

The Red Shoes



Student & Educators Pack for the USA Tour

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1 Outline of Resource Pack

This education resource pack aims to provide an insight into the creative, choreographic and design elements within Matthew Bourne's production, *The Red Shoes*, based on the award-winning Powell and Pressburger film, with music by Bernard Herrmann.

This pack is a structured guide for teachers and students that examines and documents the creative process behind *The Red Shoes*.

The pack provides contextual and factual information about Matthew Bourne's production of *The Red Shoes* and its contributors. It aims to encourage students to evaluate and gain a deeper understanding of a professional dance work. Throughout the pack are tasks and activities that have been developed to engage students with the creative process, choreographic process and production design, whilst creating opportunity for analysis and critical appreciation. Some tasks also offer practical dance ideas to be applied in the studio, and, for teachers, there will also be exam tips, worksheets, lesson plans, suggested essay questions, pedagogy and practice tips.

This resource pack explores the themes and narrative found in *The Red Shoes*. Insights have come from Matthew Bourne himself, from interviews or articles, through discussions with his creative team, and also from an audience perspective.

For convenience, the following symbols will be used to indicate whether the suggested task has a practical, written, verbal or research based outcome. Teachers may wish to combine activities throughout their lesson, in which case the outcomes may overlap.



ACTIVITY:
Discussion



ACTIVITY:
Further Reading



ACTIVITY:
Practical Exercise



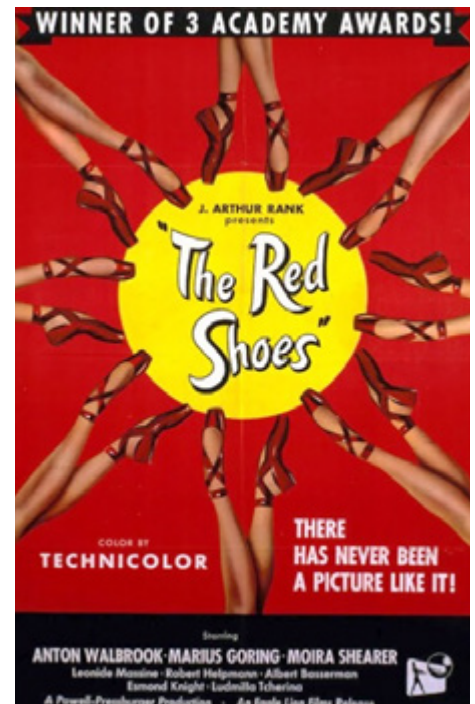
ACTIVITY:
Written Work

2 An Introduction to Matthew Bourne's Production of *The Red Shoes*

Bourne watched Powell and Pressburger's iconic film *The Red Shoes* as a teenager and, at this point, had never seen a ballet live on stage. As a young adult with a love for performance and theatre, *The Red Shoes* provided a glimpse into an elitist, glamorous and intriguing world that was unknown to Bourne. The film's classic love story is set within the working lives of a world-renowned touring ballet company, the Ballet Lermontov. Bourne identifies parallels between Ballet Lermontov and his own company, New Adventures, despite not being a ballet company themselves. Bourne's ability to identify with the Ballet Lermontov helped create his vision for reinventing the film's well-loved characters for his own company. Bourne explains, "The film's genius is to make that theatrical world at times surreal, larger than life and highly cinematic. My challenge was to capture some of that surreal, sensuous quality within the more natural theatre setting".

A common feature between Ballet Lermontov and New Adventures is that they both share a love of touring, both domestically and internationally, under the creative vision of their respective artistic directors. The film's characters are depicted very much as individual dancers within the company, yet are bound by a familial sense of collaboration, loyalty and ambition towards success. When embodying these personas on stage, Bourne believes the New Adventures cast can empathise with the personal struggles behind each character. Whilst character research plays a large role in the creative process, each dancer experiences or understands the sacrifices and dilemmas behind the desire to be a professional dancer, performer or artist.

Inspired by the fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen and the original film directed and produced by Powell and Pressburger, *The Red Shoes* is Matthew Bourne's love letter to the world of theatre.



/ *The Red Shoes* original movie poster



/ *The Red Shoes* original movie poster (Denmark)

3 The Plot of Matthew Bourne's Production of *The Red Shoes*

ACT ONE

London

After watching The Ballet Lermontov perform the *Countess Tamara's Dilemma*, Lady Neston arranges a soirée with the intention of showcasing her niece, Vicky Page, to Boris Lermontov. Despite delighting the crowd with her solo, Lermontov, ignoring Vicky, offers a job to the pianist Julian Craster. Later, Vicky attends an audition with the company's ballet master, Grischa Ljubov, and is eventually picked by Lermontov to join the company as a member of the corps-de-ballet.



