

The Nutcracker



Produced by

Eastern Connecticut Ballet

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The *Nutcracker* Ballet

The *Nutcracker* Ballet was composed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky in 1892. Tchaikovsky was one of the most renowned composers of the romantic period, although he did not start out his life as a musician. His first job was as a legal clerk at the Ministry of Justice in St. Petersburg. He was unhappy and unfulfilled in this position and in 1862 he began taking classes at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Although he had played the piano since age 7, it was not until 1862, at age 22, that he found his true calling in music.

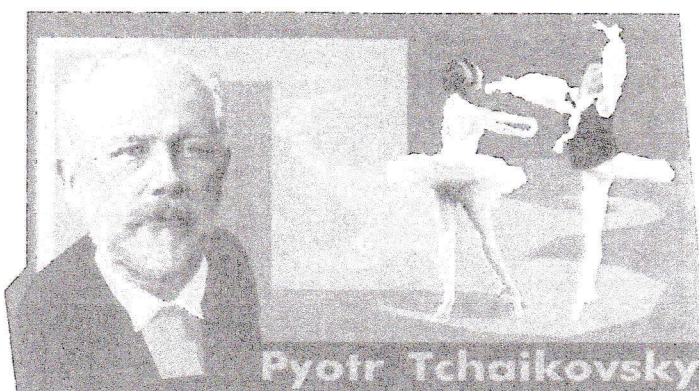
Even though he was highly successful as a musician, he always feared conducting orchestras, because of this legend says that he would conduct with his left hand under his chin, due to a fear his head would fall off. He left the St. Petersburg Conservatory after graduating and began teaching at the Moscow Conservatory where he started composing music. He taught there for 12 years and then traveled the world, composing and performing music. His music was often criticized for being too orchestral for the ballet and too balletic for the orchestra. However, he composed a number of wildly successful symphonies, suites, operas, and ballets. His work raised ballet music to previously unheard of levels of respect and accolades. He loved music that could be danced to; his personal favorite pieces were those composed by Mozart.

His most famous ballets are still three of the most widely produced and popular full length ballets in the world. *Swan Lake*, which was Tchaikovsky's first ballet was completed in 1876 and first performed by the Bolshoi Theatre in 1877. (In 1895 his music was heavily revised by Riccardo Drigo and it is this version that is most commonly heard today.) *Sleeping Beauty* was the work Tchaikovsky considered to be his best. It was commissioned by the Imperial Theatre and performed there in 1890. His final ballet was the *Nutcracker*. Completed in 1892, many critics viewed it as his best work, although Tchaikovsky was strongly disappointed in it. He did not want to compose the ballet, and when the Imperial Opera Company's director commissioned both a one-act opera and a full length ballet based upon E.T.A. Hoffman's story, he was not inspired by the subject.

In composing the *Nutcracker*, Tchaikovsky drew many melodies from existing music. Much of the music used in the Party Scene at the beginning of the ballet is based upon traditional French, German, Georgian, and Russian folk and nursery songs. In addition to incorporating many well known and familiar pieces of music into his ballet, Tchaikovsky also used a number of children's instruments in the score, including a rattle, toy trumpet, and miniature drum. While purchasing these instruments he also discovered a celeste – a bell-like

sounding instrument played with a keyboard. This instrument was a recent invention, whose discovery he carefully guarded as a secret from other composers.

The *Nutcracker* was completed in 1892, and Tchaikovsky died on November 6th, 1893. He never lived to see his final ballet reach the world-wide fame and renown it came to receive. Tchaikovsky was a deeply passionate and brilliant composer whose work changed the musical scene and brought recognition and accolades to the music that accompanies ballet. Through his work, he changed the image of ballet scores from being an afterthought, to being in the forefront of every production.



The Story of the *Nutcracker*

The *Nutcracker* ballet is based on a story written in 1816 by the German writer E.T.A. Hoffman. The original tale is rather dark and disturbing, like many of the original German fairy tales. Hoffman tells the story of a seven-year-old girl named Marie. Marie's parents often treat her harshly, but one Christmas Eve, Marie receives a special present: a wooden nutcracker carved in the shape of a funny little man. The nutcracker turns out to be an enchanted prince at war with the evil King of the Mice. In Hoffman's story, the Mouse King is a terrifying figure. A wicked spell is broken with Marie's help, and the prince takes Marie on a magical visit to the Land of the Dolls where she sees a dance by shepherdesses made out of sugar, passes by the Gingerbread City and arrives in the capital of Candytown. Marie sees exotically dressed people from all over the world, and then she falls asleep. When Marie wakes up in her familiar bed, she wonders if everything she experienced had been a dream. At the end of Hoffman's strange story, the handsome young prince reappears and marries Marie, and together they rule over a castle made of candy.

In 1891, Hoffman's story was transformed into the

plot of a ballet by Ivan Alexandrovitch Vsecolojsky, the director of Russia's Imperial Ballet. Marius Pepita choreographed the dance steps and combinations for the *Nutcracker* ballet, and Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky composed the musical score. The Russian version simplified and sugar-coated the original tale. The name of the main character was changed from Marie to Clara, and Clara's parents were not cruel to her. There was still a Mouse King to battle and a wicked spell to break, but the dreamlike adventures of Clara remained fantastical journeys which delighted audiences of all ages.

Eastern Connecticut Ballet's *Nutcracker* story is true to the Russian classical ballet tradition, but unique to

southeastern Connecticut. The story takes place around 1850 during the height of New England's whaling industry. Clara is a girl growing up in a town along the coast of Connecticut instead of in Germany. Clara's father is a whaling sea captain who sails the seas in search of whales. His journeys take him to the frigid waters of the snowy East Arctic, as well as to many exotic lands where fascinating people live. When Clara's father returns from his world-wide travels, he tells amazing stories about his adventures. The opening act is set in Clara's home during a Christmas Eve party, and her imaginative adventures begin when an old family friend, Drosselmeyer, gives Clara the intriguing present of a mechanical Nutcracker doll.

Ballet

Ballet began about five hundred years ago in Italy. Gorgeously costumed performers sang and danced stories from ancient Greek mythology. Unfortunately, their costumes were very long and heavy, so the dancers could not leap and spin the way dancers do today.

In France during the 1600's, King Louis XIV helped promote what we know today as ballet dancing. Louis was proud of his handsome legs, and he loved to dance. He created an academy, or school, to set down rules for dancing and to train dancers.

A teacher named Pierre Beauchamp down the five basic standing positions that all ballet dancers learn today. In all five positions, the feet are turned out so that the toes and knees face sideways instead of forward. Turnout looks elegant and allows dancers to lift their legs higher, but it is not a natural position. It takes a lot of practice for a dancer to have perfect turnout.

In the 1700's, a dancer named Marie Camargo decided to shorten her skirts and remove the high heels from her shoes so that she could lift her legs higher and leap farther. Other performers soon followed her example. Soon dancers had invented the grand jete, a broad, high leap, and the pirouette, a series of spins.

