



The
NUTCRACKER

PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

Student Matinee - December 7, 2018

Teacher Resource Guide

PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

Teacher Resource Guide

Terrence S. Orr's



Benedum Center for the Performing Arts

November 30 - December 27, 2018

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CONTENTS

4	Message from the Artistic Director
5	About the Ballet
6	Did You Know? Hoffmann's <i>The Nutcracker and the Mouse King</i>
6	Marie or Clara?
7	Important Dates for <i>The Nutcracker</i> Ballet
7	The Composer: Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky
8	A <i>Nutcracker</i> Innovation: The Celesta
9	Did You Know? Tchaikovsky's <i>Nutcracker</i>
9	Cast List and Setting for PBT's <i>The Nutcracker</i>
10	Synopsis
11	The Pittsburgh Connection
13	The Choreography
15	Signature Steps— <i>Pirouette</i> and <i>Balancé</i>
16	The Costumes
18	The Scenic Design
18	Getting to Know PBT's Dancers
19	The Benedum Center
19	Accessibility
20	<i>Nutcracker</i> Word Search
21	It's <i>Nutcracker</i> Time! Clock Activities
23	<i>Kaufmann's Christmas Storybook</i>
24	<i>Nutcracker</i> Map Activity
25	Stick Puppets Template/Character Guide
26	Listening Guide
27	Glossary of Musical Terms
28	Entry Pointes (Aligned with PDE Academic Standards)
29	PA Core Standards for English Language Arts PDE Academic Standards 1.1-1.5)
31	PA Core Standards for Mathematics (PDE Academic Standards 2.1-2.11)
33	Science and Technology and Engineering (PDE Academic Standards 3.1-3.4)
34	History (PDE Academic Standards 8.1-8.4)
35	Arts and Humanities (PDE Academic Standards 9.1-9.4)
36	Elementary Synopsis
37	Word Search Answer Key
38	Do's and Don'ts of Theater Etiquette

PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

November 2018

Dear Educator:

This is a particularly busy time of year for students and teachers, both at school and at home. So we especially appreciate that you have taken the time to plan for, organize, and execute a visit to the Benedum Center to see Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's *The Nutcracker*. We know you will not be disappointed—it is one of Pittsburgh's favorite holiday traditions.

But *The Nutcracker* is more than a holiday activity for your class. We invite you to explore this ballet, one of the most beloved of all time, even before you come to the Benedum. This resource guide for *The Nutcracker* includes:

- background information about the history of the original ballet and about PBT's unique Pittsburgh-themed version.
- lesson prompts—which we call Entry Pointes—aligned with PDE academic standards, to assist you in extending the experience of *The Nutcracker* into your classroom. These prompts will help you engage students in history by exploring the Pittsburgh elements of the ballet, connect students with science and math through thematic and theater-based activities, and even encourage students to explore the cultures represented in the ballet's ethnic dances.
- listening guide and suggestions for musical activities that bring Tchaikovsky's masterpiece into closer focus. Select excerpts of Tchaikovsky's music are available on our Educator Portal on our website.

We offer dozens of options to help prepare your students for their experience at the Benedum and we hope you will take advantage of all the learning opportunities associated with attending a ballet.

We welcome you to the theater on December 7th to discover *The Nutcracker* and the art and discipline of ballet. Thank you for your commitment to incorporating the arts into your curriculum and to promoting arts experiences for your students. Let us know how we can help you engage, connect, and explore the arts with your classroom.

This year we are also thrilled and proud to present a sensory-friendly performance of *The Nutcracker* on December 27, 2018 at 2 pm. Please visit our website for more information (<http://www.pbt.org/sensory-friendly-performances>) and pass the word to friends and colleagues who might know or work with children or adults who might benefit from this performance.

We wish you a successful school year and look forward to seeing you at the Benedum!

Sincerely,



Terrence S. Orr
Artistic Director

About the Ballet

The Nutcracker ballet was created in 1892 in Russia, which at the time was ruled by a Czar. In the capitol, St. Petersburg, the famous Imperial Theatre School and the Mariinsky Theater were supported by the royal family. Respect for art and music was a highly regarded czarist tradition.

The Imperial Theater regularly created music, opera and ballet programs for the entertainment of the Czar. The Theater's director, I. A. Vsevolozhsky, decided to create a ballet based on a rather dark story, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*.

Written in 1816 by German Romantic author E.T.A. Hoffmann, the story was widely known in Russia. It had been adapted in 1844 by French author Alexandre Dumas (author of *The Three Musketeers*), whose version is seen by some as a simpler, lighter and less frightening story.

Marius Petipa, the ballet master at the Imperial School, was given the task of translating the story into ballet. Because he didn't read German, he wasn't familiar with Hoffmann's book and instead used Dumas' revision (*Histoire d'un casse-noisette*) as the basis for the ballet.

Vsevolozhsky contracted with Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky to create the score. Petipa and Tchaikovsky had worked together on the very successful 1890 ballet *The Sleeping Beauty*. Petipa gave Tchaikovsky detailed musical notes, even down to the number of bars and the tempo.

When Petipa became ill, his assistant, Lev Ivanov, took over the project. There is still debate as to how much of the choreography was created by each.

The Nutcracker premiered at the Mariinsky Theatre in December 1892, along with Tchaikovsky's opera, *Iolanta*, which was performed first. (In France it was common to present a ballet following an opera; Russia sometimes adopted this French tradition.) The audience and critical reaction to the ballet was mixed. Critics generally liked the "snow" scene but were annoyed with—among other

things—the prominence of children in the ballet, the deviation from the original Hoffmann tale, and the fact that the showcase for the ballerina (the "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy") didn't occur until almost midnight (due to *Iolanthe* being staged first). The score was much better-received, and was recognized by most critics for its beauty and inspirational melodies.

The ballet wasn't particularly popular in Russia and was performed only



Original sketch for the set of *The Nutcracker*, Act II, 1892



Original cast of *The Nutcracker*, 1892 [Image source](#)

sporadically and in shortened versions for several decades. It was first performed in Great Britain in 1934 and was brought to the United States in 1944 (first performed by San Francisco Opera Ballet). George Balanchine's 1954 version for New York City Ballet popularized the ballet, and it soon became a Christmas holiday tradition in the U.S. Today, hundreds of versions of the ballet are performed every year.

Did you Know? Hoffmann's *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*

- E.T.A. Hoffmann was a Romantic-era author whose stories rebelled against rationalism (the dominant movement of his time was the Enlightenment, which emphasized rational thinking). Writers and artists like Hoffman stressed a return to nature, to imagination, and creativity.
- Hoffmann's Marie feels constrained by her family's rituals and regulations. The family name, Stahlbaum ("steel tree") reflects her feeling of restriction. Dumas changed the family name to Silberhaus ("silver house")—a gentler image. (PBT uses Stahlbaum.)
- Hoffmann's name for the uncle, Drosselmeyer, loosely translated means "one who stirs things up."
- "The Story of the Hard Nut" is a story within Hoffmann's *Nutcracker* that explains how the nephew became disfigured and was turned into a Nutcracker. This is generally not included in ballet versions of the story. (Contemporary choreographer Mark Morris created a *Nutcracker* ballet set in the 1960s and called it "The Hard Nut.")
- In Germany during Hoffmann's time, nutcrackers were carved in the image of local officials to poke fun at them.
- One of Hoffmann's other stories, *The Sandman*, is the basis for the renowned 19th century ballet, *Coppelia*.

Marie or Clara?

In the original story, Hoffmann's heroine is named Marie. (Clara was actually the name of her favorite doll.) In 1892 choreographer Marius Petipa took the Dumas version of the *Nutcracker* story and created the ballet. He renamed the main character Clara.

Today most versions of the ballet and many story books use Petipa's ballet as the basis of the story, and they also use the name Clara for the heroine. When Artistic Director Terrence Orr created PBT's *Nutcracker* in 2002, he wanted a closer link to the original story by Hoffmann, and returned the character's name to Marie. Clara is in the ballet too: watch for Marie playing with Clara (the doll) in her bedroom at the beginning of Act I; Clara also comes to life in the battle scene and dances with her best friend, Marie.



