

PNB PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET

PETER BOAL, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Study Guide for Teachers and Students

Student Matinee: February 9, 2023 | 11:00 AM
Marion Oliver McCaw Hall

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The February 9, 2023 student matinee of *Giselle* will feature excerpts from the ballet, open set changes, live music played by members of the PNB Orchestra, and introductions by PNB Artistic staff. The performance will begin at 11:00am, and will last one hour with no intermission.

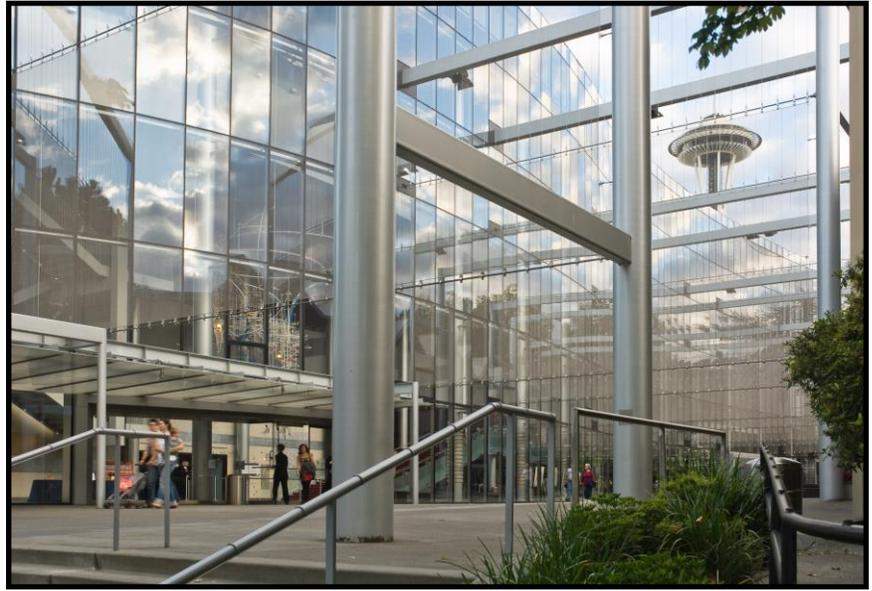
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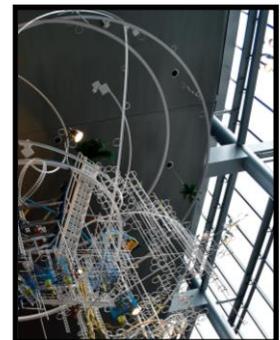
Attending a ballet performance at McCaw Hall



- You may arrive at McCaw Hall on a bus, in a car, or by walking!
- McCaw Hall is at the Seattle Center, near the Space Needle.



- When you enter McCaw Hall, you will be in the lobby.
- You can look for an art sculpture hanging from the ceiling!
- Ushers will help your group find your seats inside the theater.
- McCaw Hall is a big theater- nearly 3,000 seats!



Photos:

Second grade students arrive outside McCaw Hall (photo © Bill Mohn); Marion Oliver McCaw Hall (photo © Rodger Burnett)
Students arriving in lobby (photo © Nico Tower); students in seats at McCaw Hall (Photo © Alan Alabastro); lobby sculpture (photo © Nico Tower)



- The lights in the audience will dim before the performance begins. The theater is dark during the ballet.
- This performance will have an emcee who will speak from the stage to share about *Giselle* and PNB. However, there will not be any talking during the dancing. The story is told through movements, music, costumes, and sets.
- In order to focus and help others focus on enjoying the show, audience members do their best to sit still and quietly in their seats. However, you can clap when you enjoy something or laugh if something is funny to let the dancers know you appreciate their hard work.
- At the end of the performance, the dancers and musicians take a bow. This is a curtain call. You are welcome to clap to show you enjoyed the performance.

Going to the theater for ballet is similar to going to a movie:

- Photography and video recording are strictly prohibited. *Giselle* is copyrighted artistic material.
- Cell phones and electronics should be turned off when you enter the theater. Devices to support access needs are welcome to stay on.
- There is no intermission. Use the restroom prior to the performance.