In the 1800's, a ballerina named Marie Taglioni appeared in Paris in a ballet called *Les Sylphides*. In this ballet, the director wanted Taglioni to look like a delicate fairy-like creature whose feet barely touched the ground. Marie created this effect by dancing on the tips of her toes, a style called sur les pointes. Today, female ballet dancers wear special pointe shoes, which are handmade satin slippers with baked-on glue stiffening the toe area. Dance students are not allowed to begin going en pointe until they are about 11 or 12 years old and have already strengthened their ankles and feet through years of training.

In our own country, ballet continues to be a mixture of tradition and change. Today's ballet students are still trained according to methods described in a manual published in 1830, and many older ballets like *Swan Lake* and *Les Sylphides* are still performed today. These traditional dances have classical music scores and were often about fairies, swans, princesses, and princes. Modern ballets have used all kinds of music from marches to jazz and folk music, and the storylines of modern ballets have also changed with the times.



EASTERN CONNECTICUT BALLET

Founded in 1992, Eastern Connecticut Ballet (ECB) is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit performing arts center providing exceptional dance training for children and adults of all ages. Its mission is to promote the art of dance through community service, education, and performance. To achieve this mission, ECB provides comprehensive programs for students seriously committed to dance as its own reward, as an art form for further study, or as a professional career. In the community, ECB actively raises awareness of the beauty and power of dance and brings stunning professionally choreographed productions to the shoreline.

ECB enrolls 350 students annually from ages two through adult. Students come from the New London area as well as from Westerly, Rhode Island, along the Connecticut shoreline to Branford, and as far north as Danielson. They participate in classes that train the whole dancer including baller, Limón modern, jazz, tap Pilates, natural stretch, and creative arts for young children. ECB also offers a comprehensive dance program for adults. Every student learns the importance of conditioning, nutrition, choreography, and dance history. ECB also provides counseling for advanced students seeking company auditions and college application preparation. It offers classes at its state-of-the-art main campus in East Lyme and additional children's classes at the Old Saybrook Estuary Council of Seniors.

Thirteen resident faculty members provide professional instruction in specific disciplines. All of the faculty members are former dancers that studied at prominent institutions such as The Juilliard School, the School of American Ballet, and the Boston Ballet Conservatory; all of them also have performed professionally with such companies as the New York City Ballet, the Alvin Ailey American Repertory Dance Theater, the José Limón Dance Company, and the Dresden Staats Opera Ballet in Germany. ECB also hosts visiting faculty from major universities, prominent dance companies and Broadway shows to teach master classes and the summer program. ECB Youth Company members have also had the opportunity to perform dance selections with permission of The Balanchine Trust and José Limón Company.

Since 2002, ECB performs an enchanted Connecticut maritime-inspired version of *The Nutcracker* at the historic Garde Arts Center in new London featuring over 100 professionally trained ECB dancers that attracts an annual audience of nearly 3,000 people and features guest artists from premiere dance companies i.e., NYC Ballet and ABT and boasts beautiful live music of Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra. To date, over 43,000 people have experienced this extraordinary event. In the past 11 years, over 44,000 children have seen *The Nutcracker*, *The Nutcracker Jubilee*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella* and *Green Eggs and Ham* free of charge in special performances designed for young audiences. Biannually, all ECB students perform in a Spring Showcase that demonstrates the progression of training through seven levels of its unified, classical ballet syllabus. They also perform classical repertory and original works where they refine artistry, movement quality, and expression. Younger dancers perform in a creative, age-appropriate story ballet. Throughout the year, ECB faculty and students conduct ballet assemblies in schools, libraries, and day care centers. They also participate in regional arts festivals and regularly collaborate and perform with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra.

As part of its community outreach activities every year, ECB provides *Nutcracker*-based free interactive, educational assemblies funded by the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut for more than 1,500 students in 14 regional schools. It also provides nearly 500 free tickets to *The Nutcracker* to 14 community-based social service organizations serving families in need including the US Military. A critical component of ECB outreach is its huge commitment to providing scholarships for talented, underserved students. Each year ECB awards over \$60,000 in partial scholarships, hardship scholarships, and financial assistance to deserving students.

The Production

ECB's Production of the Nutcracker

Eastern Connecticut Ballet's *Nutcracker* has become a special part of the holidays for children around Connecticut and Rhode Island. This production is a sumptuous jewel, with lush scenery, lavish costumes, and the beautiful sounds of the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra.

The production includes a cast of 100 professionally trained dancers, including students of all levels and guest artists of international acclaim. It is a timeless tale of Clara and her enchanted journey from a holiday party, to a swashbuckling sea battle, the land of the snowflakes and the magical kingdom of the Sugar Plum Fairy. ECB's *Nutcracker* is the only *Nutcracker* in Connecticut accompanied by a full, live orchestra.

The production differs from other traditional productions of the *Nutcracker* through the use of Connecticut's own history, setting, and context. Students who attend the *Nutcracker* not only have the privilege of viewing a world-class cultural performance, they also become immersed in their own history. The costumes, sets, and plot of the *Nutcracker* have all been carefully aligned to incorporate and highlight New London and its whaling history. Traditional versions of the *Nutcracker* have Clara traveling by sleigh, while this production features an ocean journey, a rousing battle scene on a boat, and a voyage across the seas to the foreign land of the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Clara's World – on the Connecticut Coast

Clara, her brother, and all her friends and relatives in Act I are wearing **clothing they might really have worn in 1850**. Girls and women hid their legs, arms, and heads in voluminous skirts, wide sleeves, and bonnets that resembled ornate mailboxes. They warmed their hands in muffs, which look a little like stuffed animals. Their skirts stood out on either side because they wore wire frameworks underneath called hoops. When they went outside, they wore shawls and capes. Boys wore knee-length pants and jackets, and men dressed up in waistcoats, which were short jackets in front and very long in back.

Clara's dreams in this new *Nutcracker* take her **to sea**. The battle scene she imagines takes place on a boat, and when, in the second act of the ballet, she sets off for the adventures that take us all with her, she's riding the seas to a foreign land.

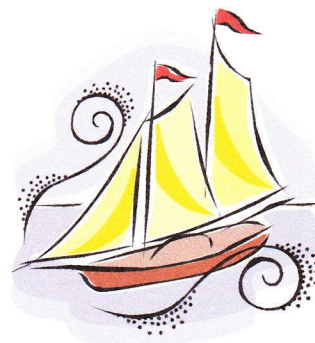
19th Century Whaling Days

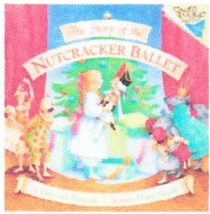
Since Eastern Connecticut Ballet's performance of *The Nutcracker* takes place during the mid 1800's in a local sea captain's home, some brief facts about the whaling industry and 19th century life might help the audience understand the history and some of the costumes and props used during the performance.

