

CINDERELLA

STUDENT MATINEE PACKET

ABOUT BALLET ARKANSAS

Ballet Arkansas traces its origins to the Little Rock Civic Ballet, founded in 1966 by Lorraine and Donald C. Cranford. Incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 1978, the organization has, over the course of its 47-year history, touched the lives of more than half a million Arkansans through its performances, education programs, and community engagement initiatives. Today, Ballet Arkansas stands as the only professional ballet company in Little Rock and is widely recognized as the state's premier ballet organization—serving audiences across every region of the Natural State.

Under the visionary leadership of Michael and Catherine Fothergill, Ballet Arkansas has grown into one of the 75 largest ballet companies in the United States, according to the Dance Data Project. The company of 17 world-class dancers presents an annual season of vibrant programming that spans classical masterpieces, landmark works of American dance, and world premieres by some of the field's most innovative choreographers. With a performance and broadcast reach extending to all 50 states and over 60 countries worldwide, Ballet Arkansas engages nearly 50,000 audience members each year and serves as a powerful cultural ambassador for the state of Arkansas.

Ballet Arkansas is proud to serve as the official dance presenter of the Robinson Center, Little Rock's most prestigious performing arts venue, and to hold the distinguished designation of Arts Partner Company in Residence at the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts. These partnerships amplify the company's capacity to deliver high-caliber, multidisciplinary programming to diverse audiences while deepening its integration within the state's broader cultural ecosystem.

A recognized statewide leader in dance education, Ballet Arkansas is home to a thriving School for Dance that provides exceptional instruction to hundreds of students from diverse backgrounds. Led by a distinguished faculty, the School is complemented by the organization's robust educational outreach initiatives, which engage more than 10,000 K–12 students annually. In addition, over 300 young dancers participate each year in Ballet Arkansas's celebrated Community Cast productions, cultivating meaningful access to the performing arts and nurturing the next generation of artists and arts patrons across Arkansas.

THE LIFE OF A PROFESSIONAL BALLET DANCER



Ballet Arkansas's company of 17 professional dancers are full-time, salaried employees who receive employment benefits and work a standard Monday–Friday schedule. Many are graduates of the nation's most prestigious university dance programs, while others have trained at some of America's finest ballet institutions.

Each day begins with a 90-minute ballet class to condition and prepare their bodies for the physical demands ahead. The remainder of the workday is dedicated to rehearsals, where—on average—it takes 25 hours of practice to learn just one hour of performance material. Once choreography is “staged,” dancers devote the rest of the rehearsal period to refining every detail for the audience's enjoyment. While they are artists, they are also professional athletes, balancing artistry with peak physical performance.

In addition to mastering thousands of intricate dance steps and precise musical phrasing, company members must memorize hundreds of light cues, navigate shifting formations, and bring each character to life with theatrical nuance. Producing any Ballet Arkansas production requires hundreds of hours of meticulous rehearsal.

In fact, a 2020 ranking by InsuranceProviders.com and the U.S. Department of Labor identified dance as the most physically demanding job in the United States. The intensity of the profession often leads dancers to retire from performing in their mid-thirties, transitioning to other roles within the arts.



AUTHOR

Charles Perrault was a French author, lawyer, and member of the Académie Française whose literary work helped define the modern fairy tale. Born into a wealthy family, Perrault studied law but eventually dedicated much of his life to literature and public service.

In 1697, at the age of 69, Perrault published *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (Stories or Tales from Times Past), a collection of tales drawn from folklore and courtly storytelling traditions. The collection included *Cinderella* (Cendrillon), *Sleeping Beauty*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *Puss in Boots*. His version of *Cinderella*, featuring the iconic glass slipper, fairy godmother, and pumpkin carriage, became the definitive telling for much of the Western world.

Perrault's elegant, moralizing style reflected the tastes of the French court of Louis XIV. His tales emphasized grace, kindness, and wit as virtues that triumph over cruelty and arrogance.

Today, Perrault is regarded as the father of the literary fairy tale, and his works have inspired countless adaptations in books, theater, ballet, and film — including some of the most beloved productions of *Cinderella* ever staged.



COMPOSER

Sergei Prokofiev was one of the 20th century's most original and influential composers, celebrated for his mastery of melody, rhythm, and dramatic storytelling through music. A child prodigy, he began composing at the age of five and later trained at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where his bold and innovative style quickly set him apart. Prokofiev's career spanned symphonies, concertos, operas, film scores, and ballets, blending lyricism with modernist edge. Among his most famous works are the ballets *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella*, the *Classical Symphony*, the opera *War and Peace*, and the symphonic fairy tale *Peter and the Wolf*.

