



Supplemental Guide

Created By:



Table of Contents

Length and Synopsis of Ballet	1
Behind the Ballet	3
Choreographer	5
Composer	6
Activities	7
Surveys	11

How long will it be?

Act 1 - 35 min

Intermission - 20 min

Act 2 - 40 min

Intermission - 20 min

Act 3 - 30 min

Total Time

2 hours 25 min*

*Times are approximate

Synopsis of the Ballet

Act I, Prologue

Jonathan Harker's mind is flooded with images of his terrifying experience in Transylvania...in his delirium, his ravings have been dreadful – of wolves and poison and blood, of ghosts and demons...

Act I, Scene i: The Woods Charing Cross Station, London

Mina and Dr. Van Helsing accompany Harker to the station as he sets off on his journey to see Count Dracula in Transylvania, where he is to conduct the Count's purchase of properties in England. A mental health patient, Renfield, being escorted through the station, causes a disturbing incident.



Yosvani Ramos and Artists of Colorado Ballet by Mike Watson

Act I, Scene ii: Transylvania

Harker arrives in Transylvania, where he watches as villagers enact a violent ritual of sacrifice to protect their village from the dangers that threaten on All Souls Night. The ceremony is interrupted by a sinister figure, Count Dracula's coachman. Despite the desperate appeal of a bereaved woman, Harker continues his journey to Dracula's castle.

Act I, Scene iii: Count Dracula's Castle

The Count welcomes Harker into his home and, having made him comfortable, withdraws. Harker sinks into a reverie and is visited by three women who both fascinate and terrify him. His seduction is interrupted by an enraged Count Dracula who distracts the vampire women with a live blood offering. Count Dracula now begins his domination of the helpless Harker. As the climax of their union approaches, Harker's scream of terror wakes him from his nightmare, and he finds himself in the sanatorium with his wife's arms around him.

ACT II

Act II, Scene i: Winter Garden at the Grand Hotel in Whitby

At a Tea Dance in the Grand Hotel, Mina's friend Lucy dances with her suitors, while unbeknownst to them, a Russian ship approaches with a sinister and dangerous cargo. Only Harker is sensitive to the impending danger. A violent storm interrupts the dance, breaking open the windows, and at the height of its fury, the figure of Count Dracula appears on the terrace. The hotel guests are unaware of his presence, but Lucy is drawn to him. As the sound of the storm returns, Count Dracula disappears, and Lucy is discovered dazed and almost unconscious.

Act II, Scene ii: The Sanatorium

Lucy is taken to Dr. Van Helsing's clinic, where her anxious, newly engaged fiancé and her friends visit her. As they leave for the night, Van Helsing, who has noticed the strange puncture marks on Lucy's neck, takes the precaution of surrounding her with wild garlic. This does not prevent a second visit from Count Dracula. Later that night, Lucy's body is discovered on the floor of her bedroom. The heartbroken men grieve over the loss of this beautiful young woman. As her fiancé places a crucifix on her lips, Lucy attacks him violently before escaping into the night. She has become Nosferatu, one of the undead.

ACT III

Act III, Scene i: Mina's Room

Harker and the men depart to locate Count Dracula. Mina, alone in the sanatorium, thinks of the terrible danger that is hovering over them all. She and Van Helsing are startled by the escaped mental health patient, Renfield, who attacks Van Helsing and draws blood before being overpowered by the wardens. Concerned for Renfield's suffering, Mina tries in vain to comfort and understand him. As she waits anxiously for the return of the men, she imagines with horror what her friend Lucy has become. The men fail in their attempt to find Count Dracula, but later that night, as Harker sleeps, the Count enters Mina's room. Van Helsing discovers them as Count Dracula suckles Mina with his own lifeblood. Van Helsing has no power to prevent the Count from escaping and taking an unconscious Mina with him. Count Dracula has chosen to celebrate his union with Mina in the vault at Carfax Abbey.

