

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR TERRENCE S. ORR
PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

Swan Lake

— WITH THE PBT ORCHESTRA —



Audience Guide to the Ballet

February 16 - 25, 2018

Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, Pittsburgh

PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE



— WITH THE PBT ORCHESTRA —

Choreography: Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov

Staging: Terrence S. Orr

Music: Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

*Swan Lake Sponsors: The Benter Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation, Eden Hall Foundation,
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February 16 - 25, 2018

Benedum Center for the Performing Arts | Pittsburgh, PA

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The Setting and Characters

The Setting

The ballet takes place in and near the European castle of Prince Siegfried, long ago. Acts 2 and 4 are set at a beautiful, misty lake nearby.

The Main Characters

Odette: Young woman who's been cursed to be a swan by day and a human at night.

Siegfried: A prince whose mother is pressuring him to get married.

Von Rothbart: An evil wizard.

Odile: Von Rothbart's daughter, whom he's transformed to look just like Odette.

The Queen: Siegfried's mother.

Swans: Odette's friends, who also are maidens cursed to be swans.

The Synopsis

ACT I

In the late afternoon. A meadow near the castle.

Prince Siegfried is celebrating his twenty-first birthday. His friend Benno and tutor Wolfgang have invited guests from the surrounding estates to join in the celebration. The party is interrupted by the arrival of the Queen Mother, who presents her son with a crossbow and reminds him that it will be his duty at his coming of age to choose a bride from six eligible princesses. The Queen departs and the festivities continue until Benno sights a flight of swans. Inspired by his new crossbow, the Prince calls Benno to organize a hunting party and the young men leave in search of the swans.



ACT II

Some hours later, after sunset. By the lake.

As Prince Siegfried enters the forest, he suddenly sees a magnificent swan in flight. He carefully takes aim, but to his astonishment, the bird transforms into a most beautiful maiden. At first the maiden is frightened by Siegfried, but he assures her he will do no

harm and asks her to explain the marvel he has just seen. She tells him she is the Princess Odette, of high birth who fell under the spell of an evil sorcerer, and now her fate is to be a swan; only in the hours of darkness may she assume her human guise. Indeed, this very lake is filled with her mother's tears. She tells him she is condemned for eternity and only if a young man, true of heart, swears eternal love to her and marries her, will the spell be broken. But if he should betray her she will remain a swan forever. Siegfried realizes his destiny has changed and swears his love and faithfulness to Odette. At that moment, the sorcerer appears. The Prince in his passion reaches for his crossbow, but Odette pleads with him not to shoot, for she knows if the sorcerer is killed before the spell is broken, she too will die. Dawn approaches, the sorcerer disappears, and Odette is compelled by the spell to return to her guise as a swan.

ACT III

The next night. The Great Palace Hall.

Guests assemble for the birthday ball, including six princesses from different countries whom the Queen Mother has chosen as eligible maidens for her son's hand. Prince Siegfried dances with each beautiful young princess. He is urged by his mother to make a decision, but is haunted by the memory of Odette and refuses to choose a bride. Suddenly, a fanfare announces the arrival of Baron Von Rothbart - who is the sorcerer in disguise - with his daughter Odile. Von Rothbart has transformed Odile into the image of Odette. Siegfried is thrilled to see the young maiden. He is dazzled by her beauty and vibrance and, thinking she is Odette, is deceived into declaring his love and fidelity to Odile. As Prince Siegfried swears his love, a fleeting vision of the real Odette appears. Von Rothbart and Odile triumphantly reveal their wicked ruse. Siegfried realizes he is the victim of an evil plot and departs the great hall in search of

Odette.



ACT IV

Later that night. By the lakeside.

The swan-maidens are anxiously waiting the return of Odette. She appears and tells of Von Rothbart's treachery. Before dawn, she intends to die. A great storm rages. Siegfried, bursting into the glade, discovers the tearful Odette and begs her forgiveness. As dawn approaches, Von Rothbart appears again. Odette tells Siegfried she must kill herself or forever be a swan. Siegfried, knowing his heart belongs only to Odette, declares he will die with her, thus breaking the power of Rothbart. The lovers throw themselves into the lake. Rothbart is mortally struck and his power is ended.