Important Dates for *The Nutcracker* ballet

- ◆ 1776—E.T.A. Hoffmann, German Romantic author, is born
- ◆ 1816—Hoffmann writes the story *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* (*Nussknacker und Mausekönig*)
- ◆ 1818—Marius Petipa, French ballet dancer and choreographer, and *The Nutcracker's* original librettist and choreographer, is born
- ◆ 1840—Tchaikovsky is born
- ◆ 1844—Alexandre Dumas writes an adaptation of Hoffmann's novel: *The Nutcracker* (*Histoire d'un casse-noisette*), which will form the basis of the ballet
- ◆ 1892—*The Nutcracker* ballet premieres in December at the Imperial Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, Russia. Original choreography by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov
- ◆ 1893—Tchaikovsky dies
- ◆ 1944—The San Francisco Opera Ballet presents the first full-length production of *The Nutcracker* in the United States
- ◆ 1954—New York City Ballet choreographer George Balanchine creates his famous version of *The Nutcracker*
- ◆ 2002—Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr creates PBT's version of *The Nutcracker*, with an enhanced storyline, new choreography, and a Pittsburgh theme

Composer Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

"The Nutcracker" is one of the great miracles of music.
Berlin Philharmonic Conductor Sir Simon Rattle

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 well-to-do, middle-class family moved to St. Petersburg where he attended school. He was mildly interested in music and at age 14 began attempting composition. He studied at the School of Jurisprudence, graduated in 1859, and started work as a clerk.

At age 21 he began to study music seriously. He attended the St. Petersburg Conservatory where he was a stellar student and in 1866 he moved to Moscow to be a harmony teacher for the Moscow



Painting of Tchaikovsky
by Nikolay Kuznetsov,
1893

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. 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.

Ballet music during Tchaikovsky's time was largely considered unimaginative. The music world was astonished when Tchaikovsky, a great composer, was willing to "stoop so low" when he wrote *Swan Lake* in 1877. 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 two more full-length ballets that would become enduring masterworks of the genre: *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*.

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

A *Nutcracker* Innovation: The Celesta



For *The Nutcracker*, Tchaikovsky created a number of musical effects using unusual instruments - including a toy trumpet, cuckoo and nightingale whistles, and a rattle that produced the sounds of a nutcracker cracking nuts. But perhaps the most exciting musical innovation was the use of the celesta (che-LEH-stah), an instrument invented in Paris in 1886. Tchaikovsky had used it in his symphonic poem *The Voyevoda* in 1891, but it was still relatively unknown as he composed *The Nutcracker*. He knew it would be perfect for musically representing the Sugarplum Fairy and wanted to keep its use a secret from critics and other composers. He wouldn't even allow it to be used in rehearsals until the final one just before the performance. Tchaikovsky's instincts were correct—the celesta was a sensation.

The celesta looks like a small piano though it is actually part of the percussion family. Instead of hitting strings as in a piano, the celesta's keys/hammers hit small steel plates creating high, clear, delicate tones. Its sound is *celestial* (where the name comes from) and conjures feelings of wonder and magic. In the "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy," Tchaikovsky uses the celesta to help create the magical, alternate reality of Act 2 of the ballet.

Explore the sound of the celesta!

Many composers have used the celesta to create magical or mysterious effects. Listen to:

- ["Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy"](#)
- ["Hedwig's Theme"](#) from the *Harry Potter* movie series, by John Williams (scroll down to click on arrow)
- ["Won't You Be My Neighbor"](#) (Theme song for *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* television show), by Fred Rogers
- ["Neptune, the Mystic,"](#) (starting at 2:17) from *The Planets*, an orchestral suite by Gustav Holst

Photo by Gregory Maxwell.

Don't miss the music Listening Guide on page 26 and music activities in the Arts and Humanities Entry Pointes, page 35.

Did You Know? Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*

- Tchaikovsky didn't particularly want to create a ballet based on the story of *The Nutcracker*. He worried whether it was suitable for ballet and generally felt uninspired at the beginning of the project. He did become "more attuned to the task" as time went on.
- The original ballet is only 85 minutes long, much shorter than Tchaikovsky's other ballets, *Swan Lake* (approximately 2 hours) and *The Sleeping Beauty* (almost 4 hours).
- Tchaikovsky felt that *The Nutcracker* was "infinitely poorer" than his music for *The Sleeping Beauty*.
- Tchaikovsky's sister died during the time he was composing *The Nutcracker*. Scholars have suggested that music for "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" was an expression of Tchaikovsky's grief, noting its descending octaves and funereal rhythm, contrasting with the "heavenly" sound of the celesta.
- Tchaikovsky based the Arabian Dance—meant to sound exotic and Middle-Eastern—on a Georgian (Russian) lullaby.
- Tchaikovsky died from cholera at age 53, eleven months after the premiere of *The Nutcracker*.
- Jazz greats Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn (who grew up in Pittsburgh) created a jazz version of *The Nutcracker Suite* in 1960.

Cast List and Setting for PBT's *The Nutcracker*

Cast List (in order of appearance):

ACT I

Marie Stahlbaum
Drosselmeyer
His Nephew
Mrs. Stahlbaum
Dr. Stahlbaum
Fritz, Marie's brother
Grandmother
Grandfather
Mr. and Mrs. Grandview
Mr. and Mrs. Heinz
Mr. and Mrs. Kaufmann
Aunt Hortense

Aunt Gertrude
General
Mr. McTavish
Young McTavish
Harlequin
Columbina
Pirate
The Nutcracker
Rat King
Rats
Snow Queen
Snow King
Snowflakes

ACT II

The Prince
Flowers
Spanish dancers
Chinese dancers
Arabian dancers
Russian dancers
Shepherdesses
Ringmaster
Sugar Plum Fairy
Sugar Plum Cavalier

Overview of the Setting

In Pittsburgh in the early years of the 20th century, on Christmas Eve

Act 1, Scene 1: The Stahlbaum's home—the F.W. McKee house in Shadyside

Act 1, Scene 2: A Snowy Forest—the view from Mt. Washington

Act 2, Scene 1: The Land of Enchantment—an amusement park inspired by Pittsburgh carousels.

NOTE! An elementary level version of the synopsis can be found on page 36.

Act 1

It is Christmas Eve in the early years of the 20th century at the Stahlbaum home in Shadyside. On the street outside, Godfather Drosselmeyer and his Nephew unload mysterious packages from their carriage. The guests begin to arrive and as Drosselmeyer introduces them to his Nephew, they are repulsed by his deformed countenance. Drosselmeyer consoles his Nephew and unveils the Nutcracker, revealing its role in this night of magic.

In her bedroom Marie, the Stahlbaum's daughter, is reading *Kaufmann's Christmas Stories for Boys and Girls*. Dr. and Mrs. Stahlbaum enter and present her with two special gifts – a beautiful scarf and a pair of pointe shoes – that signify Marie's coming of age as a young woman. Marie admires her new self in the mirror and sees a vision from her dreams of a beautiful fairy ballerina.



Drosselmeyer and his Nephew finish their preparations for the party. Alone, Drosselmeyer clutches the Nutcracker and remembers how his Nephew came to be cursed by the dreaded seven-headed Rat King. Will tonight be the night the curse is broken?

The party is under way, and the guests exchange gifts, trim the tree and dance. Drosselmeyer's magic tricks delight the children, but he has even bigger mysteries in store for Marie. He introduces her to his Nephew, and as Drosselmeyer had hoped,

Marie sees through the Nephew's affliction to the goodness within him. Next he gives her the Nutcracker, which she adores. The party concludes with Drosselmeyer's magical *pièce de résistance*, a trick which upsets Marie so much that she runs upstairs. The guests say their goodbyes and the family retires for the night.

Drosselmeyer reappears in a swirl of his cape to set the stage for the magic night to come. As midnight approaches, Marie steals downstairs to find her beloved Nutcracker. But Marie is not alone; mice and human-sized rats threaten her from every side. Overcome with fright, she faints. When she comes to, she finds herself and the whole house under a spell. Everything is growing, even the Nutcracker, who becomes life-sized. The mice and rats return to terrify Marie, but Nutcracker rallies the toy soldiers and storybook characters to rescue Marie.



