

Study Guide

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Did you know Ballet Theatre of Toledo is a non-profit community arts organization? This production of *Alice in Wonderland* is made possible in part by the generous support of our sponsors.



Charlotte Halloran



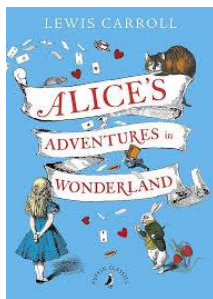


Alice in Wonderland: The Ballet

Creating Together

Introduction

For you to see this performance of *Alice in Wonderland*, a team of people had to create it. Each had to share his or her talent with you to make it happen. Would you like to meet them?



The Author Created the Story

The story for this ballet comes from the book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. It was written by author Lewis Carroll. It is a story of what happens when a young girl named Alice follows a rabbit down into his hole and finds herself in an enchanted world. She shrinks and grows, too small for some things and too big for others. She has a tea party with the Mad Hatter and White Rabbit, plays croquet with the Queen of Hearts, watches a wise caterpillar turn into a beautiful butterfly, and helps the Jack of Hearts. She returns home with a better understanding of who she is, regardless of her size!



The Choreographer Created the Dances

A **choreographer** is the person who creates dances to tell a story or make you feel a feeling. He or she teaches the dance steps to dancers who will perform them. Ballet Theatre of Toledo's Artistic Director Nigel Burgoine is the choreographer for *Alice in Wonderland*. He started dancing ballet when he was four years old. When he was 11, he left home in Bedford, England, to attend the Royal Ballet School near London. He became a professional ballet dancer, dancing on almost every continent.



The Composer Created the Music

A composer is a person who writes music. Dr. David Jex is the composer for *Alice in Wonderland*. Dr. Jex is an emeritus Professor of Music at the University of Toledo. He worked closely with the choreographer to understand how he wanted to tell the story. His music helps you understand what the story characters are feeling. Listen closely and you will hear music that is fast or slow, loud or quiet, high or low, and with long notes or short notes.

The creativity doesn't end with the author, choreographer, and composer! A team of people are needed to bring you a performance. Ballet Theatre of Toledo **dancers** will dance for you while the **musicians** play the music on their instruments. A **costume designer** created and sewed costumes in different styles and colors for the dancers to wear. A **visual artist** created and painted huge pieces of canvas cloth called sets that hang on the stage. A **lighting designer** choose bright lights or soft lights of different color that will shine onto the stage. The costumes, sets, and lights all make the stage look like the amazing world in Wonderland!



The Elements of Dance

Summary

In this lesson, students will explore the five elements of dance and the role of the choreographer. They will apply what they learn by choosing elements to express different feelings for Alice in Wonderland characters.

Applicable Ohio Fine Arts Dance Standards (Draft, 2022)

Creating: Explore movement with the basic elements of dance (see for example K.1CR - 2.1 CR)

Performing: Demonstrate basic elements of dance (see for example K.2PE - 3.2PE)

Responding: Describe how movement can express feelings (see for example K.1RE - 2.1RE); discuss how to respond to dance as an audience member (see for example K.2RE - 2.1RE)

Activities

1. **Performing the Elements of Dance.** Prior to the performance, read “The Five Elements of Dance” to students. Ask for one or more volunteers to demonstrate each of the following:

- Who can do a **non-locomotor action** that can be done in one spot? (Examples could be stretching in place, swaying, bending in place, squatting, lifting arms or legs up and down, jumping up and landing in the same place, turning in place)
- Who can do a **locomotor action** that moves from one spot to another? (Examples could be marching, skipping, walking, running, hop-scotch jumping, bunny jumping, leaping)
- Who can show me the difference between a motion that rises upward and one that drops downward in **space**? (Examples are lifting the head up or down, lifting arms up and down, rising up on tip toes and squatting down to the floor).
- Who can do a motion that goes forward and back AND can be done side to side in **space**? (Examples could be marching, bunny jumping, and leaping)
- Who can do a motion slowly and then the same motion quickly in **time**?
- Starting in a squat, who can rise softly and slowly with low **energy** and then rise quickly and explosively with high **energy**?

2. **Identifying the Role of the Choreographer.** Explain to students that a **choreographer** is the person who creates dances to tell a story or communicate a feeling. In a movie or TV show, the characters speak words to tell the story. No one speaks in a ballet, so a dancer’s movements tell the story. A ballet choreographer knows the thousands of steps of ballet. He or she chooses steps that fit the music, show what characters are feeling and thinking, and tell the story.

Ballet Theatre of Toledo’s Artistic Director Nigel Burgoine is the choreographer for *Alice in Wonderland*. In the performance, you will see ballet students as young as 6 and 7 who are just beginning to study ballet and teenagers and adults who have studied for many years. Mr. Burgoine had to create choreography that students at different levels can do.