Apotheosis: The lovers are united in life after death.

Synopsis Photo credits: 1 - Artists: Robert Moore and Julia Erickson. Photo: Rich Sofranko. 2 - Artists: Yoshiaki Nakano and Amanda Cochrane. Photo: Rosalie O'Connor.

About *Swan Lake*

The first *Swan Lake* premiered in Moscow at the Bolshoi Theatre on March 4, 1877, with choreography by Julius Wenzel Reisinger and music by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The composer was 36 years old and this was his first ballet (of only three in his career). Reviews weren't disastrous but they weren't glowing either. Audiences and critics found the music beautiful but too complex and orchestral; the choreography was seen as uninspired; the ballerina was considered not up to the task. In fact, she pronounced the music "undancable" and asked that music from other ballets be added (that presumably was danceable). The ballet was performed somewhat regularly for about six years and then it disappeared from the repertory.

The second version of *Swan Lake*, the one that's known and loved by the world today (and the one that PBT is performing in 2018), came 18 years later. Tchaikovsky had recently died from cholera, at age 53. The famed Mariinsky Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg produced a program honoring his life and work, which included a newly choreographed version of Act 2 of the 1877 *Swan Lake*. In this lakeside scene, Siegfried and Odette meet and fall in love, surrounded by Odette's friends, who are also maidens cursed to be swans. Choreographed by Lev Ivanov (assistant to the Mariinsky's great choreographer and ballet master Marius Petipa), the new staging enchanted and moved the audience (including Czar Nicholas II) so much that work on a new version of the full ballet began immediately.

Petipa, who had worked with Tchaikovsky on *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890) and *The Nutcracker* (1892), choreographed Acts 1 and 3 (the court and party scenes); kept Ivanov's new Act 2 and assigned Act 4 to him also - another lakeside scene filled with Odette's swan friends. Mariinsky conductor Riccardo Drigo arranged the score; Tchaikovsky's brother Modest helped with the libretto. Together, the four reworked and refashioned the ballet into something that would suit audience tastes in 1895. The new production of *Swan Lake* made its re-entry into the ballet world on January 27 of that year - destined to become the most acclaimed classical ballet of all time.

Origins of the *Swan Lake* Story

The story of the ballet has its roots in tales of a shape-shifting swan / human being (often a "swan maiden"), a theme that appears in the literature and folk traditions of many countries and cultures. Swans have ignited human imagination for millennia with their beauty and power, and with their ability to transcend the elements of earth, water and air. Early Hindu legend, ancient Greek mythology, the Arabian tales of *One Thousand and One Nights*, even Native American legend - all include stories of humans who turn into swans or vice-versa.

The libretto for the ballet probably drew from the swan maiden folk tales that existed in Europe, as well as the Russian *The White Duck*, a fairytale about a young queen who is turned into a white duck by an evil witch, so that the witch can marry the king. The libretto is credited to Vladimir Petrovich Begichev, director of the Imperial Theatre in Moscow (now the Bolshoi), but the story may have been the work of several. It seems likely that Tchaikovsky was one of them.

In 1871, when visiting his sister for the summer, Tchaikovsky wrote, directed and choreographed a little ballet called "The Lake of the Swans" for his nieces and nephews. He may have been influenced by existing swan maiden folk tales. Tchaikovsky was also a member of a literary salon that included Begichev's wife, and it was Begichev who offered him a commission to write the ballet for the Imperial Theater. How much of the story each wrote and who else may have contributed is not known. But we do know that some of Tchaikovsky's music for that children's ballet is still in *Swan Lake* today.

Swan Lake Timeline

1877: First performance of the ballet *Swan Lake* in Moscow for the Bolshoi Theatre (Tchaikovsky's score and Reisinger's choreography).

