The Sleeping Beauty

with the PBT Orchestra

Audience Guide

May 10 - 12, 2019
Benedum Center for the Performing Arts

PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

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THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

with the PBT Orchesira

Original Choreography by **Marius Petipa**
Staged by Terrence S. Orr
Music by **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

The Benedum Center for the Performing Arts

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Fairy-Tale Origins of *The Sleeping Beauty* Story

The story we know today contains parts of oral traditions and recorded stories dating back hundreds of years. The earliest written version appeared in a four-volume French epic called *Perceforest*, which was published between 1330 and 1334 and included a story about a princess who fell into an enchanted sleep. In 1634, Italian soldier and poet Giambattista Basile published his Pentamerone, a book of oral stories he had collected across his travels. One of them, "Sun, Moon, and Talia," which may have been based on the earlier *Perceforest* story, is thought to be the foundation of the modern Sleeping Beauty tale. These older versions contain many details that are not exactly child-friendly, including sexual assault and cannibalism.

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

The stories vary, sometimes in small ways and sometimes in significant ways. For instance, when the prince wakes the sleeping princess in both "Sun, Moon, and Talia" and "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," the story continues and includes trouble with either an angry wife (Basile) or an ogre mother-in-law (Perrault). The Grimm Brothers were the first to end the story with the prince waking the princess and the first to use a simple kiss to wake her. This tradition continued in the ballet, as well as in Disney's 1959 *Sleeping Beauty* animated film and many other modern versions.

The heroines of these stories have had different names over the centuries:, including Zellandine, Talia, Briar Rose, and in some cases, no name at all. *The Sleeping Beauty* ballet was the first version to name the title princess Aurora (in Perrault's version of the story, this name actually belongs to Sleeping Beauty's daughter), and Disney followed suit in its 1959 movie. The evil fairy had no name in the original tale, but Petipa used the name Carabosse, which he borrowed from a different fairy tale. Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* and *Maleficent* (2014) films changed the evil fairy's name to Maleficent (translated as "evil-doer").

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

About the Ballet

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

The idea for the ballet came from Ivan Vsevolozhsky, director of the Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia, at the end of the 19th century. Several ballets based on Perrault's 1697 version of the fairy tale had been performed before, but Vsevolozhsky's concept was far grander in scope. He envisioned a ballet that

would not only tell the story of an enchanted princess, but would also pay tribute to the opulent, 17th century court of Louis XIV, a French king who loved ballet and who profoundly influenced the progression of ballet as an art form.

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

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

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

Photo: Original cast of The Sleeping Beauty, 1890. Source

Historic Timeline of *The Sleeping Beauty*

1697 "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood" is included in Charles Peurrault's *Stories or Tales from Times Past, with Morals; Tales from Mother Goose*.

1812 "Little Briar Rose" is included in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimms' first published collection of fairy tales.

1818 Choreographer Marius Petipa is born.

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

1840 Composer Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky is born.

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

1890 Vsevolozhsky's vision becomes reality, and the ballet premieres at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia.

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

1916 The ballet is seen for the first time in the U.S. at the Hippodrome Theatre in New York, in an abbreviated version produced by Anna Pavlova.

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

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

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

1959 Walt Disney's animated film *Sleeping Beauty* opens in theaters.

1979 Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre presents its first full-length production of *The Sleeping Beauty* under Artistic Director Patrick Frantz.

2014 Walt Disney's live-action film *Maleficent*, a re-telling of their *Sleeping Beauty*, opens in theaters.

Did You Know?: Ballet Icons and *The Sleeping Beauty*

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

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

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

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

Synopsis

Prologue

The court of King Florestan XXIV is celebrating the christening of Princess Aurora. The courtiers are assembled around her cradle as the festivities begin. The King and Queen enter, followed by six of Aurora's fairy godmothers and their cavaliers. Each fairy dances, offering her special gift to the infant princess. Suddenly, before the Lilac Fairy is able to present her gift, the wicked fairy Carabosse interrupts the ceremony. Angry because she was not invited, Carabosse places a curse upon the princess: On her sixteenth birthday, she will prick her finger on a poisoned spindle and die. The Lilac Fairy intervenes and tempers the curse: Upon pricking her finger, Aurora will not die, but will fall into a deep sleep. The princess will sleep until she is awakened by a true love's kiss.