/ Lady Neston's after-show soirée

Whilst working alone in the theatre, Julian is swept up in a dream of one day conducting his own work with a full orchestra. Lermontov watches on from the side-lines and recognizes Julian's passion, talent and potential.

A month later, during a rehearsal of *Les Sylphides*, as the Artistic Team and Principal Dancers bicker, Vicky slips into a day dream, imagining herself

dancing the principal role, and catches the attention of Lermontov. Irina Boronskaja, the company's prima-ballerina, cries out with pain as she falls to the floor injured and is carried off, unable to continue the rehearsal.

Monte Carlo

Lermontov and his ballet company arrive on tour in Monte Carlo where the impresario and his creative team begin brainstorming ideas for the next production. Vicky is summoned to Lermontov's mansion and, on arrival, is handed a pair of red pointe shoes and consequently, the lead role in Ballet Lermontov's newest creation, *The Red Shoes*. Vicky and Lermontov dance a duet, with the latter manipulating and moulding Vicky into his muse and the star she wants to become, ending with Lermontov literally placing Vicky into the spotlight.

***The Red Shoes* Ballet (within the production)**

The Girl (Vicky) and The Boy (Ivan), her free-spirited fiancé, travel from the suburbs to the city. Suddenly, a sinister Pimp (Grischa) appears. Intrigued by her beauty, he lures The Girl away with the promise of fame and fortune, enticing her with a pair of red shoes. The Pimp seemingly hypnotises the girl until the power of the red shoes overwhelms her. The shoes take over, dragging her around independently and forcing her to dance and never stop moving. As she dances, she journeys to a vibrant, busy Dance Hall, through a wild forest and eventually gets lost in a storm.



Time passes and exhausted, *The Girl* slips into a dreamlike, euphoric state and drifts through the stars. She arrives at her own funeral, as a procession mourns her passing, and sees *The Boy* who has become a priest. He “senses” her presence around him as she desperately reaches for him and tries to reconnect. Eventually, *The Boy* releases her from the shoes and she collapses and dies.



/ *The Boy* (Liam Mower) and *The Girl* (Vicky Page) in *The Red Shoes Ballet*

The ballet is received with rapturous applause. Backstage, after the curtain calls, Vicky and Julian congratulate each other, resulting in a passionate embrace. This is noticed by Lermontov, who storms off in a rage to the thunderous and ominous sound of the clapping audience.

INTERVAL

ACT TWO – Three Months Later

Julian and Vicky begin a passionate love affair, with Lermontov forever watching them from the wings. Riddled with jealousy, Lermontov finds fault in everything Julian does, pushing the conductor to breaking point and forcing Julian and Vicky to walk out and resign from the company.

A Music Hall, London’s East End

Six months later, we find Vicky working in a music hall, dancing in a Polish Acrobatic Adagio Act. Also performing are two showgirls and an Egyptian comedic double act, based on Wilson & Keppel, who are leering at Vicky in her skimpy costume. Distressed and humiliated, Vicky runs off stage. Back in a small London apartment, Julian and Vicky, both artistically unsatisfied, argue; pulled between their love for each other and their passion for their art. After, with Julian asleep in bed, Vicky decides to return to the Ballet Lermontov and leaves with her ballet shoes and suitcase in hand.

As she revives her role in *The Red Shoes Ballet*, she is haunted by the faces of Julian, Lermontov and The Pimp and finds it hard to distinguish between reality and fiction. Fact and fiction, ballet and real life, all begin to blur and eventually Vicky finds herself alone on an empty stage. We hear the sound of the audience chanting for her behind the curtains which builds and morphs to resemble the sound of an approaching train. As the noise gets louder and louder Vicky slowly advances towards the curtains (and her audience). The curtains part and we see the blinding lights of the steam train charging toward Vicky, resulting in catastrophe.

The body of Vicky is eventually surrounded by onlookers and Julian arrives from London, suitcase in hand, just in time to see Vicky take her final breath. Julian removes her red shoes and Vicky dies in his arms, mirroring the final scene of *The Red Shoes Ballet*. Lermontov picks up the pair of shoes, walks towards the audience and holds them up, once more in their spotlight.

4 The Plot of *The Red Shoes* film and its Differences with Matthew Bourne's Production



/ Moira Shearer as Vicky Page in the original 1948 film *The Red Shoes*

Matthew Bourne's production of *The Red Shoes* is heavily based on the award-winning film, however, there are some differences evident in the New Adventures production, which Bourne has made for artistic and narrative reasons.