However, unlike the movies:

- Ballet is performed live. There are no second takes and dancers can react to the audience!
- Some people make their visit to the ballet a dress-up occasion; others dress casually. Wear something you are comfortable in so you can enjoy the performance.

Most importantly:

- Enjoy the movements, music, sets, costumes—and **HAVE FUN!**

About Pacific Northwest Ballet



Founded in 1972 and currently led by Artistic Director Peter Boal, Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB) is one of the largest ballet companies in the United States. PNB is also home to one of the United States' top ballet training schools—Pacific Northwest Ballet School.



PNB dancers are full-time professional dancers. The Company has 46 dancers, including men, women, and non-binary dancers. The Company dances almost 100 performances each year at McCaw Hall in Seattle and on tour. The PNB Orchestra, consisting of 64 professional musicians, accompanies most of these performances. PNB dances many types of ballets, including story ballets like *Giselle*, as well as dances that are shorter, share ideas or feelings instead of telling stories, or are performed barefoot.



Founded in 1974, Pacific Northwest Ballet School, under the direction of Francina Russell since 1977 and now under Mr. Boal's direction, is nationally recognized as setting the standard for rigorous ballet training and offers a complete professional curriculum to nearly 1,000 students at two locations—Seattle and Bellevue.



PNB's Community Education Programs provide dance education in the greater Seattle area and reach approximately 15,000 adults and children each year through student matinees, in-school residencies, behind-the-scenes field trips, professional development for teachers, and other community-based programs.

A Dancer's Day

The dancers at Pacific Northwest Ballet are professionals. This means dancing is their full-time job. Their work is to dance, rehearse, and perform ballets. Regular classes and rehearsals take place at PNB's Phelps Center, the building next door to McCaw Hall. No day is ever the same, but most days follow a similar routine. For more about PNB dancers, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/@pacificnorthwestballet>

Dancers make a serious commitment at a young age. Most dancers train at least 10 years before becoming a professional; careers typically last less than 20 years.

8:30 - 9:00am: Arrive

Dancers arrive early in order to change into ballet clothes, stretch, and prepare for a full day of dancing.



9:15 - 10:45am: Class

The Company starts each day with a ballet class. Class starts with warm-up exercises at the barre, followed by longer combinations that move around the room.



11:05am - 2:00pm: Rehearsal

2:00 - 3:05pm: Break

3:05 - 6:00pm: Rehearsal

During rehearsal, dancers learn what will be performed on stage. Rehearsals are usually for smaller groups.

7:30pm: Performance

On performance days, dancers start their day later. Once they arrive at the theater, they prepare by warming up, then putting on costumes and makeup.



About PNB's Giselle

Giselle is one of the most well-known ballets of the Romantic era, complete with long flowing tutus, eerie white ghosts, and a story of love and heartbreak. The idea for *Giselle* (1841) came from Théophile Gautier, a well-known patron of ballet in the mid-1800s, who was inspired by two ghost stories; the poem *Phantoms* by Victor Hugo and the Slavic legend of the Wilis, ghostly brides who feature prominently in *Giselle*. He shared the idea with friends at the Paris Opera, including director Léon Pillet and composer Adolphe Adam, and they got to work with choreographers Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot creating the world premiere of *Giselle* in 1841.

Like many classics, each version of the ballet is unique. Over the centuries, countless ballet companies have performed it, and as it is passed down from one to the next, the ballet evolves. Some details are lost along the way and new ones are added—a small tweak to the storyline here, a costume adjustment there—but the main story stay the same. A young woman dies of a broken heart, joins a sisterhood of vengeful, ghostly Wilis, and eventually forgives the love who betrayed her. The ballet's themes of the supernatural, unrequited love, and forgiveness are just as relevant and popular now as they were in 1841 when the ballet was created.