During the 17th and 18th century, Europeans settling in New England learned to whale from observing different native tribes. At first, people set up look-out posts on the beaches to watch for whales. When water from the whale's blow hole sprayed into the air, men rowed out in boats to spear the whale and bring it back to shore. They boiled the blubber in pots called trypots set up over a fire on the beach. Then when the oil was "tried out" or melted out of the blubber, the men poured the oil in large wooden barrels made by coopers.

Soon shipbuilders constructed large wooden ships with smaller whale boats attached to the sides, so whalers could follow the migration routes of the whales and hunt them on the open seas. A lookout stationed close to the top of the mast in a crow's nest would watch for whales spouting or breaching (coming up out of the water), and then the crewmen would lower the rowboats and chase the whales. By this time, the weapon used to catch the whale was a barbed harpoon with a line attached to it, so that when the harpooner stuck the whale, the whale would be connected to the whaleboat by a long rope.

The whale usually tried to get away from the painful harpoon, so it would swim fast and the whalers held onto their rowboat until the whale tired out. Whalers called this wild ride a "Nantucket Sleigh Ride." Once the whale slowed down, the men rowed up next to it while the offer aboard used a spear-like weapon called a "lance" to kill the whale. After rowing the whale back to the larger whaleship, the men cut the blubber off the whale and put chunks of blubber into the trypots which were encased in a brick oven on a deck called the tryworks. Afterwards, the oil was put in large wooden barrels and lowered into the ship's hold or the bottom of the ship for storage.





Literacy Activities

ECB's production of the Nutcracker differs from other traditional productions or storybooks through the use of Connecticut's own history, setting and context. Students who attend the performance will be immersed in their own history. The costumes, sets, and plot of the Nutcracker have all been carefully aligned to incorporate and highlight New London and its whaling history. Traditional versions have Clara travel by sleigh while this production features an ocean journey, a rousing battle scene on a boat, and a voyage across the seas to the foreign land of the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Story Elements

Tell students that they are going to talk about ballet and more specifically the Nutcracker Ballet. Have them think for a minute about what they know about ballet. After about a minute, have them turn to their partner or share with the group what they know about ballet.

Show students the story elements graphic organizer and discuss the elements of most fictional stories (character/setting/problem/solution)

- Who are the main characters in the story?
- What is the setting of the story?
- What are a problem and a solution in the story?

Explain to students that while you read aloud they will be listening for these different elements and you will be stopping to fill out the chart as a whole class.

When you are done have the children fill out their own chart. If your students can not write have them draw pictures on their chart.

3-2-1

Have students write/recall:

- 3 characters in the story
- 2 places that the story took place
- 1 problem that the characters encountered in the story

Venn Diagram

After seeing the performance and reading one or two versions of The Nutcracker discuss the similarities and differences. Then have children create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the two versions.

Coloring Book from ECB

Print the coloring book made from photos from Eastern Connecticut Ballets version of The Nutcracker. Have students read the story on their own, with a partner, or use it as a shared reading experience. Then students may color the books and bring them home to share the story with their family.

Nutcracker Acrostic Poem

After learning about ballet, theater, music from Tchaikovsky, and seeing the Nutcracker have students write an acrostic poem using the word NUTCRACKER. As a class discuss all of the things they have learned and seen relating to the Nutcracker. Encourage students to use these ideas in their poem. Have them think of words or phrases to describe the Nutcracker ballet that start with each letter in the word NUTCRACKER.

Summarize the Nutcracker

Have students practice writing a summary. After reading a Nutcracker book AND/OR seeing the ballet, have your students summarize the story using the words First, Next, Then, After that, In the end. For younger students you may do this as a shared writing experience and as a whole class discuss what happened and you can record their ideas.

Journal Entries/Reflection

Upon returning from the performance, have the students draw something from the performance they found exciting, scary, or beautiful and write about it.

Possible questions to ask to prompt some writing about their experience:

What did you see at the Nutcracker?

What did you hear at the Nutcracker?

How did the ballet make you feel?

Did the costumes tell you who the characters were? How?

What did each character's dance tell you about them?

How did the sound of the music help you understand what was happening on stage?

What was your favorite part/character of the ballet?

Was there any part of the ballet that you did not like? Why?

Writing Prompt

Explain to students how this is a fictional story with some magical elements. Tell them to imagine they received a Nutcracker and it came alive....write about the adventures and tell what happens.

Illustrate a Class Nutcracker Book

Attached is the text for ECB's version of the Nutcracker in the format of a picture book. After seeing the Nutcracker performance, have your children read the text and have pairs of children illustrate one page of the story. Remind students to think about what their page is talking about and what happened during that part of the ballet. Their picture should match that part of the story.

THE NUTCRACKER

(READ ALOUD VERSION)

It is Christmas Eve at the home of a New London sea captain and his family, where a girl named Clara, her brother Fritz, and her mother are anticipating the arrival of friends and family for a party. Clara's mother is planning for the evening activities, and maids clean the room and try to get Clara and Fritz ready in their party clothes. Clara and her mother are anxious that her father might not make it back from his latest sea journey in time for the party. Soon after, he sneaks in and surprises Clara's mother. The guests arrive and they dance. The children receive gifts. In the midst of all this, Clara's godfather, Drosselmeyer, arrives and he has brought Clara a life-sized doll. Drosselmeyer entertains them with giant puppets. He presents Clara with his present, the Nutcracker doll. Fritz is jealous and breaks the Nutcracker, but Drosselmeyer fixes it before the party ends. Much later, Pirate rats sneak into the parlor, and then have a party. Clara, who couldn't sleep, interrupts them and tries to chase the rats away. Drosselmeyer appears and the rats run off. He awakens the life-sized doll who has stayed behind after the party, and magical things start to happen. They are at sea. A Mouse King, looking like a puppet that danced at the party, appears. Then a life-sized Nutcracker marches in. While those two start to battle, the rats kidnap the girl doll and Clara and trap them in a fishing net. Along comes a boat, with the Nutcracker and sailors, who manage to free the doll and Clara. The rats corner the Nutcracker, forcing him to walk the plank. Clara manages to distract the Mouse King and, then, along with her doll friend's help, she kills him. Clara and the doll get into a boat, and the Nutcracker general turns back into a wooden doll. As the boat floats off, snowflakes start to fall as they head off for more adventures. Clara and her friend arrive by boat in an imaginary coastal city that brings out many different countries. A fairyland rises up around them and Clara sees the Sugar Plum Fairy. Flowers and children from many countries dance for Clara, decorating her boat with flowers and flags. There were Spanish dancers who dance with attitude and flare. The Chinese dancers jump with energy. The Pollies pop out from under a skirt. The Arabian dancers move slowly and precisely. The Marzipan dance with grace. The Hoops do tricks with their hula hoops, and the Flowers waltzed around. After the dances end, Clara finds herself alone. Her mother appears, beckoning to her to return home. Clara holds her Nutcracker doll aloft and takes one last look at the magical land before it's time to return home for Christmas morning.