In the first scene of the film we are at a performance by the Ballet Lermontov in Covent Garden. Three music Conservatoire students, Julian Craster (played by Marius Goring), Terry and Ike are in attendance to hear the ballet score *Heart of Fire*, composed by their teacher, Professor Palmer. Also present is Victoria 'Vicky' Page (Moira Shearer), a young, unknown dancer from an aristocratic background, with her aunt, Lady Neston. Julian recognises the music from *Heart of Fire* as one of his own compositions, and Ike notices another passage as another of Julian's works. During the performance, Boris Lermontov (Anton Walbrook), the company impresario, receives an invitation to an after-ballet party at Lady Neston's residence. Lermontov initially declines, but Professor Palmer persuades Lermontov to attend, exclaiming that "she's a great patron of the arts". Julian leaves the performance mortified at his professor's plagiarism of his music, followed by Terry and Ike.

Lady Neston has organised the after-party as an undercover audition to introduce Vicky to Lermontov, who then invites her to join the company. Contrastingly, in Bourne's adaptation, Vicky is invited to audition following the after-party alongside the quirky Joyce. Both are put through their technical paces by Ballet Master Grischa, and Vicky gets chosen to join the company over Joyce.

Meanwhile, Julian has written to Lermontov to explain that he in fact composed *Heart of Fire*, but then tries to retrieve the letter. Lermontov's assistant Dimitri stops Julian gaining entry to Lermontov's suite. Julian requests to take back his letter before Lermontov sees it, however, Lermontov has already read it. Lermontov asks Julian to play one of his own works at the piano. After hearing Julian play, he hires Julian as a répétiteur for the company orchestra and assistant to the company's conductor, Livingstone Montague. Lermontov realises that Julian was the true composer of *Heart of Fire*. Julian and Vicky arrive for work at the Ballet Lermontov on the same day.

In the New Adventures production, whilst working alone in the theatre, Julian is swept up in a dream of one day conducting his own work with a full orchestra. Lermontov watches on from the side-lines and recognises Julian's passion, talent and potential, resulting in Lermontov asking Julian to compose his brand new ballet *The Red Shoes*.

Irina Boronskaja (played by Ludmilla Tcherina), Prima Ballerina in The Ballet Lermontov has a different storyline in the film to Bourne's adaptation. In the film, Boronskaja leaves the company to marry and the entire cast flock around her in support, except for Lermontov who is outraged by her decision and is furious at being abandoned by his star dancer. In Bourne's version, Irina injures herself when rehearsing *Les Sylphides* and is unable to dance the lead role, paving the way for Vicky to take the lead in *The Red Shoes Ballet*.

Following *The Red Shoes Ballet*, Vicky and Julian announce their undeniable love for each other and Lermontov, fuelled with jealousy, gives Vicky an ultimatum to choose between dancing and love. Vicky and Julian are forced to resign from company. In the film, Lermontov coaxes Vicky back to dancing with the Lermontov Ballet leading to a distraught Julian making Vicky decide again between their love and dancing, resulting in Vicky's demise. In Bourne's version Vicky becomes disheartened and depressed with her life in London and becomes more and more distressed, leading to an argument between Julian and Vicky, fuelled by their frustration and lack of artistic and creative fulfilment. This becomes the driving force for Vicky's return to the company, in contrast to Lermontov's manipulation of her, as seen in the film.



ACTIVITY: *Discussion*

Compare the narrative of The Red Shoes with Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker!, Swan Lake or The Car Man. Are there similarities in the way that Bourne constructs his stories and what are the differences? Compare and contrast Bourne's treatment of film and ballet stimuli in his shows.

5 The Themes of Matthew Bourne's Production of *The Red Shoes*

The Red Shoes is the love story of two young artists (one a dancer, one a composer) and the fight between that love and the lure of the highest artistic achievement as represented by Boris Lermontov.

The production also explores the theatrical world of a ballet company and the stories it tells that blend into the real life tale of love, ambition and artistic and personal fulfilment, until the two are barely distinguishable.

Love vs. Art



/ Irina's accident during rehearsals

One of the main themes that Bourne was keen to explore was the difference between love for an art form and love for a person. When we first meet Vicky Page and Julian Craster, each is so ruled by their individual passion for dance or music, that their relationship is one of rivalry rather than of romance. Like many performers struggling to break into their profession, Craster and Page's sole intention was to get a job doing what they love – composing

and dancing. Increasingly, through shows such as *The X Factor*, *Britain's Got Talent* and *Strictly Come Dancing*, the audience watch and witness a performer's struggles or barriers along their quest for success. Everyone is interested in what it takes to become a great performer or artist and the sacrifices that are required, and it was this journey that Bourne was keen to capture on stage.

Bourne explains that in the film, *The Red Shoes*, the fairy tales and the stories that the Ballet Lermontov tell merge with a real-life tale of love, ambition and personal fulfilment until the two are barely distinguishable. An example within Bourne's stage production can be found at the end of Act Two, when Vicky returns to the ballet company. As she dances *The Red Shoes* Ballet, the fictional characters morph into figures from her personal life, portraying how the boundaries of her art and reality blur together, and how the inner conflict of love vs art ultimately leads to her death.



