

COLORADO BALLET



2025
2026
SEASON



CATO BERRY BY RACHEL NEVILLE

The Main Guide: Understanding Ballet

Created By:



**EDUCATION
& COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

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Colorado

Academic Standards

"As students inquire into dance, they gain skills in creating, performing, viewing, and responding...Dance can provide connections with any subject matter and help students to understand concepts important in other disciplines."
- 2020 Colorado Academic Standards in Dance

DANCE

1. Movement, Technique, and Performance

The goal of this standard is to develop students' competence and confidence during a performance. In exploring movement vocabulary and developing skill and technique, students gain a better understanding of their bodies in relation to space, time and energy. Technical expertise and artistic expression through reflective practice, study, and self-evaluation of one's own abilities and the abilities of others is essential to developing movement skills for performance.

2. Create, Compose and Choreograph (not addressed in the Student Matinee/Stream)

Creating in dance involves using the dance elements of space, time, and energy to explore, improvise, and develop movement phrases, sequences and dances. Choreography is the art of dance making using meaning, intent, and principles of structure and design. In dance, there are a number of levels or stages in the creative process that define and are involved in solving artistic problems in order to present a completed work of art. These stages include: observing or studying the stimulus or intent, becoming engaged with that intent; tapping into feelings, memories and the imagination that relate to the intent, problem solving by creating a shorter dance study or longer dance, and using critical thinking skills to analyze and evaluate the finished product.

3. Historical and Cultural Context

This standard focuses on understanding the global and cultural relevance of dance. The goal is to understand how dance shapes and reflects cultures and history over time, and acknowledge dance in society as creative, expressive, communicable, and social.

4. Reflect, Connect, and Respond

This standard focuses on reflecting upon dance, connecting it with other disciplines, responding to it to discuss and analyze dance as art. Critique and analysis of new dance works, reconstructions, and masterworks allows for distinguishing and understanding of aesthetic values and artistic intent.

READING, WRITING, COMMUNICATING

Standard 1: Oral Expression and Listening
Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes
Standard 3: Writing and Composition

MUSIC

Standard 1: Expression of Music
Standard 4: Aesthetic Valuation of Music

DRAMA AND THEATER ARTS

Standard 3: Critically Respond

Science

Standard 1: Physical Science
Standard 2: Life Science

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Standard 1: Movement Competence and Understanding
Standard 2: Physical and Personal Wellness

SOCIAL STUDIES

Standard 1: History
Standard 2: Geography

WORLD LANGUAGES

Standard 1: Communication
Standard 3: Connection


How to be a Good Audience Member


Unlike actors on your television, performers on the stage are aware of their audience and want very much to communicate their art to you and feel your appreciation in return. By the time you arrive at a theatre for a scheduled performance, many people (choreographers, composers, dancers, technicians, costume and lighting designers, etc.) have worked very hard to bring you their best efforts.


In order to show respect for those efforts, every audience member must give the performance their full attention and avoid any behavior that interferes with anyone else doing the same.


We have expectations that help us accomplish this goal:





 Always arrive at the theatre with plenty of time to find your seats and settle down into them. Late arrivals can be disruptive for fellow audience members and performers.


 Please walk in the lobby.

 Please put away cameras, cell phones or video recorders. Flashes are dangerous for dancers and unapproved photos and videos violate copyright laws.

 The performance has begun once anyone on stage starts talking or dancing, or when the orchestra starts playing. You are welcome to show your appreciation for the performance with applause at the end of the ballet or sometimes at the end of a section or solo. You are also welcome to laugh if someone on stage is being intentionally funny.

 Please refrain from talking or whispering during the performance. You will have plenty of time to discuss your impressions at intermission or after the show.

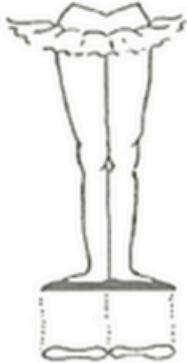
 Please leave all food outside of the theater. You can enjoy your lunch or snack in the lobby during intermission.

 Please use the bathroom before the show begins or at intermission, not during the performance

Enjoy!