1879-83: Multiple productions of *Swan Lake* in Moscow, some with new choreography.

1883: *Swan Lake* is dropped from the Bolshoi Theatre's repertoire.

1890 and '92: Tchaikovsky composes his two other ballets, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*.

1893: Tchaikovsky dies.

1894: Under the direction of Marius Petipa, Lev Ivanov choreographs a new Act 2 of *Swan Lake* for a performance at an event honoring Tchaikovsky.

1895: The full Petipa/Ivanov version of *Swan Lake* premieres at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg.

1895: Pierina Legnani, Odette/Odile in the ballet, performs 32 fouettes in Act 3. Petipa inserted the sequence especially for her (she had first performed the feat in *Cinderella* a few years earlier).

1911: *Swan Lake* debuts in America (in condensed form) at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City with the program "All Star Imperial Russian Ballet."

1934: First full-length production in Great Britain by Vic-Wells Ballet in London.

1940: San Francisco Ballet tours the first full-length American production of the ballet. American Ballet Theatre first performs Act 2 of *Swan Lake*.

1940s: During World War II *Swan Lake* is performed for Russian troops in hospitals, factories, and on the battlefield as a morale booster.

1951: George Balanchine premieres a one-act version of the ballet with his own choreography for New York City Ballet.

1970: In its first season, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre performs Act 3 of *Swan Lake* with famed guest stars Violette Verdy and Edward Villella from New York City Ballet.

1971: PBT's first full-length performances of the ballet, again with Verdy and Villella, and also with Natalia Makarova and Ted Kivitt from American Ballet Theatre.

1995: Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake*, with an all-male cast, premieres at Sadlers' Wells theater, London.

2018: PBT stages the full-length production for the 15th time.

The Music



Learn more about composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky at [biography.com](https://www.biography.com).

Swan Lake was Tchaikovsky's first ballet. Years earlier he had begun working on a score for the ballet *Cinderella* but abandoned the idea. In letters to his friends and family Tchaikovsky explained that his motivation for undertaking *Swan Lake* was partly because he needed the money (he

received 800 rubles for this work) and also because he liked ballet (his favorite was *Giselle*) and wanted to see what he could do in the art form. Ballet music at the time was considered somewhat inferior to other styles of music, and by 1877 Tchaikovsky was already a famous composer. Some wondered why he would bother to lower his standards in that way.

The world wasn't ready for what Tchaikovsky delivered. In 1877 *Swan Lake's* score was considered too complex, too orchestral. Not suitable for ballet. "Undanceable." Tchaikovsky felt the lackluster reception for the ballet was a judgement of his music. Later, he revealed how highly critical he was of the score, saying that Léo Delibes' score for the ballet *Sylvia* was vastly superior to *Swan Lake*. He wrote to a friend, "...what charm, what wealth of melody! It brought me to shame, for had I known of this (Delibe's) music, I would have never written *Swan Lake*." He didn't know then that his work would forever change how we think about ballet music. He didn't realize he had written a masterpiece.

Tchaikovsky's original 1877 score was reworked for the 1895 production by Riccardo Drigo (an Italian composer and Mariinsky Theatre resident conductor, who had conducted the premiere of Tchaikovsky's *The Sleeping Beauty*). He and Petipa deleted, added and moved music around, including the famous Black Swan Pas de Deux: originally a dance for villagers in Act I, when it was moved to Act 3 as a virtuoso dance for Odile and Siegfried, it became a ballet showpiece. Drigo also lightened the orchestration and gave the ballet an "easier and less discordant" sound.* This time, the remarkable beauty of Tchaikovsky's music was heard and felt by everyone.

Here's an 8-minute video introduction to *Swan Lake's* music by the Royal Ballet:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUaYZJeC2t4>. Learn about Tchaikovsky's use of contrasts, the structure and key of the score, and how the music leads us on a journey through the course of the ballet - how the music itself tells us the story of *Swan Lake*.

Image credit: wikipedia.com; *Jennifer Homans, *Apollo's Angels*. NY: Random House, 2010.