THE NUTCRACKER

(STUDENT COPY)

It is Christmas Eve at the home of a New London sea captain and his family, where a girl named Clara, her brother Fritz, and her mother are anticipating the arrival of friends and family for a party. Clara's mother is planning for the evening activities, and maids clean the room and try to get Clara and Fritz ready in their party clothes. Clara and her mother are anxious that her father might not make it back from his latest sea journey in time for the party. Soon after, he sneaks in and surprises Clara's mother. The guests arrive and they dance. The children receive gifts. In the midst of all this, Clara's godfather, Drosselmeyer, arrives and he has brought Clara a life-sized doll. Drosselmeyer entertains them with giant puppets. He presents Clara with his present, the Nutcracker doll. Fritz is jealous and breaks the Nutcracker, but Drosselmeyer fixes it before the party ends. Much later, Pirate

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Appendix 2

Story Elements

Title:

Setting

Where:

When:

Problem:

Solution:

Date _____

Venn Diagram

Write details that tell how the subjects are different in the outer circles. Write details that tell how the subjects are alike where the circles overlap.

Subject: _____

Name: _____

Summary of The Nutcracker

After reading a story of the Nutcracker, AND/OR after seeing the performance, have your students practice writing a summary using the following words as sentence starters.



First... _____

Next... _____

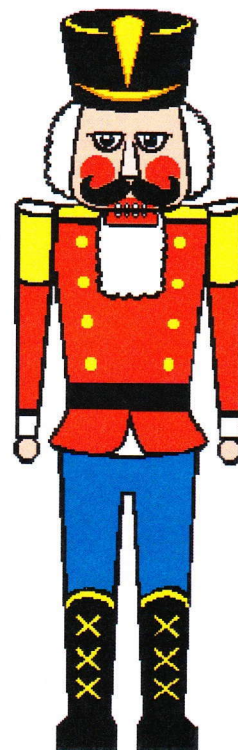
Then... _____

After
that... _____

In the
end... _____

Name: _____

The Nutcracker Acrostic Poem



N _____

U _____

T _____

C _____

R _____

A _____

C _____

K _____

E _____

R _____



Music/Movement/Art Activities

Peter Tchaikovsky

Starfall.com has a great short biography on the composer of the Nutcracker. There is also two child friendly passages that explain two dances from the ballet and plays the scores.

<http://www.starfall.com/n/artmusic/tchaikovsky/load.htm?f>

If you have trouble finding the link you can google Starfall Peter Tchaikovsky

This would be a great whole class viewing experience or you can save the link on your classroom computers and have students access the information on their computer day/time.

Ballet Positions

- Ask if any of your students have taken ballet lessons. Have any of them ever seen a ballerina dance?
- After listening to the nutcracker story/music tell students a little bit about the composer who created the music. Tell them that he created the music for the story of The Nutcracker. Explain to the children that the music helps tell the story through a type of dance called "ballet". Ballet is movement to music that creates feelings such as joy, sadness, anger, or love.
- Show students the pictures of the various ballet positions and some of the basic ballet moves. Have your students spread out around the classroom and try these positions and movements.
- Challenge pairs or small groups of students to put together a series of these positions and steps just like ballet dancers string together moves. You can teach the analogy that dancers tell a story with a series of movements like books use a series of words to make sentences to tell a story.

Dancers in Fairyland

Discuss how in one part of the Nutcracker Clara watches many different dancers perform very different styles of dancing. Use the picture cards and dance descriptions to teach the different ways these dancers move. Children can also try moving/dancing like these dancers.

March by Tchaikovsky Glyph

Use Youtube or another site to play March from The Nutcracker.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHwsvBg2Mk8>

Before playing the March by Tchaikovsky review the following music terms:

Short sounds/Long sounds

Drums/No Drums

Allegro (fast tempo)/ Largo (slow tempo)

Loud/Soft

Steady beat/No steady beat

As a class listen to March by Tchaikovsky. You may want to listen to it a few times and each time listen for the different terms/musical concepts listed above. Have students use the glyphs to determine what colors to color the nutcracker glyph based on the type of music they heard in the March.

Scores of Music

Leading up to seeing the Nutcracker performance, play different scores of music for your class during snack/quiet time/etc. It will be great to expose them to many of the scores they might hear. Students can draw pictures based on how the music makes them feel or what they picture when they hear the music. After each score have children share their thoughts on the music. What did they like/not like? What sounds/instruments did they hear?

***There are many website and YouTube videos that will play scores from the Nutcracker.*

Nutcracker Puppet

Use the template and brown paper bags to create nutcracker puppets. Discuss what a Nutcracker is and how it is often associated with Christmas and many people use Nutcrackers as holiday decorations. Research the history of Nutcrackers.

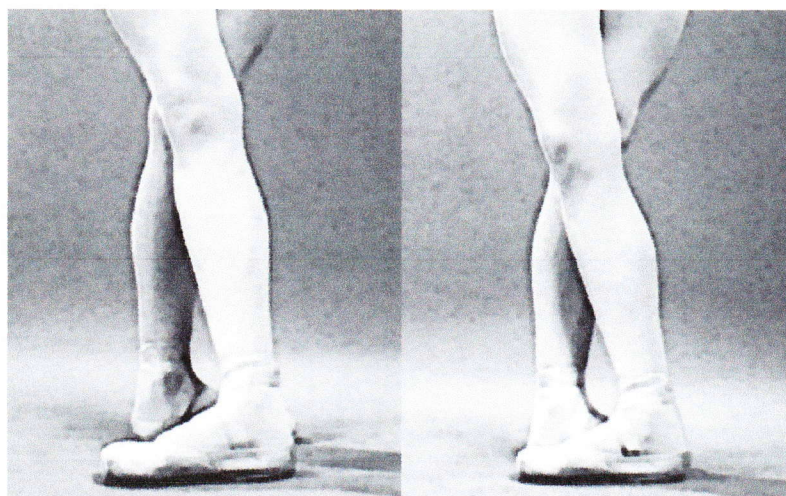
**Every ballet dancer begins by learning the five basic positions.
Teachers try these positions with your students:**



First Position

Second Position

Third Position



Fourth Position

Fifth Position

There are seven movements in ballet. All the movements used in ballet are based on seven natural movements. These are: bending, stretching, rising, sliding, turning, darting, and jumping.

Try each one yourself:



"Plie" means to bend



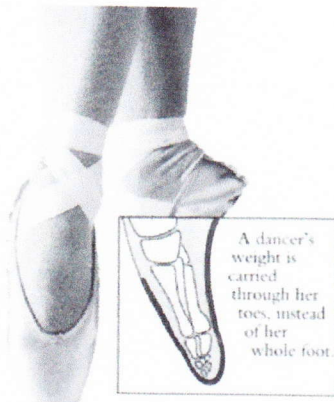
Arabesque is a bending movement



A pirouette is a turning step that turns on one foot.



