

# The Sleeping Beauty

WITH THE  
PBT ORCHESTRA



Educator Guide for the Student Matinee

May 19, 2023 at 12 p.m.

Benedum Center for the Performing Arts

## PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

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The *Sleeping Beauty* story we know today contains parts of oral traditions and recorded stories dating back hundreds of years. Though there were even earlier oral traditions of the story, a 4-volume romance called *Perceforest*, printed in France in 1528, contained a story of a princess who falls into an enchanted sleep. In 1634, Italian soldier and poet Giambattista Basile recorded a book of stories, the *Pentamerone*, that he'd collected. 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. This version contains details that are not exactly fairy tale-like, including sexual assault, murder and cannibalism.



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

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" ("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 collection of fairytales.

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 an angry wife (Basile) and 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 kiss as the means of waking her. This tradition continued in the ballet, in Disney's 1959 *Sleeping Beauty* animated film, and in most other modern versions.

The heroines in *Sleeping Beauty* stories have had different names over the centuries: Zellandine, Talia, Briar Rose, the Princess—or no name at all. *The Sleeping Beauty* ballet was the first version to name her Aurora (which was actually Sleeping Beauty's daughter's name in Perrault's tale). Disney followed suit in its 1959 movie. The evil fairy had no name in the original tale, but Petipa used the name Carabosse, taken from a different fairy tale. Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* and the 2014 *Maleficent* movie changed the evil fairy's name to Maleficent (meaning evil-doer).

## 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, the director of the Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A few ballets based on Charles Perrault's 1697 version of the fairy tale had been done before but Vsevolozhsky's concept was grander than the

previous attempts. He envisioned a ballet that would not only tell the story of the sleeping princess, but also would pay tribute to the opulent, 17<sup>th</sup> century court of Louis XIV, the French king who loved ballet and who profoundly influenced the progression of ballet as an art form.



The original cast of *The Sleeping Beauty*, 1890. [Source](#)

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, choreographer and ballet master and by this time had choreographed significant ballet revivals (*Giselle*, 1850; *Le Corsaire*, 1858) as well as original works such as *The Pharaoh's Daughter*, 1862. Vsevolozhsky saw *Beauty* as a way to showcase Petipa's extraordinary understanding of ballet movement and tone. He and Petipa wrote the libretto together.

Vsevolozhsky asked Pyotr Ilych 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 where. 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 thought the production was too lavish and the storyline too juvenile. But *The Sleeping Beauty* captivated the hearts and minds of its audiences. By 1892, it had been performed an astonishing 50 times. The dancers marked the occasion by presenting Tchaikovsky with a crown on stage.

## A *Sleeping Beauty* Timeline

**1697** The folk and fairy tale *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* (*La belle au bois dormant*) is published by Charles Perrault in his collection, *Stories or Tales from Times Past, with Morals; Tales from Mother Goose*.

**1812** *Little Briar-Rose*, a version of the Sleeping Beauty story, is published by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in a 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 Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky is born.

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

**1890** *The Sleeping Beauty*, by Petipa and Tchaikovsky, premieres at the Maryinsky 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—a shortened version produced by Anna Pavlova.

**1921** Sergei Diaghilev presents the first full-length ballet in England, with adaptations 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 when reopening the Royal Opera House in London after World War II. Margot Fonteyn dances the role of Princess Aurora. The choice symbolized the reawakening of London after the long nightmare of war.

**1959** Walt Disney's animated movie, *Sleeping Beauty*, premieres.

**1979** Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre presents its first full-length production of *The Sleeping Beauty*.

### Did You Know? *Beauty's* Affect on Ballet Icons



**Anna Pavlova** was the frail little girl of a single mother who worked as a laundress in 1890s Russia. At 8 years old, her mother took her to see *The Sleeping Beauty* at the Marinsky Theatre. Anna was so captivated by Aurora that she vowed to become a ballerina. After two failed auditions she was finally accepted by the 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 was a 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 dream was to create his own *Beauty* production—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)



# At a Glance: The Setting and Characters

## Characters

### **Prologue**

King  
Queen  
Carabosse- a bitter fairy who curses Princess Aurora  
Catalabutte- the King's Squire  
Court Couples  
Fairy of Grace  
Fairy of Beauty  
Fairy of Abundance  
Fairy of Song  
Fairy of Energy  
Lilac Fairy- a good fairy who lightens Carabosse's curse  
Cavaliers for the six Fairies  
Lilac Fairy Attendants  
Pages with Gifts  
Carabosse Monsters  
Nurse