Act One

Years have passed and it is now Princess Aurora's sixteenth birthday. It seems as though she has triumphed over the evil curse of Carabosse. Her father informs her that she is to select one of four visiting princes as her husband. Aurora dances with the princes, each of whom offers her a rose and declares his love. As the celebration continues, the disguised Carabosse hands Aurora a bouquet in which the poisoned spindle is concealed. Aurora pricks her finger. As she falls to the ground, the Lilac Fairy appears and casts her spell. Aurora and the rest of the kingdom fall asleep. They must all wait for the prince who will come to break the spell.
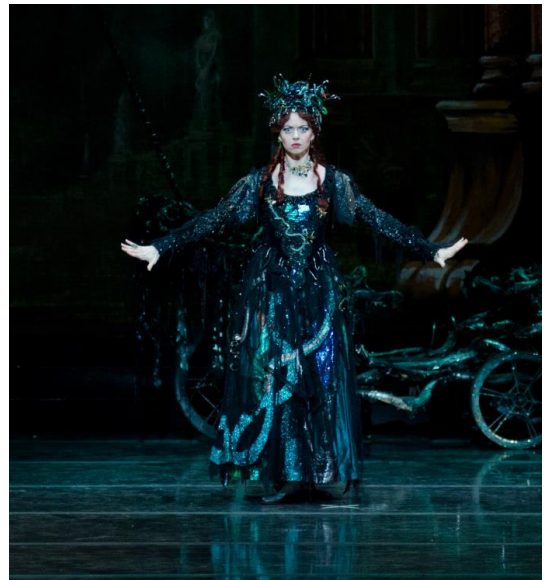
Clockwise from top right: Artists of Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School, photo by Rich Sofranko; Julia Erickson as Carabosse, photo by Aimee DiAndrea; Gabrielle Thurlow and artists of Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, photo by Aimee DiAndrea; Gabrielle Thurlow and Corey Bourbonniere, photo by Rich Sofranko.

Act Two

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

Act Three

The court is celebrating the wedding of Princess Aurora and Prince Désiré. The Lilac Fairy and all the fairy god-mothers share in the kingdom's joy. Fairy-tale characters come to dance at the magnificent celebration. At the conclusion of the wedding Aurora and the Prince dance a grand pas de deux. The King and Queen crown them the new monarchs of the kingdom.

Clockwise from top right: Yoshiaki Nakano, photo by Rich Sofranko; Gabrielle Thurlow and Luca Sbrizzi, photo by Aimee DiAndrea; JoAnna Schmidt and Masahiro Haneji, photo by Rich Sofranko. Alexandra Kochis and Alejandro Diaz, photo by Rich Sofranko.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893). Prior to Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's composition of his first ballet, *Swan Lake*, ballet music was considered unimaginative, and the music world was astonished that the composer would spend time writing music especially for ballet productions. Tchaikovsky showed an unprecedented mastery of the art, creating vivid orchestrations, beautiful themes and melodies that flawlessly matched the physical movements of the dancers on stage.* He composed three full-length ballets, all of which would become enduring masterworks of the genre: *Swan Lake* (1877), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890) and *The Nutcracker* (1892).

Tchaikovsky composed *The Sleeping Beauty* over the course of about eight months, but devoted only 49 days in all to the work. He was busy with other projects as well, including composition of his *Fifth Symphony*, the overture for *Hamlet*, and *Six French Songs* (Opus 65), as well as the conduction of numerous concerts. Completing the score for *The Sleeping Beauty* was a huge accomplishment for him; when he finished the orchestration for the ballet in August 1889, he wrote that "a whole mountain has fallen off my shoulders."

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

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

Learn more about Tchaikovsky's life on the [Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts website](#).