In 2011 at PNB, director Peter Boal went back to original notes from 1842 and manuscripts from 1860 to stage a version of *Giselle* for PNB that gets as close to the original story and choreography as possible. But, PNB still made its own mark on the ballet's evolution with new sets and costumes created in 2014. PNB worked with costume and set designer Jerome Kaplan to develop brand new designs for the sets and 82 costumes that are worn in each performance. In PNB's version, the story is set in the mid-1800s, when the ballet was choreographed, and intensive research was done to make sure everything was historically accurate. The overall result is stunning, bringing the audience back in time and bringing ghosts to life.



Jerome Kaplan, Peter Boal, Dancer Kaori Nakamura, and PNB costumers in fittings.



PNB scene shop painters at work on the sets.

The story of Giselle

Sections noted in **red will be performed at the student matinee. *Programming subject to change.*

Act One



It is time for the grape harvest in a small German village. Hilarion, a gamekeeper, and Albrecht, a duke in disguise, come to visit the beautiful Giselle. Albrecht's squire tries to stop him from knocking on Giselle's door, but he does anyway. She delightedly comes out to dance with him. Hilarion tells Giselle that she shouldn't spend her time with Albrecht, but she and Albrecht brush him off and he leaves.

The harvesters tell Giselle it's time to come to work, but she gets them to dance instead! Her mother Berthe interrupts to scold her for not working. She is worried, too. Giselle's heart is weak, and her mother worries that if she dances too much she could die. Berthe tells the story of the Wilis, which scares all the village girls, but not Giselle. The Wilis are the ghosts of women who died before their weddings and rise from their graves at night to take vengeance on the men who broke their hearts, drowning them or forcing them to dance to death.



A hunting party arrives in town, along with the Prince and his daughter Bathilde. Berthe and Giselle graciously host, and the two young women strike up a conversation about their

sweethearts. Hilarion has been hiding in Albrecht's cottage, and when the hunters leave, he comes out with Albrecht's sword- proof that he is a nobleman, despite his disguise!

Then the harvest festival begins, and Giselle and Albrecht dance joyfully together. But when they kiss, Hilarion gets jealous and reveals the duke's disguise. He calls the hunting party back. When all of the nobles recognize Albrecht, Giselle is devastated by his deception. She goes mad with heartbreak and dies, collapsing in her mother's arms.



Act Two

In a gloomy forest, Giselle's tombstone stands near a dark pond. Gamekeepers plan to keep a night watch, but Hilarion warns them off. This is the Wili's territory, and at midnight they will attack men who wander through. The men heed his warning and flee when the clock chimes.



Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis, arrives, leading the Wilis in an ominous dance. Myrtha welcomes Giselle as a new Wili, and Giselle rises from her grave to join them.

A group of revelers pass by and the Wilis chase them offstage. In the now-empty clearing, Albrecht appears with his squire, who begs him not to stay. As he lingers by Giselle's tomb, he sees her ghost, and she throws him roses.

As Albrecht turns to leave, he sees Hilarion ensnared by the Wilis and hides. Hilarion is frightened and frantic as they force him to dance to exhaustion and throw him in the pond.



As the Wilis begin to dance again, Myrtha spots Albrecht in his hiding place. He tries to escape, but can't. Then Giselle reappears and leads him to her tombstone, which protects him and breaks Myrtha's power over him. Angry, she casts a spell on Giselle. Giselle's enchantment makes her dance, and Albrecht can't help leaving the protection of the stone to dance with her.

They dance together all night, Albrecht becoming ever more exhausted. It seems as if he will dance himself to death, but the sun rises just in time, robbing the Wilis of their power and saving Albrecht. As the Wilis return to their graves, Giselle and Albrecht share a last kiss.

Albrecht's squire and Bathilde come to get Albrecht, worried that he is wallowing in sorrow. As she departs, Giselle tells Albrecht to go to Bathilde and gives them her blessing. He is heartbroken, but as he says his final goodbye to Giselle, he reaches out to Bathilde.



About the Artists

Choreographers: Jean Coralli, Jules Perrot, and Marius Petipa



Jean Coralli (1779-1854) was a French dancer and choreographer. He served as *maître de ballet en chef* at the Paris Opéra from 1831-1850 and created a number of important ballets. His best-known work is *Giselle* (a collaboration with Jules Perrot), for which he choreographed all the ensemble dances as well as the “Peasant” pas de deux in Act One.