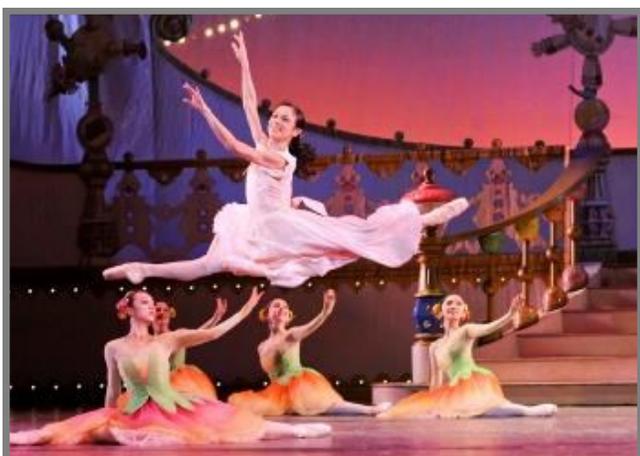
Top: Stephen Hadala as Drosselmeyer and students of PBT School, 2011. Right: Cooper Verona as the Rat King and Christopher Budzynski as the Nutcracker, 2012. Photos by Rich Sofranko.

As the battle reaches its peak, Marie's compassion for the Nutcracker ensures victory over the King of the Rats, and the Nutcracker is transformed into a handsome Prince. He invites Marie on a journey through the glittering snowy forest to the Land of Enchantment. Guided by the Snow King and Queen, they set off on a magical sleigh ride.

Act II

Drosselmeyer prepares the way for the arrival of Marie and the Prince in the Land of Enchantment, where the Sugar Plum Fairy, the vision of Marie's dreams, and her Cavalier greet the travelers. The Prince relates the tale of the battle, telling how Marie saved his life by helping to defeat the Rat King. In gratitude, the Sugar Plum Fairy presents Marie with a beautiful gift (a tiara). Marie expresses her appreciation in a dance with the Flowers.

The grand festival begins, with dancers from many lands entertaining Marie and the Prince. Her visit to the Land of Enchantment culminates with a Grand Pas de Deux danced by the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier.



Suddenly, Christmas Day dawns on the street outside the Stahlbaum home. Drosselmeyer and his Nephew make their way to their carriage, stopping to reflect on the night's wondrous proceedings. Marie's compassion has broken the Rat King's curse and the Nephew's handsome face is restored. Marie awakens in her bedroom, wondering at the fantastic nature of the night's events. Was it all a dream? She finds her beautiful scarf, a souvenir of her visit to the Land of Enchantment. Can it be? She rushes to the mirror and there, ever faithful, is her Nutcracker Prince.

Top: Julia Erickson and Robert Moore as the Snow Queen and King, 2011. Left: Christine Schwaner as Marie, 2012. Both photos feature artists of Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre and PBT School. Photos by Rich Sofranko.

The Pittsburgh Connection

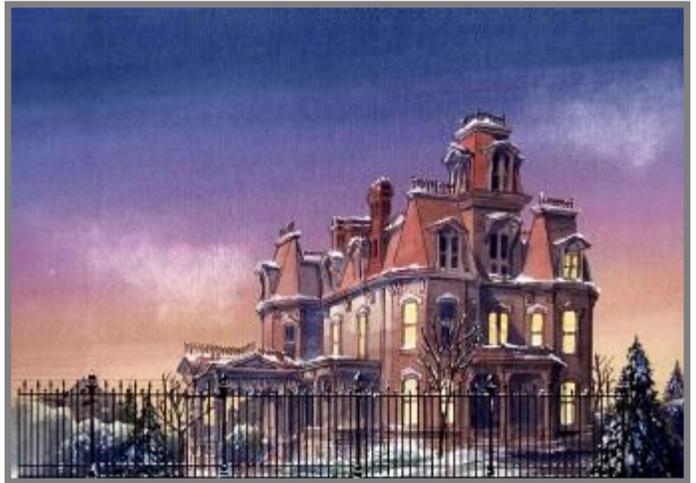
Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr added Pittsburgh elements to the ballet to make *The Nutcracker* a uniquely local experience. Connect your students with the city's history and discuss these elements in class prior to your visit to the Benedum. Watch closely for these elements during the ballet.

The Clock

At the top of the proscenium (the arch between the stage and the audience) is a large clock with the Nutcracker's face at the center. This clock was inspired by the famous Kaufmann's Clock on the corner of Kaufmann's Department Store at the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Smithfield Street in downtown Pittsburgh. Meeting under Kaufmann's clock was a Pittsburgh tradition for many years. Though the building is no longer a department store the clock is still there!

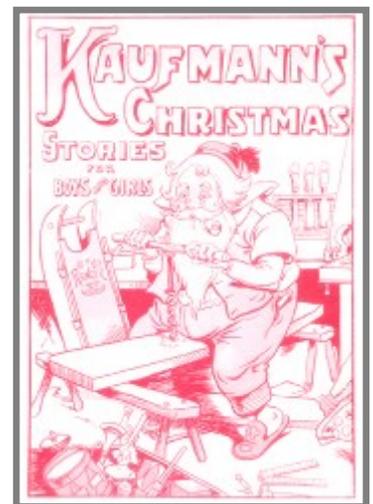
The Opening Showdrop

The first image you see in the ballet is a rendering of the F.W. McKee mansion, a large, stately home that was on Fifth Avenue in the Shadyside section of Pittsburgh. McKee was an attorney whose father founded one of the pioneer glass-manufacturing firms in Pittsburgh, McKee and Brothers. The McKees also owned a large estate in Butler County where Mr. McKee founded the town of West Winfield. When he and his family left the home on Fifth Avenue, it is thought that it may have passed down through his sister's family. The home was torn down to make way for apartment buildings.



Kaufmann's Christmas Stories for Boys and Girls

Early in the 20th century, Kaufmann's Department Store commissioned a Christmas storybook, *Kaufmann's Christmas Stories for Boys and Girls*. During planning for *The Nutcracker*, a PBT board member found a copy of this storybook, believed to have been published between 1904-1906. Mr. Orr incorporated it into several scenes: Marie reads the book at the beginning of the ballet; it appears under the Christmas tree with the other gifts at the party; the storybook grows as the whole room becomes larger than life; and Drosselmeyer "turns the pages" as the magical story unfolds. In the battle scene, characters literally come out of the book to help the Nutcracker fight the Rat King.



The Party Guests

Although the Stahlbaum family name is taken directly from the E.T.A. Hoffmann tale, Mr. Orr invited some Pittsburgh guests to the party. Significant families in Pittsburgh history are represented by Mr. and Mrs. Kaufmann, Mr. and Mrs. Heinz, and Mr. and Mrs. Grandview (named for the avenue on Mt. Washington). With his kilt and traditional Scottish dance, Mr. McTavish represents the famous Scottish Pittsburgher, Andrew Carnegie.

The Journey through the Snowy Forest

One of the most beautiful vistas in Western Pennsylvania is the view from Mt. Washington's Grandview Avenue. Looking down on the Point and the downtown area, you can see the three rivers and many of the bridges that cross them. The backdrop behind the snow scene is an artistic rendering of this vista. It's pictured as it might have looked at the time in which the ballet is set, around the turn of the 20th century.

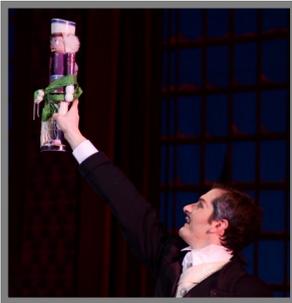


The Choreography

While many productions of *The Nutcracker* follow the same basic story and general choreography, each version is a unique creation of the choreographer who stages it. Watch for these elements in the movements your students see on stage.

Marie and the Nephew

In many productions of *The Nutcracker*, Marie is cast as a child. Mr. Orr conceived of her and the Nephew/Prince as teenagers, which allowed him to cast adult Company dancers as believable characters in the roles. He created more advanced, complex choreography for them than is present in many other productions, and developed a romantic relationship between the two.



Drosselmeyer

Drosselmeyer traditionally sets the stage for events in the story and creates visual magic to delight the audience. In PBT's version, he also drives the storyline. Mr. Orr gave the character substantial dance choreography—not always the case in other ballet versions—including a *pas de trois* (dance for three) with Marie and the Prince, when Drosselmeyer ushers them to the Snow Forest and then on to the Land of Enchantment.

The Party Scene and Battle

These scenes offer challenges to a choreographer. Watch for these elements in the ballet to see how they are handled choreographically:

- a very large cast on stage all at once covering a wide range of ages and levels of ability
- many young children
- costumes that may limit movement
- animals and toys whose choreography should reflect their characters



Snow Scene

Mr. Orr took his inspiration for the snow scene from a real snow scene at his former country home in Connecticut. Looking out on the snow-covered hills from his deck he would watch how the wind swirled the snowflakes, always in circular patterns. Watch for the circles in shapes and steps in the choreography here.