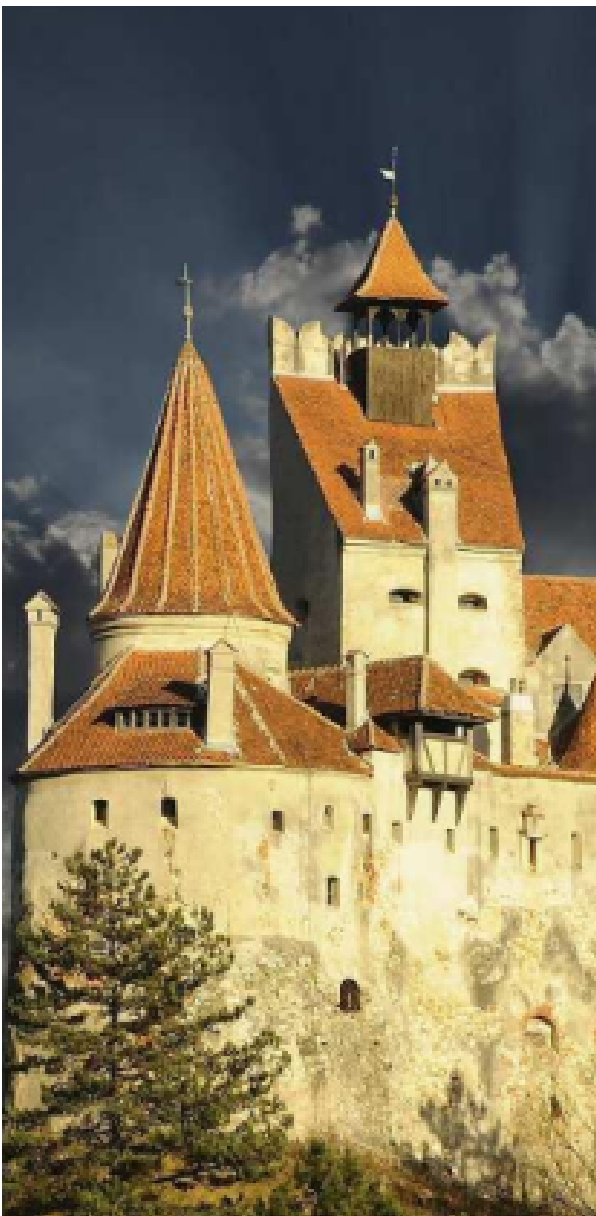
His heartbeat is the pulse that summons the Nosferatu to the ceremony. Renfield has become the sacrifice, and it is his blood that links the undead as they dance in adoration of their master. As the celebrants prepare for the consummation of the ritual, an explosion blasts through the crypt and daylight floods into the vault. Count Dracula can withstand the light, but his power is diminished, and his adversaries pursue him, finally driving a stake through his heart. The survivors are left to come to terms with their experience.



Domenico Luciano by Mike Watson

Behind the Ballet

- Dracula was published on May 26, 1897. Author Bram Stoker died in 1912, and just ten years later, the first motion picture based on the novel, Nosferatu, was released in Germany.
- Dracula lore has made his way into a number of pop-culture classics; Interview with the Vampire, Shadow of a Vampire, Kiefer Sutherland's cult classic Lost Boys, Twilight and True Blood to name a few.
- Bram Stoker did not have the luxury of surfing the web to do his research for the novel, nor was he able to travel to Transylvania to see what it was like firsthand. Yet, his book is so historically accurate that researchers and historians have been able to trace Jonathan Harker's journey through this treacherous land.
- There is a species of bat called the "Vampire Bat". While they don't go searching for innocent mortals, they are fond of livestock and will bite and feed on these animals while they sleep.
- Transylvania is a real place. The present day region is 55,146 square kilometers in the middle of Romania surrounded by the Oriental and Apuseni Mountains.



Bran Castle

You may have seen a post pop-up from time-to-time about Dracula's castle being for sale. According to a 2014 article in The Daily Mail, Count Dracula's Transylvanian castle (proven only by local lore) has been put on the market by its Romanian archduke owner with a reported asking price of at least £47million. Hilltop fortress, Bran Castle, is the eastern European country's biggest tourist attraction, bringing in 560,000 visitors annually.

Previous owners of the castle, which dates back to 1211, range from Saxons to Hungarians and Teutonic knights. In the days of Romania's Habsburg royal family, Bran Castle was given to Queen Marie, the last Queen consort of Romania and granddaughter of Queen Victoria. When she died, she bequeathed the castle to her daughter Princess Ileana. But after the Communists came to power in 1948, the family was given 24 hours to leave the country.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, Bran Castle was restored to them, and Ileana's son Dominic and daughters Maria Magdalena and Elizabeth have been running it ever since. Now in their 70s, they are ready to sell and see it move toward the future, perhaps with the additions of a hotel and other tourist attractions. Interested?