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, p. 152-3. Photo: Tchaikovsky at 25, photo by Zakharin. [Source](#)

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

Take a listen to a few familiar musical excerpts from the score:

[The Rose Adagio](#)

[Grand Pas de Deux](#) (Aurora and the Prince) – Adagio

The Garland Waltz

Walt Disney's 1959 animated film included a new song, "Once Upon a Dream," which used Tchaikovsky's melody from "The Garland Waltz." The song was an instant hit and became the movie's signature song. The 2014 film *Maleficent* once again used "Once Upon a Dream" as its main theme, with singer Lana Del Rey giving the song a modern, haunting twist more suitable for the film's darker retelling of the Sleeping Beauty story.

[Tchaikovsky's *The Garland Waltz*](#)

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

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

Using Choreography to Tell the Story

Marius Petipa (1818—1910). Born in Marseilles, France, Marius Petipa began dance training at the age of 7 with his father Jean Petipa, a French dancer and teacher. He was educated at the Grand College in Brussels, and also studied music at the College's conservatory. In 1831 he made his debut in his father's production of Gardel's *La Dansomanie*.

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

Considered an excellent dancer and partner, his acting, stage manners, and pantomime were held up as examples for many generations. In 1854, while still dancing, he became an instructor in the Imperial Theatre school, and began to restage ballets from the French repertoire. Sources differ on the first original work he staged for the Imperial Theatre, but all agree that his first great success was *The Daughter of the Pharaoh*. This work resulted in his 1862 appointment as Choreographer-in-Chief—a position he held for nearly fifty years—and in 1869 he was given the added title of Premier Ballet Master of the Imperial Theatre. The value of his accomplishments is inestimable, as he produced more than 60 full-length ballets, including *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*, *La Bayadère*, and *Don Quixote*, as well as many other works. Petipa is credited with defining the aesthetic of not only Russian ballet, but of classical ballet itself.

Photo source

Fun Facts: Petipa's Choreography of *The Sleeping Beauty*

♦ Petipa gave Tchaikovsky very specific direction for how he thought the music should sound in certain scenes. Here's his colorful and evocative description for his concept for the finger-pricking scene:

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

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

♦ Petipa agreed with French and Russian critics who thought Italian ballet dancers of the day- with their multiple turns, long balances, and jumps en pointe– to be too "circus-like." However, Petipa embraced that very style in *The Sleeping Beauty*. He refined these "stunts" through usage of clear lines and elegant geometry, creating a virtuoso style of technique that is now considered a hallmark of classical ballet. In addition, Petipa cast two Italian dancers in major roles in original production: Carlotta Brianza as Aurora, and Enrico Cecchetti as Carabosse and the Bluebird.

♦ Petipa crafted tiny papier-mâché figures to represent the ballet's main characters, and would often ask Tchaikovsky or another pianist to play the score for him as he made the figures "dance" across the table. This process helped him to visualize the choreography as he created it.

Choreography Highlights

The Sleeping Beauty is the technical standard by which all classical ballets are measured and features some of the most aesthetically "pure" choreography in the canon. Watch for these iconic moments in the ballet.

Aurora, Will You Accept This Rose?: The Rose Adagio

Petipa created his own "rose ceremony" more than a century before the *The Bachelor* beamed across TV airwaves. In Act I's Rose Adagio, Aurora is greeted by four suitors (cavaliers), all of whom offer a rose to show their love. During the dance, the ballerina poses in long balances in attitude (on pointe on one foot with the other leg extended to the back, bent and parallel to the floor). Each suitor takes her hand for a moment, and when she lets go she holds her balance independently. This is a hold-your-breath moment for the audience, and for the ballerina, a display of sheer strength. At the end of the adagio, she again balances in attitude with each cavalier, who slowly turns her as he walks around her in a circle. This "promenade" allows the audience to see the beauty and strength of her posture and line from all angles. Petipa designed Aurora's choreography to show perfection on all levels. For the ballerina, it is one of the discipline's ultimate tests of skill and stamina.

The Wedding Grand Pas de Deux

In this last dance of the ballet, Aurora and the Prince display their virtuoso technique to the fullest. The format is that of a traditional pas de deux (dance for two): Aurora and the Prince dance together (entrée and adagio); the Prince and Aurora each dance alone (called variations); and they dance together again at the end (coda). The choreography demands speed, strength, control, power, precision, and passion. This pas de deux is often performed separately from the full-length ballet as a performance showpiece. Watch for the fish dives!