He composed *Cinderella* between 1940 and 1944, during World War II, infusing the music with both sparkling wit and heartfelt romance. The score balances sweeping waltzes, shimmering orchestral colors, and tender character themes, making it one of the most beloved ballet scores of the 20th century.

Despite political pressures and health challenges, Prokofiev remained devoted to creating works of enduring beauty and emotional depth. His music continues to captivate audiences worldwide, and *Cinderella* remains a shining example of his gift for combining fairy-tale charm with musical sophistication.

THE STORY

ACT I

In her late father's home, Cinderella is treated cruelly by her vain Stepsisters, who are busy preparing for the Prince's ball. Left behind to tend the chores, Cinderella dreams of happiness. A kindly Beggar Woman, revealed to be her Fairy Godmother, appears and transforms a pumpkin into a carriage, mice into horses, and Cinderella's rags into a glittering gown. With a warning that the magic will end at midnight, she departs for the ball.

ACT II

At the palace, the Stepsisters bungle their attempts to impress the Prince. When Cinderella arrives, her grace captivates all. She dances with the Prince, and love blossoms instantly. As the clock strikes twelve, she flees, leaving behind a single glass slipper.

ACT III


The Prince searches the kingdom for the mysterious girl. When he arrives at Cinderella's home, the slipper fits her perfectly. Reunited, they marry, and Cinderella's kindness is rewarded with a life of joy and love.

CHARACTERS

- **Cinderella** – A gentle, kind-hearted young woman whose grace and compassion win the Prince's heart.
- **The Prince** – Charming and noble, he is captivated by Cinderella and determined to find her again.
- **Fairy Godmother** – A magical figure who transforms Cinderella's fortunes, sending her to the ball in splendor.
- **Stepsisters** – Comedic and over-the-top; one bossy and bold, the other timid and clumsy, both vying for the Prince's attention (traditionally danced by men in travesti roles).
- **Cinderella's Father** – Well-meaning but powerless to protect his daughter from the Stepsisters' cruelty.
- **Four Seasons Fairies** – Enchanting spirits representing Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, each bestowing gifts to prepare Cinderella for the ball.
- **Fairy Attendants** – Magical helpers who assist in the transformation of Cinderella's world.
- **Guests at the Ball** – Courtiers, dancers, and nobles adding grandeur and spectacle to the Prince's palace.

QUESTIONS

TO ASK YOURSELF

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1. What are the overarching themes of Cinderella?
2. Was the narrative of the story clearly portrayed within the production?
3. Did the performers' characterizations feel consistent and believable?
4. How was movement used to depict the storyline?
5. Describe the happenings of your favorite scene.
6. What impact did the costumes, sets, and special effects have on your audience experience?
7. How might performers use principles of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) during a performance?
8. What words or emotions would you use to describe the choreography?
9. Discuss the geometric shapes and patterns present within the dance formations.
10. Who was your favorite character within the production and why?
11. How did Prokofiev's score make you feel, and what was your favorite musical moment?
12. Describe the sights and sounds of a filled auditorium.
13. Describe the theater technology you witnessed in the production.

ETIQUETTE 101

RULES FOR THE THEATER



Attending a ballet performance is much like going to the movies—only the magic is live. The lights will dim before the performance begins, and the theater will remain dark until the end, except during intermission. Audience members are expected to sit quietly while the dancers perform, with applause warmly welcomed at the conclusion of each scene. However, loud expressions such as shouting, whistling, or screaming are discouraged, as they can distract both performers and fellow audience members.

Guests are encouraged to dress comfortably, keeping in mind that food, beverages, and chewing gum are not permitted inside the auditorium. Restroom visits are allowed as needed, but should be done quietly and with minimal disruption. Because all performance material is protected by copyright, photography and video recording are strictly prohibited.

Rules of the Theater

- Avoid Distractions – Silence or turn off your phone and give the performers your full attention.
- Open Your Mind – Immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of the performance, and enjoy forming your own interpretations.
- Be a Courteous Participant – Follow audience guidelines at all times to ensure an enjoyable experience for everyone.
- Enjoy the Show!



SHARE THE MAGIC OF THE CINDERELLA WITH YOUR STUDENTS!

Friday, February 20, 2026 • 10:30 a.m.

Robinson Center, Little Rock

This grand-scale reimagining of Cinderella brings dazzling new life to the beloved fairytale. Featuring all-new sets and costumes, Prokofiev's sweeping score, and a blend of professional and community performers, this laugh-out-loud, heartwarming spectacle is a feast for the senses. Magic dances through every scene, from the glittering ballroom to the comically chaotic stepsisters. Don't miss this joy-filled celebration of love, hope, and transformation!

Tickets: \$8 Student & \$10 Educator