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Storylines and visual elements from the MGM Motion Picture THE WIZARD OF OZ are provided by Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures.

Supplemental Guide

Created By:



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Dana Benton and Artists of Colorado Ballet by Mike Watson

How long will it be?

Act 1 - 60 min

Intermission - 20 min

Act 2 - 35 min

Total Run Time - 1 hour 55 min*

*Times are approximate

Synopsis of the Ballet

Kansas

It is morning on Uncle Henry and Aunt Em's farm in Kansas and the farmhands goof off between chores, ignoring Dorothy, who feels unappreciated and dreams of a place far away. Their unpleasant neighbor, Miss Gulch arrives to complain about Dorothy's little dog, Toto, threatening to take him away. Toto escapes and Dorothy runs away with him. On the road, Dorothy meets a showman, Professor Marvel, who urges her to return to the farm as a twister approaches.

The Twister & Munchkinland

Dorothy is lifted into the sky by the twister and travels for what seems like an eternity. Suddenly she plops to the ground with a thud. The twister has taken her to the Land of Oz, where she meets the Munchkins and Glinda, the Good Witch of the North. Dorothy's bed has fallen upon the Witch of the East, killing her, and freeing the Munchkins from her power. As the Munchkins celebrate, the Wicked Witch of the West arrives to claim her sister's magical ruby slippers, and avenge her sister's death. But in a flash, the ruby slippers appear on Dorothy's feet, thwarting the Witch...for the moment. Dorothy wants to go home to Kansas. The Munchkins tell Dorothy that, surely the Wizard of Oz will help her, and she sets off down the Yellow Brick Road towards the Emerald City to find him.

Along the Yellow Brick Road

Along the way, Dorothy and Toto meet three friends who need help: a Scarecrow whose head is full of straw; a Tin Man with an empty chest, and a Lion who is afraid of his own tail. Dorothy invites them to join her to see if the Wizard can help them too. When the Wicked Witch fails to intimidate Dorothy and her friends, she creates a beautiful field of poppies whose scent is poisonous. Glinda causes it to snow, and the poppies melt away, revealing the gates of the Emerald City. Dorothy and her friends boldly knock on the gates but the Guard with the Green Whiskers and his Assistant send them away.

The Emerald City

The Guard sees that Dorothy is wearing the ruby slippers and assumes she must be a person of great importance. He welcomes the friends into the Emerald City. As they are preparing to meet the Wizard, the Witch flies by with another warning to Dorothy: give her those slippers! Unsettled, the group is led into the Wizard's throne room where they ask for help. He tells them that to prove themselves worthy of his assistance they must bring him the broomstick of the Wicked Witch of the West.

Winged Monkeys and The Witch's Castle

Dorothy and her friends depart in haste, and as they make their way to the Witch's Castle, they are set upon by the Witch's Winged Monkeys who capture Dorothy. The Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion, sneak into the castle to try to free Dorothy and Toto, who have been imprisoned by the Witch and the Winkies, her slaves. Amid the chaos, the Witch makes a grab for the ruby slippers and Dorothy defends herself by throwing a bucket of water on the Witch, who melts into nothingness. The friends take her broomstick and return to the Emerald City.

The Humbug and Dorothy's Return Home

In the Throne Room, the Wizard is reluctant to help Dorothy and her friends, when Toto discovers a befuddled man behind an emerald wall: it turns out that the Wizard is a humbug. He's not a wizard at all, but an ordinary man from Kansas who found himself in Oz after he lost control of his hot-air balloon. The Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion impatiently remind him that he promised to help them, but the Wizard points out that they don't need his help—they have already shown brains, heart, and courage beyond measure. As for Dorothy, he tells her that he will take Toto and her to Kansas himself in his hot-air balloon. As they prepare to depart, Toto runs off, and Dorothy chases him, but it's too late—the wind had already taken the Wizard, leaving Dorothy and Toto behind. Glinda appears, telling Dorothy that her ruby slippers will take her home. Dorothy says farewell to her friends, and with the aid of the slippers, wills herself home. Dorothy awakens to find herself at home in Kansas, with Toto asleep at her feet.

Behind the Ballet



Asuka Sasaki by Mike Watson

The world premiere of *The Wizard of Oz* took place in Kansas City in October 2018, Colorado Ballet presented the production in February 2019, and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet presented their premiere in May 2019.