ACTIVITY: Discussion

*Discuss some current icons in the world of theatre and film. Can you think of any examples where fame or love for their art has interfered with aspects of their personal life and why? Discuss how these issues can relate with the characters in *The Red Shoes*.*

Career vs. love

The Red Shoes is the love story of two young artists and their internal struggles between love and the lure of highest artistic achievement. This premise is opposed by Lermontov, who believes one cannot be a great artist if distracted by love. This theme is prominent in both the stage and film productions. Vicky enjoys fame and success as a single, soloist dancer, however, her choice to live a life out of the spotlight with the man she loves ultimately ruins her career. On leaving the company, dancing in an East End Music Hall is not enough for Vicky and she chooses to leave Julian in order to reinstate her career and stardom.

When creating his new production, one of Bourne's most satisfying challenges has been portraying the intense triangular relationship between Lermontov, Vicky and Julian. "The more I've watched the film, the more I've realised how messy that relationship is. Vicky and Julian fall in love while they're working together on *The Red Shoes* Ballet and, really, they're only happy together inside that burst of creativity. Afterwards, it doesn't work so well and I've actually found myself sympathising with Lermontov's position: that love and art don't always go together."

Lermontov's character is likened to that of Russian ballet-impresario and founder of the Ballets Russes, Sergei Diaghilev. Diaghilev had a romantic and professional partnership with Vaslav Nijinsky but later fired him after Nijinsky impulsively married another company dancer, Romola de Pulszky, from the corps-de-ballet. Like Vicky's character, Nijinsky subsequently failed to find the level of success he had previously, once he had disrupted his career with a love affair.

Obsession

Obsession, arguably, is one of the attributes often associated with the ballet world, when imagined by the layman. It is universally accepted that to reach success in the performing arts, particularly as a ballet dancer, one must make many sacrifices and be obsessed with their art. Matthew Bourne does not focus his depiction of the ballet world on a company full of resentment, rivalry and jealousy. However, we do see brief moments and references, particularly in rehearsal scenes within the ensemble.

Obsession is seen in a number of ways throughout *The Red Shoes*. Characters show their obsession with their art form, success and stardom. These obsessions are predominantly portrayed when we get a glimpse into the character's thoughts and feelings. Like a monologue, the audience are invited into the character's thought process, aiding them in understanding their personality, actions and narrative better. During Act One, Julian Craster performs an impassioned solo exploring his creative process and excitement at composing a new work. In Act Two, he tries to replicate the success he once had by repeating key motifs and phrases from his original solo, but nothing seems to be working or falls into place, much to his frustration.

Vicky Page's obsession with dance is first evident in her performance at Lady Neston's soiree. She performs in a passionate, expressive state of ecstasy which heightens her disappointment when she is shunned by Lermontov through his admiration for Julian. Furthermore, when the company are rehearsing *Les Sylphides*, as tempers flare between the principal dancers and Grischa, we see Vicky slip into a dream-like state, imagining herself captured in a spotlight, performing the central role. It is like the world melts away, and all that is left is Vicky and the dancing.



/ Lermontov (Sam Archer) in his chambers

Lermontov's obsession with Vicky Page is portrayed in a more sinister fashion – stalking her from afar during her courtship with Julian. Their relationship ignites an anger in him that causes both Julian and Vicky to leave the company. His anguish is evident as he is seen alone in his chambers, slumped in his chair. However, he is arguably not jealous of their relationship, but more of Julian's ability to pull Vicky away from the company and her dream career. He is obsessed with Vicky's talent, in moulding her into a star, and having ultimate control over her and her destiny. When he loses this hold he lashes out and the audience see glimpses of temper and emotion, in an otherwise composed and guarded man.



ACTIVITY: Discussion

Watch the film, The Black Swan. Discuss the similarities and differences between Natalie Portman's, character's journey and that of Vicky Pages in The Red Shoes.



ACTIVITY: Practical Exercise

Creating a motif based on a theme from The Red Shoes:

- 1. Choose a theme as previously described (Love vs. Art, Career vs. Love, or Obsession)*
- 2. Brainstorm words that describe that theme*
- 3. Choose four to six words and create a movement that embodies each word*
- 4. Connect the movements together to create a motif or short phrase*
- 5. Optional: introduce different directions, change of level, a turn, an elevation and a suspension to the motif*
- 6. Develop the motif by repeating the phrase but changing the dynamics with each repetition. For example, start small and soft, like a whisper, then build to an explosive and expansive shout.*



ACTIVITY: Written Work

Choose four New Adventures productions and write down the main themes present.

Research and write down some of Matthew Bourne's main influences and sources of inspiration from popular culture and his background.