The Man Behind the Legend

When we think of "Dracula", most of us think of a black-caped, elegantly dressed, pale skinned, larger-than-life character with slicked-back hair. However, Vlad Dracula, the man who originally coined the name, was not so caricatured. Vlad Tepes (Tepes means "the Impaler" – a nickname that came when he became leader of Romania) was born in 1431 from a line of strong warriors and leaders whose heritage goes back to the founding of Wallachia, a state that is still part of present-day Romania.

Vlad's father (also named Vlad) was invited to be initiated into a society called the "Order of the Dragon". He began to go by the name "Dracul", which in Romanian, means "dragon", and used the insignia of a dragon and a cross. Dracula means "son of the dragon", thus the connection to Vlad III, who was trained in knighthood as a child.

Vlad rose to the position of "voivode" (a Slavic word meaning "warlord" or "supreme chief") and was in and out of this position for the next 20 years. Though he did not stay in power for long periods of time, his reputation, power and influence on the country were great and long-lasting. His tactics were ugly, psychological, and brutal. His nickname, Vlad the Impaler, came from his favorite way to kill: impalement.

The stories about Vlad Dracula spread like wildfire even when he was still alive. Depending on where one is from, the opinion of Vlad Dracula ranges from patriotic hero to devilish bloodthirsty villain. Part folklore and part spicy history, Vlad is almost always associated with violence and blood. One pamphlet that was circulating in Germany in the 15th century was called "The Frightening and Truly Extraordinary Story of a Wicked Blood-drinking Tyrant Called Prince Dracula."



Choreographer



Michael Pink

What is a Choreographer?

A person who
creates the
sequence and
movements for a
dance
performance.

Michael Pink is the longest serving artistic director in Milwaukee Ballet history. Since joining the Company in December of 2002, he has established himself as a prominent member of the Milwaukee arts community, demonstrating his commitment to the future of dance through new work, education and collaboration.

His artistic vision for Milwaukee Ballet continues to be exciting and challenging. His long-awaited production of Peter Pan signified a major landmark in the Company's history and was broadcast nationally by PBS in Spring of 2014. His production of Romeo & Juliet has also been broadcast by MPBS. In 2008, the Wisconsin Dance Council presented Pink with the Choreography/ Performance Award.

In 2014, the Milwaukee Press Club honored him with the Headliner Award for service to the arts. He received the Civic Music Association's award for Distinguished Citizen – Professional in the Arts in 2015. He recently accepted the Educational Excellence Award from the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts which recognizes organizational achievement of a nonprofit that exemplifies collaboration in the arts.

Pink is an international choreographer whose theatrical productions of Dracula, Esmeralda, Swan Lake, Giselle, The Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Romeo & Juliet, La Bohème, Don Quixote, Mirror Mirror, Dorian Gray and Beauty and the Beast have been hailed as 'Classical Ballet for the 21st Century'. His first professional work, 1914, was nominated for a West End Theatre Award, London.

His early choreographic work won him first place in the Frederick Ashton and the Royal Society of Arts Choreographic Competitions. He worked as a répétiteur for Rudolf Nureyev at the Paris Opera and La Scala Milan. He trained as a classical dancer at The Royal Ballet School and danced with English National Ballet 1975 to 1985.

Pink was the founding director of Ballet Central in London; he also served as associate artistic director of Northern Ballet. He continues to build strong working relationships with other Milwaukee Arts groups, where his credits include A Christmas Carol, Assassins, Cabaret and Next to Normal for Milwaukee Repertory Theater, as well as Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and Matilda for First Stage.



Composer

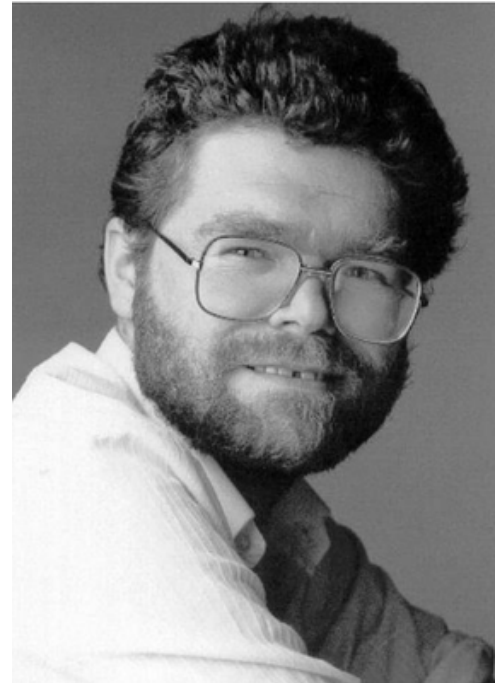
British Composer and Pianist, Philip Feeney (b.1954), studied composition at the University of Cambridge with Robin Holloway and Hugh Wood, and later with Franco Donatoni in Rome at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia.