A pas-de-chat is a "cat's" step that involves darting and jumping.



A dancer's weight is carried through her toes, instead of her whole foot.

This is en pointe which means to be on the point of the toes.

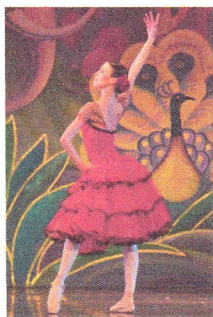
MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Use these cards and pictures to teach the children about the different ways they will see people dancing. All of these dancers appear once Clara and the Nutcracker arrive in the fairyland with the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Suggested Activities:

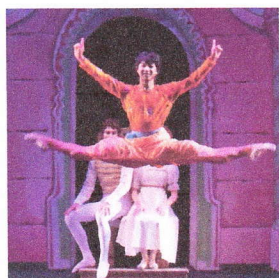
- Have children try to move the way each group of dancers might move.
- Have children match how each group moves
- Use these cards when teaching the story and sequence of events.

Spanish Dancers



Dance with attitude
and flare.

Chinese Dancers



Jump with energy.

Pollies



Pop out of a skirt.

Arabian Dancers



Dance slow and
precise.

Marzipan Dancers



Dance with grace.

Hoops



Do tricks with hula
hoops.

Flowers



Waltz

March from The Nutcracker

Name: _____

By Tchaikovsky

Hat:

RED: short sounds

BLUE: long sounds

Hair

YELLOW: Allegro

BLACK: Largo

Buttons:

GREEN: I liked it

BROWN: I did not like it

Body:

RED: loud

BLUE: soft

GREEN: both

Legs:

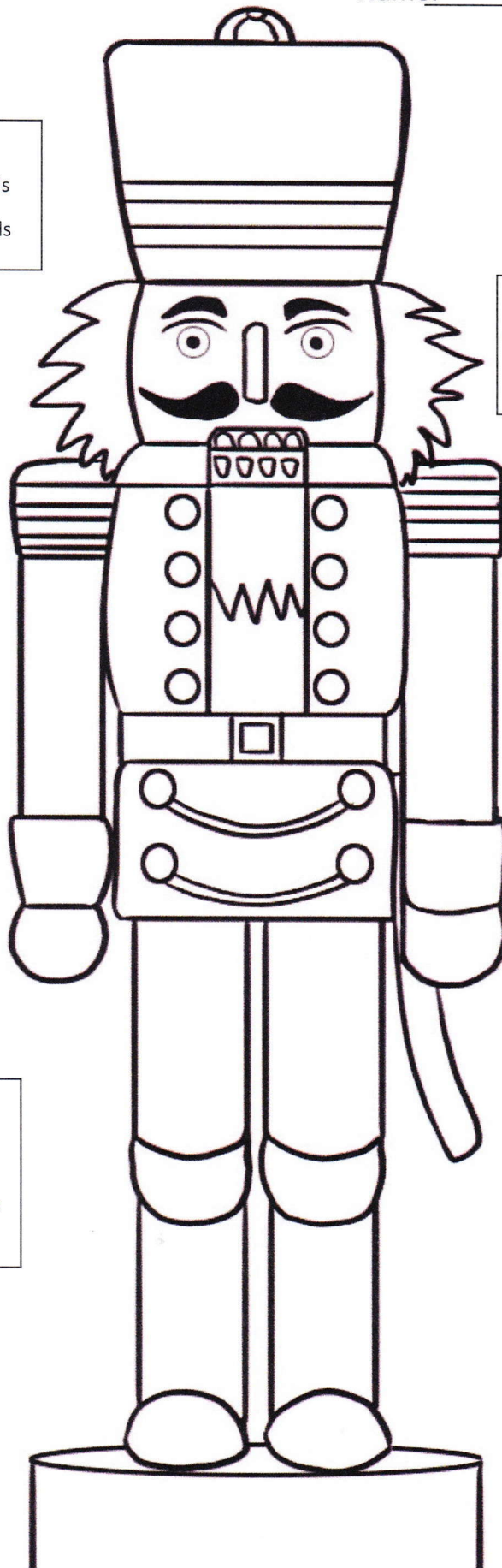
BLUE: drums

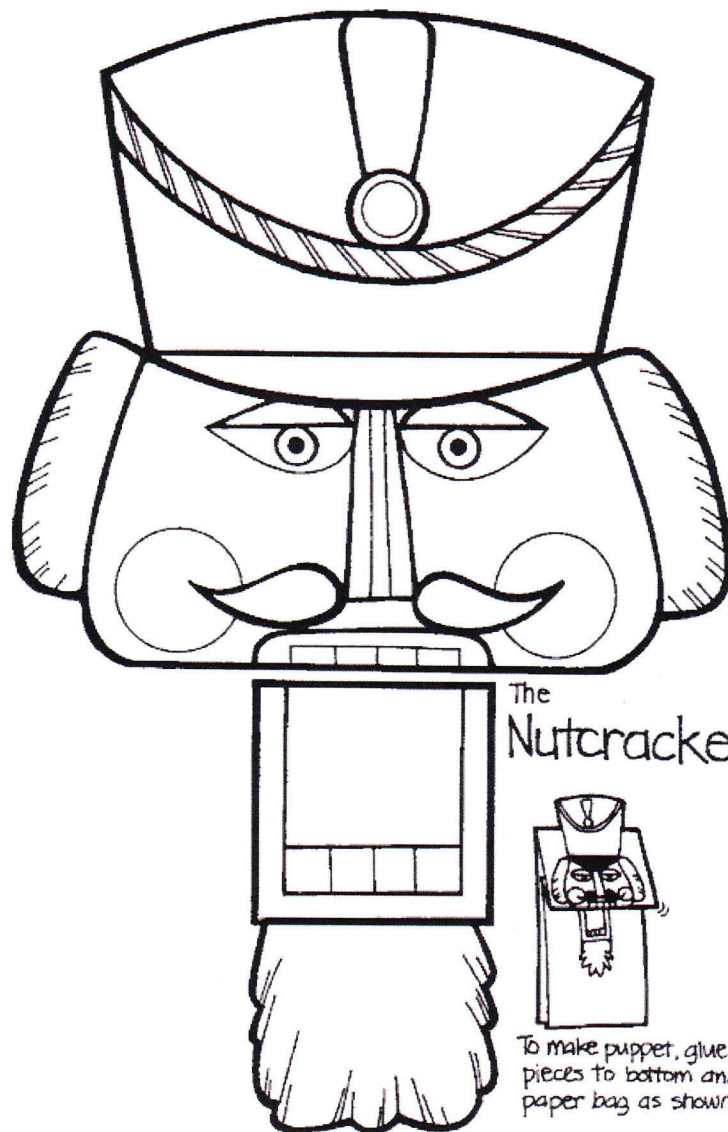
BLACK: no drums

Shoes:

RED: Steady beat

BLACK: No steady beat



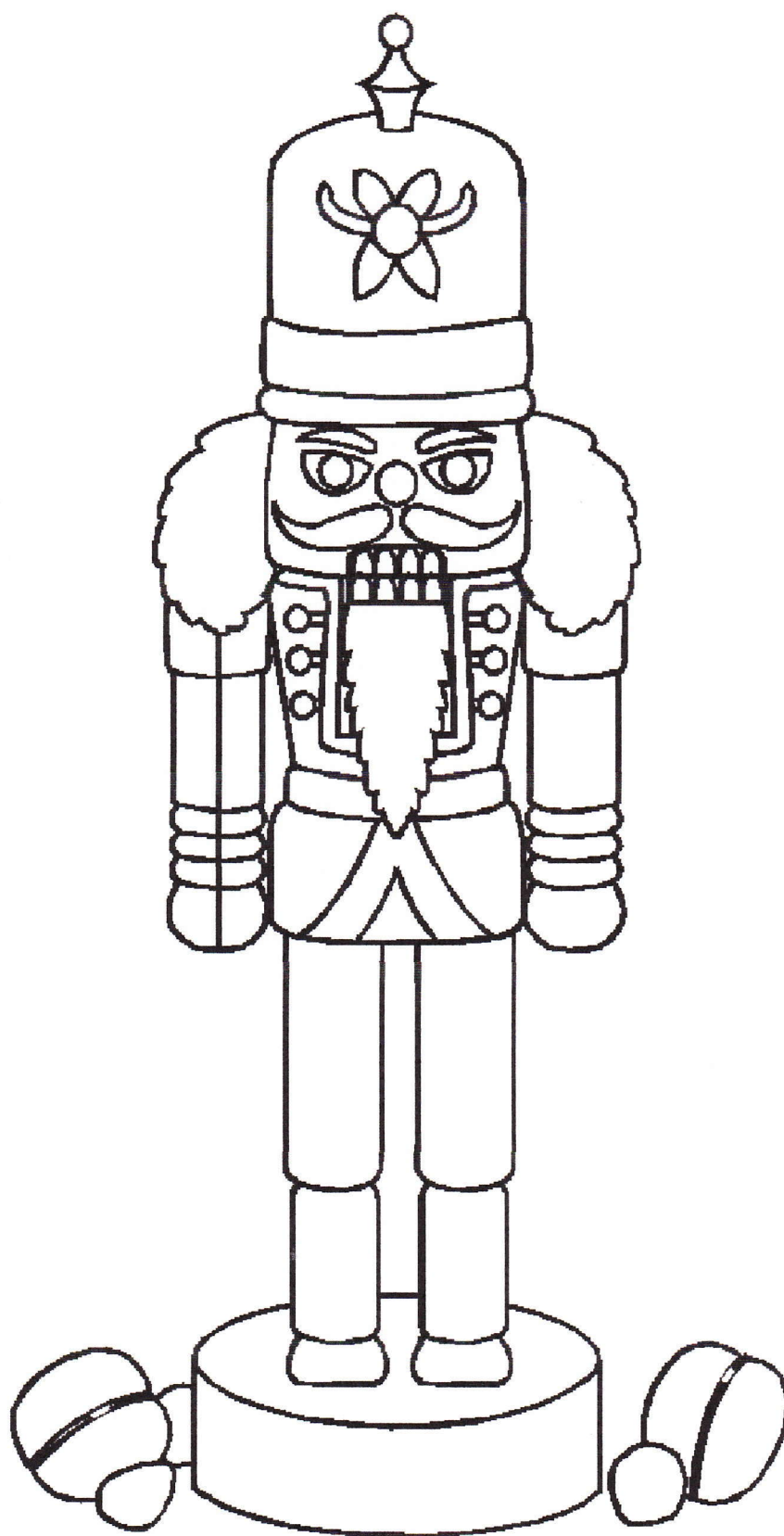


JIM GAMBLE PUPPETS
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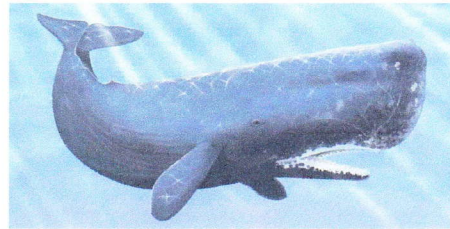
The
Nutcracker



To make puppet, glue head & mouth
pieces to bottom and side of a
paper bag as shown.



Social Studies/Science Activities and Links within ECB's Production



ECB's production of the Nutcracker differs from other traditional productions or storybooks through the use of Connecticut's own history, setting and context. Students who attend the performance will be immersed in their own history. The costumes, sets, and plot of the Nutcracker have all been carefully aligned to incorporate and highlight New London and its whaling history. Traditional versions have Clara travel by sleigh while this production features an ocean journey, a rousing battle scene on a boat, and a voyage across the seas to the foreign land of the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Clara's World-on the Connecticut Coast

Clara, her brother, and all her friends and relatives in Act I are wearing clothing they might really have worn in 1850. Girls and women hid their legs, arms and heads in large skirts, wide sleeves, and bonnets. They warmed their hands in muffs, which look a little like a stuffed animal. Their skirts stood out on either side because they wore wire frameworks underneath called hoops. When they went outside they wore shawls and capes. Boys wore knee length pants and jackets, and men dressed up in waistcoats, which were short jackets in front and very long in the back.

New London, CT Whaling

On chart paper sketch the clothing for a typical woman, man, and child in the 19th century. Use images from the computer or from books to show children what the clothing looked like during this time period.

19th Century Whaling Days

Since Eastern Connecticut Ballet's performance of The Nutcracker takes place during the mid-1800's in a local sea captains home, some brief facts about the whaling industry and 19th century life might help the audience understand the history and some of the costumes and props used during the performance.

Use attached whaling information to read to your children or discuss the history and reasons for whaling. Also point out that the city of New London was one of the busiest whaling cities. There are vocabulary words and pictures to use when teaching whaling concepts.

Other suggested activities to teach about whaling days and whales:

- Study whaling and complete a whaling KWL.
- Research and compare different types of whales
- Make a whale sculpture out of a shoe box
- Compare and contrast two main categories of whales (baleen and toothed whales)
- Visit a local whaling museum
- Research 19th century customs, fashions, and lives. Have students use Venn Diagrams or any other comparative tool to compare their own lives with that of Clara and her family.

19th Century Whaling Days

During the 17th and 18th century Europeans settling in New England learned to whale from observing different native tribes. At first people set up look-out posts on the beaches to watch for whales. When water from the whale's blow hole sprayed into the air, men rowed out in boats to spear the whale and bring it back to shore. They boiled the blubber in pots called trypots set up over a fire on the beach. Then when the oil was "tried out" or melted out of the blubber, the men poured the oil in large wooden barrels made by coopers.

