisy Buchanan, whom he has not seen in many years. Gatsby has purchased a mansion in West Egg across the sound from where Daisy lives with her wealthy husband Tom.

### Scenes I & II

The Buchanan home in East Egg is full of tumult. Daisy and her friend, Jordan Baker, have just returned from a shopping trip in the city. Tom Buchanan interrupts their revelry when he comes home, triumphant from his polo match. Daisy disregards Tom. Filled with resentment, Tom calls his mistress, Myrtle, for some attention and solace.

### Scene III

Nick Carraway is discovered in a bustling cityscape, having traveled from the Midwest to New York City to begin his career as a bond trader. He will be reunited with his cousin Daisy, and become acquainted with Daisy's friend Jordan Baker.

### Scene IV

From the city, Nick travels to his cottage in West Egg which is next door to Gatsby's grand mansion. Fitzgerald wrote of Gatsby: "He stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and as far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily, I glanced seaward and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been at the end of a dock." The green light is the beacon at the end of Daisy's dock.

### Scene V

A party breaks Gatsby's solitude. Fitzgerald wrote of the guests: "They simply force their way in and he's too polite to object." In the book, Jordan tells Nick: "I think Gatsby half expected Daisy to wander into one of his parties, some night," but Daisy never comes. And despite all the people, Gatsby is alone.

### Scene VI

Tom Buchanan schedules a visit with his mistress, Myrtle. Myrtle's husband is George Wilson, owner of a garage in Wasteland. Fitzgerald writes of where George and Myrtle live: "This is a valley of ashes...a gray land." Myrtle married George to escape her life. Now, Myrtle sees Tom Buchanan as her ticket out of her miserable life and has created an elaborate web of denial for herself. Myrtle and Tom leave for the city.

## Scene VII

Gatsby, too, has crafted his own story. He has reinvented himself, raising the money and the profile he thinks he needs to regain Daisy's love. As part of that scheme, he's involved with the illegal trade of booze that proliferated during the prohibition. Fitzgerald only hinted at Gatsby's illegal activities, but in the ballet we see the underworld that Gatsby flirts with. On their way to Tom and Myrtle's apartment, Nick and Tom stop in a speakeasy that is part of Gatsby's criminal network.

## Scene VIII

The speakeasy isn't the only place where Tom Buchanan flirts outside the law. His time with Myrtle is freer than his regimented proper life with Daisy in East Egg. He keeps a small apartment with Myrtle in the city, and it, too, is full of people who have just pushed their way into the party.

## Scene IX

Act one closes with the reality of the Buchanan's marriage bared. In the shadow of one troubled relationship, Nick and Jordan begin their romance. In a confrontational dinner, Daisy and Tom argue, leaving her in solitude.

## **Act II**

### Scene I

Nick and Jordan are on a date and arrive at Nick's cottage. Nick is inquisitive about Gatsby and asks Jordan what she might know about him. Jordan responds by opening a photo album and begins her story.

### Scene II

As Jordan tells Nick the story, the scene fades to Louisville, where Jordan and Daisy grew up. As Jordan tells the story of how Gatsby and Daisy met, we see their romance. But when Gatsby left for the war, Daisy married Tom Buchanan, succumbing to society's pressure to retain her status and fortune.

### Scene III

Gatsby would like Nick and Jordan to arrange a meeting for him with Daisy. Nick then shows Daisy a scarf that she had given Gatsby as a memento before he left for the war so many years ago. Daisy remembers it instantly. She rushes to join Gatsby and the two lovers reunite.

### Scene IV

The lovers begin their affair. They brazenly flaunt their love at one of Gatsby's parties. But Tom is there. He is outraged. His tantrum upsets everyone and ends the party.

### Scene V

Daisy runs after Tom. Gatsby, hurt that she cares for Tom, tries to stop her. "Oh, you want too much!" Daisy tells him and grabs his keys to run after Tom.

### Scene VI

With Daisy at the wheel, Gatsby and she race through the night, passing by Wilson's garage. Myrtle sees the Rolls Royce and thinks it is Tom. She races out in the road to meet him, but too distraught to see, Daisy hits Myrtle and kills her. As the rest of the characters pass through the Wasteland, they see the accident. Tom knows it is his opportunity for revenge against Gatsby. He tells George Wilson it was Gatsby who was driving the car that killed Myrtle. Tom's chauffeur opens his bag and shows George a gun. George can barely touch it. The concept of getting revenge doesn't yet seem real to him. He lifts the gun out of the bag and takes it — the idea growing in his mind as the scene ends.

### Scene VII

After the tumultuous evening, Gatsby is left again with his memories. He sits in his club chair dreaming and reminiscing about Daisy. George Wilson, now resolute, approaches and shoots Gatsby. As Gatsby lies dying, he remembers everything he has lost. Fitzgerald closes the book: "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1896. He was the only son in an upper-middle class family. He was educated at St. Paul Academy, the Newman School in New Jersey, and later at Princeton, where he was active in the school's literary circles. During his senior year, World War I captured his imagination, and he left Princeton for the army in 1917. Fitzgerald was commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant and stationed in Alabama where he met his future wife, Zelda Sayre.

Fitzgerald was discharged in February 1919 and he set off to New York City to become a writer. After a rough start making \$90 a week as an advertising copy writer, he finally got his first story published in *Smart Set* magazine. Then, in 1920 his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, was published. The novel, based on his undergraduate life at Princeton, was an instant success and established Fitzgerald as the spokesman for the "Jazz Age." He was now financially secure, and Zelda finally agreed to marry him in 1921.