Jules Perrot (1810-1892) was a French dancer, choreographer, and teacher. Among his best-known works are *La Esmeralda*, *Pas de Quatre*, *Ondine*, and *Giselle* (in collaboration with Jean Coralli), for which he choreographed Carlotta Grisi's dances (*Giselle's* solos). Perrot was active throughout Europe and was famous for his marvelous dancing and stage presence. From 1848 to 1859, he was ballet master in St. Petersburg Russia, where he was a colleague and predecessor of Marius Petipa.



Marius Petipa (1818-1910) is often regarded as the greatest choreographer of the second half of the nineteenth century. Born in Marseille, France, Petipa was trained by his father. He moved to St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1847, where he worked as a ballet master and dancer. In 1869, Petipa retired from dancing and became the sole ballet master of the Imperial Theater in St. Petersburg. *The Daughter of the Pharaoh* (1862) was Petipa's first major choreographic work. Others include *Don Quixote* (1869), *La Bayadère* (1877), and *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890), and *Raymonda* (1898), as well as many dances for operas. Petipa was also responsible for restaging ballets by other choreographers; his versions have become the basis for most subsequent productions. These include *Les Corsaire* (1863), *Paquita* (1881), *Coppélia* (1884), *Giselle* (1884), and *Swan Lake* (with Lev Ivanov, 1895), among others.

PNB Artistic Director Peter Boal has added additional choreography as Stager for this production, based on manuscript notes from early productions.



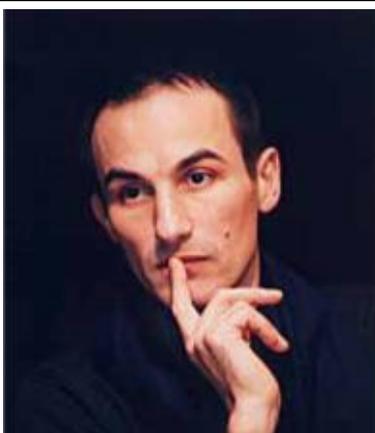
Peter Boal assumed artistic directorship of Pacific Northwest Ballet and PNB School in 2005 following a 22 year career at New York City Ballet. In addition to working with George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, and Peter Martins, Mr. Boal originated roles in over 30 new works. He received his training at the School of American Ballet, joined New York City Ballet in 1983, and was promoted to principal dancer in 1989. From 1997 to 2005, he was a full-time faculty member at SAB. In 1996, Mr. Boal received the Dance Magazine Award, and in 2000 he received a New York Dance and Performance Award.

Composer: Adolphe Adam

Additional music by Friedrich Burgmüller, Riccardo Drigo, and Ludwig Minkus is included in this production.



Adolphe Adam (1803-1856) was a prolific French theater composer who trained at the Paris Conservatoire. From his youth, he loved the theater, and was a favorite collaborator of artists. The ballets *Giselle* (1841) and *Le Corsaire* (1856) as well as the Christmas carol "Cantique de Noël" ("O Holy Night", 1847) are among his best-known works. He was celebrated by critics as the "master of masters" of ballet composition and his comic operas were enormously successful as well.



Scenery & Costumes: Jérôme Kaplan

Jérôme Kaplan was born in Paris and studied scenic design at L'ecole de la Rue Blanche. He went on to design sets and costumes for Les Ballets de Monte Carlo including, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Cendrillon (Cinderella)*, and *Scheherazade*. He has also designed for the Shanghai Ballet, National Ballet of Finland, the Australian Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre, among many others.

In 2001, he became the first French scenographer to collaborate with the National Ballet of China in Beijing, when he created the costumes for *Raise the Red Lantern*. In 2012 he won the Golden Mask Award for Best Costume Designer for for the world premiere of Alexei Ratmansky's *Lost Illusions (Les Illusions Perdues)* at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow.