Ballet 101

Positions of the Feet



1st

Heels together, toes pointing in the opposite directions, creating a straight line



2nd

Heels approximately ten inches apart, toes pointing in opposing directions



3rd

Feet parallel, heel of front foot touching middle of back foot



4th

Feet parallel, front foot approximately eight inches in front of back



5th

Feet parallel, front and back foot touching at the toes and heels



Preparatory



1st



2nd



High 5th

Positions of the Arms

Preparatory

Arms dropped, elbows slightly rounded so that the arms do not touch the body, hands close but not touching

1st

Arms raised at the level of the diaphragm, elbows slightly bent, hands close but not touching

2nd

Arms opened to the sides, shoulders not drawn back or raised, hands at the level of the elbow

High 5th

Arms raised above, but just in front of the head, elbows rounded, hands close but not touching. Hands should be visible without raising the head.

A Note on Hands: In her Basic Principles of Classical Ballet, Agrippina Vaganova says, "The manner of holding the hands is very difficult to describe. All fingers are grouped freely and they are soft in their joints; the thumb touches the middle finger; the wrist is not bent, but the hand continues the general curved line on the arm from the shoulder."

Point Shoe FAQ

What are pointe shoes made of?

There are many different companies who produce pointe shoes, and therefore many ways of making them. Contrary to popular belief, pointe shoes are not made of wood or metal. The area around a dancer's toes is called the box and is usually made out of a plaster-like material which is applied in several layers (Similar to the plaster/paper mâché-like substance that is used to create a piñata). A leather sole creates a sturdy back of the shoe.



How do dancers personalize their shoes?

Each dancer sews their own ribbons onto their shoes, to place them according to their preference. Also, most dancers darn or even burn the edges of the box (or platform) to give themselves better balance and decrease slipping. To make the sole and box more flexible, dancers may bend the shoes, and bang them on the wall or floor.

Do they hurt?

Yes and no. If a dancer is strong and trained well enough to dance en pointe and has the proper shoe for her foot, pointe work should not cause bleeding or disfigurement. However, dancing en pointe up to eight hours per day will wear on a dancer's feet. Some dancers choose to put small lamb's wool pads over their toes. The amount of pain a dancer endures also depends on the construction of the foot itself. For example, dancers with toes that are relatively equal in length have the advantage of more support.

How long do they last?

Pointe shoes break down very quickly with frequent use. A ballerina may need a new pair of pointe shoes after each performance of a full-length ballet. In fact, Evelyn Cisneros, former Prima Ballerina at San Francisco Ballet, says that at least three pairs are required to get through Swan Lake. It is possible that a professional dancer will need a new pair each week.

How much do they cost?

Since pointe shoes are handmade and often imported, they can cost anywhere between \$80-\$115. Dancers with a company contract get an allotment of pointe shoes paid for by their employer since it is required equipment to do their jobs.

When does a dancer begin dancing en pointe?

It is important that a ballet student does not begin dancing en pointe too early, before the bones in their ankles have finished growing. Therefore, the age at which dancers begin pointe work varies. However, it is usually around 11 years old.

Dancers

Colorado Ballet has 40 company dancers and 22 studio company dancers. From the company, we have seven apprentices, fourteen members of the corps de ballet, eight demi-soloists, four soloists, and seven principal dancers.

But what do these different categories mean?

- **Studio Company:** Dancers in their first years of professional work as performers looking to secure a position as an apprentice or corps de ballet dancer. Considered to bridge the transition from student to professional.
- **Apprentice:** The next step in a dancer's track to work in the regular company, they learn repertoire and understudy roles.
- **Corps de Ballet:** The group of dancers who are not soloists. They are a permanent part of the ballet company and often work as a backdrop for the principal dancers.
- **Demi-Soloist:** A dancer in a ballet company a step above the corps de ballet and a step below a soloist. They dance roles that are a soloist part but are created to be performed by members of the corps de ballet.
- **Soloist:** A dancer in a ballet company above the corps de ballet but below principal dancer. Dancers at this level perform the majority of the solo and minor roles in a ballet.
- **Principal:** A dancer at the highest rank within a professional ballet company. The position is similar to that of soloist; however, principals regularly perform not only solos, but also pas de deux.

