



# *The Nutcracker*

## Sample Classroom Lessons

### EXPLORING THE NUTCRACKER THROUGH MOVEMENT AND STORY

The following sample lessons and activities are intended for students in grades K-5 attending BalletMet's Morning at the Ballet, *The Nutcracker Suite* performance. Because of the large age range of students attending the program, not all lessons and activities may be suitable for all students.

Teachers should select and modify the lessons and activities as needed.

Please note that due to the variety of grade levels that attend BalletMet's Morning at the Ballet performances, only Ohio Dance Standards will be listed in the sample lessons. Teachers should decide which Dance Grade Level Indicators (GLIs) and other academic Content Areas are appropriate for their students.

#### **LESSON I**

#### **THE ORAL TRADITION OF STORYTELLING**

National Dance Standards addressed:

- St. 3: Understanding dance as a way to create and communicate meaning
- St. 5: Applying and demonstrating critical and creative thinking skills in dance
- St. 7: Making connections between dance and other disciplines

Ohio Dance Standards addressed:

- Connections, Relationships and Applications
- Creative Expression and Communication
- Valuing the Arts/ Aesthetic Reflection

Enduring Understandings:

Dance is part of an overall "picture" of a culture and country's history. People use stories to share the beliefs, moral behaviors and history of a culture. Stories can be told in many ways and can be used as a motivation for a ballet. Choreographers can use a story as an idea to make a dance.

Essential Questions: What do fairytales teach us? How can people tell stories? How can dance tell the story of a fairy tale?

Lesson Objectives:

The learner will:

- Identify ways a story can be told.
- Demonstrate the use of elements used in a fairy tale
- Tell a story using the oral tradition
- Create an original story using the elements of a fairytale

Materials:

Original story of E.T.A. Hoffman's *The Nutcracker*, Storyline of BalletMet's ballet, *The Nutcracker*, paper, pencils, chart paper, markers

Vocabulary:

Fairy tale, tradition, culture, plot, characters, climax, storyboard, ballet, nutcracker, choreographer, set

Assessment:

Class checklist for oral story telling

Original student-story or storyboard

Note: Teachers should use grade-appropriate criteria to assess storyboards.

Activity 1: Let's Tell a Story

Clear the desks to the sides of the classroom leaving a large open space in the center. Place the students in a circle or if the class is large, divide the circle into two groups creating two circles. One person is picked to whisper an event that happened to them today to the person on their right.

Moving clockwise around the circle each person in turn retells the story, in a whisper, to the next person. Continue until the story reaches the original storyteller. The last person (reporter) to hear the story stands up and tells the final story. The original storyteller then tells the original story.

\*Teacher Note: Allow the storyteller and the last person in the circle to volunteer. This helps children who may be shy or struggle with speaking in front of others. Activity 1 can be repeated several times or in smaller groups to give more students a chance to be storytellers. Allow students with language limitations to write, sign or speak the story in their language to their classmates and have other students repeat the actions or language.

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