The Fitzgeralds moved to New York where they were the center of the wild society he often wrote about. For the Fitzgeralds, the twenties meant a succession of parties, drinking and excessive spending. It was not uncommon for their servants to find them sleeping on the front lawn in the morning. They also spent a considerable amount of time in Paris and the French Riviera as a part of the expatriate circle that included Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos.

Fitzgerald's most impressive work, *The Great Gatsby*, was published in 1925. Although the work garnered impressive critical praise, it was not a huge popular success. Fitzgerald's popularity declined after *The Great Gatsby* and many considered him a literary has-been whose career ended with the 1920's.

In 1930, Zelda suffered the first of several nervous breakdowns. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia and was permanently institutionalized in 1931. She died in a sanitarium fire in 1947.

Throughout much of his life, Fitzgerald struggled to make the money needed to accommodate his lavish lifestyle. In 1937, under financial pressure, Fitzgerald moved to Hollywood to write screenplays. F. Scott Fitzgerald died of a heart attack in 1940. At the time of his death, he was working on a novel based on his experiences in Hollywood. Although it is unfinished, critics consider *The Last Tycoon* his most mature work.

Fitzgerald died in almost total obscurity, yet decades later was touted as one of the foremost American writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

# About the Choreography

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*Laurie Stallings – Dancemaker*

## **Background**

Creating choreography for *The Great Gatsby* led me to explore the unique age of the 1920's. Broad characteristics that artists of the 20's shared, the life of F. Scott Fitzgerald and the personalities in his novel formed the basis for my thoughts. I melded that historical background with my experience as a present day dancemaker who works with pop genres and contemporary artists. This is an exciting time for dance as age old traditions come to terms with "today."

Artists of all genres in the 20's used vivid and bold strokes to express themselves. They had strong convictions and the courage to show them in new ways. F. Scott Fitzgerald was one of those artists. Perhaps the most influential art form of the era was its music – jazz music. Fitzgerald was a highly educated individual who was greatly inspired and influenced by this music. He even coined the term "Jazz Age."

Comparing classical traditions to contemporary techniques often has to do with expectations and predictability. In traditional art, you create something with elements that people expect. In contemporary art forms, we don't worry about what's expected or predicted – it's fresh, new, searching. As sweeping contemporary forms and ideas burst onto the scene and overwhelm the audience, a need develops to personalize them and make them "iconic." They're constructed, marketed, enhanced, and condensed so the audience can say, "I know what that is."

"The American Dream" was also a big factor. The search for love and happiness – Fitzgerald had it, *Gatsby* had it and it is still alive today. It's hard work to strive for it, and it is not always reached; but the search is eternal. The human personalities in this story are also fundamental, making it relevant to any era. *The Great Gatsby* was part of the fresh contemporary art of the 20's, but the values and human traits of the characters are timeless.

## **Inspiration**

As a present day dancemaker I take all these timeless facets of human nature and let the texture of them soften me, giving me an intuitive sense of structure. There are subtleties and bold strokes in the vocabulary. It's simple, soft, yet convoluted, determining where the movement comes from and how it flows. I listened to the old, original jazz recordings of the songs and dances, and began to see the "beast" in the individual – the organic, raw, and spontaneous responses of human nature to human experience. Spontaneity and careful planning are both needed to create art. That's what dance was in the 20's and 30's.

## **Technique**

Today's dancemakers use tradition as their platform to go on to the next step. They take what is going on today – speed, hyper-communications, and contrasts in the world – and integrate them with traditional elements to create something bigger, wider, faster, and with more shifts.

Tap dancing was my entrance into dance. It thrives on rhythmic patterns that respond to your heartbeat and the rhythm of your day. There's a looseness and focus on where the movement comes from. It flows from the back and sides, not the fingers and toes.

I studied the dances of the 20's and 30's on original films – the Charleston, Susie Q, Big Apple, Dusty Dusty, and others. For the two party scenes, I used the original movement in those social dances and then gave it the capacity for more space. The dances were vertical, with most of the movement from the waist down. I incorporated the arms and made the movement bolder and more intricate.

### ***Act I***

Created as a Middle Class party

Movement is freer and full of abandon

Movement is clearer and separate components are more obvious

It isn't fancy; it's more pedestrian.

### ***Act II***

Created as an Upper Class, elite, socialite party

Movement is based entirely on the Charleston and Susie Q

It's more cosmopolitan and shows a more progressive state of mind.

The movement is based on the two social classes of the characters. Even a person's walk tells a lot about them as seen in the contrast between Tom Buchanan and George Wilson.

**Tom** – raised with money, arrogant, life is dispensable, decadent lifestyle more important than virtue

**George** – comes from "Wasteland," rooted, vulnerable, terribly honest, wears his heart on his sleeve

### **Choreographic Vocabulary**

- Movement rides between the Corps and individuals
- Movement of the Corps makes the dance churn
- An individual steps out and changes everything, illustrating how one person's decision can affect everyone's life.

#### *Gestures*

- Created new and fresh gestures, not traditional mime, to push the story forward
- Subtle, yet right there in front of you, creating tension and then leaving it hang
- This tension was especially seen in Daisy's character and in the Tablecloth scene.

### ***Working with PBT Dancers***

This is my second experience at PBT, but the first time I have had a full-length ballet restaged on another company. My choreography career is young, and most of my dance works have been new. The dancers at PBT know my vocabulary now, and I know them. I have made many changes based on PBT's artistry. It is a very different production from the original in Atlanta. My experience as a dancer with Hubbard Street Dance Theater was like that. Nothing was ever replicated exactly. It was tailored to the individuals dancing the work and reflected their individual artistry. As a dancer, I worked like that and now as a dancemaker, that's how I work.