All of our dancers have worked extremely hard to make this production possible, along with our orchestra, stage hands, and production team. There are multiple dancers cast as each part of the performance. As much as we would love to include information on all of our dancers, we have included just a few on the next page that you may see on the stage!

**To see a full list of our company dancers
and their full bios, please visit:**
coloradoballet.org/Dancers





Jonnathan Ramirez (Principal)

Jonnathan Ramirez is originally from Cali, Colombia. At the age of 8 he began his training at the Colombian Institute of Ballet, Incolballet. After graduating at 16, he moved to New York City where he received a full scholarship to continue his training at American Ballet Theatre's Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School of Ballet. In 2007 he danced with Cincinnati Ballet for two seasons, then in 2009 he joined Houston Ballet. In 2010, Jonnathan joined the Tulsa Ballet Theatre where he performed numerous soloist and principal roles over ten consecutive years before joining Colorado Ballet in 2020. Jonnathan was promoted from Soloist to Principal in 2021.



Patrick Mihm (Soloist)

Patrick Mihm was born in Dubuque, Iowa and began his training at the Dubuque City Youth Ballet at the age of 11, where he studied for three years. At the age of 14, he moved to southern Florida to begin his training at the HARID Conservatory. After staying at the school for two years, he decided to move to New York City to finish his training at Ellison Ballet. During his time in school he performed many roles from classical repertoire including Albrecht from Giselle, James in La Sylphide, Cavalier in The Nutcracker, as well as Basilio in Don Quixote. Upon graduation in 2020, he began his career with Colorado Ballet in the Studio Company. After one year in Studio Company, Patrick was promoted to Apprentice. In 2023, Patrick was promoted to the Corps de Ballet.



Ariel McCarty (Soloist)

Ariel began training at Texas Ballet Theater School in Dallas before continuing her education at Colorado Ballet Academy. She then joined Colorado Ballet's Studio Company in 2017 and has since become a Demi-Soloist with the Company as of 2022.

Her notable roles include Siren in George Balanchine's Prodigal Son, Nichette in Val Caniporoli's Lady of the Camellias, selected roles in Jiri Kylián's Sinfonietta and Petite Mort, Spring and Summer Fairy in Ben Stevenson's Cinderella, Zulma in Giselle, and roles in George Balanchine's Theme and Variations and Serenade.



Mackenzie Dessens Studinski (Demi-Soloist)

Mackenzie began her training in New Orleans at Giacobbe Academy of Dance and privately with Kimberly Matulich Beck. She later moved on to further her training at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy and upon completion joined Cincinnati Ballet's second company. In 2015, she joined Colorado Ballet as an Apprentice and was promoted to Corps de Ballet in 2017 and Demi Soloist in 2021.



Cato Berry (Corps de Ballet)

Cato Berry is originally from Seattle, Washington where he began his training at Pacific Northwest Ballet School. He trained with full merit scholarships to some of the top schools in the US and Europe, including Royal Ballet, IBStage of Barcelona, Kirov Ballet and The Rock School. Cato trained through his high school years with TanZ Academie in Zurich, Switzerland and upon graduation he attended the Nationale Ballet Academie Pre-Professional Program in The Netherlands. He joined Pennsylvania Ballet's second company In 2016. He then joined the main company as the youngest male dancer in 2017.



Sheridan Guerin (Corps de Ballet)

Sheridan Guerin was born in Ft. Worth, Texas and began her training at age 12. She trained under Lisa Slagle at Ballet Academy of Texas. She has attended American Ballet Theatre's summer intensive in New York and was nominated to be their National Training Scholar. She has placed 1st overall at YAGP in both contemporary and classical divisions. In 2017, Sheridan was accepted as a Studio Company member at Oklahoma City Ballet. In 2018, Sheridan went on to join Atlanta Ballet's school under the leadership of Sharon Story. At Atlanta Ballet, she had the opportunity to perform in Yuri Possokhov's world premiere of The Nutcracker. Sheridan was then hired as a Studio Company member for Colorado Ballet's 2019/2020 Season and was promoted to Apprentice in the main Company in 2020. As an Apprentice, Sheridan had the opportunity to perform as Clara in The Nutcracker. She holds close to her heart the experience of being the first black Clara in The Nutcracker in Colorado Ballet history. She was then promoted to the Corps de Ballet in 2022.