Identify connections between the themes in his productions and describe how these themes may link with his influences, background and training.



6 Character Profiles

The importance of character is a key stylistic feature in Matthew Bourne's productions. During the choreographic process, dancers are directed to conduct specific research tasks to help them understand and take ownership of their character. For Matthew Bourne's production of *The Red Shoes*, online video footage was a huge source of primary research. Video footage of noted actors, ballet dancers, 1940s dance crazes and movies were often referred to throughout rehearsals to help refine and shape the various characters.

Victoria 'Vicky' Page



/ Ashley Shaw as Vicky Page

When the audience first meet Vicky, she is an unknown, young, beautiful and ambitious ballerina. In the 1948 film, the role was played by Moira Shearer from The Sadler's Wells Ballet whose fiery red hair became an iconic feature of her character. In the film version, Vicky was introduced as coming from a family of great wealth and nobility who dreams of being a star with the Ballet Lermontov. In Bourne's production, he chose not to portray her as a product of privilege and instead focussed on her struggle to stardom.

After a successful audition and the injury of the company's prima ballerina, Vicky is cast as the lead in Lermontov's new production, *The Red Shoes*. Although, initially, she does not see eye to eye with the young composer Julian Craster, they eventually fall in love, much to the disapproval and jealousy of Lermontov creating a complex triangle between the three. She is pulled in two directions – her love for her career in dance with Lermontov's company, and her love for Julian – which results in tragedy.

The majority of Vicky's movement style is characterised by her grounded, more modern quality. The reason she stands out is because she dances differently to other dancers of her generation; she is very fluid, more earth bound and breathy, and demonstrates a greater use of her back and torso.

Boris Lermontov



/ Sam Archer as Boris Lermontov

The role of Lermontov is partially based on the legendary ballet impresario, Sergei Diaghilev, founder of the Ballets Russes. However, for Bourne's version, throughout the research and creative

process, J. Arthur Rank (founder of the Rank Organization) and director/producer of the 1948 film, Michael Powell, also became an important influence for Lermontov's character. Bold, ruthless and charismatic, Lermontov fiercely believes that there is no place for love if one wants to achieve great success. Although initially dismissive of Vicky, he eventually sees her potential, and believes she could be the future star of the company. He is filled with jealousy when he discovers that she is in love with Julian and fires him.

Lermontov's character is portrayed through his physicality, being one of stature, assurance, power and dominance. Although his authority and his presence are asserted, the audience are shown his true emotions through dance in a few key scenes, for example, his pas de deux with Vicky at his Monte Carlo mansion. His choreography appears mature, proud, manipulative and strong, as he leads her through various supports, lifts and turns. Whilst Vicky's focus is always projected out towards the audience, his eyes remain fixated on her. A contrasting example would be his anguished solo in his private quarters, seen in Act Two, as he contemplates life without Vicky, the star of his ballet.



ACTIVITY: *Further Reading*

Research Sergei Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes. Compare Diaghilev to the character of Boris Lermontov in The Red Shoes. Discuss what characteristics they both have and how they are similar? Write down a list of these characteristics.

Julian Craster



/ Dominic North as Julian Craster with Ashley Shaw as Vicky Page

A young composer and conductor hired by Lermontov after his riveting performance at Lady Neston's soiree. At first, it is clear that he is dictated and governed solely by his passion for music. His stubborn love of his art form initially causes a rift between himself and Vicky, when he rejects the printed music Vicky provides for her audition and instead performs one of his own rousing works. Julian gains professional success and recognition after he is chosen to compose the score for Lermontov's new ballet *The Red Shoes*. However, Julian is forced out of the company by Lermontov after his relationship with Vicky is exposed.

Like Lermontov, Bourne explains there were challenges when faced with creating movement to portray Julian's character. He is a musician, not a dancer, and, in keeping with Bourne's style of storytelling, the character has to use movement to convey his narrative, thoughts and feelings. An example of how Bourne achieves this can be seen in Act One, when Julian is left alone at the piano.

Starting with a few simple gestures and notes on the piano, the phrase builds in momentum to show his passion and thought process when creating a new score for the company. The movement develops from acting based gestural language to energetic, expressive virtuosic dance sequences which demonstrates the influence of Fred Astaire on Bourne's choreography. Initially, Julian's movement vocabulary is more subtle than other characters', yet this solo builds in momentum as his passion rises, culminating in explosive leaps and turns, mirroring the crescendo in the music.

Irina Boronskaja

We are first introduced to Irina in the opening ballet 'Countess Tamara's Dilemma' where she dances wearing a glamorous and striking shimmery romantic tutu. Irina is the company's Prima Ballerina. She makes her high status evident by parading her costume around the stage on a hanger, in an homage to Alicia Markova. Vicky is only able to make her impression once Irina suffers an injury, preventing her from dancing the lead role in Monte Carlo.