# Songs of the "Jazz Age"

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## Act I

### **Prologue: Gatsby dreams and is wrapped in his memories of Daisy**

Jay Gatsby & Daisy Buchanan

#### *If I Had a Talking Picture of You*

Lew Brown, Buddy Desylva & Ray Henderson

### **Buchanan Home: A typical afternoon at the grand home in East Egg**

Daisy Buchanan, Jordan Baker, Tom Buchanan & Maid Ensemble

*Petite* Raymond Scott

*I'd Love It* Will Hudson & Don Redman

*Whitman Stomp* Jo Trent & Fats Waller

*Awful Sad* Duke Ellington

### **Tom's Phone Call: Tom, angry with his wife, seeks solace with his mistress**

Tom Buchanan, Myrtle Wilson & George Wilson

*Muggles* Louis Armstrong

### **Cityscape: A bustling urban New York**

Nick Carraway, Jordan Baker, Daisy Buchanan, Cop,  
Fashion Designer & Assistants, Model, Street Musician, Shoe Shine Fellow,  
Mother w/infant, High Society Lady, College Boy & Girl, Scooter Boy,  
Business Man, Nun & Parochial Students

*Kansas City Stomp* Jelly Roll Morton

### **Longing Solo: Gatsby reaches out for the Green Light**

Jay Gatsby

*Blue Turning Grey Over You* Andy Razaf & Fats Waller

### **1<sup>st</sup> Party: Gatsby's veranda**

Jay Gatsby, Jordan Baker, Nick Carraway, Oilley, Party Guest Ensemble

*Happy Feet* Milton Ager & Jack Yellen

*Quality Shout* Alex Hill

*Crazeology* Bud Freeman

*I Want to be Loved by You* Bert Kalmar, Henry Ruby, Herbert Stothart

### **Wasteland: George's garage, which is also his home with his wife Myrtle**

George Wilson, Myrtle Wilson, Tom Buchanan, Chauffeur,  
George's Assistant, Homeless Man & Wasteland Children

*The Mooche* Irving Mills

**Speakeasy: A prohibition bar in a New York basement**

Jay Gatsby, Tom Buchanan, George Wilson, Male Ensemble

*Uncle Willie's Tune* Raymond Scott

**Myrtle & Tom's Apartment: In Hell's Kitchen**

Tom Buchanan, Myrtle Wilson, Apartment Guest Ensemble

*Twilight Zone* Raymond Scott

*Egyptian Fantasy* Sidney Bechet & John Reid

**Club 21: Dining out with the Buchanans**

Daisy Buchanan, Tom Buchanan, Nick Carraway & Jordan Baker

*Tablecloth* Clay Benning

**Act II**

**Nick & Jordan: On a date**

Nick Carraway & Jordan Baker

*Liza* Eddie Condon & George Arr Rilling

**Louisville Flashback: The History of Daisy & Gatsby**

Jay Gatsby, Daisy Buchanan, Tom Buchanan, Chauffeur, Young Daisy Buchanan, Young Jordan Baker, Debutantes, Military Men, Top Hat & Cane Men

*Untitled* Paul Chihara

*Arabian Nights* Herbert Reynolds

*Two Way Stretch* Raymond Scott

**Cottage Meeting: Jordan and Nick retrieve Daisy for Gatsby**

Jay Gatsby, Nick Carraway, Jordan Baker & Daisy Buchanan

*Humpty Dumpty* Fud Livingston

*My Heart Stood Still* Lorenz Hart & Richard Rogers

*Rhapsody in Blue* George Gershwin

**2nd Party: High Society Party**

Jay Gatsby, Daisy Buchanan, Nick Carraway, Jordan Baker, Tom Buchanan, Party Guest Ensemble

*Charleston* James P. Johnson & R C McPhearson

*What'll I Do* Irving Berlin

*Pulse* Clay Benning

**Rolls Royce: Daisy gets the keys from Gatsby to follow Tom**

Daisy Buchanan, Jordan Baker, Nick Carraway & Jay Gatsby

*The Key* Clay Benning

**Wasteland: George fights for Myrtle**

George Wilson, Myrtle Wilson, Tom Buchanan, Jay Gatsby, Daisy Buchanan,  
Chauffeur & Homeless Man

*Peridido Street Blues* Lillian Hardin Armstrong

*East St. Louis Toodle* Duke Ellington

**Epilogue: Gatsby waits in expectation**

Jay Gatsby, Daisy Buchanan, Tom Buchanan, Nick Carraway, Jordan Baker,  
Myrtle Wilson, George Wilson, Ensemble

*Memories of You* Eubie Blake & Andy Razaf

*What a Wonderful World* Robert Thiele & George David Weiss

## About the Production

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*John McFall, Artistic Director of Atlanta Ballet*

Artistic Director John McFall of Atlanta Ballet conceived and produced the current production of *The Great Gatsby*, which premiered in February of 2007 in Atlanta. To begin, he secured Peter Farmer's beautiful sets and costumes from Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. They had been commissioned by Patricia Wilde, former PBT Artistic Director, for a production that would mark this Company's Opening Night in October, 1987 at Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's new home, the historically renovated Benedum Center for the Performing Arts in the Cultural District of downtown Pittsburgh. This launched McFall's process of adaptation and re-formation to create his version of *The Great Gatsby*. He graciously shared some of his thoughts about his creative process:

"As I envisioned the kind of production that I wanted to create, I used three fundamental principles to guide me in adapting the *physicals* (sets, scenery and costumes) and telling the story.

- 1) The music landscape would include original period recordings, not a ballet orchestra.
- 2) *The Great Gatsby* was set in a time that was an incredibly important era in the history of our country.
- 3) Human emotions and relationships among the characters will tell the story without the need for every little detail.