STE(A)M Connections

Did you know that dancing can relate to other subjects in school? Check out the information below on ideas on how to incorporate dance into other core subjects!

Balancing Bodies – Before coming to the student matinee, encourage students to see if they can count how long they see a dancer balance on one leg. After seeing the dancers on stage, students may want to explore the various movements they saw. You can incorporate this into class by investigating what it feels like to be on and off balance as well as how we can move different body parts to create a dance!

Moving Matter – Just like the three states of matter (solid, liquid, gas), students will see dancers move their bodies with different types of flow (bound/free). Play some different dynamics of music and have students imagine they are on an adventure. Use the various dynamics of the story to depict the movement qualities. For example, some movements can be flowy, some can be sharp, some can use level changes.

Performing Plants – Just as a seed grows from the ground up, the dancers students see on stage use different levels on stage! Students learn that plants need three things to thrive and grow – sunlight, water, and carbon dioxide. Students can practice moving on different levels as they grow from seed to plant as they get more and more sunlight, water, and CO₂.

Force Frenzy – Pushes and pulls help objects determine their speed and direction. Many of the dancers you will see use force to do turns, lifts, and jumps. Ask students where they saw the effect of force on stage. Students can relate this science concept to dance in the classroom by exploring how force produces a variety of movements in their bodies that result in changes in both speed and direction. Once they explore these, they could create unique movements or dances demonstrating the effect of those forces!

Water Cycle Waltz – Did you see any waltzes in the ballet? What quality does water in a lake have? What about streaming water? How does the water cycle work? To connect dance to science, have your students dance through the water cycle! You could incorporate different levels of movement (water rises as it evaporates into clouds), flow qualities (water condenses and becomes bound before it precipitates and flows freely), or different energies in dance (rain is smooth, hail is sharp, snow is smooth, etc.)!

Physics of a Fouetté – Check out the link below for an explanation on how our dancers can perform turn after turn with ease:
https://www.ted.com/talks/arleen_sugano_the_physics_of_the_hardest_move_in_ballet?language=en

Behind the Scenes: Jobs at the Ballet

Artistic Director

Hires dancers and Artistic Staff, chooses productions and choreographers

Executive Director

Creates and manages budget and policy, business development and long-range planning

Academy

Academy Director

Hires instructors and guest artists, directs curriculum

Academy Principal

Oversees upper level Academy, teaches and evaluates new students

Lower Division Principal

Oversees lower level Academy, teaches and coordinates classes

Academy Administrator

Data Entry; Customer Service

Academy Dance Instructor

Professional Dancer; Dancer Instructor

Advancement

Chief Advancement Officer

Secures and oversees funding for the Company

Senior Director of Development

Coordinates funding for the Company

Development Manager

Runs events, staff volunteers, purchases merchandise

Development Officer

Targets businesses for support and coordinates large donations

Assistant Director of Institutional Giving

Requests funding from government and foundations

Artistic

Ballet Masters

Rehearses, choreographs, and teaches technique

Company Dancers

Professional Dancer

Music Director & Principal Conductor

Professional Musician

Company Pianist

Professional Musician

Behind the Scenes: Jobs at the Ballet

Database Administration

Senior Database Administrator

Maintains and builds patron database

Assistant Database Administrator

Improves and helps build patron database

Education & Community Engagement

Director of Education & Community Engagement

Oversees all department operations

Associate Director of Education & Community Engagement

Manages Teaching Artists and oversees school dance programs

Education & Community Engagement Coordinator

Coordinates school and community dance programs

Education & Community Engagement Assistant

Aids department in bookkeeping and administrative tasks

Teaching Artists

Teaches in-school and in the community

Finance

Director of Accounting

Processes payroll and all deposits and expenses

Staff Accountant & HR Administrator

Assists with accounting and handles all HR for the Company

Accounting Associate

Accounting. data entry

Academy Business Coordinator

Completes all finances for the Academy

Marketing & Public Relations

Director of Marketing & Communications

Public Relations, communications, journalism

Marketing Manager

Communicates with press, social media
marketing

Marketing & Communications Associate

Assists with marketing projects and communications

Graphic Designer & Marketing Associate

Designs marketing materials, newsletters

Patron Services

Patron Services Manager

Ticket sales, staffs sales team

Patron Services Representatives

Tickets sales in box office and by phone

Education & Community Engagement

Department Information

Providing highest-quality educational opportunities for preschool through adults, the Education & Community Engagement Department has served the Colorado community for over 20 years. The department makes 20,000 contacts each year with at-risk youth, families, teachers, and people with special needs, reaching over 225 schools and organizations. Department staff have worked with the Colorado Department of Education in the development of statewide K-12 standards and assessments for dance education and have presented at the National Dance Education Organization's annual conference, as well as the Colorado Dance Education Organization's conferences.