Soon shipbuilders built large wooden ships with smaller whale boats attached to the sides, so whalers could follow the migration routes of the whales and hunt them on the open seas. A lookout stationed close to the top of the mast in a crow's nest would watch for whales spouting or breaching (coming up out of the water), and then the crewmen would lower the rowboats and chase the whales. By this time, the weapon to catch the whale was a barbed harpoon with a line attached to it, so that when the harpooner stuck the whale, the whale would be connected to the whaleboat by a long rope. The whale usually tried to get away from the painful harpoon so it would swim fast and the men would hold onto their rowboat until the whale tired out. Once the whale slowed down the men rowed up next to it and rowed the whale back to the larger whaleship.

The men cut off the blubber and put chunks of blubber into the trypots which were encased in a brick oven on a deck called the tryworks. Afterwards the oil was put in large wooden barrels and lowered into the bottom of the ship for storage.

Why Did Hunters Hunt Whales?

It might be hard to imagine life without computers, video games, television sets, radios, telephones, cars, and electricity, but back in the 1800s, there were none of these inventions. There were many machines in factories, businesses, and homes, but they were simpler and none of them were powered by electricity.

In the 19th century, people used whale oil and whale bones for many reasons. Whale oil was used to keep machines running smoothly. If people wanted to light their homes or streets, they burned candles or whale oil lamps. Whale bones were used to make canes, tools, and utensils to name a few things. Sailors even etched pictures on whale's teeth and bones to create works of art called scrimshaw. Whale bones were also used for women's clothing. Whales bone was used for undergarments called corsets which were worn under womens clothing to make womens waists small.

When whalers returned home from their long voyages at sea, not only did they tell exciting tales of their adventures, but they also gave their family and friends gifts made out of whale bone. Since the sailors visited so many foreign countries' ports, they often brought back unusual presents from these exotic lands as well.

Name: _____

Whaling KWL

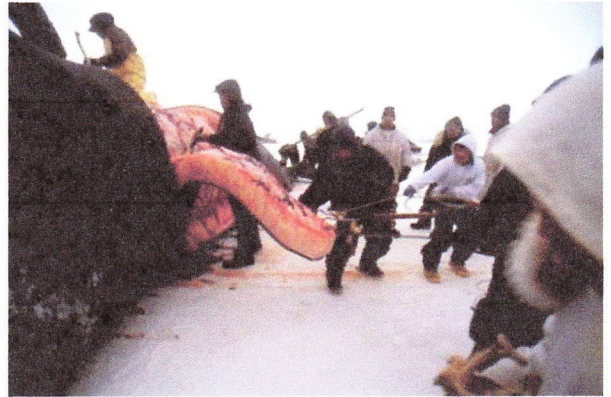


What I KNOW about Whaling	What I WANT TO KNOW about Whaling	What I LEARNED about Whaling

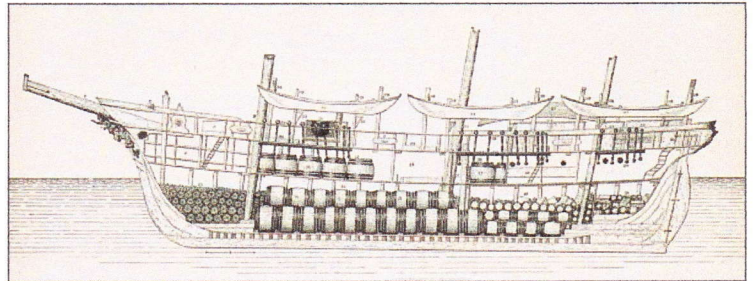
trypots



blubber



whaling
ship



crows
nest



harpoon



tryworks



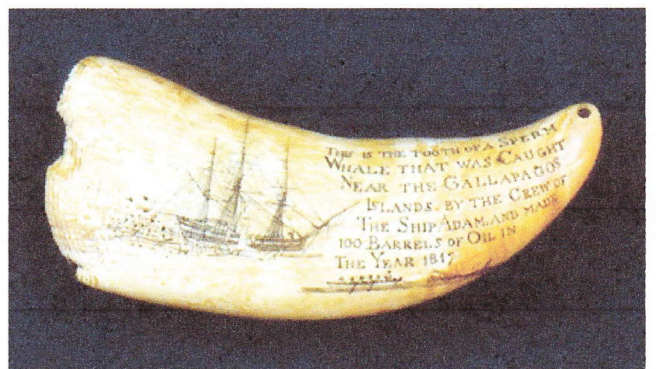
whale oil
lamp



corset



scrimshaw



Teaching Theater Ettiquette

Talk with your students about what it is like to go to a theater and see a ballet. Ask if any students have ever been to a live performance at a theater. Have them share what they know.

Some students may never have attended a ballet performance before. It is important to teach the difference between a movie, theatrical performance, and a ballet. Some points to emphasize about a BALLET:

- *The signal for the start of the ballet will be the dimming of the lights, it will seem very dark, but reassure children that this is what is supposed to happen. The curtain will not go up yet, but music will start to play; this is called the Overture. The Overture is a sampling of the music that will be heard all during the performance.*
- *Once the Overture ends, dancers will emerge from the wings (offstage areas on either side of the stage). These dancers, and every dancer who follows, will help tell the story by pantomime. There are no spoken "lines" in ballet; dance, gesture, and facial expression are used to tell the story. Also, the changing sound of the music will also help set the mood for a scene and help tell the story. There will be no words spoken during the entire performance.*
- *There will be a brief "pause" between Acts I and II of about 2 minutes. It is not a true intermission, which is usually 10 to 15 minutes long. This pause is not long enough for students to leave their seats. Be sure that students understand that the ballet will resume after Act I. Students often mistake the musical crescendo at the end of Act I for the finale.*

A GOOD AUDIENCE MEMBER:

Create a chart about being A GOOD AUDIENCE MEMBER. Ask your students what it looks and sounds like when they are watching the ballet.

Rebus Story on How to be a Good Audience

Make copies or enlarge the rebus story on How to be a Good Audience. Read this with your children before going to the ballet. Role model or practice attending a ballet by having some students be the audience and others act as the dancers on stage. Talk about how you might feel if you were the dancers on stage and how the dancers want the audience to act.

Important People Behind the Scenes

Teach your children that there are many more people involved in putting on a ballet than just the dancers on the stage. Show them the visual of a theater and discuss all of the jobs different people have to help make the ballet special. Read the different jobs and how these people help. There are also little riddles that children can try to solve.

Attending a Performance








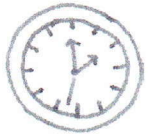











How to be a Good Audience

It's time to plan to attend the ballet performance. Read about what to expect.

Imagine "reading" with the pictures instead of words. This will help you to remember what to do at the performance.

Think about the pictures and match the words in the key to these pictures to complete the story.