We did a lot of research on the music for this ballet. Art always reflects the period, and music did more to represent those times than any other art form. The music written and performed in the 1920's, the Jazz Age, has influenced this country for generations. It is the most critical element in this ballet for telling the story. We've used theatrical storytelling to depict this very American story. It is an American perspective that focuses on characters' feelings, aspirations, emotions and relationships. The music is used to paint the emotional architecture that you have built, expressing the varying emotions of each character and painting the relationships that you have etched between those characters. That is of the utmost importance.

Each of the pieces and songs chosen captures the spirit and flavor of this Jazz Age in history and heightens the drama of the relationships while still leaving something to the imagination. In a few cases when no music could be found to express the nuances of the scene, a soundscape became the paint for the emotional canvas.

- *Tablecloth: The tension in the air as Nick and Jordan dine at Club 21 with the Buchanans is only heightened by the tinkling sound of the ever popular music box with the dancing ballerina. I remember being fascinated by the one my mother owned.*
- *Tom Buchanan's solo: At the High Society Party in Act II Tom's realization of Daisy's relationship with Jay Gatsby throws him into an emotional solo filled with anger and hatred that is accompanied only by the pounding of a heartbeat.*
- *Key Oleo: Daisy's concern over Tom's state prompts her frantic efforts to get the keys to Gatsby's car in order to go after him. The staccato sounds of tapping shoes underscore her mounting panic.*

Historically, the importance of events from the 1920's on the evolution of American society is astounding. World War I was just over, and the new social climate had a tremendous impact on women. They had just gotten the right to vote. Hairstyles changed to shorter bobbed styles and dresses became shorter and slinkier; it was the era of the *flapper*. Women were also entering the work place in larger numbers to launch careers instead of helping the war effort as they had been. It is this new urban society setting that charges the *Gatsby* story. It is all about the urban energy in New York City and other coastal cities. It is an affluent energy that flourished and then crashed with the stock market in 1929. This kind of energy did not reach rural America until much later, partly due to the lack of communications technology.

Since in a ballet you cannot depict every detail, we depend on the scenery, costumes, lighting, and especially the music, to emphasize the physical emotion, letting that move the story. In *The Great Gatsby* the emotions and relationships of seven characters can tell the whole story.

<i>Jay Gatsby</i>	<i>Racketeer and romantic idealist who amasses the wealth he thinks will win back the girl he has been dreaming of all these years</i>
<i>Daisy Buchanan</i>	<i>"Golden Girl" of Gatsby's dreams, Nick's cousin and Tom's wife, wealthy and immersed in her material world</i>
<i>Jordan Baker</i>	<i>Daisy's best friend, a young woman golfer, independent career woman</i>
<i>Nick Carraway</i>	<i>Narrator and moral arbiter of the story</i>
<i>Tom Buchanan</i>	<i>Daisy's husband, wealthy, arrogant, chauvinistic</i>
<i>Myrtle Wilson</i>	<i>Tom's mistress, aspires to a better material life</i>
<i>George Wilson</i>	<i>Myrtle's husband, mechanic and owner of a garage in Wasteland</i>

As a production moves from one theater to another, it often has to be restaged to accommodate different facilities and dance companies, while maintaining the integrity of the art form.

## Plot, Theme and Character

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The exercises in this section focus on the elements of plot, theme, and character. Though dramatic structure in its strictest definition does not exist in ballet, a story ballet does share the elements of plot, theme and character.

These activities make references to Fitzgerald's text, as well as the adaptations of the novel *The Great Gatsby*, and help to point out the differences between the novel and the ballet. These activities are an excellent introduction to the ballet, and the ideas discussed in this section will support activities in other sections of this handbook.

## **Plot, Theme and Character: Activity 1**

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The most helpful exercise for your students is to familiarize them with the characters and story of *The Great Gatsby*. Those students who have studied Fitzgerald's novel may only need a brief review of the characters and plot. Other students will benefit from reading the synopsis of the ballet or watching one of the movie versions.

**Characters of the Story** and the **Synopsis** are on pages 16 and 17 of this Handbook.

## Plot, Theme and Character: Activity 2

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Adapting a novel to a different medium can be a difficult process. Whether a novel is developed into a play, a movie, or in this case, a ballet, change is almost inevitable. Often characters are added or eliminated, dialogue is altered, or the setting is changed.

When the choreographers created this ballet, they were challenged to transform a story told in words into a story told through dance. Using dance, pantomime, music, props and scenery, the choreographers portray the story of *The Great Gatsby*.

Here are some discussion points to compare the novel to the ballet:

- What methods did the choreographers use to introduce the story?
- How was this different from Nick Carraway's introduction in the novel?
- Why do you think the choreographers made these changes?
  
- Do you feel the choreography successfully captured the spirit of the novel?
- Which characters in the ballet do you feel were the most memorable?
- Are they the same characters that most impressed you in the novel?

## **Plot, Theme and Character: Activity 3**

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**Signs of the Times: The 1920's** on page 32 lists many changes, events, inventions, and developments that happened in the 1920's that continue to impact our lives today.

Choose one of two of these important **Signs** and research its progress through the generations to today – 2008. What affect has it had on our society? Do you consider it beneficial or not?

Choose on of these **Signs** and tell how it has directly affected you and your family. How would your life be different if this **Sign** had not occurred?

