

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR TERRENCE S. ORR
PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

THE GREAT GATSBY

with the PBT Orchestra



Audience Guide to the Ballet

February 8 - 17, 2019

Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, Pittsburgh

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with the PBT Orchestra

Choreography: Jorden Morris

Score: Carl Davis

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Benedum Center for the Performing Arts | Pittsburgh, PA

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About the Novel

The Great Gatsby was published in 1925 and is considered F. Scott Fitzgerald's greatest work. At the top of the list of quintessential American novels, it is considered the definitive history of the Jazz Age for its pitch-perfect portrayal of social mores and conflicts of the day. It's also beloved for its beautiful and lyrical prose.

Though *Gatsby* received critical acclaim when it debuted it was not a commercial success in Fitzgerald's lifetime - it never sold well and earned Fitzgerald a total of only about

\$8,000 in both advances and royalties. He died in 1940 believing the book to be a failure.

In 1942 *The Great Gatsby* was selected for distribution to American soldiers in World War II - 155,000 copies made their way to the warzone. It was a hit - readers and critics at home took a second look at it and the mirror it held up to the "American Dream." As of 2013 more than 25 million copies of the book had been sold worldwide.

F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896 - 1940)

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1896. He was the only son in an upper-middle class family, named after his second cousin three times removed, Francis Scott Key, composer of *The Star Spangled Banner*.



He was educated at private schools and later went to Princeton University, where he was more interested in writing and trying to get published than academics. He dropped out to join the Army in 1917. He was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant and sent to Montgomery, Alabama for training. There he met his future wife, Zelda Sayre.

The war ended before Fitzgerald could be deployed and he was discharged in 1919. He set off to New York City to become a writer. He started as an advertising copywriter, and published a story or two in magazines; by 1920 he'd published his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*. The novel, based on his experiences at Princeton, was an instant success and established Fitzgerald as the spokesman for the Jazz Age. In addition, he was now financially secure. Zelda, a beautiful, fiery and unconventional Southern belle, who'd been refusing to marry him until she "heard the jingle of money in his pocket," finally said yes and they married in 1921.

The Fitzgeralds lived in New York City and on Long Island, where they were at the center of the lavish society he often wrote about. For them, the '20s meant a succession of parties, drinking and spending that devolved into alcoholism and infidelity. 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.

Zelda suffered from a simmering mental illness that reached the boiling point in 1930, when was diagnosed with schizophrenia. She was institutionalized off and on for the rest of her life. She died in 1947 in a fire at a hospital in Asheville, North Carolina.

Throughout much of his life, Fitzgerald lived beyond his means and struggled to support his lifestyle. In 1937, under financial pressure, Fitzgerald moved to Hollywood to write screenplays. He died there from a heart attack at age 44, leaving his last novel, *The Last Tycoon*, unfinished.

[Photo Credit](#)

PBT's Previous Productions of *The Great Gatsby*

PBT's first *Gatsby* was commissioned by Artistic Director Patricia Wilde to celebrate the 1987 grand opening of the Benedum Center after its restoration (as well as PBT's move from Heinz Hall to the Benedum Center).



1987: Choreography by Andre Prokovsky

Artists: Scott Jovovich as Gatsby, Janet Popeleski as Daisy. Photo: Randy Choura

1996: Choreography by Bruce Wells



2008: Choreography by John McFall and Laurie Stallings

Artists: Stephen Hadala as George and Erin Halloran as Myrtle

The Ballet

The Setting

Summer on Long Island in 1922. East Egg is an enclave for the “old money,” established gentry. Across the harbor is West Egg, where the nouveau riche have settled. From his mansion Gatsby can see the green light at the end of Daisy’s dock in East Egg.

Between Long Island and Manhattan is the Valley of Ashes, a junkyard where the broken dreams of the working class smolder.

The Main Characters

Gatsby: A rich young man living in West Egg. Grew up desperately poor in North Dakota and changed his name in an effort to change the trajectory of his life. Has loved Daisy since they met before he shipped out to fight in World War I. Made a fortune (illegally) after the war and moved to Long Island to be close to Daisy and to try to regain the love they lost.

Nick: The narrator of the novel and the main character; Daisy’s cousin. Moved to New York City from the Midwest to experience the urbanity and excitement of the East Coast. He lives next to Gatsby in a gardener’s cottage.