A couple videos from the Royal Ballet illuminate the incredible detail, and the technical and artistic demands of the choreography for Aurora and the Prince:

The Sleeping Beauty: The Challenges of Technically Demanding Roles

The Sleeping Beauty Rehearsal

The Fairies

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

▪ **The Lilac Fairy.** She is the epitome of a Petipa ballerina, performing precise and majestic choreography with ethereal grace. The Lilac Fairy is the guiding force of the ballet's action.

▪ **The Fairy of Abundance.** Also known as the "Breadcrumb Fairy," her delicate music and choreography, including a series of dainty hops on pointe, reimagine the Russian custom of sprinkling breadcrumbs in a baby's cradle to bring prosperity. Her expansive, open movements express generosity and abundant good fortune.

▪ **The Fairy of Energy.** Her character and her dancing are strong and spirited! Her variation is sometimes called the "finger variation" because her pointed fingers accentuate the brisk and sparkling choreography.

Artists: Hannah Carter and Jake Unger; Photo: Aimee DiAndrea

The Bluebird Pas de Deux

This pas de deux in Act III tells the story of the Bluebird teaching Princess Florine how to fly, and is known for its virtuoso choreography for the male dancer. The Bluebird's brisé steps (French for "broken") mimic the fluttering and soaring of a real bird. In this step, the dancer jumps up and beats his legs and feet in mid-air, "breaking" his feet apart. He performs 22 of these in a row (known as brisé volé), springing across the stage as if he is taking flight. This choreography is still considered some of the most difficult in the classical male repertory. Princess Florine's rapid yet delicate bourées (beating steps) and port de bras (carriage of the arms) are pristine, precise, and beautifully bird-like!

Artists: Yoshiaki Nakano and Amanda Cochrane; Photo: Rich Sofranko

Act III Divertissements
Petipa decided that some of the wedding guests in Act III would be fairy-tale characters from other stories. These characters perform divertissements, or short entertainments, that showcase dancers' skills (but have nothing further to do with the story!). In PBT's version, our entertainers are Puss n' Boots and the White Cat, Bluebird and the Princess Florine, and the Jewel fairies. Petipa's original choreography also included Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, among others.

Artists: Olivia Kelly and William Moore; Photo: Rich Sofranko

Decoding Pantomime in *The Sleeping Beauty*
Many story ballets use pantomime to convey some of action. Here's a quick guide to some of the mime found in *The Sleeping Beauty.*

Prologue
Carabosse tells the court that though Aurora will grow up to be beautiful, she will prick her finger on a spindle and die. The Lilac Fairy steps in to amend the spell so that Aurora will not die, but instead sleep until a handsome prince awakens her with a kiss. Watch this scene translated [by Nashville Ballet](#).

- **Think:** touch the temple
- **Beautiful/Handsome:** gracefully circle the face with hand
- **Here or "why are you here?":** sweeping gesture with both arms across body
- **Die/dead:** cross arms — hands clenched in fists
- **Yes:** nod head
- **No:** turn head vigorously while gesturing with arms
- **Please:** clasp hands, elbows bent, in front of chest
- **Sleep:** place arms on top of each other and rest cheek
- **Prince/Princess/King/Queen:** gesture to top of head, hand upright, touching each side of the top of the head to indicate a crown
- **Kiss:** two fingers touch the mouth then pull away

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

Act I
The King tells Aurora that she looks beautiful and must chose a prince to marry. Aurora runs to her mother, who tells her she only has to dance with the princes.
- **Beautiful/Handsome**: gracefully circle face with hand
- **Marry:** point to ring finger
- **Dance:** circle hands overhead

Act II
The Lilac Fairy asks Prince Désiré why he is crying.
- **Why:** arms open out and down, in front of body
- **Cry:** fingers in front of eyes, trail down cheeks

Carabosse orders her minions to kill Prince Désiré.
- **Kill:** index finger slices across neck
- **No:** turn head or gesture with arms

The Prince tells Aurora he loves her. Translated directly from mime, he says, "I—you—love."
- **I:** one hand on heart; **You:** point toward other person; **Love:** two hands on heart

