



**2007
Young People's
Performance**

THE FIREBIRD

Thursday, March 15, 2007

**Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center
University of Missouri - St. Louis**

9:30 a.m. and 12:45 p.m.

Alexandra Ballet is a member of:

Classic 99 KFUE-FM Circle of Friends - Chesterfield Arts - Missouri Citizens for the Arts
Dance St. Louis - Regional Dance America, Mid-States Honor Company

Alexandra Ballet is partially funded by:



The *Alexandra Ballet* Educational Booklet is designed to provide classroom material for teachers that can be used to enrich students' experience of the ballet. It offers lessons to integrate ballet with curriculum in social studies, art, music, literature and writing.

THE FIREBIRD

Adapted from the Russian Folktale, *The Firebird*
Music by Igor Stravinsky
Choreography by Marek Cholewa after Mikhail Fokine

RUSSIAN FOLKTALE

Essential elements

The Firebird, like most folktales, reflects cultural values or life's universal theme of good against evil. Review one of the books listed below and/or other folktales in order to introduce the five essential elements of a folktale or fairy tale.

1. Struggle between good and evil
2. Magic, wishes come true
3. Talking animals
4. Reward for good
5. Punishment for evil

Ask students to select a folktale and identify one of the elements in it. Before students come to the ballet, request that they watch for one of the essential elements in the ballet. How was it shown through dance? Where do your students see these in the ballet?

Characters

There are four main characters in the folktale and ballet.

- Firebird - magical bird rewards virtue
- Kostchei- the evil ruler of the enchanted garden
- Prince Ivan
- Tsarevna (Princess of Unreal Beauty)

Literary components

Ask students to select a folktale to read. After reading, ask them to identify three components from their selection.

1. Who- good and evil characters; magical characters
2. Where- setting is usually a castle, kingdom, forest or garden
3. What- plot; conflict and resolution

Students can compare and contrast what they found. If they selected folktales from different cultures, are the values that are presented by the folktales similar between cultures?

Several versions

Since folktales are fictional stories passed along by word of mouth, often there are several versions of a story.

The retelling of *The Firebird* by Rachel Isadora published by Putnam in 1994 (Call # QJ398.2/1-2) is a simple retelling of the folktale where Prince Ivan encounters the magical Firebird who helps him defeat the evil Kotschei and rescue the princess. This version is similar to the ballet. Other versions of the folktale include additional characters such as a horse and wolf.

THE FIREBIRD

THE BALLET

The Russian folktale about Prince Ivan and the Firebird premiered as a ballet in 1910 in Paris. The adaptation of a folktale into a ballet incorporated the work of composer, choreographer, set designer, costumer, dancers, and others.

Composer

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), born in Russia, is known as one of the great composers of the twentieth century. At the young age of 28 Stravinsky composed a three-act musical interpretation of *The Firebird* for the premiere performance of the ballet.

Later in 1945 Stravinsky composed a shorter version (29 minutes long), *Firebird Suite* for Orchestra, to be used for the New York City Ballet premiere of a new version of *Firebird* choreographed by George Balanchine. More information on the New York City Ballet presentation of *The Firebird* can be found on website,

<http://www.nycballet.com/company/rep.html?rep=74>.

These two versions of Stravinsky's *Firebird* are in the public library.

COM.DISC C/S9129F3

Stravinsky, Igor, 1882-1971.

The Firebird; 1910 version

PHI. 400 074-2

COM.DISC C/R577S4

Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay, 1844-1908.

Shekherazada

Scheherazade [sound recording] / Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. The Firebird / Igor Stravinsky.

Oakhurst, NJ : Musical Heritage Society,

Inc., p1997.

Choreographer

Mikhail Fokine (1880-1942), choreographed the ballet and danced the role of Prince Ivan in the first adaptation of *The Firebird* in 1910. This Russian born choreographer added freer and more expressive movement to the traditional ballets of the late 1800's.

Ask your students to watch the dancers' expressions of emotion and the use of mime and gestures as they dance. Note how this helps tell the story of magic, evil, and love.



These websites provide information on Fokine, other choreographers, and dancers.

http://www.abt.org/education/archive/choreographers/fokine_m.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel_Fokine

In addition to Fokine, other well-known choreographers have created their artistic interpretation of *The Firebird*. George Balanchine first choreographed *The Firebird* in 1945 and, then, collaborated

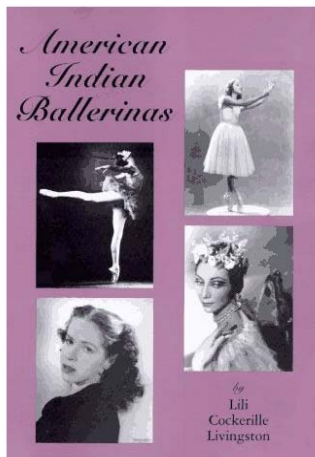
with Jerome Robbins to produce a revised ballet of *The Firebird* in 1970.