## Signs of the Times: The 1920's

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- The 1920's was a time of radical change – population rose, the gross national product skyrocketed, new technology was developed and mass media emerged.
- Population grew from 106,466,000 in 1920 to 121,770,000 in 1921.
- The economy took off in 1921 and in eight years the GNP grew 40 percent with little inflation.
- Consumption of electric power doubled between 1921 and 1929. Radios, refrigerators, electric stoves, washing machines and vacuum cleaners became everyday household items.
- New products that emerged in the 1920's included Kellogg's All-Bran, Kleenex, Scotch Tape, 16mm film, Gerber baby food, Mickey Mouse, Band-Aids, Peter Pan peanut butter, Drano, Schick razors, and Baby Ruth candy bars (named after Grover Cleveland's daughter).
- In 1924 a brand-new Model T Ford cost \$290.
- Commercial airline services began in the 1920's.
- Prohibition began on January 16, 1920 and lasted until December 5, 1933. The Eighteenth Amendment forbade the manufacture, sale or transport of intoxicating liquor.
- Young women wore short skirts and slim, low-waisted dresses. They shocked their elders by abandoning their corsets, choosing silk over cotton stockings, and patronizing "beauty shoppes." The most fashionable young women bobbed their hair and plucked their eyebrows.
- Raccoon fur coats were the rage for both men and women.
- Fads of the 1920's included crossword puzzles (bought with pencils attached), dance marathons, ouija boards, mah-jongg (1.5 million sets were sold in 1923), marathon flagpole sitting, limerick contests, baseball cards and athletic heroes (Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, Gene Tunney, Bobby Jones, Helen Wills, Johnny Weismuller, Red Grange).
- The first beauty pageant took place in 1921 in Atlantic City. Contestants were permitted to wear daring one-piece bathing suits and bare their legs.

- Baseball continued to be very popular, despite the scandal over the fixed World Series of 1919. In 1921, the Yankees attracted 1, 289, 443 fans to the Polo Grounds. Yankee Stadium was built in 1923.
- Golf, tennis and boxing were also extremely popular.
- The American Professional Football Association was formed in 1920 but games were poorly attended. College football continued to be a national obsession.
- Movies were extremely popular and produced a new set of idols including the "Sheik" Rudolph Valentino, the "It Girl" Clara Bow, Mary Pickford, Theda Bara, Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and John Barrymore.
- Pittsburgh's KDKA became the first licensed radio station in the United States in 1920.
- Radio gave everyone diverse entertainment that included broadcasts such as live theatre, sporting events, concerts, jazz and popular evangelists. People received up-to-date news such as presidential speeches and Lindbergh's first flights.
- The most popular song in 1924 was "Yes! We Have No Bananas!"

## Music, Movement and Mime

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Music and movement are the essence of dance, and in classical ballet there is the added dimension of *pantomime*, gestures which can be literal or symbolic. In this section, you will find activities designed to acquaint your students with the ballet's music and to introduce them to the choreographic process.

On page 40 you will find a Classic Mime Worksheet. This worksheet explains the basic language of classical mime. This information will be useful to your students for several of the activities in this section.

# Music Excerpts and Activity

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Listed below are the musical excerpts that are included on the enclosed CD. After listening to the music and reading the synopsis, consider and discuss the following points.

- 1) Compare the period recordings with today's popular music genres.
  - What differences do you hear in the style of the music and the sound of the instruments and voices? Why do you think that is?
- 2) Most of the music is from original 1920's period recordings. In some instances, creator John McFall did not find exactly what he wanted to set the mood or create tension.
  - Band 4 is a newly composed piece to set a mood. Why do you think that this works better than a period piece?
  - Bands 5 and 9 are soundscapes. Can you determine what the sounds represent and why those sounds were used in those particular scenes? Be sure to listen for them in the ballet. Did they accomplish their purpose?

## Act I

Band 1	Scene III – Cityscape: A bustling urban New York <i>Kansas City Stomp</i>
Band 2	Scene IV – Longing Solo: Gatsby reaches out for the Green Light <i>Blue Turning Grey Over You</i>
Band 3	Scene V – 1 <sup>st</sup> Party: Gatsby's Veranda <i>Happy Feet</i> <i>I Want to be Loved by You</i>
Band 4	Scene VIII – Myrtle & Tom's Apartment: In Hell's Kitchen <i>Egyptian Fantasy</i>
Band 5	Scene IX – Club 21: Dining Out with the Buchanans <i>Tablecloth</i> – Clay Benning

## Act II

Band 6	Scene II - Louisville Flashback: The History of Daisy & Gatsby <i>Untitled</i> – Paul Chihara
Band 7	Scene III – Cottage Meeting: Jordan and Nick retrieve Daisy for Gatsby <i>Rhapsody in Blue</i>
Band 8	Scene IV – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Party: High Society Party <i>Charleston</i>
Band 9	Scene IV – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Party: High Society Party <i>What'll I Do</i>
Band 10	Scene IV – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Party: High Society Party <i>Pulse</i> – Clay Benning Scene V – Rolls Royce: Daisy gets the keys from Gatsby to follow Tom <i>The Key</i> – Clay Benning

# Music, Movement and Mime: Activity 1

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In Act I of *The Great Gatsby*, Jay Gatsby performs a solo based on this passage from the book, as observed by narrator, Nick Carraway:

*“...he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and as far as I was from him I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock.”* (end of Chapter 1)

Later it is revealed that the green light is the light at the end of the Buchanan's dock across the bay and Gatsby is yearning for his lost love, Daisy.

The solo is performed to the song “*Blue Turning Grey Over You.*” Have your students listen to this selection on the enclosed CD and discuss how the feeling of **yearning** is expressed in the music.

Have students name popular songs that they enjoy that express a similar sentiment and discuss how the songs they name might be used for choreography. Would the chosen music fit in to the story of *The Great Gatsby*? Why or why not?

## Music, Movement and Mime: Activity 2

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The Charleston was a popular dance during the 1920's. It was danced by women and men, in partners and solo. Much of the choreography of *The Great Gatsby* has a Charleston influence and often the dancers perform a stylized version of the Charleston. In the party scene of Act II, the song “*Charleston*” by James P. Johnson and R.C. McPherson is used. Have your students listen to this selection on the enclosed CD.