The Prince asks the King for Aurora's hand in marriage, and the King tells everyone to dance.
- **Marry:** point to ring finger
- **Prince/Princess/King/Queen:** gesture to top of head, hand upright, touching each side of the top of the head to indicate a crown
- **Dance:** circle hands overhead

Using Costumes to Tell the Story

PBT is renting the sets and costumes for *The Sleeping Beauty* from Boston Ballet, which purchased them from the Royal Ballet in London (ballet companies often rent productions from other companies). Designed by David Walker, the costumes are intricately crafted for each character, and each is a work of art in its own right. After the production is over, PBT will clean and repair the costumes, and alterations done for PBT's dancers will be "undone" before the costumes are returned to Boston Ballet.
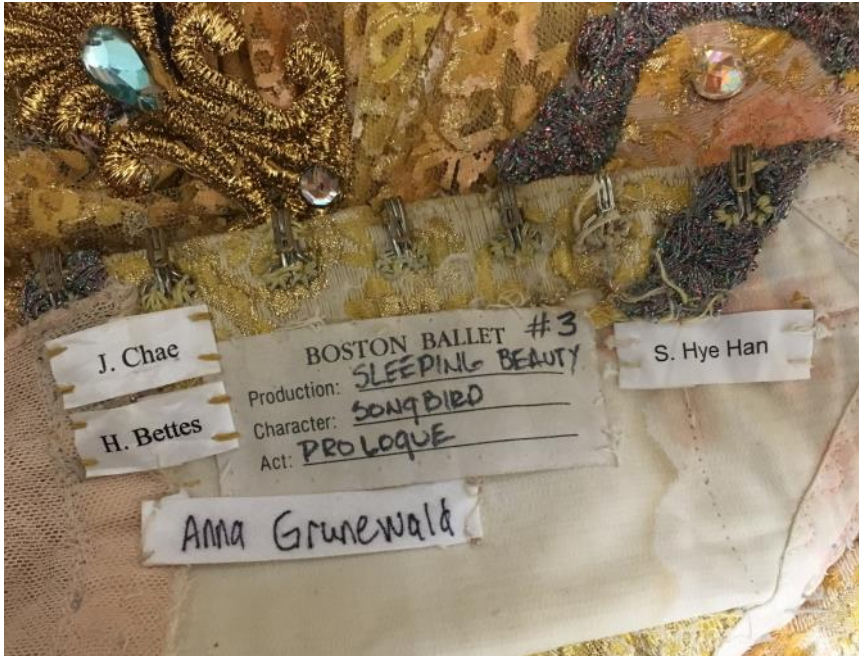
Clockwise from top left: The names of Boston Ballet dancers who portray the Fairy of Song are sewn inside the tutu. There are often two costumes for major roles to fit dancers of different sizes. PBT will temporarily tape our dancers' names in the costumes. Carabosse's costume is glorious, conveying her evil intentions! Her headdress, dress and cape are covered with glittering snakes and sparkly, jeweled spiders. Tattered wisps of dark chiffon and lightweight tulle give the costume a spider web effect. This detail of the Bluebird Princess's tutu shows the scalloped layers of tulle and the multi-hued blue dyes used to create its feathery feel. The Fairy of Energy's costume is bright gold, with sparkling jewels bursting from the bodice, necklace and headpiece representing glittering bolts of energy.

Artists: Julia Erikcson (Carabosse) and Hannah Carter (Fairy of Energy). Photos by Rich Sofranko and Aimee DiAndrea.

Using Scenery to Tell the Story

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

In *The Sleeping Beauty*, when the curtain rises on the Prologue, the huge columns, gold thrones, and rich curtains tell us immediately that this is no ordinary baptismal ceremony. This is the seat of the ruling family of the land, and they possess wealth and power enough to command the presence of the entire kingdom. The ominous appearance of Carabosse in her coach darkens the entire stage and set immediately, as the skies flash with lightning, communicating immediately to the audience her evil purpose.