The Choreography

Click on these links for more information about *Swan Lake's* choreographers, [Marius Petipa](#), Ballet Master at the Mariinsky Imperial Theater (St. Petersburg, Russia) and his assistant, [Lev Ivanov](#).

The Dual Role of Odette + Odile



The ballerina's dual role of Odette/Odile, or White Swan/Black Swan, is one of the most iconic in the repertoire, demanding technical mastery and emotional range to morph from vulnerable and pure Odette to audacious and deceptive Odile. Thematically, these opposites symbolize a battle between good and evil. Choreographically, they also contrast: Odette is fluid and ethereal with the delicate carriage and rippling swan arms that are a signature of the ballet; Odile's steely technique glitters with brashness and danger. The ability to perform this role, with the technical prowess and dramatic artistry it demands, requires a ballerina who's at the top of her game.

Artists: Alexandra Kochis and Alejandro Diaz. Photos: Rich Sofranko.



Acts 1 and 3

The choreography for *Swan Lake* was a collaboration between Petipa and Ivanov, with Petipa contributing Acts I and 3 and Ivanov Acts 2 and 4. Petipa was the most important choreographer of the 19th century - his work came to define what classical ballet is. For *Swan Lake* he created the public scenes in the ballet - the birthday party, the ball, the court gatherings, the formal dances. His choreography is bright, precise, athletic and dazzling. He brought virtuosity to ballet movement and that quality is on full display in *Swan Lake*.

Artist: Yoshiaki Nakano as the Jester. Photo: Rosalie O'Connor.

Spotlight on the Black Swan Pas de Deux

Petipa's grand pas de deux (dance for two) for Siegfried and Odile in Act 3 is a defining moment in *Swan Lake* - and in all of ballet. It is classical ballet at its most commanding. The Black Swan is known for her 32 fouetté turns, a breathtaking feat that is as technically demanding as any in dance. But all of her choreography is magnificent: Petipa gave her movements that endowed her with the power to seduce and destroy. The Prince's own bravura choreography signals exactly where his head and heart are in this moment. His thrilling jumps and turns show that he is intoxicated by Odile, head over heels, unable to resist her. Petipa pulls out all the stops in this dance, with choreography that creates brilliant, clear and fiery characterizations.



The Grand Pas Explained

A grand pas de deux is a hallmark of classical story ballets. It has a specific structure: a grand entrance to introduce the couple, a slower adagio to display precision work, exciting solos (called variations) for each, and an ending (coda) that is full of ballet fireworks. A “pas” is inserted into a story ballet to show off the talent and technique of the principal dancers. Often there isn't much contextual relevance to the story itself (an example is the Sugar Plum Pas de Deux in *The Nutcracker*).



Petipa changed the game with the Black Swan Pas de Deux—this dance isn't just for show, it's critical to advancing the story of the ballet. It's packed full of information: in just 15 minutes we find out all we need to know about the ballet's themes of deception, evil, and moral failing. It's in this pivotal dance that the Prince is seduced into betraying Odette—and the ballet's final tragedy begins to unfold.

Watch American Ballet Theater's Black Swan Pas de Deux with Gillian Murphy and Angel Corella: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIFfEMrebBs>

Artists, both photos: Amanda Cochrane and Yoshiaki Nakano; 2nd photo with Stephen Hadala. Photos: Rosalie O'Connor.

What's a *fouetté*? A turn the dancer does by standing on one leg and whipping the other around. The whipping leg pulls in so that her foot touches the supporting knee as she rises up on pointe at the same time. If this sounds complicated and hard, it is! (You can see Odile's fouettés starting at 10:38 in the video above.) The ability to do 32 of these turns in a row is a virtuosic accomplishment for the ballerina, showing off her strength, stamina, and technique. Petipa created the sequence for Italian ballerina Pierina Legnani who starred in Petipa's *Cinderella* in 1893. Petipa knew a scene-stealer when he saw one, and so he inserted the turns into *Swan Lake* as well, also for Legnani, who portrayed Odette/Odile in 1895. When she did them in *Swan Lake* on opening night, the audience went wild and demanded she do them again - and incredibly she came back out on stage and managed to do another 28.