Discussion Topics

Movement:

Discussion:

Dance is a way to communicate stories, ideas, and feelings without using words. How can our bodies show feelings and ideas without talking or sounds?

Pre-performance Questions:

- What kinds of movements and facial expressions show happiness? Sadness?
- Would these movements be fast or slow? Sharp or smooth?
- How would you show a celebration? Something scary?

Post-performance Questions:

- How did the choreography communicate the story and the characters' feelings?
- Give an example of something the dancers told the audience through movement.
- Were there any parts of the ballet that were confusing to you? Why?



Costumes:

Discussion:

Costumes are important because they help to show the characters and setting in the story. The audience can use costumes as clues to identify the characters. Each piece helps create a character and adds to the bright setting of Act 1 and eerie scene in Act 2.

Pre-performance Questions:

- What kinds of costumes do you expect to see in *Giselle*?
- What kinds of materials/considerations are important for dance clothing?
- Why do you think it is important for dancers to wear tights?



Post-performance Questions:

- How long do you think it would take to make so many costumes? (*over one year*)
- Think about *Giselle's* different costumes. How did they help tell the story?
- Which costumes looked easiest to dance in? The most difficult?

Music:

Discussion:

Since ballet does not involve talking while dancing, music is a very important part of the performance. In addition to music helping to tell the story and set the mood, dancers use the music to remember their choreography and stay together with the musical beat while performing. The music for this student matinee will be played live by members of the PNB Orchestra.

Pre-performance Questions:

- What kind of music tells you when something scary or exciting is happening in a movie?
- What kind of music do you expect to hear during *Giselle*?
- How do you think music and dancing work together?

Post-performance Questions:

- How was the music different in each scene? The same?
- How did the music help to tell the story?
- If you were creating a ballet, would you prefer to pick a piece of music that was already composed, or one that was created specifically for your dance?

Scenery:

Discussion:

The set for *Giselle* was hand-crafted by a team of artisans in 2014. Comprised of intricately painted backdrops, large set pieces, dramatic lighting, and props, the design took over one year to create.

Pre-performance Questions:

- What kinds of things would you expect to see on stage to show a village? A graveyard?
- What kinds of considerations do scenic designers have to make for ballet versus a play when designing set pieces?
- How could the lighting design change the mood without changing anything else?

Post-performance Questions:

- What did the sets look like?
- How and why were the sets and lights different for each scene?
- Did the set design coordinate with the costume design?

Additional Resources

LITERATURE: (both books include *Giselle*)

Ages 4-8: [*A Child's Introduction to Ballet: The Stories, Music, and Magic of Classical Dance*](#)

Laura Lee

ISBN: 978-1579126995

Black Dog & Leventhal, 2007

Ages 9-12: [*Favorite Stories of the Ballet*](#)

James Riordan, Foreword by Rudolf Nureyev

ISBN: 978-0528821783

Rand McNally, 1984

MUSIC:

Listen Online: *Orquestra de Lubeck*

Act 1: <https://youtu.be/74k8YS4vR0c>

Act 2: <https://youtu.be/5SAOuN7IxHA>

To Purchase:

[*Adam: Giselle* by the London Symphony Orchestra](#)

OTHER GISELLE INTERPRETATIONS:

Dance Theatre of Harlem's *Creole Giselle*:

<https://pointemagazine.com/dance-theatre-of-harlem-creole-giselle/>

Akram Khan's *Giselle* for the English National Ballet:

<https://www.ballet.org.uk/production/akram-khan-giselle/>

VIDEO / WEBSITE:

Videos, photos, program notes, and behind-the-scenes information on PNB's website:

<https://www.pnb.org/repertory/giselle/>

GET TO KNOW PNB:

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/pacificnwballet/featured>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PNBallet>

Blog: <https://blogpnborg.wordpress.com/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/pacificnorthwestballet/>

PNB Community Education programs are committed to serving all members of the community. We believe every child and adult has the ability and merit to dance. Programming is inclusive, regardless of race, national origin, disability status, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or gender.

For more information about PNB's Community Education programs:

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