3. **Creating and Responding to Dance.** Before the performance, have students role play as the choreographer. They can explore which elements of dance they would choose to show a feeling or action in *Alice in Wonderland*. If appropriate, have them perform their choreography.

- The White Rabbit is late and needs to hurry!
- Alice is sad when she is too small or too big to do something she wants to do.

- The Queen of Hearts is angry that someone has stolen her strawberry tarts!
- The Jack of Hearts is afraid the Queen will think he is the thief.

After seeing Alice in Wonderland, ask students to respond to the performance. What about the dance movements did they like? Were they able to identify some of the elements of dance they learned about?



The Five Elements of Dance



Body

A dancer uses his or her body to create art, like a painter uses a paint brush or a musician plays an instrument. The body may be still or in motion. One part of the body can move or the entire body can move. The shape can be rounded or linear, soft or hard, the same on the right and left (symmetrical) or not (asymmetrical). Ballet has over 3,000 steps that define how the body is shaped. A ballet dancer trains over many years so his or her body has balance, strength, flexibility, and agility.



Action

Action is the movement the body does when it dances. Non-locomotor movement occurs in one spot, like a stretch, a bend, a rise, a jump or stationary turn. Locomotor movement travels through space, like a walk, a run, a leap, or a traveling turn. Action also includes being still and not moving! A dancer moves from one step to another. Ballet steps are put together to form a ballet “word,” a series of steps forms a ballet “sentence,” series combine to form a dance, and several dances combine to tell a ballet story.



Space

The body acts through space. Movement can be level with the floor, downwards, or upwards. The dancer can move forward, backward, to the left or right, on a diagonal, toward the audience (downstage), or away (upstage). The dancer can face forward, backward, to the sides, or diagonally. Movement can take up a small part or the entire stage. Space also describes the relationship of the dancers. Are they alone or with others? Are they close together, far apart, side by side, in front, or behind one another? Do they form a pattern like a line or circle?



Time

The body acts in time. A movement or dance could take a short or long amount of time as measured in seconds, minutes, or hours. A dancer follows the tempo, or speed, of the music. It can be slow, moderate, or fast. Sometimes it can be very fast! Movements can also be repeated. Time also describes the relationship of dancers to each other. Does one dancer or group of dancers move before or after the other? Do they move at the same time? Do they perform the movement at the same speed, faster, or slower?



Energy

Energy describes how the dancers move. A movement can be sudden and swift or slow and flowing. It can be small or large, using one part or the whole body. It can be relaxed or tense. It can be light and gentle or explosive and powerful. Don't be fooled! A dancer needs as much strength and agility for slow, sustained movements as they do for quick, powerful ones.



Alice in Wonderland: Music for the Dance

Summary

In this lesson, students will learn the roles of the composer and conductor, identify the musical family for each instrument they will hear at the performance, and explore how music communicates feelings.

Applicable Ohio Fine Arts Standards (Draft, 2022)

Responding: Listen to and explore music of various styles (see for example K.1RE - 3.1RE)

Connecting: Experience how music communicates feelings, moods, images, and meaning (see for example K.1CO - 4.1CO)

Activities

1. **The Composer and Conductor:** Explain to students the roles of the composer and conductor.

The **composer** is a person who writes music. Dr. David Jex is the composer for *Alice in Wonderland*. The **conductor** is the person who directs musicians as they play the music on their instruments. Dr. Jex is also the conductor for this ballet. Since he composed the music, he can tell the musicians exactly how he would like the music to be played.

2. **Name That Musical Family!** Did you know musical instruments are grouped into musical families? Dr. Jex wrote the *Alice in Wonderland* music to be played on several instruments. Read the description of the musical families below. Then look at the photo of some of the instruments you will hear during the performance. What family does each instrument belong to?

Strings: the string family has instruments with wooden bodies and strings that are bowed or plucked.

Woodwinds: the woodwind family has instruments made of wood or metal that make sound when you blow air into them.

Brass: the brass family has instruments with brass bodies that produce sound when you blow air into them.

Percussion: the percussion family has instruments that make sound by being struck.



Trumpet: _____



Clarinet: _____



Saxophone: _____



String Bass: _____



Drums: _____



Keyboard: _____

3. **If I Were the Composer. . .** Below you will find cards with *Alice in Wonderland* characters and what they are feeling during part of the story. If you were the composer, how do you think the music should sound to express the feeling? Raise your hand to vote on each of the given musical elements. The teacher will circle the winning choices. Was it harder to decide for some?

Character: The White Rabbit

Action: He's late and has to hurry!

How should the music sound?