The mission is simple: Every. Body. Dance!

Every. To make dance accessible to everyone.

Body. To promote dance and movement as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Dance. To encourage creativity and expression through dance and foster an appreciation for ballet.

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Programs

Student Matinees – Started by Colorado Ballet Trustee Diane Nolen, the Student Matinee series allows students to attend the final dress rehearsal of a Colorado Ballet production on a school field trip. Each year, one performance of The Nutcracker is offered for FREE to highest Title 1% (free and reduced lunch) schools.

Digital Broadcast – Typically, Colorado Ballet streams three productions to schools and organizations all over the state and nation. The Nutcracker holds strong as a favorite with thousands of students watching live and recorded streams each year. This is an exciting endeavor for Colorado Ballet to increase access to ballet and live and recorded performances for those who are unable to attend due to geographic barriers.

Daytime Dance Residency Program – A long-term, in-school program designed to take place during the regular school day, this program brings professional teaching artists into classrooms for over a period of one week up to three months – whatever timing works best for your school.

Afterschool Programs – 12 weeks of class in creative movement and ballet foundations at more than 20 schools in the Denver Metro Area. Students are given T-shirts as well as reduced price ticket vouchers to a Colorado Ballet production. Participants of the program are chosen for a full-year scholarship to the Raydean Acevedo Colorado Ballet Academy.

Warren Village – Colorado Ballet has partnered for many years with Warren Village, an organization that helps motivated low-income, previously homeless single-parent families move from public assistance to personal and economic self-sufficiency. Creative movement classes are offered at no cost on a weekly basis throughout the school year to 24 preschool students. The students study a variety of dance concepts while working on spatial awareness, problem solving and strengthening the body and brain.

From the Page to the Stage – A traveling interactive school assembly featuring Colorado Ballet Studio Company dancers, From the Page to the Stage explores ballets through history. Storytelling through movement, pointe shoes, male roles and athleticism in dance are discussed. Each school year 16–20 schools experience the show.

Workshops – In an effort to provide arts opportunities integrated with core curriculum initiatives, Colorado Ballet has created unique experiences for students including Words in Motion (poetry/vocabulary and movement), Metamorphosis Moves (the life cycle of a butterfly through movement, in partnership with the Butterfly Pavilion), as well as technique classes rooted in history such as West African dance, American Folk dance, and much more.

Be Beautiful, Be Yourself – In partnership with the Global Down Syndrome Foundation and the Sie Center for Down Syndrome at Children's Hospital, Colorado Ballet hosts three classes each week for more than 25 students with Down Syndrome. Colorado Ballet instructors work closely with a professional physical therapist in the classroom, teaching creative movement and ballet concepts to increase cognitive and developmental skills.

Figaro – In addition to recognizing sponsors, Colorado Ballet was the first ballet company to use the Figaro seatback titling system as an optional tool for new patrons. Its brief, text-like cues translate mime sequences, introduce characters, and provide synoptic background. The service is available in English and Spanish.

Audio Description – A designated performance(s) of each full-length Colorado Ballet production is audio described for blind and visually impaired patrons. Education staff extemporaneously narrate the performance from the catwalk while speaking directly to patrons through convenient headsets with adjustable volume.

**Thank You
Supporters of Colorado Ballet's
Education & Community Engagement Programs!**



Genesee Mountain Foundation

**Special thanks to these supporting organizations and the
Colorado Ballet Board of Trustees!**

Without you, these programs would not be possible.

Surveys

Teacher/Facilitator Survey

CLICK HERE

or scan QR code below



Student/Viewer Survey

CLICK HERE

or scan QR code below