He is best known for his work in dance, which he first encountered in Italy, collaborating with many different and varied choreographers including Cathy Marston, Michael Pink, Alexei Ratmansky, David Nixon, Michael Keegan-Dolan, Didy Veldman, Sharon Watson and Adam Cooper for companies as diverse as Northern Ballet, Rambert, Ballet Black, English National Ballet, Cullberg Ballet, Boston Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, The Royal Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet, Fabulous Beast, Scottish Dance Theatre, Milwaukee Ballet and Les Grands Ballets Canadien de Montréal, in addition to more than forty works for Ballet Central.

Clearly inspired by image and movement, Feeney's output is remarkable, apart from anything else, for its range and scope. Extending from full-length orchestral ballet scores to electro-acoustic soundscapes, even to jazz and hip-hop scores, his works exhibit a capacity for making style work for him, by reinventing past styles in a post-modern way.

For him, the crucial thing is that music for dance needs to make sense as pure music at all times. It needs to have that kinetic musicality and parallel logic that makes one feel that the music is right, and that it is the only possible music that could work for that particular choreography.

From 1991–95 he lectured in composition at Reading University. He is currently composer in residence for Ballet Central and has been a longstanding accompanist at the London Contemporary Dance School.



Philip Feeney

What is a Composer?

A person who writes music, especially as a job.



Activities

LISTEN AND LEARN: Listen to music. Close your eyes, if you need to. Now, answer the following questions: If this piece of music were a shape, what shape would it be? A color? An animal? A season? A place? Why? Is it fast, slow, or varied? What is the mood of the piece, or what emotions do you feel when you listen to it? Think of three more adjectives that you believe describe the music. Compare your answers with other students' answers. Are any of your answers the same? Why do you think you came up with similar or different answers?

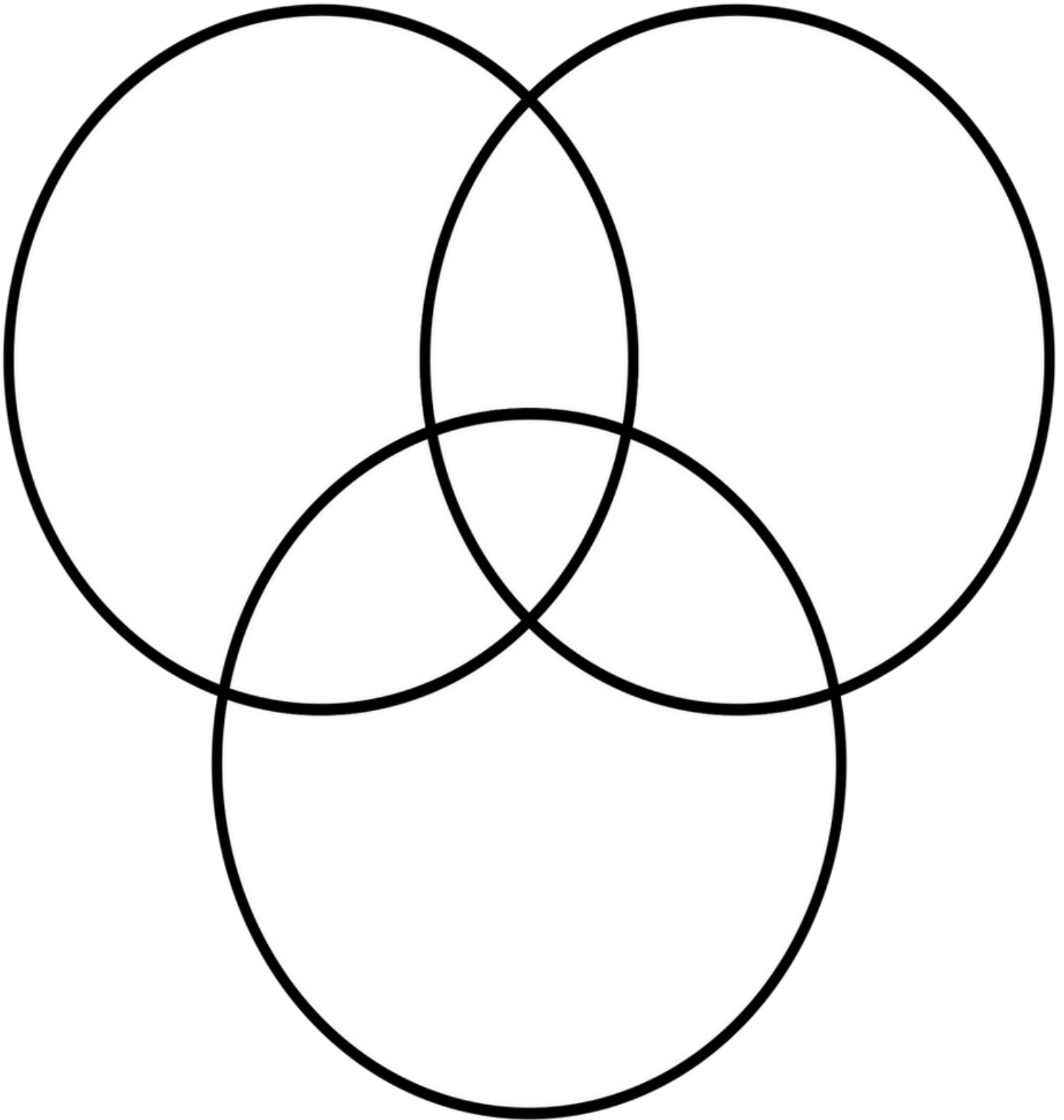
MOVE TO THE MUSIC: Now, divide into groups and create movements that go with your team's answers from the listening activity. Try to incorporate some of everyone's answers. How do the animals move? How would you move in winter that's different from how you move in summer? How would blue move, as opposed to orange? Some movements should be high; others should be low. Some should be fast; others could be slow. Be mindful of using all of your body, not just your feet. Link your movements together into a dance and perform it for the class.