Loud	or	Quiet
Slow	or	Fast
High notes	or	Low notes
Long notes	or	Short notes

Character: Alice

Feeling: She is sad when she is too small or too big to do something she wants to do!

How should the music sound?

Loud	or	Quiet
Slow	or	Fast
High notes	or	Low notes
Long notes	or	Short notes

Character: The Queen of Hearts

Feeling: She is angry that someone has stolen her strawberry tarts!

How should the music sound?

Loud	or	Quiet
Slow	or	Fast
High notes	or	Low notes
Long notes	or	Short notes



Theater Etiquette

Summary

In this lesson, students will learn theater etiquette appropriate for attending a ballet production and explore how their behavior at a performance can create a shared experience with the performers.

Applicable Ohio Fine Arts Standards (Draft, 2022)

Dance - Responding: Demonstrate appropriate audience etiquette (see K.2RE - 5.2RE)

Drama and Theatre - Responding: Demonstrate ways an audience can show respect when watching a theatrical performance (see for example K.5RE - 2.5RE)

Music – Connecting: Attend music performances demonstrating appropriate audience behavior for the context and style of music performed (see K.1CO - 5.1CO)

Activities

1. **What is Etiquette?** Ask students what etiquette is. Lead them to build a working definition. They may already understand rules for classroom etiquette. Who decides what behaviors are appropriate? Why should students learn classroom etiquette? How is it better for them? For other students? For the teacher? What happens if they break the rules?

2. **K-W-L Chart for Theater Etiquette.** As a class, build a Know-Want to Know-Learn chart for theater etiquette. Ask these questions to identify what they want to know: Are there classroom rules that should also be followed at the theater? Do they know when to clap during a performance? Can they laugh? Can they take photographs? Can they record a video? What do they do if they really liked a dancer or a dance? What if they have a question? What if they have to go to the bathroom? Have students complete the other activities below and then complete the “L” column of the chart.

3. **How is going to a live performance different than seeing a movie?** Compare and contrast a live theater performance and a recorded theater performance like a movie. This may be easier if you have them think about a non-animated movie. Have students work in small groups or as a class to make a list of similarities and differences. For contrasting, prompt students to think about the following:

Location: Where do the performers perform? Does the audience see the performance at that same place?

Time: Does the audience see the performance as the performers perform it or after?

Number: Is there one performance or many?

Interaction: Do the performers and audience react to each other? Do they share the experience? Does this reaction change the performance or is it always the same?

4. **Theater Etiquette: The Audience Has a Role, Too!** Read the theater etiquette document below. Have students analyze how different behaviors could change the performance. Would that change make it better or worse? How would different behaviors make the performers, other audience members, and themselves feel? What kind of shared experience do they want to create?



Theater Etiquette:

The Audience Has a Role, Too!

You may think you are just sitting in the audience, but you have a role to play, too! At a live theater performance, the performers and audience interact to create a shared experience. That doesn't happen at a movie!

Before the Performance Begins

The usher will help you find your seat. The house lights will be bright, and it's okay to talk quietly. In fact, the performers can hear the excited hum of your voices. They become even more excited to give you a great performance! Yelling or running around will make them worry you won't be quiet and still during the show.

If you talk quietly, you'll hear the musicians tuning their instruments. Can you identify each one?

Don't be scared when the lights go out. That's just the signal the performance is about to begin! Now is the time to settle into your seat and stop talking.

The Artistic Director Nigel Burgoine will soon appear. He will welcome you to the performance. You can clap when he's finished. Your applause thanks him for his work to create this performance for you.

Now watch for the conductor, Dr. David Jex. Clap when he walks out. He may even ask the musicians to stand so you can clap for them, too. Your applause thanks them for their hard work to prepare to play this music for you.

During The Performance

Watch for the conductor to raise his baton. At his signal, the musicians play a short musical introduction called an overture. When the overture ends, the curtain rises.

Live theater is magical. The dancing, costumes, music, sets, and lighting should thrill you. You may be tempted to reach for your phone to take a photo or record a video. Stop! Screen lights and camera flashes distract dancers and can even temporarily blind them, risking injuries. Help protect them. Don't use your phone.

Dancers and musicians love to know you're enjoying the performance. They will perform with even more energy for you when you engage with them. How can you tell them?

- Clap at the end of a scene and when a dancer or group of dancers finish a dance.
- Clap when a dancer does something that impresses you or looks really difficult!
- Laugh when you think something is funny.
- Stay very quiet and still if you find something sad.

If you have to leave to go to the bathroom or anything else, try to wait until the end of a scene.

At the End of the Performance

At the end of the performance, all the dancers come on stage. Clap for them when they bow. You can yell "bravo" to show how much you enjoyed a particular dancer. If you really loved the performance, you can stand up while clapping. That's called a standing ovation!