The Charleston has four basic steps, based on walking. Have your students give these movements a try. It is easy to do the Charleston in a small space. The steps are as follows:

1. Step forward with the right foot.
2. Touch forward with left toe. (\*Note: this is a touch and not a complete step. This is important so that the foot is ready to move back or forward easily for the next dance move.)
3. Step back with the left foot.
4. Touch back with right toe.

Once the students have tried the basic Charleston, they can add accent moves such as moving their arms in swinging opposition or placing one hand on the hip and wiggling the opposite hand's pointer finger at head level. The Charleston can be done in straight lines or turning. As long as the original rhythm is kept, students can experiment with additional accent moves of their choosing.

After trying the Charleston, have your students discuss how the movements and the music of the Charleston go together. Did they enjoy dancing the Charleston? Ask them if there are any popular songs that they can think of that have a corresponding dance. Compare and contrast these current dances with the Charleston.

## Music, Movement and Mime: Activity 3

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Choreography, like many other art forms, is concerned with content, form, technique and projection. In dance, *content* is the central concern of the work, *form* the shape, *technique* the technical ability of the dancer, and *projection* the bridge of communication between the audience and the performer. A choreographer will experiment extensively with movement in order to create a new piece of work. Try the following movement exploration assignments.

Pick an inanimate object from the classroom. React to the object in the following ways:

Move toward	Under	Through	As if it were not there
Away	Over	Around	From bottom to top

Relate to another student in the following manner:

Move toward	Under	Through
Over	With	Around
Away	In opposition	As if they were not there

Question and Answer. One student initiates a movement, other students respond by:

Mirroring	Contrasting
Extending	Reversing

Put your arm out. Gather an imaginary something and bring it back into your body. Try it with different intentions, such as:

Evil	Caring	Sneaking	Teasing
Hoarding	Loving	Destroying	Saving

What are some others that you could try?

## Music, Movement and Mime: Activity 4

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In the absence of dialogue, a story ballet relies primarily on pantomime for exposition. Pantomime helps convey character, and every gesture is important for telling the story.

In classical ballet there is a standard mime used by every ballet company. For example, a dancer from Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre and a dancer from the Paris Opera Ballet would mime the word "love" in exactly the same way. The Classic Mime Worksheet on page 40 explains some basic mime gestures.

Choreographer Lauri Stallings states specifically that she did not use classical mime in *The Great Gatsby*. She created new and fresh gestures to move the story forward.

On page 41 are several quotes from *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Using mime and gestures, do an exposition of these quotes in the following ways:

- ❖ **Before seeing the ballet:** Use the Classic Mime Worksheet, then Create your own gestures
  
- ❖ **After seeing the ballet:** Use the style of choreographer Lauri Stallings

# Classic Mime Worksheet

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<b>I</b>	point to yourself
<b>King</b>	hand gestures on sides of head in form of crown
<b>Devil</b>	two gestures on top of head/fingers in shape of horns
<b>Love</b>	two hands on heart
<b>Knocking</b>	tap fist in hand three times
<b>Sewing</b>	pull needle through fabric
<b>You/He/She</b>	gesture to other person palm up
<b>Think</b>	touch your temple
<b>See</b>	point to each eye
<b>Beautiful/Handsome</b>	circle your face/draw hand down face
<b>Crazy</b>	circle around your ear
<b>Marry</b>	point to your ring finger
<b>True/Faithful</b>	hold two fingers high
<b>Dress</b>	gesture along sides of clothing
<b>Hear</b>	cup your ear with your hand
<b>Someone</b>	hold your first finger up
<b>Enter</b>	sweeping gesture with both arms across your body
<b>Cry</b>	gesture with all fingers from eyes
<b>Mice/Rats</b>	moving fingers as whiskers
<b>Dance</b>	circling hands overhead
<b>Die/dead</b>	cross arms-hands in fist
<b>Yes</b>	nod head
<b>No</b>	turn head or gesture with arms

## Worksheet: Quotes from *The Great Gatsby* Novel

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"Just because I'm stronger and more of a man than you are."

"I'm p-paralyzed with happiness."

"I like her," said Daisy. "I think she's lovely."  
"Her voice is full of money," he said suddenly.

"They're such beautiful shirts," she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds.  
"It makes me sad because I've never seen such – such beautiful shirts before."

"Oh, you want too much!" she cried to Gatsby. "I love you now – it's that though. I can't help what's past." She began to sob helplessly. "I did love him once – but I loved you too."

"Listen," Tom said, shaking him a little. "I just got here a minute ago, from New York. I was bringing that coupe we've been talking about. That little yellow car I was driving this afternoon wasn't mine – do you hear? I haven't seen it all afternoon."

## **Costumes, Scenery and Lighting**

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In his book Perceiving the Arts, Dennis Sporre suggests that dance is essentially a visual and theatrical experience and part of our response is to those theatrical elements of dance that are manifested in the performance.

In dance, as in theater, technical elements come together to create the spectacle of production, and we should look at costumes, scenery and lighting as an important part of dance. The activities in this section should encourage students to consider the technical elements of dance.

On page 43 there is a list of colors traditionally used in theater to help convey meaning and character. Share this information with your students so they can get a feel for the meaning of colors, or what colors have come to represent and symbolize in theater. Use the information for reference while completing the following activities about costumes, scenery and lighting.

# The Meaning of Color Worksheet

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**White** is a symbol of light, purity, chastity, innocence, truth, modesty, peace, femininity, delicacy, sacrifice and infirmity. White is cold, hard, cruel and sometimes mournful.