Ringmaster with Clowns

This scene is a showcase for young dancers. Filled with whimsy and acrobatic movements, it's a lively take on the carousel theme in Act II.

Top: Alexandra Kochis and Christopher Budzynski, 2011, photo by Rich Sofranko. Stephen Hadala as Drosselmeyer, 2012, photo by Aimee DiAndrea. The battle scene, with students of Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School, 2010. photo by Rich Sofranko. The "Snow Scene," 2013; photo by Aimee DiAndrea. PBT students as the clowns, 2011. photo by Rich Sofranko.



Divertissements

Divertissement (literally, a diversion) refers to a complete dance, for one or more dancers, that is usually part of a larger ballet. (A *variation* is a solo dance.) All *Nutcracker* productions traditionally have four divertissements in Act II that highlight traditional dress, music, and dance steps from other lands.



Spanish – graceful *port de bras* (movement of the arms) of classical Spanish dance, quick turning or snapping of the head at the end of a musical phrase.



Chinese – traditional Chinese ribbon dance; dancers hold ribbons on sticks that they twirl and ripple. A Chinese dragon, a symbol of power and royalty, is carried by six dancers as it undulates overhead. Before the premiere performance in 2002, a ceremony was held by members of Pittsburgh’s Chinese community: in the ceremony, the dragon’s blank eyes were colored with red ink, which is thought to “awaken” the dragon and bring prosperity to the community.



Arabian – exotic weaving of arms and legs; slithering snake-like partnering and distinctly “Arabian” angular poses of the head and arms.



Russian – inspired by the Trepak, a traditional Ukrainian folk dance known for its acrobatic feats and technical difficulty.

Top to bottom: Amanda Cochrane, Diana Yohe, 2012, photo by Aimee DiAndrea; Casey Taylor, 2012, by Aimee DiAndrea; Robert Moore and Danielle Downey, 2012, photo by Aimee DiAndrea; Luca Sbrizzi and Nicholas Coppola, 2010, photo by Rich Sofranko.

Signature Steps—*Pirouette* and *Balancé*

The choreography of *The Nutcracker* is packed with challenging steps and technique. Watch for *pirouettes* and *balancés* throughout the ballet.

PIROUETTE

One of the most familiar ballet terms, *pirouette* literally means to "whirl." It is a controlled turn on one leg, with the non-supporting leg turning out or inward toward the supporting leg. The turn usually starts with one or both legs in *plié* (bent knee) and then rises to straight leg and onto *pointe* (the tip of the toe) for women, or onto *demi-pointe* (the ball of the foot) for men. The non-supporting leg can be held in various positions. Pirouettes can be done as a single turn or in multiple rotations. Turning technique includes spotting—when the dancers fix their gaze on a single spot while turning. The pirouette can take many different forms.

Snow Queen and King Pas de Deux

At the end of Act I, the Snow King and Queen dance with the Snowflakes in the forest. The Snowflakes perform a series of *pirouettes enchaînement* (in a "chain" or linked sequence). The mass of simultaneous pirouettes creates a beautiful, glittery blizzard effect on stage.

Arabian Dance

In Act II, Marie and the Prince are entertained by exotic Arabian dancers. Watch for the *finger pirouette* in this dance: the male partner twirls and supports the ballerina as she holds onto just one of his fingers for balance. This is an example of *pirouette en dehors*, with the non-supporting leg turning out, away from the supporting leg, and the turn is executed outward.

The Sugar Plum Pas de Deux

Also in Act II, the Sugar Plum Fairy and Sugar Plum Cavalier perform a *pas de deux* to the ballet's most famous music, *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*. Notice the several *supported pirouettes*, where the Cavalier balances and twirls his partner. The Sugarplum Fairy performs a series of dazzling *pirouettes enchaînement*, a triumphant sequence for only the most expert of ballerinas.



The Snow Queen (Amanda Cochrane) completes a pirouette, 2012, photo by Aimee DiAndrea.

BALANCÉ



Balancé is a rocking step that is usually executed in three counts. The dancer shifts her weight from one foot to the other in a "down up down" sequence to 3/4 time. The step begins in fifth position *plié*. Before the first count, one foot extends in a *degagé* (slightly lifted off the floor) usually to second position. The foot may cross in front or in back. *Balancé* is also sometimes called the "waltzing step." Watch for the *balancé* step in the party dances, the "Waltz of the Snowflakes," and the "Waltz of the Flowers."

The Costumes

Building costumes for a new ballet production involves inspiration, research, and technical decisions about construction. Zack Brown, Scenic and Costume Designer, and Janet Marie Groom, PBT's Costumier, (a person who makes or builds theatrical costumers) share information about their work on the production.

ZACK BROWN

Design, fabric, and construction are the important elements. Dance clothes are difficult. Laundering is a major factor because more than one person usually wears each costume, and physical exertion of dance produces much perspiration. These two factors mean that costumes must often be washed or cleaned. It also makes them deteriorate, and then they have to be replaced. Re-makes are done all the time.

Artistic Director Terrence Orr gave me parameters that helped focus my ideas. The size of the budget also has a big influence on decisions. Some of the guidelines that were helpful in my decisions were:

- 1. "Chinese" costumes should be red and yellow. They should also have some representation of the sun.*
- 2. "Arabian" should include a scarf or veil for the woman. There can be nothing abrasive on the costume because the man does not wear a shirt, and there is so much body contact between the dancers that he would get all scratched.*
- 3. The overall look of the production should be like a storybook that comes alive.*

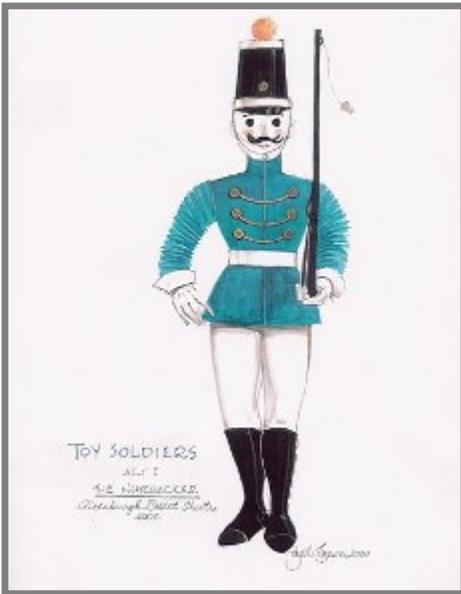
These guidelines and others like them helped me choose the overall color palette and styles for the costumes. Using historical research, my own imagination and talent, conversations with Terrence Orr, and the inspiration of the music with its rich orchestral colors and sweeping melodies, I was able to design the vibrant, colorful, sumptuous costumes you will see.

JANET MARIE GROOM

Costumes are "built", not made. The reason we say they are "built" is because more is involved than just cutting out a pattern and sewing seams. Fabrics sometimes must be dyed to get just the right shade and to make sure that the various fabric colors match or coordinate perfectly. Sequins and jewels must be sewn on by hand. Sometimes they also have to be dyed to match the fabric. Many layers of tulle have to be cut to make the tutu skirts. The edges are not usually straight but scalloped or pointed. These are all cut by hand. All of these things must be done with the movement of the dancers being the first consideration. There are 215 costumes for this Nutcracker production.;110 of them were built in Pittsburgh in PBT's costume shop. The rest were built at shops in New York and Washington, D.C.



Each costume is often made of many pieces that have to be carefully stored. The following descriptions are for two of the costumes from Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's production of *The Nutcracker*. They give some insight into how elaborate these costumes can be.



Toy Soldier

- White pants have gold stripes down the sides. Suspenders that are not seen have a row of buttonholes to allow for adjustment on dancers of different heights.
- Boot tops are attached to the shoes or to a toe sock that goes inside the shoe.
- Elaborate sleeves with hand-sewn welts and large white cuffs are attached to a t-shirt that fastens in the front and is worn under the jacket.
- Buttons are sewn on the jacket, but the chains are attached behind the buttons with elastic.
- The wide belt attaches on the side.
- The hat is held on by a chin strap. Some of the hats are attached to a mask-like face.



Snowflake

- Skirt is separate from the bodice and attached together with button tapes that allow for height adjustment.
- Snowflakes, elaborately decorated with hand-sewn sequins of several kinds, are attached to the bodice.
- Four layers of fabric make up the skirt: white tulle on top, blue sparkle tulle, white with silver sparkles, white tulle with white flocked hearts.
- All the hems of all the tulle layers are cut in points. There are more than 20 snowflake costumes with a total of 10,580 points, and all of them were cut by hand by one person.

