



Supplemental Guide

Created By:



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How long will it be?

Total Run Time

2 hour 25 min*

*Times are approximate

Synopsis of the Ballet

Act I

A War Farewell

In 1917 Louisville, Daisy and Gatsby share a final goodbye as he leaves for war. Heartbroken and uncertain about her future, Daisy is drawn into high society by the charming and persistent Tom Buchanan.

New York Shadows

Five years later, Nick Carraway arrives in New York and visits his cousin Daisy, now living with Tom in East Egg. He quickly learns that Daisy is unhappy and that Tom has a mistress. One night, Nick notices a mysterious figure across the bay staring toward a green light on Daisy's dock. It is Gatsby.

Entangled Lives

Nick accompanies Tom into the Valley of Ashes, a bleak industrial zone where Tom's mistress, Myrtle, lives. Later, Nick is invited to one of Gatsby's extravagant parties and finally meets the elusive host. Gatsby, aware that Nick is Daisy's cousin, asks him to arrange a reunion. At a tea in Nick's garden, Daisy and Gatsby are reunited and their old love is revived.

Act II

Cracks in the Fantasy

As Daisy and Gatsby grow closer, Tom becomes suspicious. At another Gatsby party, tension builds. During a trip to the city, Tom confronts Gatsby at the Plaza Hotel. Gatsby begs Daisy to say she never loved Tom, but she cannot. Her loyalty to her family wins out.

The Crash

On the drive home, Daisy accidentally kills Myrtle while driving Gatsby's yellow car. Tom tells Myrtle's grieving husband, George, that the car belongs to Gatsby.

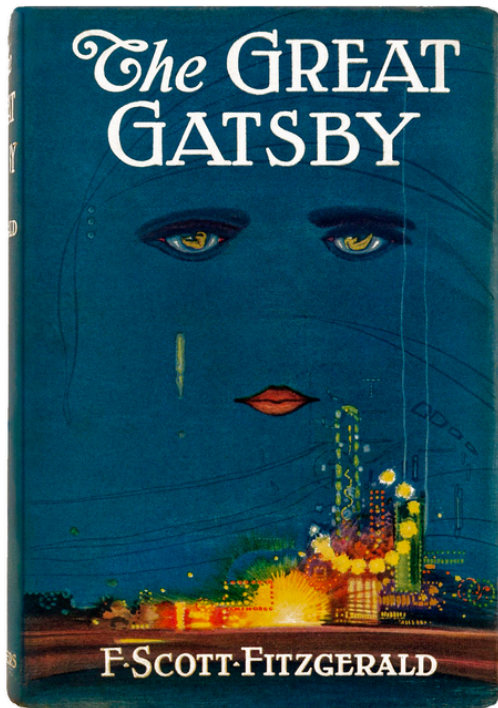
The End of the Dream

Gatsby waits for Daisy's phone call by the pool, clinging to hope. Instead, George arrives, kills Gatsby, and then takes his own life.

A Lonely Farewell

Few attend Gatsby's funeral. Nick, disillusioned by the selfishness and moral decay of the people around him, returns home reflecting on Gatsby's tragic hope and the broken world that destroyed it.

Behind the Ballet: F. Scott Fitzgerald



Jorden Morris's ballet is based on the classic novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Set in the glamorous and turbulent Jazz Age, the story follows Jay Gatsby, a self-made millionaire whose obsessive love for Daisy Buchanan leads him to host extravagant parties in hopes of winning her back. The novel's themes of wealth, class, idealism, and the elusive American Dream are brought vividly to life through music and dance, capturing both the glittering surface and the deeper emotional struggles of the characters.