The brainchild of acclaimed choreographer Septime Webre (presently Artistic Director Hong Kong Ballet and formerly Artistic Director of Washington National Ballet), this dazzling production brings all of Oz's favorite characters to dance down the yellow brick road – from Toto to flying monkeys, this ballet has it all. Webre's choreography showcases the strength, athleticism and artistry of Colorado Ballet's talented dancers.

Bringing to life one of the most beloved stories of all time through dance, Webre assembled a world-renowned creative team to realize his vision. The vibrant costumes by Liz Vandal, ingenious set and lighting design by Michael Raiford and Trad Burns, and searing score by composer Matthew Pierce set the stage not only for the dancers, but for the magical puppetry of Nicholas Mahon, who created the puppets for the Opening Ceremony of the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea.



Artists of Colorado Ballet by Mike Watson

The Wizard of Oz will delight and inspire from the first note to the final curtain.

Choreographer



Photo by Dean Alexander

What is a Choreographer?

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

Septime Webre

Septime Webre was appointed artistic director of The Washington Ballet in 1999, after a six year tenure as artistic director of American Repertory Ballet in New Jersey. In his tenure as TWB's artistic director, The Washington Ballet's impact regionally, nationally and internationally has deepened in three areas. First, the Company's work has continued to grow and expand in its level of excellence and bold creativity with projects including the "American Experience," a series featuring original full-length ballets based on iconic works of American literature, and the pursuit of full-length original classic works including Swan Lake, a significant milestone for a dance company.

Also, The Washington School of Ballet's enrollment has tripled and the organization's commitment to community through its visionary DanceDC and TWB programs has positively affected the lives of tens of thousands of children in the District of Columbia. Much in demand as a choreographer, Webre has created works that appear in the repertoires of many companies in North America, including Pacific Northwest Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, North Carolina Dance Theatre, Ballet Austin, Atlanta Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet, Ballet San Jose, Kansas City Ballet and Colorado Ballet, among many others. As a dancer, he was featured in works by George Balanchine, Paul Taylor, Antony Tudor, Alvin Ailey and Merce Cunningham, as well as in principal and solo roles from classical repertoire.

Mr. Webre has sat on the boards of Dance/USA and the Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington. Among his many awards, Webre received the DC Mayor's Arts Award for Visionary Leadership, Excellence in Artistic Discipline and numerous metro DC dance awards. He has been a recipient of a number of fellowships for his choreography. He is the seventh son in a large Cuban American family and graduated from the University of Texas with a B.A. in history and pre-law.

Composer Matthew Pierce

Matthew Pierce is celebrated for his new classical scores commissioned by major American ballet companies. He has written ballet scores for Joffrey Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Atlanta Ballet, Ohio Ballet, BalletMet, Cincinnati Ballet, Miami Ballet, Ballet Memphis, Ballet Hawaii, Post Ballet, Ballet Coeur d'Alene, Kansas City Ballet, New York City Ballet, Houston Ballet, and the San Francisco Ballet. Night, a full orchestra score set to a Chagall-inspired dreamscape ballet, has been seen at the Opera Garnier in Paris, Covent Garden in London, and City Center in New York. San Francisco Ballet's Imaginal Disc was voted "Best Cultural Event of 2003" by the San Francisco Chronicle and Sarah Kaufman of The Washington Post called his 2012 score for Washington Ballet's Alice (in wonderland), "The cherry on top: Pierce's visionary result, a shimmering landscape that weaves together bits of our own world—Asian, Middle Eastern, pop riffs, jazz—with a contemporary edge and a spirit of discovery. And, yes, wonder."



What is a Composer?

A person who writes music, especially as a job.



Artists of Colorado Ballet by Mike Watson

General 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.



Dana Benton,
Nicolas Pelletier,
Leopold Foster and
Artists of Colorado
Ballet by Mike
Watson

Elementary School Activities

Yellow Brick Road “Bricks”

Ingredients:

- 6 tablespoons butter
- 10 ounces mini marshmallows
- 6 cups Cap’n Crunch



Instructions:

1. Line a 9 x 13 in baking pan with buttered wax paper and set aside.
2. In a large saucepan, melt butter. Add in marshmallows and stir continuously until fully melted and mixed with the butter. Remove from heat and fold in Cap’n Crunch.
3. Transfer mix into the 9 x 13 in baking pan. Wet hands and evenly press mixture into the pan.