### **Act I**

Aurora- a sixteen year old princess who is cursed by Carabosse.  
Garland Dancers  
Garland Children  
Aurora's Friends  
Prince of the East  
Prince of the West  
Prince of the North  
Prince of the South

### **Act II**

Gallison  
Prince Desire- a lonely and kind prince.  
Marchioness  
Royal Hunting Party  
Peasants  
Nymphs

### **Act III**

*Precious Jewels*  
Diamond  
Opal  
Ruby  
Gold  
Silver  
Puss n' Boots  
The White Cat  
Bluebird  
Princess Florine

**The Setting:** A faraway kingdom

**Prologue:** The palace of King Florestan XXIV, Princess Aurora's baptism celebration

**Act I:** The palace of King Florestan XXIV, Princess Aurora's sixteenth birthday party

**Act II:** The forest

**Act III:** The palace of King Florestan XXIV, Princess Aurora and Prince Desiré's wedding celebration



Photo: The Lilac Fairy guides Prince Desiré to Princess Aurora. Artists: Christine Schwaner and Christopher Budzynski. Photo by Rich Sofranko. 2009.



### 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 to the celebration, 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.

20 -minute intermission

### 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.

pause (please remain seated)

### Act Three

The court is celebrating the wedding of Princess Aurora and Prince Désiré. The Lilac Fairy and all the fairy godmothers 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.





[Picture source](#)

**Marius Petipa**, the “father of classical ballet,” was born in Marseilles, France in 1818. He began dance training at the age of 7 with his father Jean Petipa, a French dancer and teacher. Marius was educated at the Grand College in Brussels and also attended the conservatoire, where he studied music. 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 theatre 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 at the Comedie Francaise, partnering the famous ballerina Carlotta Grisi in a benefit performance. He spent a few years dancing in Spain and Paris: in 1847 left for Russia. He had signed just a one-year contract but was to 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 he became an instructor in the Imperial Theatre school, while continuing to dance and 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: he produced more than sixty full-evening ballets, including *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*, *La Bayadère*, and *Don Quixote*, as well as many other works. He is considered to have laid the foundation for Russian ballet and for ballet itself in the 20th century. Petipa died in 1910.

### What Makes it Classical Ballet?

- Dancing on pointe
- Turn-out of the legs and hips
- Upright torso
- Graceful, flowing movements
- Precision, exactness
- The “architecture” of the dance is balanced, symmetrical
- Ethereal: in leaps and jumps a quality of floating on air

## The Choreography

Petipa’s *The Sleeping Beauty* has been called the standard by which all classical ballets are measured. It captivates the audience with its fairytale love story and sweeping score—and some of the most pristine, “pure” dancing in all of ballet. On the following pages are just a few things to know about the choreography.



Artist: Nurlan Abougaliev; Photo: Rich Sofranko



## Aurora, Will You Accept This Rose?



Petipa created his own “rose ceremony” more than a century before the premiere of TV’s *The Bachelor*. In Act I’s “Rose Adagio,” Aurora is greeted by four suitors (cavaliers) who all offer her 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 strength and willpower. 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 ultimate tests of skill and stamina.

**Watch** a [video from the Royal Ballet](#) in London, looking at the technical demands of the roles of both Aurora and Prince Desire.

## Paper Dolls

As Petipa created the choreography for *The Sleeping Beauty*, he asked Tchaikovsky or a pianist to come to his house to play the music for him. Petipa would move little papier-mâché figures around on a table to help him visualize the movements as the music played.

## En Travesti

Petipa created the role of Carabosse to be *en travesti*, a term that means that a male performs the role of a female character (or vice versa). PBT casts both male and female dancers in the role.



## The Wedding Pas de Deux

In this exciting, last dance of the ballet, Aurora and the Prince display their technique to the fullest. It is in a traditional pas de deux (dance for two) format: 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. It’s often performed separately as a showpiece. Watch for the fish dives (shown below)!



**Learn** about the detail that goes into rehearsing for the Grand Pas de deux in this [Royal Ballet rehearsal](#), with renowned British dancer Anthony Dowell instructing the dancers.