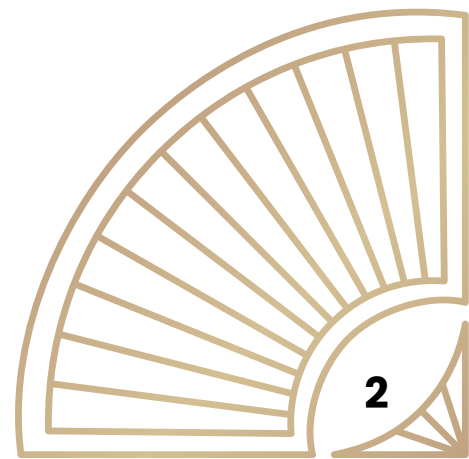
The Great Gatsby was published in 1925 and is often considered the "Great American Novel." Fitzgerald, a key figure of the Jazz Age, wrote the novel during a time of great social change and cultural dynamism in America following World War I. Though it was not an immediate success, the book grew in stature over time and is now celebrated for its powerful exploration of the illusions people create to escape reality and the tragic cost of chasing unattainable dreams.



About F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896–1940)

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born in Minnesota and became one of the most prominent writers of the 20th century. After serving in the military during World War I, he began writing novels and stories that captured the spirit of the Jazz Age, a term he helped popularize. Fitzgerald's own life reflected many of the themes in his work, including the glamour and excess of the 1920s, as well as personal struggles with love and loss.

His brief romance with debutante Ginevra King inspired much of *Gatsby*'s longing and reinvention. Fitzgerald's career was marked by great literary success but also by financial difficulties and health problems. He died at the age of 44, leaving behind a legacy that has deeply influenced American literature and culture.



Choreographer

Jorden Morris



After retiring from the stage as a principal dancer, Jorden began to study and explore choreography. He attended New York University studying dance and theatre arts. Jorden also worked with Claude Bessy and Serge Golovine from the Paris Opera, studying early French choreography.

In 1999 Jorden premiered “The Three Musketeers”. This first work was a one act ballet depicting the classic Alexandre Dumas novel. In 2000, Jorden choreographed “Elle est Quatre” for the Alabama School of Fine Arts in Birmingham, Alabama. This contemporary work to the music of Aaron Copland was taken to the Birmingham arts festival after its premiere at ASFA.

In 2002 Jorden took on the concept, direction and choreography of “Head Start/Feet First”. The project was collaboration between the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and four intercity high schools. Jorden choreographed the popular work “Free zone” for this project as well as the finale, which incorporated 160 dancers on stage.

In 2003, Jorden took the popular children’s television show “The Toy Castle” and transformed it into an interactive live dance performance. Directed and choreographed by Jorden, the production incorporated a live host with interactive dance for pre-school children. Since then, Jorden has re-staged the work for Atlanta Ballet. Jorden starred in the television series and was nominated for a Genie award in 2003.

In 2005, Jorden created the Celtic themed ballet “Deverell”, one of his most popular and well known works. A favourite of critics and audiences, “Deverell” continues to be re-staged and taken on tour. Jorden choreographed the Salute to Vienna Concert series in 2005 and 2006. After the success of Jorden’s work in the Winnipeg 2005 series, his choreography was taken to Hamilton and Kitchener performances as well as Winnipeg in 2006.

In December of 2006, Canada’s Royal Winnipeg Ballet presented the world premiere of Jorden’s full length classical ballet “Peter Pan”. The critically acclaimed work played in sold out houses over the Christmas season, making it the biggest box office success in the company’s history. Jorden’s second full length creation, “Moulin Rouge” had its world premiere in October 2009.

In the summer of 2015 Jorden accepted the position of Artistic Director with Citie Ballet in Edmonton, Canada. Over the next three years he choreographed twelve new works on the company and brought in guest choreographers Alysa Pires, Yukichi Hattori and Brett Taylor. Jorden’s artistic leadership and success was acknowledged by critics and dance journalists across the country.

In 2018 Jorden left Citie Ballet to begin working on his next full length “The Great Gatsby”. In 2020 season, Jorden was the choreographer in residence for Orlando Ballet. In 2021 Jorden was named the Artistic Director of Orlando Ballet. Since taking over, Jorden has choreographed a new 3.6 million dollar Nutcracker production.

Jorden now lives in Orlando with his wife, Lisa Thorn Morris.

What is a Choreographer?