In Act I, notice the feeling of airiness and light during the sixteenth birthday of the Princess. Her vibrancy and energy are echoed everywhere in the setting, through the garlands of flowers on stage, the bright lighting, and the carefree stage manner of the young people dancing. The audience knows that Aurora is loved by the kingdom, and that all is well in the kingdom. However, when she pricks her finger on Carabosse's spindle, the mood on stage changes immediately to one of gloom and despair, as the lights go out and an immense enchanted forest "grows" out of the set.

In Act II, the Prince must travel through the forest to reach the sleeping Aurora in the castle. Notice how first one section of leafy scenery and then another moves as the Prince fights to reach Aurora; each piece is manually pulled on cue by a stagehand. In addition, the scene grows brighter as the Prince makes his way towards the castle; the audience begins to see the bedroom of the princess glowing faintly in the distance. When the last leafy drop has been swept aside, the on-stage lighting is fullly bright again.

In Act III, the on-stage kingdom is restored to its former glory. The audience finds itself in a ballroom setting even richer than that of the Prologue. The brightness and grandeur of the scene confirm that good has triumphed over evil, and that the world is once again in balance.

Adapted from "Using Scenery to Tell the Story" by Bob Neu, production manager for Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre from 1989-98. Top photo: the baptism. Right: an eerie tone is set for Carabosse with the help of scenery and lighting (Artist: Julia Erickson). Photos by Rich Sofranko.

The Disney Connection

The 1959 Disney animated movie *Sleeping Beauty* is the version of the story that many of us know best. Walt Disney drew elements from the ballet, as well as from both the Perrault and Grimm Brothers' versions of the story, to create his famous interpretation of the tale. One of his most important decisions was to use the Tchaikovsky ballet score. He had originally commissioned an entirely new score, but quickly realized that the power of the ballet's music could not be matched. The score was adapted for the film by George Bruns.

Check out a comparison of the two versions below!

	Ballet	Disney
Year of premiere	1890	1959
Music	Tchaikovsky	Tchaikovsky
Good Fairies	6—Grace, Beauty, Abundance, Song, Energy, Lilac	3—Flora, Fauna, Merryweather
Evil Fairy	Carabosse	Maleficent
Princess's name	Aurora	Aurora as a baby; Briar Rose when she is in hiding (Briar Rose is the name of the princess in the Grimms' version)
Prince's name	Désiré	Philip (after Prince Philip of England, married to the young Queen Elizabeth II)
Aurora grows up with . . .	Her parents, the King and Queen	The fairies, until her 16th birthday
Has a vision / dream of a true love	Prince Désiré (dreams of Aurora)	Aurora/Briar Rose (dreams of an imaginary true love and then meets Philip)
Evil fairy's fate	Carabosse is forgiven and is invited to the wedding	Maleficent turns into a dragon and is defeated
How Aurora wakes from sleep	With the Prince's kiss	With the Prince's kiss

Watch Disney animators sketch the character of Briar Rose from the live action dance of actress Helene Stanley in this 1950s video.

Theatre Programs

Join us at the theater for these educational programs to learn more about *The Sleeping Beauty!*

Fri., May 10, 7 p.m. Performance Preview: Join us for this special opening night preview of the ballet with Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr and guests. In the theater, no reservations necessary.

Sat., May 11, at 1 p.m. Family Pointe: Bring the whole family to learn about *The Sleeping Beauty*! Hear the story of the ballet, meet the Monster characters who drive Carabosse's creepy chariot and dance with us to music from the ballet! This is a great way to get familiar with the production before the show. Enter at the Benedum stage door, 719 Liberty Ave., 15222. [Register here](#).

Sat., May 11 at 2 p.m. Audio-described Performance: PBT presents a live narration of the performance for patrons with visual impairments. Devices are available at the Guest Services Center with a photo ID.

Sat., May 11, at 7 p.m. Insights: Join us as Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr and Maestro Charles Barker explore Tchaikovsky's magnificent score. PBT Company Pianist Yoland Collin accompanies the discussion with piano excerpts in this up-close and personal listening session! Mezzanine level; [register here](#).

Sun., May 12, at 1 p.m. Talks with Terry: Start your afternoon at the ballet with this exclusive opportunity to watch the last part of the company's onstage warm-up class. Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr then joins the audience for a preview of the performance. In the theater, no reservations necessary.

Accessibility Services

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.