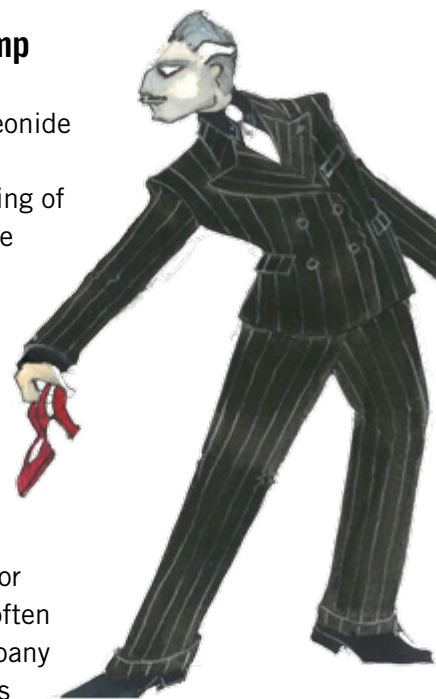
/ Michela Meazza as Irina Boronskaja with Liam Mower as Ivan Boleslawsky

Ivan Boleslawsky

Ivan is the male lead of the Ballet Lermontov and is paired with Irina in the opening pas de deux and technical rehearsal. Portrayed in the film by Robert Helpmann, Ivan demonstrates diva-like behaviour as he struts around the stage in a silk dressing gown and matching headband. Furthermore, the character of Ivan is very similar to that of Rudolf Nureyev, one of Russia's most celebrated dancers of the twentieth century. This further evidences how Bourne has developed his characters using real life dancers. It is clear that Ivan is passionate and dedicated to his work with the company. He is also quite self-obsessed and demonstrates his big ego through his confident, cocky and larger than life demeanour.

Grischa Ljubov/The Pimp

Portrayed in the film by Leonide Massine, Grischa plays an important role in the running of Ballet Lermontov. He is the company's Ballet Master and choreographer; teaching the daily company ballet class and rehearsing the dancers for both new and established ballets in the company's repertoire. He is also the principal character artist for the Ballet Lermontov. As often found in many ballet company hierarchies, character roles are given to senior members of the company who are required to act as well as dance. In Grischa's case, he is required to play to role of The Pimp in *The Red Shoes* Ballet. Like any stereotypical ballet master, he is described as highly-strung but a technically brilliant and expressive dancer with a strong presence.



The Ballet Lermontov



/ Ballet Lermontov in rehearsals on the Covent Garden stage

Under the direction of Boris Lermontov, Ballet Lermontov is a world-leading ballet company. In Matthew Bourne's production of *The Red Shoes*, the company reside in London's Covent Garden but tour extensively whilst generating a wide yet versatile repertoire. With Irina and Ivan being the principal dancers and Grischa as their ballet master, the company have defined hierarchical roles that are typical of a traditional ballet company. However, the company are a tight-knit group and everyone contributes to its success.



ACTIVITY: Discussion

The significance of character is a key stylistic feature of Bourne's work. Discuss how he demonstrates character in his work and how these characters might be created and develop. Discuss how the use of character differs across the independent dance scene in Britain.



ACTIVITY: Written Work

*There are six characters who form the creative team that collaborate to produce *The Red Shoes Ballet*, as seen in the scene 'Lermontov's Mansion'. They are the Artistic Director, Company Manager, Costume Designer, Scenic Designer, Composer, Rehearsal Director/Assistant Choreographer.*

Create a character profile for three of these characters following the example template below:

Name:

Age:

Role in Ballet Lermontov:

Family Members:

Social Class:

Where they are from:

Previous Experience:

Journey to current job:

Hobbies:

Three Personality Traits:

Physical Characteristics:

7 Production Elements Set Design

For students at examination level, it is important to be able to identify, describe and analyse production features and their significance within dance works. Matthew Bourne's productions are renowned for their high production values and how he works closely with a network of long-time creative collaborators to bring his stories to life.

The set, costumes and lighting are integral parts of Bourne's works and are designed with meticulous attention to detail. Like the movement, the set and costume reflect the era as a result of extensive research. The Sadler's Wells Ballet, The Ballets Russes and prominent dancers throughout dance history were researched to inform the accuracy and detail of the various costume designs. On the other hand, the set design influences and drives the narrative forwards, creating a visual feast whilst guiding the audience through complex split scenes and various geographical locations.

Matthew Bourne starts thinking about a production years in advance. In this case, creating a show based on *The Red Shoes* film had always been in Bourne's mind, but had never quite come to fruition. However, a discussion to finally turn the much-loved film into a New Adventures production began a two-year process to take the idea from concept to stage.