Daisy: A Southern belle, married ultra-rich Tom Buchanan while Gatsby was overseas. She still loved Gatsby but chose the security of Tom’s wealth over love. She and Tom have a little girl.

Tom: Originally from Chicago. Fabulously rich. Callous and manipulative.

Jordan: Daisy’s friend from their hometown and a professional golfer. She and Nick strike up a romance during the summer.

Myrtle: Tom’s lover, lives in the Valley of Ashes. She sees Tom as a way out of the drudgery of her life.

George: A mechanic - a working class guy, who is beaten down by his lot in life. Myrtle’s husband.



Artists: Alexandra Kochis and Lucius Kirst as Daisy and Gatsby. Photo: Aimee DiAndrea.

A Note the Ballet's Narrative

In the novel we learn about Gatsby and Daisy's relationship in a series of flashbacks. The ballet tells the story chronologically.

The Synopsis

Act I

It's 1917 in Louisville, Kentucky, and outside a military base, a young Daisy and Gatsby say goodbye as he departs for the war in Europe. Daisy is left alone, distraught and unsure of what her future holds. Her best friend, Jordan, arrives and convinces her to attend a function at the dance hall in an attempt to lift her sunken spirits.

There, handsome polo player Tom Buchanan pursues Daisy, struck by her beauty and initial disinterest. He is relentless and eventually his charisma wins over the vulnerable Daisy.

Five years later in New York city, Nick Carraway steps off the train to begin a new job and spend time with his cousin Daisy, now married to Tom and living in the stylish area of East Egg on Long Island. During Nick's first visit to the Buchanan estate, he meets Jordan, now a famous golfer, and an emotional Daisy confesses that her life is truly unhappy. A mysterious phone call for Tom interrupts the gathering and throws Daisy into a tirade. Jordan reveals to Nick that Tom has a mistress somewhere in the city.

Nick returns to his bungalow in West Egg, reflecting on the events of the day. At the mansion across the garden he sees a lone figure gazing over the bay. As the figure moves into the light, he watches Gatsby lost in thought — seemingly pulled towards the green light of Daisy's dock across the water.

The next day, Tom and Nick take a trip into the city, stopping at a gas station in the Valley of Ashes. In this wasteland between Long Island and New York City, Nick meets George, the mechanic, and his wife Myrtle. It becomes apparent that Myrtle is Tom's mistress. Soon after Tom and Nick leave, Myrtle makes a scene and departs for the city, leaving a confused and frustrated George behind.

Tom and Nick gather Myrtle from the train station in the city and make their way to the apartment Tom rents for their affair. Nick has his first glimpse of the debauchery, infidelity and abuse surrounding him. A drunk Myrtle, desperate for Tom to leave Daisy, pushes the issue too far and sends Tom into a physical rage.

Later that week, Nick receives an invitation to a party from his mysterious neighbor, Gatsby. Soon caterers begin to arrive, preparing the grounds and mansion. That evening, the infamous spectacle of a Gatsby summer party ignites with lights, music and an array of extraordinary characters. Jordan is in attendance and escorts Nick into the fete when he arrives. At the end of a magical evening, Gatsby introduces himself to Nick. Having learned from Jordan

that Nick is Daisy's cousin, Gatsby asks Nick to grant him a favor. Nick agrees to the seemingly strange request, and a garden tea party is arranged for Gatsby to see Daisy again.

On the morning of the tea party, Gatsby arrives at Nick's bungalow early. Usually calm and cool, he is outwardly nervous, fretting over the décor and the weather. Just as Daisy is about to arrive, an anxious Gatsby rushes away, followed by a perplexed Nick. Daisy arrives to a beautiful but empty garden and explores the grounds, wondering why she is there. Nick returns with Gatsby and the two lovers are reunited. Nick leaves them to converse in the garden and after a few awkward moments, the two begin to rekindle the flame of love. When Nick returns, they are euphoric. Gatsby offers Daisy a tour of the mansion, and the two depart. Alone in Gatsby's bedroom, the passion of their former lives overtakes them.