Dancers

The role of the Firebird has been danced by renowned ballerinas of different nationalities and performed in many countries. The first Firebird was Tamara Karsavina in 1910. Other ballerinas who danced the part can be researched by students.

- Margot Fonteyn in London, 1954
- Gelsey Kirkland in New York City, 1970

The first ballerina to dance the role of the Firebird in New York City in 1945 was Maria Tallchief. Maria Tallchief was a famous ballerina, a Native American, and the wife of the famous choreographer, George Balanchine.



Maria Tallchief - These are some of the books on and video recordings of Tallchief that are in the public library.

1. 100 Native Americans who changed American history / Bonnie Juettner. Milwaukee, WI: World Almanac Library, 2005.
2. Eight who made a difference : pioneer women in the arts / Erica Stux.. Greensboro: Avisson Press, 1999.
3. Tallchief : America's prima ballerina / Maria Tallchief with Rosemary Wells; illustrations by Gary Kelley. New York: Viking 1999.

4. American Indian Ballerinas / L.C.Livingston. University of Oklahoma Press:1997.

Costumes

Léon Bakst (1866-1924) was a Russian painter and scene- and costume-designer who sketched this and other costumes for Ballets Russes *Firebird* in 1910. One of his students in 1908-1910 was Marc Chagall.



Bakst's Costume Design

Set Design

Marc Chagall (1887-1985) designed the setting and costumes for the 1949 *Firebird* by the New York City Ballet. Students can research Chagall, the Russian painter and his other works for the ballet.



AUDIENCE BEHAVIOR

Attending the ballet at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center is an opportunity to teach audience etiquette. The following is taken from a lesson plan developed by New York City Ballet which is on their website.

<http://www.nycballet.com/company/rep.html?rep=74>

Procedure

1. Because this activity deals with the practice of appropriate audience behavior at a dance performance, we encourage you to have this discussion just prior to your trip to the theater. (If you are watching a video, this lesson may still provide good practice for use in the future.) It is important for the students to know that we want everyone in the theater (and classroom) to enjoy the performance without distraction.
2. Explain to students that they will be making a very special journey. They will be going to a theater for a performance of a famous ballet. You may explain that the theater is a special place for people to experience amazing and beautiful things. However, in order to fully appreciate the performance a certain kind of behavior is necessary. The following discussion might be helpful in preparing students for the concert.

3. Discussion

- How many of you have been to a theater?
- How many of you have been to a ballet performance?
- What was the performance and where was it?
- How did people behave during the performance?
- Is going to the theater like going to a football game? Is it like going to a symphony performance? Why or why not?
- How do people express themselves at a ballet?
(Do people talk loudly, eat, move around, or jump up and down during a dance concert? Do people pay close attention? Are they quiet? When do they applaud?)
- Why do we behave differently at a ballet performance than at a baseball game?
- How do you intend to behave when you go to the ballet performance?

Alexandra Ballet hopes that you and your class enjoy **THE FIREBIRD**.

Performances for the General Public

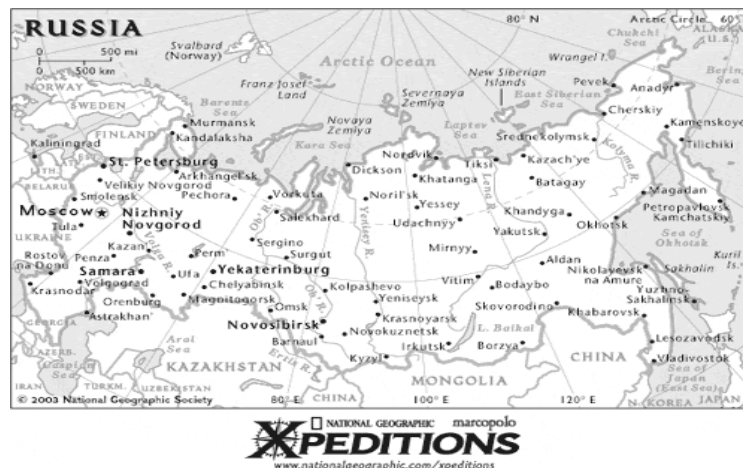
Saturday – March 17, 2007 at 7:30 pm & Sunday – March 18, 2007 at 2:00 pm