**Black**, in many respects, is opposed to white. It expresses gloom, darkness, woe, night, death, dread, mystery, horror, terror, evil, wickedness, crime and mourning.

**Gray**, one of the black and white series, is less severe than black. Gray symbolizes humility, melancholy, resolution, solemnity, age, penance and mature judgment.

**Red** is classified as a warm color and suggests blood, heat, fire, anger, hatred, cruelty, murder, tragedy, shame and destruction. Red can also symbolize power, vigor, health and passion.

**Orange** is also a warm color. It is a symbol of autumn, harvest, warmth, plenty, laughter and contentment.

**Yellow** is a warm color which suggests heat, liveliness, gaiety, gaudiness, and in some instances, cowardice, indecency, decay, deceit and sickness.

**Brown** can symbolize autumn, harvest, warmth, plenty, laughter and contentment.

**Green** suggests youth, vigor, spring, immortality, peace, solitude, life, victory, and sometimes, jealousy. Green is the color of hope and promise.

**Blue** symbolizes coldness, melancholy, the sky, the sea, heaven, hope, constancy, fidelity, serenity, generosity, intelligence, truth, spirituality and aristocracy.

**Violet** signifies sadness, quietness, purity, love, sentimentality, royalty and wealth.

**Purple** suggests royalty, heroic virtue and wealth.

## **Costumes, Scenery and Lighting: Activity 1**

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A costume designer gleans ideas for designs by familiarizing themselves with the plot, theme and characters, and by listening to the music and observing the choreography. In the case of *The Great Gatsby*, the costume designer also had to research the clothing styles of the 1920's.

The 1920's were a time of outrageous fashions, especially for women. Skirts were shorter than ever. Cloche hats, silk stockings, costume jewelry, and bobbed hair were popular. Young men wore lounge suits, creased and cuffed trousers, saddle shoes, sharp-brimmed hats, and raccoon fur coats.

For this activity, divide into small groups and choose a character from *The Great Gatsby*. Based on your interpretation of the character, determine how that character should be dressed. Remember to consider the fashions of the time and choice of color. Don't forget that the dancers need to be able to move in the costumes.

Your school library should have books on fashion in the 1920's which will be very helpful for this project.

## Costumes, Scenery and Lighting: Activity 2

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Noted designer Peter Farmer created nine sets and one-hundred twenty costume designs for *The Great Gatsby* in 1987. He had to create costumes with a 1920's feel – but they could not restrict the dancers' movements. This was difficult because the fashions of the 1920's were long and straight – not exactly perfect for ballet dancing.

Enclosed are two sketches by costume designer Peter Farmer. There is a fabric swatch attached to Sketch A of the actual material from which the dress was made. Pass this sketch around to your students to examine the quality, texture, color and feel of the fabric. Remind your students that often a design will have minor changes as it goes from "page to stage." When you attend the ballet, see if you can recognize this dress in the production.

Sketch B is a drawing of Daisy's dress in the flashback scene. Allow students to decide which color and type of fabric they would use on this dress. Designer Peter Farmer decided to make it out of two layers of yellow silk organza. Have your students locate the dress during the performance and decide how their fabric/color choices compare to what the designer chose. What other uses of this dress design do you see?

## Costumes, Scenery and Lighting: Activity 3

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After the central idea of the dance has been established, the next step is devising a visual accompaniment. There are five general ways that a designer can approach set design.

1. Neutral background – no particular feature of pattern or shape
2. Decorative scenery – no more than a picture to look at
3. Descriptive scenery – a background establishing the place of the action
4. Atmospheric scenery – a suggestion of mystery or nostalgia, the unusual or highly dramatic
5. Active background – for example, volcano flames or a growing Christmas tree

Three settings dominate *The Great Gatsby*:

1. The resplendent mansion of Tom Buchanan at East Egg
  2. Wasteland where George and Myrtle Wilson reside
  3. The luxurious but déclassé castle of Gatsby.
- Have your students choose one of these three settings and design a set for it.
  - Research what the chosen setting should look like.
  - Write a description of the intended visual effect and what elements the stage picture should contain. Include possible backgrounds, scenic units, and anything that may appear on the stage.
  - Draw a ground plan, including anything that touches the floor or hangs above it.
  - Make sketches of possibilities for scenery.
  - Assuming that you are planning to have someone else build and paint the scenery, provide *elevations* – detailed drawings with instructions about sizes, construction and painting.
  - Allow your imagination to take over, unlike a real set designer you don't have to worry about budget restrictions!

## **Follow-Up Activities**

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The follow-up activities may be the most important part of the field trip experience. They provide the teacher with a method of evaluation, and they provide the student an opportunity to extend his or her experience.

## Follow-Up Activity 1

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The most revealing follow-up to a performance is to have students write a review of the performance. A review provides the teacher with an opportunity to evaluate student involvement, and it gives students a chance to apply their newly-acquired knowledge.

This activity has two parts:

- 1) Read a review of the ballet from a newspaper to get a feeling for how a review is written and how a critic observes.
- 2) Write your own review of the performance, applying what you have learned about music, choreography and the technical elements of a dance performance. Some points to consider when writing a review.
  - a. How did the ballet compare with students' expectations, or how did it compare to another dance performance that you may have seen?
  - b. How would you evaluate the costumes, scenery and lighting?
  - c. Did all of the elements come together to create an exciting production?
  - d. How was the music?
  - e. Did any dancer stand out because of their characterization or technique?
  - f. Did the choreographer's casting choices fit your interpretations of the characters?
  - g. How did the audience respond?

## Follow-Up Activity 2

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Do you think you might want to work for a ballet company someday? The most obvious career opportunity in ballet is that of a dancer, but a ballet company is not made up of dancers alone. It takes many other talented people behind the scenes for a ballet to make it to the stage.