Act II

An abstract scene reflects the storylines of the main characters thus far. Tom and Daisy continue to struggle with their marriage, with Daisy spending more and more time with Gatsby at his mansion. George and Myrtle also continue to fight. George is becoming more suspicious and Myrtle grows more desperate every day. We are given a glimpse into Gatsby's history, and how Meyer Wolfsheim, an unsavory associate, transformed a young army officer into the Great Gatsby.

The caterers have returned to the Gatsby grounds and are preparing for another summer party. Daisy has convinced Tom to attend, and they arrive with Nick and Jordan for another evening of spectacle. During the party, an overconfident Daisy and Gatsby dance a foxtrot in front of all the guests. Tom begins to suspect the affair, becoming dangerously jealous when he is embarrassed by Gatsby. The evening ends on a dark note, but Daisy sneaks a parting kiss with Gatsby, further fueling his hopes of reclaiming the past.

Daisy has arranged a luncheon at the Buchanan home, inviting Nick and Gatsby to join. Tom, still angry over events of the party, makes his feelings clear. When Daisy begins flirting with Gatsby, Tom begins picking away at the rumors surrounding the man and his questionable rise to fame. When tensions reach a boiling point, Jordan and Daisy decide a trip to the city is in order. Daisy and Gatsby take Tom's car, while Jordan and Nick depart with Tom in Gatsby's vehicle.

Tom, Nick and Jordan stop in the Valley of Ashes for fuel, and Myrtle is surprised to see Tom in a different car and with a strange new woman. When Tom refuses her advances Myrtle assumes the worst and is left torn and heartbroken.

Everyone meets at the Plaza Hotel and Tom arranges a parlor suite for the afternoon. Once inside the suite, Tom continues to interrogate Gatsby, pushing further and further until a physical altercation erupts. Driven to the edge, Gatsby breaks from his façade and violently attacks Tom. Daisy rushes to stop the fight, in shock at Gatsby's actions and fearing for Tom's life.

A broken Gatsby tries to apologize and regain his composure, pleading with Daisy to leave Tom and admit she does not love him anymore. Daisy is forced to explain that while she loved Gatsby once, she will not leave Tom and her family. After this emotional afternoon, the group departs back to Long Island. An arrogant Tom, having won Daisy back, offers for Gatsby to drive her home one last time. Daisy and Gatsby leave in his car, while Tom and the others follow shortly after.

It is now evening, and in the Valley of the Ashes, a tormented Myrtle feels her life crumble around her. George is at a loss to console her. Myrtle, seeing the yellow car Tom was in earlier, rushes into the street in a manic frenzy. She is struck and killed by the vehicle, which speeds off, leaving her broken body in the road.

Tom, Nick and Jordan arrive at the scene of the accident moments later. Tom is beside himself, but cannot show any remorse over the tragic scene. George is in a catatonic state over the death of his wife, his sanity faltering with each passing moment. Tom reveals to him that the yellow car involved is owned by Gatsby, and George vows to seek revenge.

At the Buchanan home, Daisy is in shock. She was driving the car when it struck Myrtle. Overwhelmed with what her life has become, Daisy realizes she has gone too far. When Tom, Nick and Jordan arrive, she sends her friends away to be alone with Tom. The couple reconcile their marriage. Daisy keeps the truth about Myrtle to herself.

Outside the Buchanan house, Nick finds Gatsby hiding in the garden. He is still convinced he can win Daisy back, and that it's not too late for a future together. Nick, frustrated and distraught over his friends' blind ambitions, tries to tell Gatsby he must let it go. Gatsby finally agrees to leave, telling Nick that Daisy promised to call the next day.

The next morning, Gatsby waits by the pool for the phone call from Daisy. Nick checks in on his friend before he departs for work. A shadowy figure appears on the grounds and sees the yellow car. Gatsby, deep in thought, continues to wait for Daisy's phone call as George steps out from the shadows. He shoots Gatsby and, seconds later, takes his own life.

The funeral for Gatsby, arranged by Nick, is a somber affair attended only by the mansion staff and few guests of parties past. Nick reflects on the bizarre and tragic events of the summer — the twisted lives in which he became entangled, the dark and selfish side of society. His only respite is remembering Gatsby and his singular obsession with reclaiming a past love. His never-ending hope and unwavering belief.