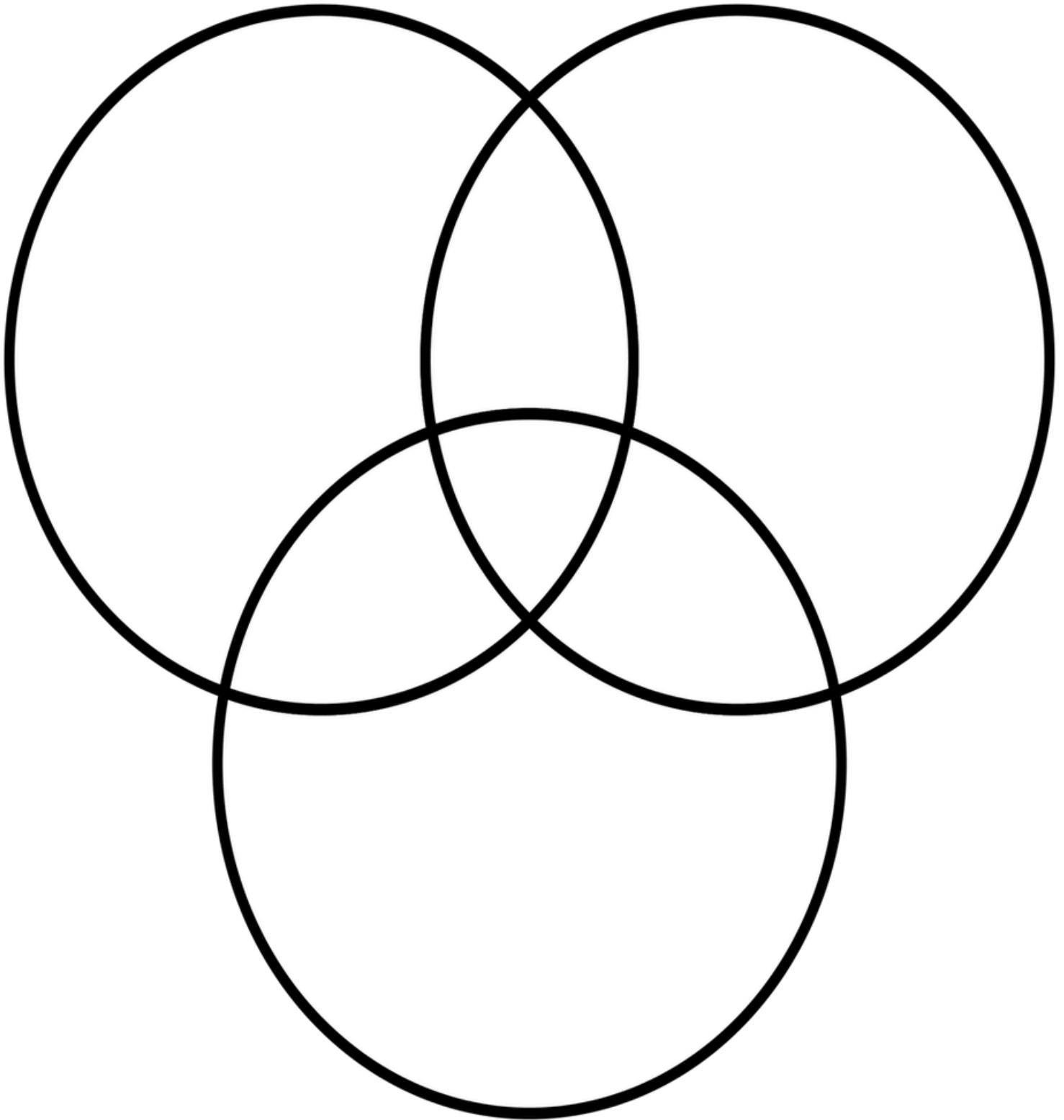


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Middle & High School Activities

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. Or, try comparing the story of the Wizard of Oz with the story of Wicked!



Writing Prompts

If you were the choreographer, would you keep the story of The Wizard of Oz the same? Or would you change something—a scene, a character, the ending, the setting, or the way the characters move—to tell the story in a new way or make it more exciting for today’s audience?

Imagine you are creating a new version of The Wizard of Oz. What would your world look like? What would the characters wear, how would they move, and what new ideas would you include while keeping the heart of the original story?

Surveys

Teacher/Facilitator Survey

CLICK HERE

or scan QR code below



Student/Viewer Survey

CLICK HERE

or scan QR code below