## The Fairies

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

□ **the Lilac Fairy.** Her gift is wisdom. Her movements are ethereal yet powerful and majestic—she is a guiding force of the ballet’s action.

□ the dainty hops on pointe by the **Fairy of Abundance.** This is meant to imitate the Russian custom of sprinkling breadcrumbs in a baby’s cradle to bring prosperity. She is also known as the “Breadcrumb Fairy.”

□ the “Finger Variation.” The **Fairy of Energy’s** dance is sometimes called this because of the dancer’s pointed fingers, which accentuate the brisk and sparkling choreography.



## The Italian Connection

Italian ballet dancers in the late 1800s were famous for performing difficult “tricks” – multiple turns, long balances, jumps en pointe. French and Russian critics called them circus-like. Though he too disliked the Italian style, Petipa embraced it in *The Sleeping Beauty*. He refined the movements, giving them clear lines and an elegant geometry. Through Petipa the “stunts” became the virtuoso technique that is now a hallmark of Russian classical ballet. Petipa cast two Italians in major roles in original production: Carlotta Brianza as Aurora and Enrico Cecchetti as Carabosse and the Bluebird.



## The Bluebird

The Bluebird Pas de Deux in Act III is known for its airborne choreography for the male dancer (the Bluebird), who is teaching Princess Florine how to fly. Petipa’s tricky steps mimic how a bird springs, bounces and soars. It is still considered some of the most difficult choreography in the classical male repertory.

## Why is Puss-in-Boots in *The Sleeping Beauty*?

Act III, devoted to the grand wedding of Aurora and the Prince, is a chance to show off the dancers’ skills. Petipa decided that the wedding guests would be fairytale characters from Perrault’s (and other) stories. They perform divertissements—short dances that entertain and have nothing to do with the actual story. In PBT’s version, Puss n’ Boots, Blue Bird, and the White Cat perform, though Petipa’s original choreography also included Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, the Wolf, and others. The “jewel” fairies—Diamond, Opal and Ruby—also perform divertissements at the wedding.



Photo credits, L-R: Christine Schwaner as the Lilac Fairy, 2009, by Rich Sofranko. Carlotta Brianza as Aurora, 1890, [Image source](#). Nicholas Coppula and Alison Kappes as Puss-in-Boots and the White Cat, 2009, by Rich Sofranko.

## The Composer: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born in Kamsko-Votinsk, Russia on May 7, 1840. He was a precocious child who could read French and German at the age of six and at age seven was writing verses in French. He began taking piano lessons when he was seven years old. He showed an ultra-sensitivity to music and had a delicate musical ear.

In 1850 his family moved to St. Petersburg; mildly interested in music, he began composing at age 14. He attended the School of Jurisprudence and in 1859 and had started work as a clerk first-class.

At age 21 he began to study music seriously at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, becoming one of their best students. He moved to Moscow to be a harmony teacher for the Moscow Conservatory. He led a quiet life there, teaching and composing. In 1877, a wealthy widow started to subsidize Tchaikovsky, a relationship that was to last fourteen years. However, there was one strange condition to the widow's financial support—they were never to meet. With this financial independence, he was able to resign from the Conservatory in 1878. Tchaikovsky ended up making a great deal of money during his life, but gave away much of it and freely spent the rest.



When Tchaikovsky first began composing for ballet, ballet music was considered unimaginative: the music world was astonished that such a great composer would "stoop so low." But he showed an unprecedented mastery of the art, creating vivid orchestrations, effective themes and melodies that flawlessly matched physical movements.\* He went on to compose three full-length ballets that would become enduring masterworks of the genre: *Swan Lake* (1877), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890) and *The Nutcracker* (1892). Tchaikovsky died from cholera less than a year after the premiere of *The Nutcracker*.

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

## The Music

Tchaikovsky composed *The Sleeping Beauty*, his second of three ballets, 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: during this time he composed his *Fifth Symphony*, the overture for *Hamlet*, and *Six French Songs* (Opus 65), and he also conducted numerous concerts. When he finished the orchestration for the ballet in August 1889 he wrote, "a whole mountain has fallen off my shoulders."