Choreographer Jorden Morris discusses [PBT's *The Great Gatsby*](#) in this video.

Memorable Moment

One of the novel's most iconic scenes takes place at the end of Act I. Gatsby takes Daisy to his mansion, and when they get to his bedroom, he opens his closet, which is filled with beautiful shirts made from the finest fabrics in the world. One by one he tosses them down to Daisy on the bed. The shirts are a symbol of his success, his wealth, and his belief that he is now worthy of her. They float down on Daisy as an offering, a gift to her of his love, and of his entire being.

The Choreography

Choreographer Jorden Morris



After retiring from the stage as a principal dancer, Morris began to study and explore choreography. He attended New York University studying dance and theatre arts. Jorden also worked with Claude Bessy and Serge Golovine from the Paris Opera, studying early French choreography.

Morris premiered his first work in 1999, a one-act interpretation of Alexandre Dumas's *The Three Musketeers*. In December of 2006, Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet presented the world premiere of his first full-length work, *Peter Pan*. This production became the biggest box office in the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's history, until it was surpassed three years later by his next full-length ballet, *Moulin Rouge® – The Ballet*. Since its creation in 2009, *Moulin Rouge® – The Ballet* has been on tour across North America and Europe and has been seen by over 180,000 people in theatres. *Moulin Rouge® – The Ballet* was made into a full feature film in 2013 and distributed by Cineplex Odeon.

In the summer of 2015 Jorden accepted the position of Artistic Director with Citie Ballet in Edmonton, Canada. Over the next three years he choreographed new works on the company and brought in renowned guest choreographers. Morris's artistic leadership and success was acknowledged by critics and dance journalists across the country.

In 2018 he left Citie Ballet to begin working on his next full-length work, *The Great Gatsby*. Jorden currently divides his time between his new and existing productions as well as working for Canada's Shumka Dance Company as Senior Creative Director.

Photo courtesy of Jorden Morris

Other works by Jorden Morris in PBT's Repertory



***Peter Pan*, 2011 and 2016**

Artists: Caitlin Peabody, Christopher Budzynski. Photo: Rich Sofranko



***Moulin Rouge® – The Ballet*, 2013**

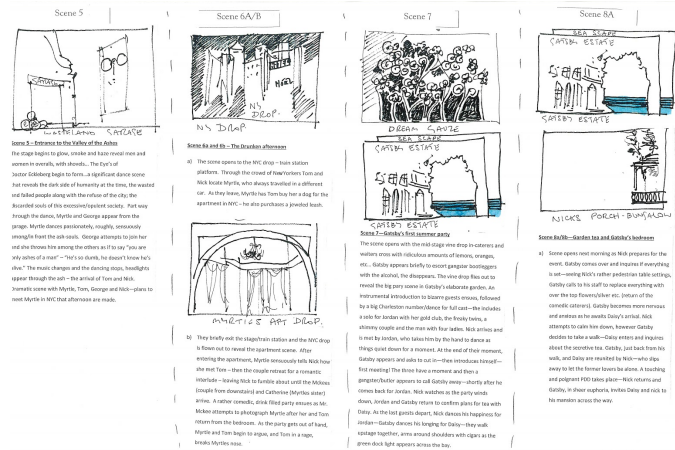
Artists of Pittsburgh Ballet Theater. Photo: Rich Sofranko

Creating a Story Ballet - the Process

Though ballet in the 19th century always meant a “story ballet” - think *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *The Nutcracker*, etc. - abstract or plotless ballets dominate ballet choreography today. Jorden Morris is one of ballet’s few modern master storytellers.

Morris spent 5 weeks at PBT in late summer 2018 to begin creating the ballet on the company - by the end of that time the entire ballet was basically in place. He returned the 2nd week of January 2019 to rehearse and to refine the choreography. The entire process took more than 18 months and included:

- Reading the book (5+ times!)
- Historical research for dance styles of the era and infusing them with ballet movement
- Researching books, authors, photographs, film, news of the era - to get a feel for what American culture and society were like at the time



- Creating a storyboard (above) to outline the narrative and pick out scenes that work well for dance
- Working closely with the composer long-distance and in many cross-Atlantic meetings to create the sound he envisioned (Morris and composer Carl Davis hadn't met prior to starting work on this project)



- Finally, getting into the studio with the dancers, to find out what works and what doesn't work, in a collaborative, creative effort.