Gabrielle Thurlow, photo by Aimee DiAndrea, 2012.

More *Nutcracker* designs by Zack Brown



The Rat King



Arabian



The Nutcracker

The complexity of staging a big production such as PBT's *The Nutcracker* can be an amazing technical feat! Many things are hidden from view so the audience sees only seamless transitions from one scene to another—flawless and magical. The massive sets and complicated devices used to achieve the delightful visions are sometimes anything but seamless and flawless. Learn the secrets of some of the mechanical and scientific elements of scenery and lighting used to create the enchantment and wonder of *The Nutcracker*.

Act I – The Stahlbaum Home

Act I begins with the bustling arrival of party guests on the sidewalk in front of the Stahlbaum home. The picture of the home is painted on a scrim, which is a large piece of sheer fabric hung from a pole high above the stage. When the light projects on the scrim from the front, it is opaque and you see what is painted on the scrim. However, when an object behind the scrim is lit, the scrim seems to disappear and that object is seen. Watch at the beginning of Act I when Marie's bedroom appears and the house exterior vanishes—a great example of how a scrim and lighting work together.



Act II – The Carousel Canopy

Known affectionately by the stagehands as "The Squid," this octopus-like mechanical monster operates in a manner similar to an umbrella. Like an umbrella, one pushes the mechanism upward, sliding it along the center pole forcing the spokes to open the cover. Then, it's pulled downward along the pole to close it. (*If possible, demonstrate this in class with an umbrella.*) See below for additional details.

Photo by Rich Sofranko, 2012.



Here's the idea! On the left is a normal view of an umbrella. You push upward to open. The inverted umbrella on the right is how the *Nutcracker* carousel works—it's as if the wind has blown your umbrella inside-out. The mechanism pushes downward to open and expand the carousel.

Getting to Know PBT's Dancers

Dancing as a profession is a lifelong pursuit, beginning early (sometimes as young as age two) and continuing through many years of rigorous training. Especially during their school years, dancers' lives are very scheduled! In many ways, however, they are just like everybody else. Learn more about the lives of PBT's dancers on our [website](#).



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.

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
- Audio-described performances (**Sunday, Dec. 2, 2018 at 12 p.m.** for *The Nutcracker*).
- Sensory-friendly performance: **Thursday, December 27, 2018, 2 p.m.**

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

A Nutcracker Word Search

E G T H N T X X P S R W N Q K
C C R C E E V P N R E P U D P
G D N L H T P O F N Y R T S Y
V N L A U A W H E O E E C C H
W A I T D Q I C E B M I R A H
B J U K U N J K H W L D A R S
A R W E T X A A O H E L C F K
H B E Z F A J I P V S O K A C
W N R I U B R L B D S S E F M
L E S U O R A C L A O K R R G
B A T T L E T W E S R S Y D E
O X T B G E H T O L D A W S N
M T W A S H I N G T O N C R K
N C R N Y V X Z Q W O U B G U
Y R I A F M U L P R A G U S K

Find the hidden words!

Arabian Dance

Ballet

Battle

Carousel

Drosselmeyer

Mt. Washington

Nephew

Nutcracker

Rat King

Scarf

Snow Queen

Soldier

Sugar Plum Fairy

Tchaikovsky

Tutu

(Answer key on last page)

It's Nutcracker Time! A Clock Activity

The clock at the top of the proscenium (above the curtain) tracks time during the ballet. Have your students make a clock and practice setting it to the times you will see in the ballet.

Materials

Paper plates or circles cut out of paper

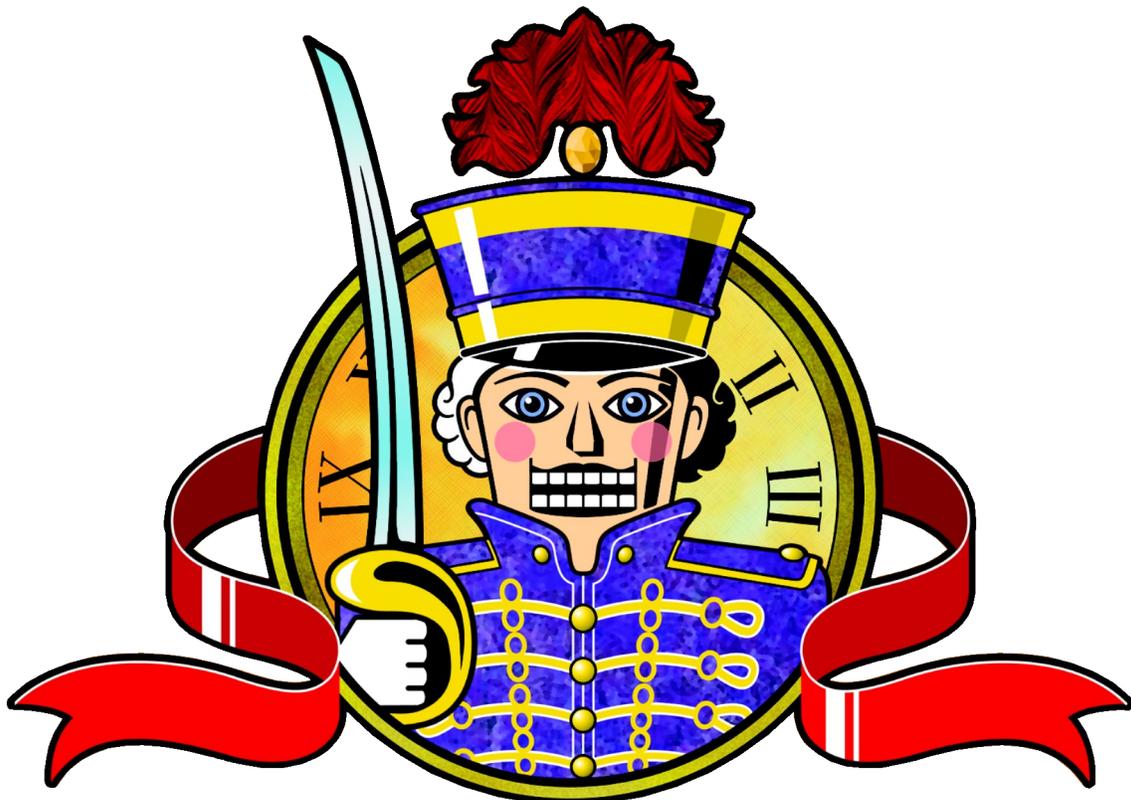
Brass brad clips

Number templates and arrows (next page)

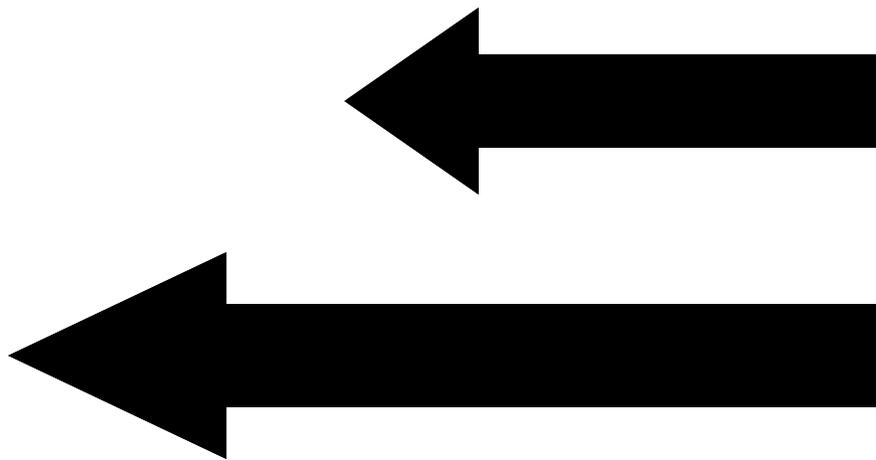
Nutcracker face (below)—to go in the middle of the clock face

Clock Times in *The Nutcracker* Ballet

4:15 (PM)	Before curtain opens
5:40	Curtain opens on street scene
6:15	Street scene, boy leaves stage with sled loaded with presents
7:35	Marie and parents in her room before party
7:55	Street scene before party
8:15	Pirate dance
9:45	Guests leave party
12:00 (Midnight)	The Magic Begins!
7:45 (AM)	Marie awakens



1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	11	12



Kaufmann's Christmas Book Activity



Explore this image from the cover of Kaufmann's Christmas stories book from 1906. Santa's workshop is full and busy! Find and circle the items listed below. You can also color the picture!