Petipa gave him detailed instructions about timing, tempo, themes, etc., and Tchaikovsky delivered. He was famous for over-doing it: for the "Garland Waltz" in the Prologue, Petipa requested 166 bars 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 the dancers—and Petipa himself—to greater heights. Ballet historian Jennifer Homans credits Tchaikovsky with the ballet's enduring appeal, a result of the way his music "works on the human body and spirit."\*

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

Petipa's directions to Tchaikovsky included great detail for the scene in which Aurora pricks her finger:

*Suddenly Aurora sees an old woman who plays with her knitting needles, in 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...'*

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



## Did You Know? "Once Upon a Dream"



The 1959 Disney film included a new song using the "The Garland Waltz" tune from the Prologue of Tchaikovsky's ballet score. "Once Upon a Dream" became the movie's signature song. The 2014 Disney film *Maleficent*, a sleeping beauty story told from the Evil Fairy's point of view, uses "Once Upon a Dream" again as its main theme; singer Lana Del Rey gives it a modern, haunting twist. Listen to the different versions—what is the tone and character of each? What does each version convey about the stories they are a part of? How does a 125-year old tune become a modern hit?

[Tchaikovsky's "Garland Waltz,"](#) 1890 version

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

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

[Image credit](#)

## Costumes



The costumes for *The Sleeping Beauty*, designed by David Walker, are being rented by Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre from Charlotte Ballet. Ballet companies often rent productions from other companies because of cost: *The Sleeping Beauty* is so big and so spectacular that it would be very expensive to mount this production from scratch. The costumes are beautifully constructed and trimmed in exquisite detail. PBT Artistic Director is designing a new costume for Carabosse to incorporate spider-like elements to make the character seem even more threatening!

Backstage there will be a lot of costume changes: dressers will help the dancers get into and out of costumes, sometimes in just two minutes! After the production is over, PBT will clean and repair the costumes, and major alterations done for PBT's dancers will be "undone" before they are returned to Charlotte Ballet.

Photos : Charlotte Ballet





The 1959 Disney animated movie is probably the *Sleeping Beauty* that many Americans know best. Walt Disney took elements from the ballet, and the Perrault and Grimm Brothers' stories, to create his famous version. One of his most important decisions was to use the Tchaikovsky ballet score: he originally commissioned an entirely new one but soon realized the ballet's music could not be matched. The score was adapted to the film by George Bruns.

Here are just a few of the differences and similarities between the film and the ballet. [Image Credit](#)

	Ballet	Disney
<b>Year premiered</b>	1890	1959
<b>Music</b>	Tchaikovsky	Tchaikovsky
<b>Good Fairies</b>	6–Grace, Beauty, Abundance, Song, Energy, Lilac	3–Flora, Fauna, Merryweather
<b>Evil Fairy</b>	Carabosse	Maleficent
<b>Princess's name</b>	Aurora	Aurora as a baby; the fairies change her name to Briar Rose
<b>Prince's name</b>	Desire	Philip (after Prince Philip of England, married to the young Queen Elizabeth II)
<b>Aurora grows up with . . .</b>	Her parents	The fairies
<b>Has a vision / dream of a true love</b>	Prince Desire	Aurora/Briar Rose
<b>Evil Fairy turns into a dragon</b>	No!	Yes!
<b>How Aurora wakes from sleep</b>	With the Prince's kiss	With the Prince's kiss

[Watch](#) Disney's animators sketch the character of Aurora from the live action dance of actress Helene Stanley.

## The Benedum Center



The Benedum Center for the Performing Arts is the crown jewel of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and the Cultural District in downtown Pittsburgh. It was renovated in 1987 and is on the National Register of Historic Landmarks. The 2800 seat theatre used to be the Stanley Theater, still visible on the lighted marquees outside. It has the third largest stage in the United States measuring 144 feet wide by 78 feet deep. The Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Opera, and Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera all use the Benedum for their performances. Find the fascinating history of the theater [here](#).

## Accessibility

PBT is committed to being an inclusive arts organization that serves everyone in the greater Pittsburgh community through its productions and programs.

In conjunction with the Benedum Center for Performing Arts, the following accessibility services are provided to patrons:

- Wheelchair accessibility
- Braille and large print programs
- Assistive listening devices
- Audio recordings of select program notes
- Sign Language Interpretation provided by special request only. Please contact the Education Department (see contact information below) at least 2 weeks in advance. Thank you!
- Audio-described performances (Sunday, May 21, 2023 for *The Sleeping Beauty*).

For more information about all of these programs or have any questions about our accessibility services, contact [accessibility@pittsburghballet.org](mailto:accessibility@pittsburghballet.org).