Jorden Morris and Artists of Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre.. Photo: Aimee DiAndrea

Choreographic Style

Rehearsal Director Caitlin Steel describes the overall ballet style as very classical. There are Balanchine influences - a little “more arm movement, a little more expansive, more use of pointe shoes and really bending over the toes. A little more hip action. Very Jorden Morris!”



Artists: Gabrielle Thurlow, William Moore, Marisa Grywalski. Photo: Aimee DiAndrea

Telling the Story through Movement - Signature Moments

Morris’ main goal in all of his work is to make the story accessible and understandable, and to make the art form of ballet accessible to a wide audience. His tools are:

- humor and fun - the ballet, though an essentially dark story, is sprinkled with physical comedy throughout
- incorporating social dancing and different dance styles (Charleston, Foxtrot, Shimmy, Quick Step) into the choreography. The result is an overall choreographic style that feels familiar - that feels relatable to both ballet lovers and tp those new to the art form.
- adding contemporary and jazzy dance movement to help convey the story’s modern sensibility
- signature and understandable movement vocabulary that interprets the personalities and deep emotions of the characters

Meyer Wolfsheim

The Meyer Wolfsheim character, who appears at the beginning of Act 2, is original to Fitzgerald's novel. He is a prominent figure in organized crime in New York City in the 1920s and is Gatsby's mentor. He schools Gatsby in bootlegging and possibly other crimes that bring Gatsby his great wealth. Wolfsheim is said to be modeled on Arthur Rothstein, a real-life kingpin of New York's Jewish-American crime syndicate.

In the Act 2 scene, Morris's choreography conveys the power of Wolfsheim's personality and his influence over Gatsby. The music in this sequence, along with signature movements, also suggest Wolfsheim's Jewish heritage.

The Valley of Ashes

George and Myrtle live in a community called the Valley of Ashes. In the novel, the community represents the poor and working class, who've been left behind in the Jazz Age's headlong and often brutal pursuit of wealth and "the American dream." Morris's choreography for the inhabitants of the Valley of Ashes in Act 1 is characterized not by classical ballet technique but by more modern and contemporary dance movement:

- rather than the long lines of classical and neo-classical ballet, the movement here is rounded and flattened
- women are not in pointe shoes, the feet are grounded and movement is oriented toward the floor - dancers even crawl across the floor at one point
- near the end of the scene, one dancer clambers up onto the backs of the others with arms outstretched, in a desperate attempt to reach (perhaps the American Dream) what none of them can attain.

The Party Scenes



In these vibrant and vivacious scenes Morris applies ballet form and technique to social dance styles. Using dances popular in that era sets the ballet squarely in the Jazz Age but also creates a movement story that many in the audience can relate to and understand. Layering classical ballet on top of the Charleston was a technical challenge; the result takes both dance forms to a higher level. And it's so much fun to watch!

Character-driven Choreography

Each character's personality and motivations are expressed through movement - each has their own movement style and vocabulary that portray who they are. Here are just a couple examples:

Myrtle: Her choreography, exaggerated and angular, telegraphs her slinky sexuality and also her cruel betrayal of George. But the quality of her movement also conveys her vulnerability, despair, and desperation. In her first scene with Tom, her choreography is both seductive and imploring - she is begging Tom to love her.

Gatsby: Classical lines with long, lyrical extensions, as if he is yearning, reaching for something he can never actually grasp. In a solo in Act I his movement is oriented toward the green light at the end of Daisy's dock - Fitzgerald's iconic symbol of Gatsby's love for Daisy, of their (unrecoverable) past, and ultimately of the American Dream. Be sure to notice that this lyrical, "yearning" choreography also appears in the Valley of Ashes scene.

Composer Carl Davis created a beautifully poignant leitmotif (a recurring musical phrase) that also conveys Gatsby's sense of longing.