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

Composer

Carl Davis (1936–2023) was an American-born British composer and conductor celebrated for his prolific contributions to film, television, and ballet. Known for his sweeping scores and deep musical storytelling, Davis brought emotional depth and cinematic flair to both stage and screen. He gained early acclaim with his scores for *The World at War*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, as well as his revival of live orchestral accompaniments for silent films, including *Napoleon*.

Davis had a profound and enduring connection to ballet, collaborating with many of the major choreographers of his time.

His ballet work began with the London Contemporary Dance Theatre and included high-profile commissions such as *A Picture of Dorian Gray* for Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet, *A Simple Man* for Northern Ballet Theatre, and *Aladdin* for Scottish Ballet, later staged internationally by companies including Tokyo's New National Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet. Other significant ballets included *Cyrano*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Lady of the Camellias*, and *Nijinsky*.

In 2019, Davis composed the full-length ballet *The Great Gatsby*, choreographed by Jorden Morris and premiered by Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. This dynamic new adaptation was brought to life again in 2021 with Orlando Ballet, marking a highlight in Davis's late career and showcasing his ability to blend American jazz-era energy with timeless romanticism. His work further affirmed his legacy as a composer who could seamlessly bridge classical music with contemporary ballet storytelling.

Carl Davis's influence extended beyond genre and generation, leaving behind a rich legacy of music that continues to inspire audiences worldwide.

Photo from carldaviscollection.com



Carl Davis

What is a Composer?

A person who writes music, especially as a job.

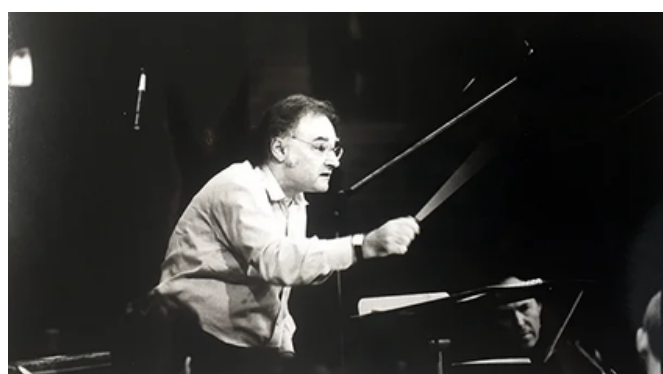


Photo from carldaviscollection.com

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.

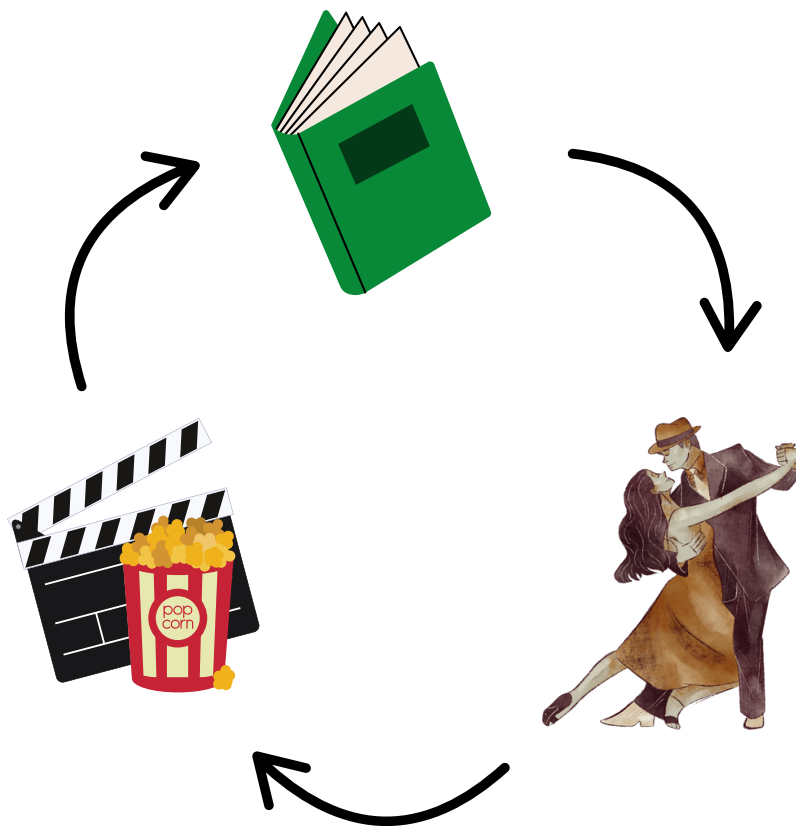
POETRY IN MOTION: After seeing the production, write a poem inspired by the performance. Now, try reversing that process! Get into groups, find a poem that you really like, and create a dance to go along with it! Identify powerful words and themes within the poem, and associate movements with them. Link 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