Before She was the Black Swan

Odile was always meant to be Odette's double, but she wasn't always the "Black Swan." Her costume was that of an enchantress or sorceress--bright, glittery, and no feathers! We don't know who the first ballerina was to appear in a black tutu, but the tradition was set forever by the captivating performance of Tamara Toumanova, a Ballet Russes de Monte Carlo dancer who donned the tutu and the Black Swan persona at a 1941 New York performance.

Artist: Julia Erickson. Photo: Rich Sofranko.



Acts 2 and 4



Ivanov's choreography for Odette, Siegfried, and the swan maidens - in the misty lakeside scenes - is the polar opposite of Petipa's (and this contrast is partly what makes the ballet so compelling). Ivanov's movements for Odette and Siegfried are full of challenging sequences with rigorous classical technique, but they're softened, overlaid with an intense longing.

Where Ivanov's aesthetic becomes transcendent is in his characterization of the swans. We see this beautifully in Odette, with her fluttering arm movements, trembling foot beats, and arabesques that arch backward, mimicking a swan spreading her wings. In the middle of Act 2, when she returns to Siegfried after their first encounter, you see her circling him, wings beating, and finally gliding to a landing, folding her wings in on herself.

The swan choreography for the corps de ballet creates some of ballet's most iconic images. Like Odette, their movements, especially the port de bras (movement of the arms), have a feathery, wing-like quality. An arm raised above the head, with a crook in the elbow and slightly flexed hand, suggests the gracefully curved neck of a swan. As a group they are sculptural, weaving patterns on stage as if in flight - at times even in the v-formation of migrating birds. They project both vulnerability (when Siegfried approaches them with his crossbow in Act 2, they fold their wings in a plea to be spared) and strength - in Act 4 their beating wings are strong and formidable as Rothbart is destroyed. As Jennifer Homans (*Apollo's Angels*) points out, the

swans' choreography follows Odette's journey, serving as her shadow and reflection - they are an outward manifestation of her inner world.

Artists: Amanda Cochrane, Yoshiaki Nakano and PBT corps de ballet. Photo: Rosalie O'Connor.

Dance of the Little Swans



One of the (many) highlights of Act 2 is the Dance of the Little Swans (Cygnetts), also called a pas de quatre (dance for four). The four dancers clasp hands and in complete unison and move together with fast, staccato precision - which is exhausting and incredibly difficult! Ivanov created the dance to portray how little swans huddle and swim around together for protection. At the end of the dance

the little swans try to fly, but they can't quite make it, and they drop to the stage floor. Watch a Pacific Northwest Ballet rehearsal of the dance here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5Yp-vTol2E>

Artists: Gabrielle Thurlow, Caitlin Peabody, Molly Wright and JoAnna Schmidt. Photo: Rich Sofranko.

The White Act

The corps de ballet swans in *Swan Lake* are part of a tradition in classical ballet called the "white act" (*ballet en blanc*). Dancers are dressed all in white, and with their completely unified choreography - dancing as one body (the definition of corps de ballet) - they create some of the most dramatic imagery in ballet. Think of the Shades in *La Bayadere*, the Wilis in *Giselle*, the Snowflakes in *The Nutcracker*. They often represent ghostly or other-worldly creatures.



The PBT corps de ballet as Shades in *La Bayadere*, and as Swans in *Swan Lake*. Photos by Rosalie O'Connor.

But Ivanov's swans soar above the others. He gives them authentic and expressive movements that are recognizable and somehow human, even though they're supposed to be birds.

This short video from the Royal Ballet is a terrific look of the technical and artistic challenges that *Swan Lake* presents for the corps de ballet:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkCijrMgeM8>

Costumes and Scenic Design

The late ballet designer Peter Farmer designed both the costumes and sets for *Swan Lake*. The sets are brand new for our 2018 production. Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr describes the scenic design as capturing incredible depth and light, adding an entirely new dimension to our production.