After you have seen *The Great Gatsby* list as many career opportunities you think could be found in an arts organization. Don't forget to consider music, administration, publicity, costumes, doctors, etc.

Compare your list with the job descriptions listed on the next page. How many of these career positions would not require an accomplished background in dance?

# Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Job Descriptions

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- **Artistic Director:** *The guiding force behind the company. Responsible for the artistic growth and direction of the organization. Among other things, the artistic director selects the dancers for the company and determines what the ballet company will perform each season.*
- **Executive Director:** *Responsible for the financial and professional success of the company. Oversees all non-artistic personnel.*
- **Choreographer:** *Responsible for creating new ballets for the company to perform.*
- **Conductor:** *Auditions and selects musicians for the PBT Orchestra. Conducts the orchestra for the performances. Arranges music and determines the size of the orchestra for the piece. Works with dancers and ballet masters on tempo. Controls the tempo and sound of the orchestra while considering the dancers' needs.*
- **Composer:** *Collaborates with choreographers to compose original music for ballets.*
- **Ballet Master:** *Advises the Artistic Director on scheduling and casting. Scouts for new talent and choreography. Works with the dancers on a regular basis: teaching company class, rehearsing upcoming ballets, and constantly coaching and refining the dancers' work.*
- **Assistant to the Artistic Director:** *This position could actually be called "Coordinator for the Artistic Staff" because the person in this position assists the Artistic Director, Choreographer, Conductor and Ballet Masters. Other responsibilities include Workman's Compensation for the dancers, negotiating music rights, and handling logistics for visiting artists.*
- **Company Pianist:** *A pianist who works with the company on a daily basis playing music for Company class and rehearsals.*
- **Production Manager:** *Responsible for making the production look the way the Artistic Director perceives it to look. Negotiates with designers and union personnel.*

- **Stage Manager:** *Assists the production manager and "calls" the shows. The Stage Manager gives everyone their cues during the performance, including lighting technicians, dancers, conductor, and stagehands responsible for props and sets. He runs the show. He is also responsible for the audio and video requirements for the company.*
- **Costumier:** *Makes new costumes for ballets and alters existing costumes to fit other dancers. PBT's Costumier also designs costumes and creates her own patterns out of plain brown paper.*
- **Director of Marketing:** *Responsible for all income goals. Oversees Public Relations, Subscriptions, Group Sales and Telemarketing.*
- **Director of Public Relations:** *Pitches story ideas to the media and is responsible for most of the written communication to PBT's audiences.*
- **Director of Arts Education:** *Responsible for developing education materials about the productions and for implementing arts education programs within schools and the community.*
- **Telemarketing Manager:** *Oversees phone representatives who seek subscriptions and request contributions.*
- **Ticketing Manager:** *Handles seating and ticketing for ballet subscribers as well as all customer service opportunities.*
- **Director of Development:** *Responsible for soliciting contributions from corporations, foundations and individuals.*
- **Tour Manager:** *Responsible for booking PBT on national and international tours. Handles all logistics of the dancers' itinerary.*
- **Director of Finance:** *Accountant for the Ballet. Oversees the budget by tracking expenses, income and cash flow.*
- **School Director:** *Manages all aspects of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School including training, recruiting and scholarships.*
- **Ballet Teacher:** *Responsible for teaching dance to children and adults through PBT School.*

# Glossary

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**ballerina (bah-luh-ree'nah)** A leading female dancer of a ballet company. A dancer earns the title ballerina through years of hard work and great dancing.

**balancé (ba-lahn-say')** A rocking step much like a pas de valse and is an alternation of balance, shifting weight from one foot to another.

**ballet (bah-lay')** From the Italian *ballare*, to dance.

**chainés or chainés déboulés (sheh-nay' day-boo-lay')** A series of turns on pointe or demi-pointe executed in a line or in a circle, in which the feet remain close to the floor and the weight is transferred rapidly and almost imperceptibly from one foot to the other as the body revolves.

**choreographer (cor-ee-og'ra-fer)** Someone who makes dances. Originally the word meant someone who records dances, but has come to mean the person responsible for the design of movement in ballet.

**classic (klas'ik)** When applied to ballet, the word classic is not the contrary of Romantic. Classic applies to a rigorous basic vocabulary of steps and movements capable of infinite variations and a system of instruction that makes such variation possible for individual dancers.

**corps de ballet (core, di, bah-lay')** Dancers who appear only in large groups. The corps de ballet is the backbone of every ballet company.

**divertissement (di-ver-tis-mah')** A section of a ballet consisting of dances that have no connection with the plot.

**entrechat (an-tray-shah')** Probably from the Italian *intrecciare*, to weave to braid. A beating step of elevation in which the dancer jumps straight in the air from a plié and crosses his feet a number of times, making a weaving motion in the air.

**jeté (zhe-tay')** From the French *jeter*, to throw. This is a jump in which the weight of the body is thrown from one foot to the other.

**pas de deux (pah, duh, duh')** A dance for two people.

**piqué (pee-kay')** Executed by stepping directly on the point or demi-pointe of the working foot in any desired direction or position with the other foot raised in the air.

**pirouette (peer-oo-wet')** A complete turn of the body on one foot.

**plié (plee-ay')** From the French *plier*, to bend. In the classic dance, this is a bending of the knees, with the knees wide open and the feet turned outward. The function of the plié in the dancer's body is like the function of the springs in an automobile, and is necessary for the development of flexibility.

**port de bras (port, duh, brah')** In ballet, the movement or carriage of the arms.

**sauté (soh-tay')** Jumped or jumping.

**tutu (too'too)** Slang term for the very short petticoat worn by a dancer in the interest of modesty.

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