Once Bourne has a concept, story or idea for a new show, he meets with Lez Brotherston (set/costume designer) to discuss ideas and decide on a shared vision for research and design. Locations, eras, time of day, plot development, intentions and moods are all discussed in order to build a foundation for Brotherston's designs. Brotherston conducts extensive research using photography, books, video footage and the internet in order to create mood



/ Lez Brotherston, Set and Costume Designer for *The Red Shoes* and *New Adventures* Associate Artist

boards and models which he later presents to Bourne over a series of creative meetings. A model of the set design is used to determine its potential use in choreography and allows alterations to be made to the design prior to its construction.

One of the main challenges faced by Brotherston was Bourne's intention to portray both the offstage and onstage worlds of a ballet company. In Bourne's production of *The Red Shoes*, several on-stage rehearsals and ballet productions occur, and Brotherston's task is to help the audience distinguish between the two. To achieve this, Brotherston designed the most prominent feature of the set – a rotating, mechanical proscenium arch. It features heavy, golden-red curtains which help to frame the stage. It is embellished with a dense gold trim and tassels with an oversized gold emblem in the centre of the arch, creating a strong indication of Ballet Lermontov's wealth and finesse. The proscenium is automated and can rotate as well as move upstage and downstage and it is used magically throughout the production to aid in defining space and location.



/ Vicky Page (Ashley Shaw) framed by the proscenium arch

During *The Red Shoes* Ballet (at the end of Act One), the proscenium arch glides forward, establishing a theatre setting and signifying the beginning of a performance. As the curtains part, four starkly white panels fall into place to create a new and dramatically monochrome proscenium arch and wings. This level of contrast helps the audience to recognize the significance and importance of the featured ballet *The Red Shoes* within Bourne's overall production.

In Powell and Pressburger's film *The Red Shoes*, the backdrop animations consisted of 130 oil paintings by Bauhaus-trained painter Hein Heckroth. In Matthew Bourne's version, a white backdrop acts as a cyclorama in order to use projections, designed by Duncan McLean, to depict various locations and effects, removing the need for additional set.

The white set, monochrome costuming and use of projection indicate that the Ballet Lermontov are pushing the boundaries in terms of their new productions, and exploring something much more modern and abstract in conception than the more traditional romantic ballets of the time.



/ Ivan Boleslawsky (Liam Mower) as 'The Boy' in *The Red Shoes* Ballet

The proscenium arch has many other functions in the production and it is useful in creating a 'split-screen' space to highlight different locations or narratives. An example of this can be seen in Act Two, where a single curtain peels open (stage left) to reveal what happens 'behind closed doors'. We get a glimpse into Lermontov's luxurious private quarters and see him in a state of frustration and anguish at the loss of his star dancer, Vicky Page. The proscenium then rotates to create a split scene, with Julian and Vicky in bed in their East London Flat (stage right). The audience gets an insight into their private world, as we see their depression born from the unfulfilling and uninspiring state they have ended up in. This device portrays that the action is happening simultaneously and helps to connect the emotion of both scenes and heighten the narrative drama.

The Red Shoes features a variety of locations and Brotherston's design is paramount to the audience's comprehension of place and time, as we travel from Covent Garden to Monte Carlo to the East End of London. From rehearsal room, to stage, to coastal resort to a seedy music hall. Some scenes are abstract in their design whereas most scenes are more realistic in their aesthetic.

A device often used is to introduce the audience to a new scene through a ballet performance by Ballet Lermontov, that segue ways into the real-time narrative. An example of this is when the company travel to Monte Carlo. The scene opens with the company dancing in period styled bathing suits in front of a white and blue striped backdrop. Whilst a specific location is not portrayed, the abstract set design complements the dancers' seaside attire and swimming inspired movement. The choreography is very performative; establishing it as piece of repertoire, but it then breaks into more naturalistic, pedestrian and gestural movement as other members of the company stroll into the beach scene. As the ballet continues, a more literal set is formed before the audience's eyes, that of Lermontov's coastal holiday mansion. The performers help set up the space by setting white balustrades to create Lermontov's ocean view balcony, and bringing on the piano and model box, which is a mini version of the set design for *The Red Shoes* Ballet. The backdrop is a dark shade of blue with white fluffy clouds. The bottom metre of the backdrop is a mirror dressed to look like the reflective surface of the ocean.



ACTIVITY:
Written Work

Pick a photograph of the production. Describe each individual aspect of the set design in detail and then describe how the design comes together to create a sense of place and context.



Costume Design

A large amount of research went into the costume design in order to determine their historical accuracy. Photographs were the primary source of research as Brotherston referred to images of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, The Royal Ballet and Ballet Rambert. Although the company have Russian connotations, the fictional Ballet Lermontov are based in London and therefore British ballet companies formed the foundations of the research. Due to the post-war time period, there was still rationing and a shortage of fabrics and this was taken into consideration when designing the costumes accurately.