Ruler ▪ Pipe ▪ Saw ▪ Doll ▪ Button ▪ Sled ▪ Spinning Top ▪ Spatula ▪ Drum ▪ Feather

Nutcracker Map Activity

PBT's *The Nutcracker* is adapted so that its location is in Pittsburgh! (Other ballet companies may use their own cities as the location). Mark the *approximate* locations of the story's landmarks and scenes on a map of Pittsburgh.

The Stahlbaum Family Home	At the corner of Fifth Avenue and S. Highland Avenue
Kaufmann's Department Store	Smithfield Street and Fifth Ave. downtown
Amusement Park and Carousel	Kennywood Park
The Snow Scene	Mt. Washington

Map *The Nutcracker* Journey!

In the ballet, Marie and the Prince magically travel from Marie's home to the Land of Enchantment and back. In the real world, though, they would have to take streets to get there! Help them find their way using Pittsburgh's roadways. First, mark your map with the locations in the box above. Then, using the directions below, use a colored marker to trace the route that Marie and the Prince would have to take in their journey. If you see more than one route, trace it in a different color.

1. Marie and the Prince travel from the Stahlbaum home to Mt. Washington to see the Snow King and Queen (and the Snowflakes) present a beautiful dance.
2. Marie and the Prince travel from Mt. Washington to the Land of Enchantment (Kennywood Park).
3. Marie travels from the Land of Enchantment back to the Stahlbaum home where she wakes up the next morning.

Spot Other Landmarks! Mark these on your map.

- The Point
- A city boundary line
- An incline
- The Fort Pitt Tunnel
- The Benedum Center (7th Street and Penn Ave., downtown)
- Where you live! (or the direction of your home if you don't live in the Pittsburgh area shown on the map)

Stick Puppet Templates for *The Nutcracker*

Cut out and paste onto cardboard or foam core. Glue each puppet to popsicle stick and create your own *Nutcracker* ballet!



Marie



Nephew



Nutcracker



Drosselmeyer



Snow Queen



Rat King



Cavalier



Sugarplum Fairy



Bumblebee

Nutcracker Listening Guide

This listening guide provides a look at the music of *The Nutcracker*. Musical excerpts are provided on the Educator Portal on the PBT website. See the glossary on the next page for terms in bold.

The Battle

The Rat King's imminent attack is announced by the tension-filled **tremolos** and theme in the oboe. With a momentary pause after the oboe completes its phrase, a loud cannon introduces the Nutcracker's soldiers. The oboe's previous theme is taken up by the bassoon, while the upper **woodwinds** provide march-like **melodies**. The battle itself begins with drumrolls and military woodwinds take the role of the Nutcracker's soldiers, while the ominous **brass** mimic the rats. The themes call and respond to each other while the **percussion** instruments continue to represent the gunshots. The music reaches a climax with a clash of the cymbals as the Nutcracker stabs the Rat King, and the orchestra's wild **sixteenth-note** runs wind down.

Waltz of the Snowflakes

In the snowy forest, the delicate snowflakes' waltz begins with whimsical flute flutters and **pizzicato** strings. With the marking **cantabile** indicating the only instance of singing in the ballet, the Snow Queen and King enter and prance impossibly lightly, followed by the Nutcracker and Marie. With the incorporation of the triangle and harp, the music leads to an intense and passionate phrase—a blizzard of music—ending with harp **glissandos** and a **tutti fortissimo** chord.

Arabian Dance

The stage darkens for the entrance of the lithe Arabian dancers. The quiet, exotic flavor of the clarinets in **minor** mode sets the mood for the slow, sensual movement of the dance, with untraditional lifts and continuous snake-like movements. The Middle-Eastern flavor is enhanced by the solo oboe and English horn as the upper strings continue their quiet **melody** and the lower **strings** maintain constant **sixteenths**. The music fades out as mysteriously as it began.

Russian Dance

The Russian Dance, representing Tchaikovsky's native country, demonstrates the grandness and intensity of Russian music through both the music and the costume designs. Also referred to as Trepak, this number was inspired by a traditional Ukrainian folk dance. The energized music and gymnastic dancing never slows, and the **sixteenth-note** patterns in the **strings** build and accelerate to a climactic end.

Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy

The delicate dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, in her sparkling tutu and tiara, features the celesta—the only instrument Tchaikovsky felt was worthy of her character. The music accompanies her movements perfectly, with solo **woodwinds** adding to the celesta's unique tone and musical color. The dancing accelerates along with the music, and the Sugar Plum Fairy twirls rapidly until a **tutti** chord ends the number.

Glossary of Musical Terms

Accelerando—speed up

Arpeggio—a series of notes spelling a chord

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

Canon—multiple simultaneous imitations of the melody beginning on different beats

Cantabile—in a singing style

Chord—a set of three or more notes played together

Crescendo—grow louder

Da capo—a return to the beginning section

Fermata—an orchestral note or rest held for an extended time

Fortissimo—very loud

Glissando—a continuous slide between two notes

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

Minor—a musical mode that sounds serious or sad, as opposed to major mode

Percussion—non-wind instruments, including celesta, timpani, snare drum, cymbals, bass drum, triangle, tambourine, castanets, tam-tam, and glockenspiel

Pizzicato—plucked strings

Presto—very quick

Sfz (Sforzando)—very loud and accented

Sixteenth notes—quick notes; four sixteenths per quarter note

Staccato—short detached 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 that forms the basis of a passage

Time signature—an indication of meter; 3/4 is felt in three beats, 4/4 in four beats, 6/8 in two beats that are each divided into three smaller beats

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

Tutti—all playing together

Winds—woodwinds and brass

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

Entry Pointes

Check out these additional learning prompts to further explore the ballet. Entry Pointes are questions, topics, and areas of focus for educators to use and make connections between their curriculum and the ballet. We strive to make meaningful connections in main content areas and provide *entry pointes* for learners at all levels. Educators are encouraged to expand and adapt the entry pointes as necessary to meet the needs of their students and address certain standards.

After each entry pointe is a suggested grade range ES/MS/HS

- 29 PA Core Standards for English Language Arts (PDE Academic Standards 1.1-1.5)
- 31 PA Core Standards for Mathematics (PDE Academic Standards 2.1-2.11)
- 33 Science and Technology and Engineering (PDE Academic Standards 3.1-3.4)
- 34 History (PDE Academic Standards 8.1-8.4)
- 35 Arts and Humanities (PDE Academic Standards 9.1-9.4)

PA Core Standards for English Language Arts (PDE Academic Standards 1.1-1.5)

- Read E.T.A. Hoffmann's story, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, written in 1816, and the synopsis of Terrence Orr's version of *The Nutcracker* ballet found in this resource guide. Compare and contrast the two story versions, including characters, events, setting, and themes. (MS, HS)
- Read the synopsis of *The Nutcracker* and develop a list of inferred character traits for various characters, including Marie, the Nephew, Drosselmeyer, and the Sugarplum Fairy using evidence from the text to support your argument. Next, read the snippet below from E.T.A. Hoffman's story, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, that describes Drosselmeyer:

Drosselmeyer "was anything but handsome. He was short and very thin, his face was seamed with wrinkles, he had a big black patch where his right eye should have been, and he had no hair at all, for which reason he wore a beautiful white wig, a real work of art."