For tickets call the Blanche M. Touhill PAC at 314-516-4949 or
Toll free 866-516-4949

RESOURCES - LESSON PLANS

Folktales and Cultures

1. The Kennedy Center presents lesson plans about folktales on the internet.
 - Elements of Folktales comparing five different folktales. Ivan and the Firebird can be added to the list for comparison.
<http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/2212/>
 - Russian Folktales
<http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/2320/>
2. The National Endowment for the Humanities presents a lesson plan for Grades 3-5 titled *The Magical World of Russian Fairy Tales* on this website.
http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=590
3. A lesson plan on the Russian Fairy Tale, *Sasha and the Little Birch Tree*
<http://www.unr.edu/cos/geography/GAIN/materials/fairytales.html>
4. Other cultures and their values can be introduced through folktales.
 - Folktale from Chile
http://www.cbcbooks.org/cbcmagazine/showcase/2005-09-10/nativepeoples_05.html
 - Native American legends
<http://pbskids.org/readingrainbow/family/activities/activity73.html>
 - Puerto Rico
http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=306
5. Identify Russia on a map incorporating other geographical or cultural information. Along with the map lesson plans and classroom activities are suggested.
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas/index.html?Parent=asia&Rootmap=russi>



6. The Firebird in Russian Crafts

Because the *Firebird* is a mythical or fantasized creature it has been described in literature and represented artistically in various ways. If students read more than one version of The *Firebird* they can compare the descriptions. Russian crafts such as enamel, lacquered boxes pictured below show one painting of Ivan and the Firebird.



The website by Russian Crafts gives a history of enamel painting as an art in Russia, and has an explanation on lacquered boxes.

<http://russian-crafts.com/enamel.html>

Students can paint their image of a Firebird on a small papier-mâché box. These boxes are available in craft stores, usually priced at one dollar or less.

7. Poetry & Art

Ask students to express what they saw at the ballet by painting and/or writing a poem. How would they envision and paint the setting, an enchanted garden? Can they write a poem that describes the Firebird?

The New York City Ballet website has several lesson plans on the Nutcracker Ballet that give examples of art and poetry by students.

http://www.nycballet.com/nycb/content/teachers.aspx?id=381&TierSlicer1_TSMMenuTargetID=1556&TierSlicer1_TSMMenuTargetType=5&TierSlicer1_TSMMenuID=28

8. Ballet

Ballet is a performing art in which a choreographer and dancers use stylized movement set to music to express emotion or an idea or to tell a story. *Alexandra Ballet* invites your students to research the life of a dancer, other folktales retold through ballet, the origin of the five basic ballet positions, and much more about the art through the books and magazines in the public library or the websites listed below.

- www.nycballet.com - Kids & Families section click on Ballet Is for Kids to find a coloring book, crossword puzzle, and other activities

- www.abt.org/education/dictionary/index.html - Ballet dictionary by American Ballet Theatre
- www.alexandraballet.com – Educational Outreach section click on Sleeping Beauty for history and vocabulary of ballet



**Margot Fonteyn in the Royal Ballet's
Firebird of 1959**

This photo is from the United Kingdom National Museum of Performing Arts' website which provides the history of many forms of dance.

http://www.peopleplayuk.org.uk/guided_tours/dance_tour/menu.php

Click on Ballet and the historical period that you want to research.

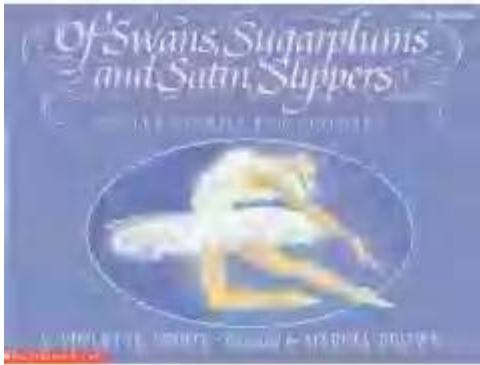
9. Three of the many versions of *The Firebird* in the St. Louis Public Library are:



QJ 398.24 1-2
Demi.
Firebird: a Russian folktale
New York : Holt, 2005, c1994



FICTION
Lackey, Mercedes.
Firebird
New York: T. Doherty Associates, 1996



QJ 792.8 3-4

Verdy, Violette

Of swans, sugarplums, and
satin slippers: ballet stories
for children

New York: Scholastic, 1991

Alexandra Ballet

Alexandra Ballet is classically oriented and seeks to cultivate an appreciation for the art of dance as an essential ingredient in the life of the community. Alexandra Ballet is a not-for-profit organization that raises community consciousness and appreciation of the art of dance through public performances. The repertoire ranges from traditional to contemporary and performances showcase original works, the re-staging of classics by nationally known choreographers, and the collaboration of professional guest artists.