Costumes By The Numbers

- 24** Swan tutus (not including Odette and Odile)
 - 40** Hours to make **one** classical tutu
 - 90** Costumes in the production
 - 470** Accessories (headpieces, boots, etc.)
-

The Tutus

The swans are the only characters in the ballet who get to wear classical tutus—the flat, pancake-like skirt that we most associate with classical ballet. The tutus set them apart as mystical and beautiful creatures.



Artists: PBT corps de ballet. Photo: Rich Sofranko.

Classical Tutu Fast Facts

- skirts extend straight out at the hip line so that the dancer's legs and movements can be easily seen by the audience
 - made of 12 layers of a stiff, pleated net (Balanchine net)
 - fitted with hoops to hold horizontal shape
 - each bodice is 10 pieces of white silk (black for Odile and four swans in Act 4)
 - feathers are applied to white flannel and attached to the bodice along with some sequins (feather trim removed for washing)
 - Odile's tutu is made of silk dupionne with gold metallic appliqués, which give a feathery effect. Its glitz and glamour immediately grab the audience's (and Siegfried's) attention.
-

A Few Costume Tidbits!

The peasant women in Act I wear knee-length dresses that have four layers of tulle and a silk organza overskirt. The tulle is in varying shades to give the tutu more depth. Headpieces are made of silk flowers wired into a crescent shape with ribbons. These longer dresses are called romantic tutus - each one takes about 3 days to make.



Act III is “costume heavy,” with lush fabrics and trims used on the court and traditional costumes. The princesses’ dresses have gold brocade bodices and skirts made of ombre-dyed silk chiffon. The czardas costumes are made of velvet, brocade, and a ruby-colored antique satin purchased in London.

Von Rothbart’s costume is green brocade with petals made out of four different, shimmery, lightweight fabrics. Originally his cape was supposed to be long enough to drag dramatically behind him, but in dress rehearsal Odette kept stepping on it! The cape had to be shortened just before the performance.

Artists: Stephen Hadala and Amanda Cochrane. Photo: Rosalie O'Connor.

Programs at the Theater

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

Fri., Feb. 16, 7 – 7:30 p.m: Performance Preview

Join us for a special preview of the ballet with Principal Dancer Alexandra Kochis and Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr. Ms. Kochis is dancing the role of Odette / Odile in two upcoming performances. Located in the theater; no reservations necessary.

Sat., Feb. 17, 1 – 1:30 p.m: Family Pointe

Come learn about *Swan Lake* before the performance! We will take a look at mime and how it helps to tell a ballet's story. And get ready to dance with us and try out some steps from the ballet! For all ages. Enter the theater at the Benedum Center stage door, 719 Liberty Ave., 15222. Reservations requested – register [here!](#)

Sat., Feb. 17, 7 – 7:30 p.m: Insights

Join us for in-depth discussion about Tchaikovsky's magnificent score for *Swan Lake* with Maestro Charles Barker and Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr. Located on the Mezzanine level. Reservations requested – register [here!](#)

Sun., Feb. 18, 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. Located in the theater; no reservations necessary.

Sat., Feb. 24, 12 p.m: Ballet Adventures

The best way for children to connect with a ballet performance is to dance it themselves! No dance experience is required for this fun, 50-minute class, which takes place just before the 2 p.m. matinee. Warm up, learn basic ballet steps and try out modified choreography from *Swan Lake*. Appropriate for boys and girls, ages 5 – 13. Located at the Cultural Trust Education Center, at 805 Liberty Ave. 15222 (just steps away from the Benedum Center). Fee: \$25 plus ticket purchase.

To purchase tickets to the performance and register for the class, click [here](#).

If you've already purchased tickets for the Feb. 24, 2 p.m. performance and would like to register for the class, click [here](#).

Sun., Feb. 25, 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](#).