Key: bow dancers lights program school time
clap dress-up music quiet stage usher

You may want to  to make your ballet attendance a special occasion. An  will seat your  group and give you a . Before the ballet begins you may talk quietly and read the  to learn about the story and the . When the  are dimmed, it is  for the performance to begin. You must be quiet and concentrate on the , the  and the . You may want to  when the  first appear on stage or when the  finish a dance. You may  when the  do difficult steps, such as several turns in a row. At the end of the ballet, all of the  will come and take a . Then you may let them know how much you appreciate their dancing and  again.

Important People Behind the Scene

Choreographer: This person is the main source for the ideas for a new ballet. He or she creates all the dance steps or movements that carry out the story of the ballet. The choreographer works closely with composers or music for the ballet. A choreographer teaches a work to the Dancers one step at a time. It is not unusual to rehearse an entire afternoon and only complete one minute of a new work.

Principal Dancers: Stars of the ballet.

Corps de Ballet: A group of dancers who perform together and dance in unison.

Set Designer: The stage is decorated for the performance by the set designer. Sets can be plain and simple or they can be as complex as the inside of a house or castle. A crew of carpenters, painters and stagehands puts the set together. When we see *Cinderella*, the set will be slightly complex. His will help our imagination to get a better picture of the ballet.

Lighting Designer: The best lighting designers paint with lights. Lighting is very important to a ballet. Bright lights may mean daytime or happiness. A darkened stage can mean nighttime or sadness.

Costume Designer: This person creates costumes to help tell the story. The costume designer creates detailed sketches for each costume and selects the colors and fabrics.

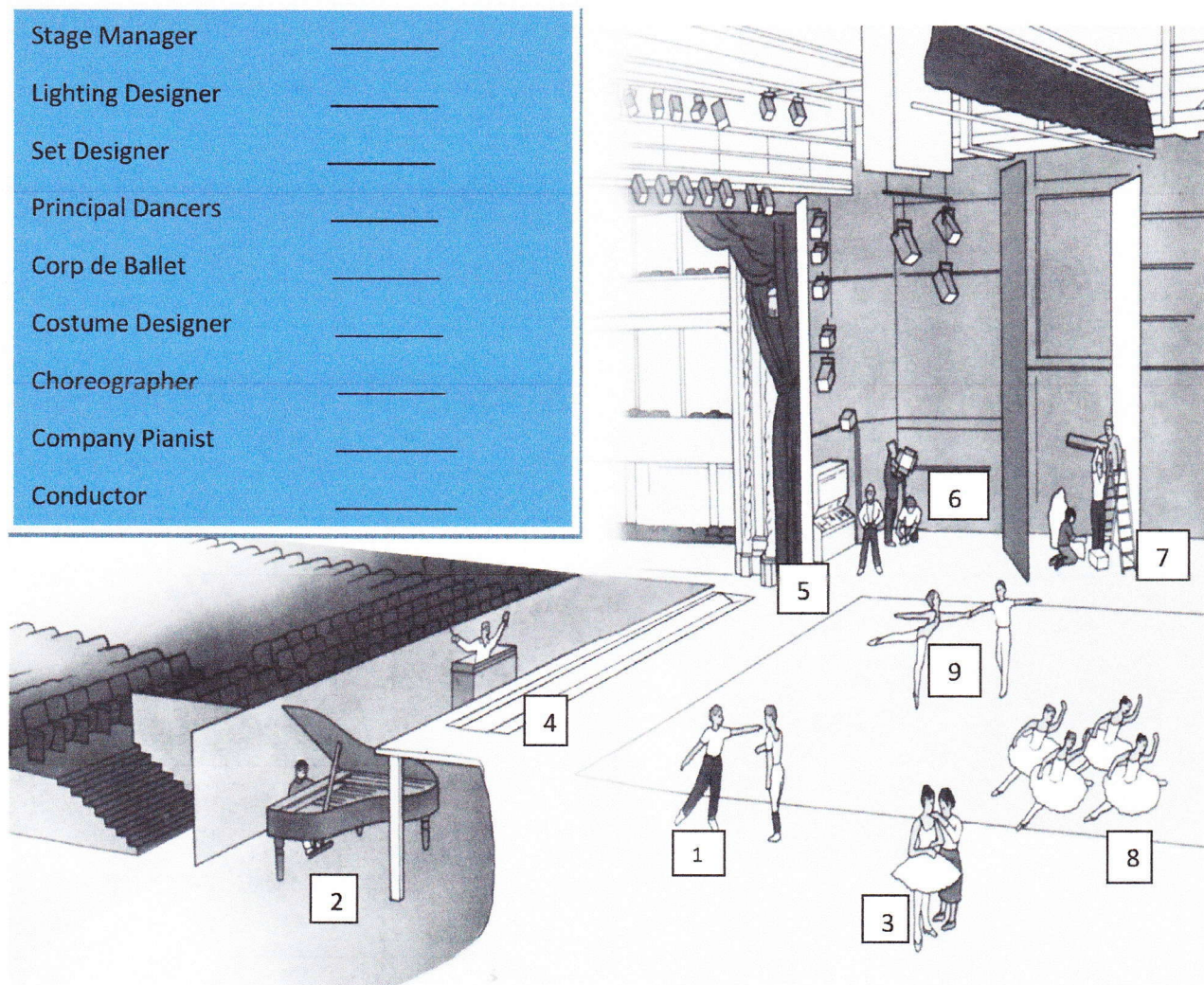
Company Pianist: Sometimes, Dancers like to rehearse to live music so there may be a pianist who plays the piano during class and rehearsals.

Stage Manager: This person makes sure the ballet performance runs smoothly. The stage manager oversees cues or special messages that are related to the dancers, music, lighting, and scenery

Conductor: This person directs the orchestra, communicating to the performers with motions of a baton or his or her hands.

Name _____

We won't see the important people working behind the scenes to create the ballet performance. The idea for the story comes from the choreographer who develops the gestures and movements and teaches them to the dancers. To tell the story without words, the dancers are helped to show feelings or emotion by costumes, lighting, and scenery. All of the following make the performance come alive!



The people behind the scenes are all on stage getting ready for the performance. See if you can match the number beside each person to his or her correct title on the list below.

©2007 Carolina Ballet, www.carolinaballet.com/cartwheels.html

Name _____

Who Am I?

I make up all the dances in the ballet. Who am I?

I write all the music for the ballet. Who am I?

I am a female dancer in the ballet. Who am I?

I am in charge of all that happens backstage. Who am I?

I am the head of the ballet and make all the creative decisions. Who am I?

I am a fan of the ballet. Who am I?

I create the clothing worn by the performers. Who am I?

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Each year, ECB's *Nutcracker* provides an opportunity for school children across southeastern Connecticut to experience the joy of a live dance performance. This educational packet offers these students and their teachers a wide range of information about the *Nutcracker* and its history, along with resources and materials on ballet, music, theatre, and the history of whaling. If there are questions about this material or if you have additional resources or suggestions that you believe would help make this packet more valuable to other teachers and students, please contact ECB, so that we can include them in future educational packets.