POETRY IN MOTION: After seeing the production, write a poem inspired by the performance. Now, try reversing that process! Get into groups, find a poem that you really like, and create a dance to go along with it! Identify powerful words and themes within the poem, and associate movements with them. Link the movements together to create a dance to perform for your peers. If you were to make an entire production out of your dance, what kind of sets and costumes would be fitting? Draw or make a collage of pictures representing how you would set the scene.

STORYTELLING THROUGH DANCE: Dance is an art form that tells a story through movement. Using a story or text your class is studying, you can recreate scenes from the story using dance. Put the students in small groups and assign different scenes from the story. Instruct the students to reinterpret the story using only movement. Invite the students to be creative in their reinterpretations, allow abstract or literal movement.

Activities

COMPARE AND CONTRAST: Utilize the Venn diagram as a way to compare and contrast three different media mediums for storytelling. Try comparing the ballet to two other stories – one in literature and one in film.



Movement

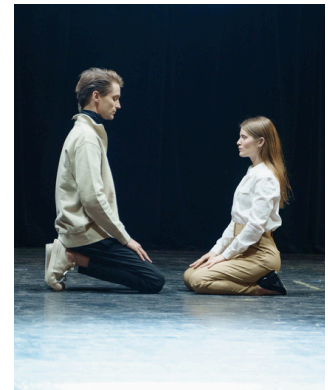
Dracula Tableaux

Students use frozen body shapes to express emotion, tension, and story from Dracula.

Note: a tableau is a frozen pose or "statue" that tells a story or emotion. Like a moment from a movie paused. No movement, no talking—just expression through body and face.

Dracula Tableau Prompts

- Caught mid-transformation from bat to human
- Realizing the castle door is locked behind you
- Just bitten, but unsure what happened
- Preparing to strike with fangs bared, cloak raised
- Creeping through the fog, watching from the shadows
- Reading the vampire's letter and gasping
- Frozen outside Dracula's coffin at sunrise
- Two characters: one suspicious, one hiding something
- Gazing into a cursed mirror
- Holding a candle and sensing something just behind you



Optional: Guess the Scene!

- Divide students into small groups
- Each group gets a prompt in secret and creates a tableau
- The rest of the class guesses.



Writing Prompts

Think about the Dracula ballet you watched or imagined.

What are the core elements that make it Dracula and not just any spooky story? Can you name specific themes, scenes, characters, or movements that made it feel like Dracula?

If you were the choreographer, would you keep everything the same? Would you change something (a scene, a character, the ending, or the setting) — to say something different or make it more interesting for today's audience?

Surveys

Teacher/Facilitator Survey

CLICK HERE

or scan QR code below



Student/Viewer Survey

CLICK HERE

or scan QR code below