Artist: Lucius Kirst. Photo: Aimee DiAndrea



The Score

Composer Carl Davis



A consummate, all-round musician, Carl Davis is widely known internationally in many spheres of music-making. Born in New York, his early work in the United States provided valuable conducting experience with organizations such as New York City Opera and the Robert Shaw Chorale. Among his most well-known works in an extensive career are: Paul McCartney's *Liverpool Oratorio*, the feature films *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and Abel Gance's *Napoleon*; and for television, *The World At War*. Davis is well-known in the field of dance, working with the major choreographers of the day. His contribution to ballet includes works for London Contemporary Dance Theatre, Sadler's Wells, Royal Ballet and Northern Ballet Theatre. His scores created for

Northern Ballet Theatre include *A Simple Man* and *A Christmas Carol*. His symphonic work, *A Circle of Stones*, consists of four symphonic pictures for orchestra and was written for Mike Mansfield Publications for broadcast in 1997.

Davis's output for film and television is vast, including *Pride and Prejudice* (nominated for a BASCA Ivor Novello award for Best Music for a Television Production in 1996) has been one of his best-loved scores, and this was followed by *Cranford* in 2007, also for BBC.

Recent commissions include a *Ballade* for cello and orchestra commissioned by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (2011), and a large-scale choral work for children's choir and the Hallé Orchestra entitled *Last Train to Tomorrow* on the subject of the 'Kindertransport'.

Image courtesy of Bright Media

Carl Davis on Composing the *Gatsby* Score

Creating the sound: [My thought was to use] the line-up of the [Paul] Whiteman Band (which premiered George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1924) and really evoke the authentic sound of the period. So instead of the kind of orchestra you might have for a Tchaikovsky ballet, which could not be less than about 60 or 70 players, I would actually use the maximum that one would use for a Paul Whiteman-sized band, which would be 30. So it's much smaller, it's much noisier, it's much louder, than a symphony orchestra. A typical group would be a group of woodwind instruments that would include saxophones, which is not a normal classical instrument. A large percentage of the rest would be brass: Trumpets, trombones, tuba would be very important. There would be a wide variety of strummed instruments like banjo, guitar, and ukulele.

But the basic feel is going to be a jazzy show. Because it sounds really Gershwin-ish and very period and has that sort of beat for a lot of it. When it hits the bits of music that are jazzy, it just lifts off, it goes into another sphere.

Composing for the novel: When you're doing a ballet that has a specific subject the story has got to be in the score. I like to say that if you're listening to what I've done without the dance you would still be able to get a pretty clear idea of what was actually going on. It's got to be that graphic, that descriptive.

You have a bible - which is the book. . . . From the book you form certain ideas about all these things: historic associations, the 1920s, Gershwin, Fitzgerald . . . the feeling of the times. [Also the novel's] sociological background, its emotional level, its sympathy or lack of with the characters. [It's a] wonderfully inspirational source, but at the same time we're not dealing with language, we're dealing with movement and spectacle. We've got to be faithful to the spirit of this book. What qualities we might find in it, which we can present to the audiences in dance form.

Composing for ballet: You have to understand the special nature of, the privilege of writing music . . . the moment of magic in which movement is joined to the music. This is so special and life-enhancing when these two things combine.

Listen to WQED's interview with Carl Davis and hear some of the *Gatsby* music!

[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

Costumes and Scenic Design

The costumes and set design for this production were originally created for PBT's 1987 version of *The Great Gatsby*, designed by Peter Farmer. Mr. Farmer was an acclaimed British designer for ballet and theater.

A Few Costume Tidbits!

- 80+ costumes in the ballet
- PBT Costumier Janet Marie Groom worked with Peter Farmer on the original design and "build" of the costumes in 1987
- Many have been refurbished, with new, modern fabrics added for strength and "dance-ability"
- New costumes were designed and created to add unique and "funky" elements from the era
- Some female dancers cut their hair in a "bob" style, popular in the 1920s. Others will wear wigs
- Dancers had a special session to learn to apply makeup according to the fashion of the day

Learn more about the costumes for *Gatsby*
[this PBT video.](#)



[in](#)