Literary Analysis: Compare how key scenes from the novel are adapted in the ballet. Also include the film version if you'd like. Use the table on the following page to complete this exercise.

1. Identify a scene that takes place in both the ballet and the novel.
2. Re-read the corresponding excerpt in the novel.
3. Identify elements from the reading using the chart. Use the "Novel" column.
4. Re-watch the scene in the ballet.*
5. Identify how the elements were translated into movement using the "Ballet" column.
6. Optional:
 - Watch the scene in the film version and use the "Film" column to compare how storytelling changes through mediums.



*Register for our Digital Broadcast [HERE](#) to see the recording of the student matinee performance.



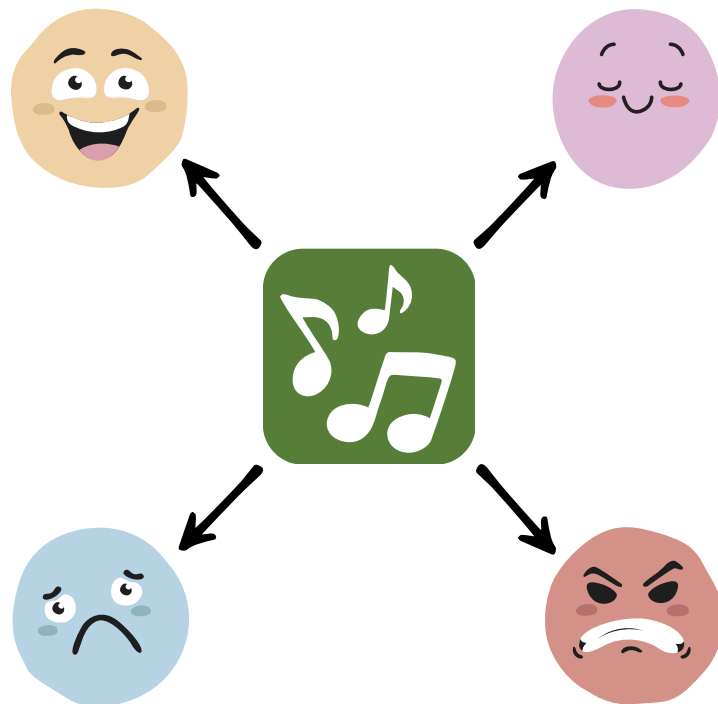
Scene: _____

	Novel	Ballet	Film
Key Plot Points (list 2–3 important events)			
Main Characters (How are they portrayed?)			
Use of Symbolism (Ex: green light, yellow car)			
Tone / Mood (What emotions or atmosphere are created?)			
Theme: The American Dream (How is it shown or challenged?)			
Additional Elements?			

Activities

Music and Mood Analysis: Develop an understanding of how music conveys a narrative.

1. Teachers select an excerpt to listen to from Carl Davis's score*.
2. Students answer the following questions after listening:
 - a. What emotions were evoked?
 - b. What type of scene or character might this music support?
 - c. What instruments and tempos were used and why?
3. Optional: If students have seen a film adaptation...
 - a. How does the music used in the film contribute to the narrative?
Is it different from the ballet?
 - b. Are there modern influences in the music selection/composition?
How does these choices impact the audience?
 - c. Do specific characters have similar musical themes across both mediums (film score vs ballet score)?



Surveys

Teacher/Facilitator Survey

CLICK HERE

or scan QR code below



Student/Viewer Survey

CLICK HERE

or scan QR code below