Based on the descriptions and inferences students make about the characters, write a short "Day in the Life" journal entry for one or more characters. (MS, HS)

- Analyze various covers of *The Nutcracker* storybooks. What symbols, myths, and other information do the covers provide? Decide what elements are the best marketing tools for the story and design your own cover. (ES, MS)
- Read a storybook version of *The Nutcracker*. In small groups draw pictures or write a recount of three important scenes from the story. As a whole class put the pictures together on a wall to create a story line. What events are most represented on the story line? What events from the story are missing? (ES)
- Using evidence from the text and ballet to support your word and language choices, write a formal thank you note from one of the following character's perspective:
 - * Marie thanking her father for her scarf
 - * The Nutcracker thanking Marie for her help in defeating the Rat King
 - * A party guest thanking the Stahlbaums for their Christmas Eve party
- The carousel in PBT's production of *The Nutcracker* is a very complex part of the set design. (For a description of how it operates, see page 20.) Mr. Orr wanted to include a carousel in this production to pay tribute to the two dozen amusement parks that once entertained families in the Pittsburgh region. Currently three carousels remain in our area: two historic carousels at Kennywood and Idylwild, and a modern carousel (based on a 1913 carousel) at Schenley Plaza. Design your own theme for a carousel, creating a complete list of characters and drawing one or more characters. Write a brief explanation of what theme you chose and why. Research the history and cultural importance of the carousel to write an informative essay (ES, MS, HS)
- Every version of *The Nutcracker* seems slightly different from each other. Read the storybook version of *The Nutcracker* provided on the flash drive and chart the similarities and differences between the storybook and PBT's production of *The Nutcracker* based on the synopsis in this Guide. A Venn Diagram or other story organizer can be used. (ES, MS)
-

- Create a poem about the story of *The Nutcracker*. Explore different poetic forms, such as haiku, limerick, or cinquain. (MS, HS)
- Write a book review of a storybook version of *The Nutcracker* or E.T.A. Hoffmann's story. Summarize the story, highlight the main characters, discuss setting and themes, and describe why this book should or should not be read by others in a persuasive manner using evidence from the text. (ES, MS, HS)
- Drosselmeyer is an important and mysterious character in *The Nutcracker*. Who is Drosselmeyer? How do you think he creates such amazing party acts? Is he a magician, a wizard, or maybe a scientist? Create your own background story about Drosselmeyer. (ES, MS, HS)
- Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's production of *The Nutcracker* is very Pittsburgh specific. As a result, changes had to be made to the traditional storyline and performance. Research both the story and performance and write a review addressing the following points:
 1. How do the changes affect the story?
 2. How do you change the ballet while still maintaining the integrity of the original?
 3. How would audiences outside of Pittsburgh receive PBT's production? (MS, HS)
- Identify the following vocabulary words: celesta, lest, appreciation, prominent, commission, precocious, mysterious, countenance, clutch, affliction, pièce de résistance, rallies, enchantment, gratitude, tiara, wondrous, souvenir. How does each term relate to the production? (MS)

Mathematics (PDE Academic Standards 2.1-2.11)

- Stage lighting for productions uses a lot of energy! Answer the following math problems about stage lighting. Based on the units below, write your own word problems! (MS, HS)
 - * Each “unit” of stage lighting might average 800 watts. If the average household light bulb uses 75 watts, how many household light bulbs would it take to equal just one unit of stage lighting? Round your answer to the nearest whole number (11 light bulbs)
 - * There are approximately 575 units of stage lighting used in the production for each performance. How many total watts of energy are used in one performance? (460,000)
 - * Check the program or online at www.pbt.org for the total number of performances of *The Nutcracker*. Calculate the total amount of wattage used for *The Nutcracker*. (In 2018, there are 26 performances).
 - * Now calculate the number of household bulbs it would take to equal all the wattage used throughout the production run of *The Nutcracker*! Round your answer to the nearest whole number.
- Choreographers utilize a variety of shapes and line patterns when creating dances that depend upon how many dancers they have onstage at one time and what ideas they are trying to convey. Some line patterns include parallel lines, diagonal lines, perpendicular lines (an X), grid formation, and staggered formation. Some shapes to make are circular, triangular, square, hexagonal, or pentagonal. Some of the patterns and shapes resemble the idea that is being conveyed or an object, such as flower or a snowflake. Watch for various patterns during the production and record when they are used in the production and how or why that pattern or shape is being used. Some scenes to pay careful attention to are the Snowflake dance and the Waltz of the Flowers. (ES, MS, HS)
- Explore transformational geometry through various poses of *The Nutcracker*. Brainstorm scenes and moments from the production to emulate. One student freezes in a pose from the production. Another student then takes a position that is a reflection, rotation, or translation of that original pose. Everyone in the class can participate at once to create a *corps* of dancing geometric figures. Perform and record the pieces with digital technology and have students reflect on their creations. (ES, MS)
- The children at the party play a hand-clapping game. In partners, develop your own handclapping game with an established rhythm and pattern. Try patterns of different length (3 claps, 4 claps, 6 claps, etc.) or work on patterns that include multiples (2, 4, 6, 8 or 3, 6, 9) etc. (ES, MS)
- With so many performers on the stage at one time, how does the choreographer keep everyone from running into each other? How does he or she divide the space? How do the dancers know exactly where to be? How do dancers adjust to a smaller or larger stage? (MS, HS)
- Set designers have the important job of making the stage look realistic. How do set designers make sets look proportionately correct? How do they show depth? (MS, HS)

- Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre brings its own special floor to the Benedum Center for performances. Research the type of floor that is best for dancers to use and find out its cost by square foot. Then, find out the size of the stage. Consider transportation costs when bringing the floor to the Benedum five times a year. How much in total would it cost to provide a special floor for the dancers annually? (HS)
- Based on the idea that the nutcracker toy becomes the size of an actual human, calculate how large the ordinary objects would become under this spell. (MS, HS)

Science and Technology and Engineering (PDE Academic Standards 3.1-3.4)

- Investigate the amount of force required to crack a nut in a nutcracker using different-sized nutcrackers and various nuts (almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, etc.) (MS, HS)
- Snowflakes appear in the “Journey to the Snowy Forest” scene. Research and investigate how snowflakes form and how temperature plays a role in snowflake formation. For advanced students, research snowfall patterns in the state of Pennsylvania and/or the United States. How does geography, such as mountains and large bodies of water, impact snowfall amount totals? (ES, MS, HS)
- Lighting for a production of *The Nutcracker* uses a range of colors, saturations, and intensity to achieve the various settings and dream-like quality of the production. Using scraps of different colored cellophane and a flashlight and/or a lamp, experiment with the different color combinations and intensity of light (concentrated or diffused) you can create. What effects and moods might different colors have on various scenes? Brainstorm qualities to each color combination and, after reading the synopsis for *The Nutcracker*, decide what colors would best fit each scene’s mood. Watch during the performance to see all the different colors used! (ES, MS)
- In the background of the Stahlbaum party, a full moon illuminates the scene. What are the stages of the moon cycle? During which years has there been a full moon near Christmas Eve? (ES, MS)
- Look at the image of Santa’s workshop on the cover of *Kaufmann’s Christmas Stories for Boys and Girls* on page 25. What kinds of technology are shown in Santa’s Workshop? Do we still use these tools and this technology? What kinds of tools do we use now that wouldn’t have been used in 1906? (ES, MS)
- Props, or properties, are the small objects handled by the dancers in a production. The props in *The Nutcracker* go through quite a beating—sometimes literally—throughout the course of the production. Take for instance the giant fork sword used during the fight between the Rat King and his mice and the Nutcracker. It has to be able to be handled by the dancers and tossed to the ground night after night after night. Choose one prop from the production that you saw. How was that prop used in the show (Picked up? Dropped? Etc.)? Engineer and design your own version of that prop, taking into consideration materials you could use, how the prop is utilized, and keeping costs as low as possible! (MS, HS)
- Imagine how in the future technology might be used to enhance performance experience. Describe watching a ballet at the theatre 100 years in the future. Do you believe technology could ever replace the experience of live performance? What would be gained, and what would be lost? (MS, HS)

History (PDE Academic Standards 8.1-8.4)