Artist: Emily Simpson; Photo: Kelly Perkovich

Set Design Fast Facts

- The overall look is one of grandeur - Morris noted that the sets had to be “as big as Gatsby’s persona”
- Morris wanted a blend of new and traditional styles to mirror the societal changes taking place during the 1920s
- PBT hired scenic designer Andrew Holland to refurbish the old design and create new elements
- Farmer’s beautiful original designs for the drops were retained, though repainted to be fresh and vibrant
- Additional pieces and three-dimensional elements added for a new and modern energy
- To inform his updating of the sets, designer Holland visited locations in Fitzgerald’s novel, including the Plaza Hotel and Penn Station, and researched historical photos at the Museum of the City of New York
- A scale model was produced to exactly replicate the Benedum Center stage; tiny replicas of every prop used was created with 3-D printing
- Scenery was built by Mr. Holland in New Jersey and painted by scenic painter Michael Hagen in upstate New York

Programs at the Theater

Join us at the theater for these educational programs to learn more about *Swan Lake*!

Fri., Feb. 8, 7 – 7:30 p.m: Performance Preview

Join us for a special preview of the ballet with Choreographer Jorden Morris and Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr. Located in the theater; no reservations necessary.

Sat., Feb. 9, 7 – 7:30 p.m: Insights

Join us for in-depth discussion about creating a new ballet Choreographer Jorden Morris and Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr. Located on the Mezzanine level. Reservations requested – [register here!](#)

Sun., Feb. 10 and 17, 1 – 1:30 p.m: Talks with Terry

Never seen ballet class before? This is your chance! Watch a few minutes of the company’s onstage warm-up class; then get a preview of *Swan Lake* with Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr. Rehearsal Director Caitlin Steele joins him to talk about the show. Located in the theater; no reservations necessary.

Sun., Feb. 10, 2 p.m: Audio-described performance

A live narrative of the ballet for patrons with vision impairment. Click [here](#) for more information.

Accessibility

We believe dance is for everyone! Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre is committed to including everyone from our greater Pittsburgh community and beyond in the beauty, discipline, and creativity of dance. We strive to make our company, school and art form accessible to talented and committed students and families.

Theater Accessibility Services

Wheelchair accessibility: The Benedum Center for the Performing Arts features elevators, accessible restrooms and companion seating (available only on the main floor of the theater). Guide dogs are permitted; please inquire when purchasing tickets. Please inform your ticketing representative when purchasing to take advantage of wheelchair and companion seating.

Braille and Large Print Programs: With assistance from the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children Outreach/Braille Project, PBT makes printed Braille programs available at the Benedum Center for patrons who are visually impaired. Large-print programs also will be available. Please see front-of-house staff at the Benedum Center for a program.

Assistive Listening Devices: Assistive listening devices are available at the Benedum Center for Performing Arts for patrons who desire amplification. Neck loops are available. Please see an usher at the Benedum Center when you arrive to obtain an Assistive Listening Device, which are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Audio Description: Audio Description is available for all patrons to hear and experience dance through verbal description that paints a picture in the mind. For more information about our audio description program, including dates and pre-performance sensory seminars, please visit our [audio description page](#).

Closed Captioning will be available for select performances with music with lyrics; offered on request with 3 weeks advance notice. Please contact education@pittsburghballet.org for more information.

Sign language interpretation may be available for performances that use music with lyrics and educational programs only upon request. We kindly request at least two weeks advance notice before the performance or program dates to ensure that we are able to secure interpreters.

Sensory-Friendly Performances: PBT is proud to present a sensory-friendly performance once per year. [Learn more here](#).

Audio Program Notes: Audio program notes are produced for each of PBT's productions. The recordings are produced in collaboration with the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, part of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh system. [Listen and learn more here.](#)

For more information about all of the accessibility services at the Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, please visit the theater's [accessibility page](#).

Studio Accessibility

Dance for Parkinson's: This program, based on the Dance for PD® program, invites people with Parkinson's, their families, caregivers, and friends, to become participants in the dance process! [Learn more here.](#)

Adaptive Dance: Themed around classic story ballets, our adaptive dance classes are designed for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders or other sensory sensitivities. We emphasize creative movement principles and simplified ballet technique within a welcoming and structured studio environment. [Learn more here.](#)

Children's Scholarship Program: This program aims to expose more children to dance at an early age by funding need-based scholarships for talented and committed students from ages 5-8. [Learn more here.](#)

PBT in the Community: PBT's education team brings ballet into neighborhoods, schools and community centers in an effort to engage and inspire more people with the mind-body benefits of ballet and movement. [Learn more here.](#)