Alexandra Zaharias, Artistic Director, is founder of the Alexandra School of Ballet, established in 1949. She is National Dance Chairman for the National Society of Arts and Letters and past president of the St. Louis Chapter. She has served as co-director of the Midwestern Music and Art Camp, University of Kansas, and taught ballet at Fontbonne College in Clayton, Missouri. She was dance consultant for the St. Louis Board of Education Shaw Visual and Performing Arts School, on the advisory panel of the Regional Arts Commission, Saint Louis, and served as a dance panelist for the Missouri Arts Council. She also directed four seasons of the Nutcracker and choreographed Kinder and Young People's Concerts for the Saint Louis Symphony. Alexandra received the Hellenic American Achievement award in 1991 for her work in the arts and the Arts and Education Excellence in the Arts award in 1999. She serves as historian for the National Board of Regional Dance America and is an honorary member of the Dance St. Louis Troupe.

Additional copies of this booklet can be downloaded from the home page of the Alexandra Ballet website at www.alexandraballet.com, or requested by contacting CiCi Houston, 314-469-6222.

Behind The Scenes – Backstage Activities

The Young People’s Performance will begin with two demonstrations. Dancers from the Company will demonstrate ballet technique, styles, and costumes that your students can look for as they watch the production. Next, our production stage manager, Tim Hubbard, will provide the students with an interactive presentation of the backstage activities of the stage crew with, “What’s Going on Back There?”



Photo of backstage presentation from the 2005 Young People’s Performance, *Harlequinade*.
Photograph by Tynetta Chastain

Presented by Tim Hubbard, Production Stage Manager, students will view and learn about the action backstage and get a sneak peek of the backdrop and learn stage terms. The importance of the jobs performed by those backstage, the impact of the various types of lighting, and the stage manager’s role in pulling it all together will be demonstrated.

Tim Hubbard has had an illustrious and diverse career in dance and theater. He has a bachelor’s degree in theater from the State University of New York and a master’s degree in dance from Butler University. Tim was a founding member of the Indianapolis Ballet Theatre (IBT, later

called Ballet Internationale), where he danced many principal and featured roles. While at IBT, Tim also developed a strong production and arts administrative career track, serving as Technical Director, Production Manager, Lighting Designer, Tour Manager, and finally General Manager.

Tim has designed lighting for over a dozen ballet companies, including the Colorado Ballet and Capella Ballet in St. Petersburg, Russia, where he was fortunate to work with his mentor, George Verdak, who staged the Russian premiere of the ballet *Le Bal*. Tim's production management has taken dance companies all over the country and internationally. He recently designed lighting and did the production management for the Gala that celebrated the retirement of Sally Bliss in St. Louis, working with dancers from many major dance companies in the United States.

Tim has been active in the arts education field throughout his career. He developed educational programs at IBT and Dance Kaleidoscope, a contemporary dance company, where he served as Director of Touring and Education for over five years. He has been a national trainer for teachers at The Grammy Foundation's Leonard Bernstein Center for Learning, which fosters an arts-integrated approach to education.

Currently, Tim is an adjunct professor in the College of Education at Butler University offering classes that instruct pre-service elementary education teachers how to integrate the arts into their classrooms and curriculum. In addition, he is a free-lance project manager and consultant in arts education and was instrumental in helping to create the Indiana Academic Standards for Dance. In 2005 Tim received a Creative Renewal Fellowship from the Arts Council of Indianapolis.

Theatrical Terms That Will Be Presented

Apron	The part of the stage in front of the main curtain.
Backdrop	A screen, curtain, or painted cloth used as part of the scenery for a production.
Backstage	The part of the stage behind the main curtain, including the dressing rooms, side wing space, and fly loft over the stage.
Border	Wide and short curtains used to mask or hide the upper portion of the stage from the audience's view.
Fly Loft	The space above the stage, used for "flying" and storing scenery that is out of the audience's view.
Leg	Narrow and tall curtains used to mask or hide the side portions of the stage from the audience's view
Main	The curtain that separates the audience from the stage
Proscenium	The structural frame around the stage opening that separates the stage from the auditorium.