- A giant carousel appears in Act II of PBT's production of *The Nutcracker* to represent the history of carousels in the Pittsburgh region. How are carousels built? What images can be found in carousels? Find out when the first carousel appeared in Western Pennsylvania, where other carousels were built, and how many are still in existence today. (ES, MS, HS)
- The original *Nutcracker* was set in 19th century Russia, and Terrence Orr, the choreographer of PBT's version, set the story in late 19th century Pittsburgh. How would the ballet change if it were set in another time period or place? Some suggestions to explore would be an early civilization from ancient history, medieval Europe, or the pioneer days of the United States. How would the costumes and sets differ? Using your knowledge of that time period, find what celebrations and dances would likely have been included. (ES, MS, HS)
- This production of *The Nutcracker* is set in Pittsburgh. (See page 11 for more details.) What other Pittsburgh connections do you think should have been included in the production? How would you incorporate them into the ballet? (ES, MS, HS)
- While the Arabian dance seems exotic and foreign compared to the rest, Middle Eastern culture has had tremendous influence on western civilization. So it's not quite as foreign as it would seem! Even in ballet, a classic move—the arabesque—means “in Arabic fashion.”
- In Act I, the partygoers are entertained by dancing dolls. Two of these are Harlequin and Columbine. Where do these characters come from? (MS, HS)
- The Rat King in *The Nutcracker* is the antagonist. Why do you think the enemy is portrayed as a rat rather than another animal? What does a rat make you think of? Find out the symbolic meaning of a rat, then explore mythology and folk tales. Are rats used as antagonists in other stories? If not rats, then what other animals are vilified? Are those perceptions the same today? (ES, MS)
- PBT's production of *The Nutcracker* is set right here in Pittsburgh in a neighborhood called Shadyside. Research the settlement patterns of the neighborhoods in the city of Pittsburgh. What groups of people settled into the various neighborhoods? What was their culture and average socioeconomic status? How did these cultures and economics affect the architecture and business of each neighborhood? (ES, MS, HS)
- In the “Snowy Forest” scene in *The Nutcracker*, the backdrop is painted from a lookout on Mt. Washington. Look at maps and pictures of Western Pennsylvania. Describe the topography of Western PA. Create your own topographical map of your home or your school. Research famous “look outs” in Western Pennsylvania. (ES, MS)
- Terrence Orr returned to E.T.A. Hoffmann's original story by making Marie older in PBT's production of *The Nutcracker*. He draws attention to her becoming an adult, represented by the gifts of a scarf and pointe shoes in Act I. What other “coming of age” rituals can you think of? Research coming of age rituals in other cultures t00. (MS, HS)

Arts and Humanities (PDE Academic Standards 9.1-9.4)

- Create a poster for *The Nutcracker*. How do you catch people's attention so they will read the poster? What should be included in the poster to give all-important information? What can you say to excite people about the ballet? (MS, HS)
- Read the synopsis of *The Nutcracker*. Divide the class into three groups and assign each group one of the following scenes to plan and paint: Christmas Eve at the home of Dr. and Frau Stahlbaum at the arrival of Godfather Drosselmeyer; the battle of the mice and the toy soldiers; the Land of Enchantment. After the three murals are completed hang them in story order and have each group describe and/or act out the action of the scene. (ES, MS, HS)
- Make your own costume from “found” materials (such as cardboard tubes, newspaper, recycled bottles, etc.) for one of the following characters: Marie, the Nutcracker, the Rat King, Drosselmeyer, and the Sugarplum Fairy. Write a short paragraph describing the various elements of your costume, the materials you used, and why you used those materials. (ES, MS, HS)
- The music for “The Battle of the Mice” and “The Waltz of the Snowflakes” displays different qualities. Listen to each piece (available on the Educator Portal) and create an acrostic poem that describes the music and action of the scene. Share poems with the class. (ES, MS)
- Tchaikovsky was one of the first composers to use a new (in 1892, that is!) instrument called the celesta (che-LE-sta). In *The Nutcracker*, it provides the distinctively delicate tinkling notes in “Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy.” Taken from the French word for “heavenly,” the celesta gives a magical, dreamy or other-worldly feeling to the music. Listen to the “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy.” Prompts for students: Describe what the celesta sounds like, what it makes you think of, and how it makes you feel. Research what the instrument looks like and is made of. How is sound created by the celesta? What other pieces of music use the celesta? Listen to the selections on page 8 and compare and contrast with the “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy.” (ES, MS, HS)
- *The Nutcracker* includes dances that have characteristics that come from Spain, China, Russia, and the Middle East. Compare the movements you see in each dance. How are the dances different from each other in terms of movement?. Review the story sequence of *The Nutcracker* by creating “frozen pictures” or *tableaux* in small groups. Each group decides upon 5 key moments of the story and creates a *tableaux* for each moment. Share *tableaux* and record what moments each group has chosen. Discuss story structure (exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, and resolution) and how the *tableaux* depict various parts of the story structure. Also discuss the aesthetic experience of *tableaux* and how the production utilized moments of *tableaux*. (ES, MS, HS)
- *The Nutcracker* ballet was adapted from a story written by E.T.A. Hoffmann. Think about popular stories today such as the *Harry Potter* series or *The Hunger Games* series. How would you adapt one of these stories into a ballet? What elements would be needed to bring these characters to life? Describe the music, special effects, costumes, and scenery you would use. How would you tell these stories without words? (ES, MS, HS)

The Nutcracker Elementary Synopsis

It is Christmas Eve, and Godfather Drosselmeyer and his Nephew unload presents from their cart. They are going to a party at the Stahlbaum's home. The Nephew wears a mask because he was cursed by the Rat King long ago. The mask frightens many of the guests as they arrive.

Marie is in her bedroom, where her parents present her with two special gifts, a scarf and a pair of ballet shoes.

Inside, the party is underway. Drosselmeyer performs magic tricks for the children. He introduces Marie to his Nephew, and Marie isn't scared of the mask. She recognizes the goodness inside him. He gives her a Nutcracker as a gift, but her brother grabs it from her and breaks it. Drosselmeyer fixes it with his magic. The party ends, the guests depart, and the family goes to bed.

At midnight, Marie goes downstairs to find her Nutcracker. But mice and human-sized rats come out and scare her. Suddenly, everything is growing, even her Nutcracker, who comes to life.

The mice and rats return, but the Nutcracker fights them to save Marie. He leads the toy soldiers and storybook characters in a battle! During the battle, Marie helps the Nutcracker defeat the Rat King by throwing her shoe at him.

Because of her concern for the Nutcracker, the spell is broken. He is transformed into a handsome Prince. He invites Marie on a journey through the glittering snowy forest to the Land of Enchantment.

When they arrive, the Sugar Plum Fairy greets them. The Prince tells the tale of the battle and how Marie saved his life. The grand festival begins, with dancers from many lands entertaining Marie and the Prince. Marie's visit ends with a beautiful duet danced by the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier.

Suddenly, Christmas Day dawns on the street outside the Stahlbaum home. Drosselmeyer and his Nephew make their way to their cart. They stop to remember the night's amazing events.

Marie awakens in her bedroom. Was it all a dream? She finds her beautiful scarf, a souvenir of her visit to the Land of Enchantment. Can it be? She rushes to the mirror. Looking back at her, ever faithful, is her Nutcracker Prince!

Word Search Answer Key

E	G	T	H	N	T	X	X	P	S	R	W	N	Q	K
C	C	R	C	E	E	V	P	N	R	E	P	U	D	P
G	D	N	L	H	T	P	O	F	N	Y	R	T	S	Y
V	N	L	A	U	A	W	H	E	O	E	E	C	C	H
W	A	I	T	D	Q	I	C	E	B	M	I	R	A	H
B	J	U	K	U	N	J	K	H	W	L	D	A	R	S
A	R	W	E	T	X	A	A	O	H	E	L	C	F	K
H	B	E	Z	F	A	J	I	P	V	S	O	K	A	C
W	N	R	I	U	B	R	L	B	D	S	S	E	F	M
L	E	S	U	O	R	A	C	L	A	O	K	R	R	G
B	A	T	T	L	E	T	W	E	S	R	S	Y	D	E
O	X	T	B	G	E	H	T	O	L	D	A	W	S	N
M	T	W	A	S	H	I	N	G	T	O	N	C	R	K
N	C	R	N	Y	V	X	Z	Q	W	O	U	B	G	U
Y	R	I	A	F	M	U	L	P	R	A	G	U	S	K

Do's and Don'ts of Theater Etiquette

Please Do . . .

- applaud! It's the best way to communicate with the dancers. It tells them that you're enjoying the performance. If you see something you like, feel free to clap
- turn off your cell phone completely. The light and sounds can distract your neighbors—and the dancers too!
- dress neatly! Going to the theater is special. You don't do it every day so if you want to, take it up a notch!
- ask questions! Ballet staff can answer your questions before or after the performance, or during intermission.
- use the restroom before or after the performance. Enjoy the dancing, the drama and being at the theater with your class!

Please Don't . . .

- talk during the performance. It bothers your neighbor! You'll have lots of time to chat before and after the show, and during intermission.
- text or tweet or use your cell phone at all! Especially during the performance—it's really distracting, even to the dancers who can see the glowing light of your phone from the stage!
- take pictures. It's not allowed at all during the performance.
- eat, drink or chew gum in the theater. The Benedum is one of the most beautiful buildings in Pittsburgh and we want to keep it that way!
- miss a thing! There's so much to see, hear and experience!

PBT Artists; Photo: Rich Sofranko.