Vicky Page

Vicky changes costume multiple times during the production. In Act One, Vicky wears a lycra black leotard with long, black mesh sleeves and a black wrap-around ballet skirt. Over the top of her leotard she wears a checked shirt, tied in front of her stomach and a matching bandana to pull her hair back off her face.

During her performance in *The Red Shoes* Ballet, Vicky wears a tight fitted sweetheart-cut romantic tutu with white tulle skirt. It has a red velour overcoat and bodice which is embellished with a gold-stitched pattern. During the ballet, the pristine white tutu becomes grey, torn and dishevelled. The overcoat is removed, leaving behind torn strips of fabric.

During her scenes in Monte Carlo, she wears white high-waist trousers with three metallic buttons on the pockets. Her white sweater is long sleeved with blue horizontal stripes.

Vicky also has red hair, as an homage to the original film character, played by Moira Shearer.





Boris Lermontov

Lermontov wears his hair slicked back. In the production, he is mostly wearing a tuxedo, portraying his wealth and status. The tuxedo consists of a black tailcoat jacket and trousers, a white silk waistcoat and bow tie and a white shirt.

In Monte Carlo, he is wearing white trousers, a white shirt and a peach patterned tie. In the privacy of his chambers, Lermontov wears a blood-red velvet robe.



Julian Craster

Julian wears a tight fitted black waistcoat and tailored black trousers. Underneath his waistcoat, he wears a grey and white striped shirt, rolled up to the elbow.

During his romantic night time stroll with Vicky, in the Monte Carlo scene of Act Two, he wears cream trousers and a pastel blue t-shirt with white horizontal stripes from the chest downwards.



Ivan Boleslawsky

In one scene with Irina, Ivan enters the stage wearing brown boxer shorts and a white tank top. Over the top, he is wearing a loose green and yellow kimono-style dressing gown and matching bandana. He is often seen holding a cigarette.

During company class Ivan wears a vest that is knotted at the front with navy leggings and his signature bandana.



Grischa Ljubov

Grischa wears a cravat and high-waist trousers with a white shirt tucked into it. His trousers are held up by black braces. Lez Brotherston wanted Grischa to reflect the uniform worn by the teachers of the Imperial State Ballet and The Ballet Russes. He is frequently seen with a cane in one hand.



Irina Boronskaja

At the beginning of the production, Irina is wearing a stunning black glittery romantic tutu with white gloves. In the production of *Les Sylphides*, Irina is wearing a white, romantic tutu with glittery embellishments across the bodice.



ACTIVITY: *Written Work*

Create a mood board of male and female ballet dancers using images from The Sadler's Wells Ballet, The Royal Ballet and Ballet Rambert and annotate the stylistic features of the costumes.

Once you have created and annotated a mood board, compare your images to Lez Brotherston's designs using the images throughout the pack.



ACTIVITY: *Practical Exercise*

Choose four images from your mood board as created in the previous written exercise. Recreate these images on yourself.

In groups of four create four tableaux using your positions to represent a series of photographs from the era.

Development: add music and then play with rhythm and dynamics to change from one photograph to the next.

Lighting Design

Paule Constable is a prominent female lighting designer in the United Kingdom. *The Red Shoes* is the fifth production she has worked on for New Adventures.

Paule Constable liaised with Lez Brotherston in the early stages of creation to discuss the storyboard. They needed to ensure that the initial lighting designs could be achieved working in and around the complex automated proscenium. Later, Bourne and Constable worked together more closely, exploring how the lighting design would serve to highlight particular moments, create atmosphere and a sense of place, and aid in furthering the plot.

Below is a brief overview of the lighting states in *The Red Shoes* and the purposes they serve.

ACT ONE

The curtains open on Ballet Lermontov's latest production and a large chandelier hangs above centre stage, creating a sense of grandeur and elegance. Hidden upstage, in darkness, sits an audience including Vicky and her Aunt who are watching from the auditorium. As the proscenium rotates, PARcan lights are used to reveal the onstage audience and to create two distinct spaces—backstage and the auditorium. Here, our focus is directed to a mesmerised Vicky Page, dreaming of a life onstage as part of this company.

As the scene changes to Lady Neston's soiree, the lighting reflects the décor and portrays Lady Neston's aristocratic background. The use of floral sconce lampshades helps to create the atmosphere of a stately home whilst a second chandelier reinforces Lady Neston's luxurious lifestyle and wealth.



Lermontov's Monte Carlo mansion is lit with a warm, soft, glow, indicating that the meeting is held in late afternoon/early evening, and they have been working all day, mulling over ideas for the company's next production. As Lermontov stands, a white spotlight picks out a pair of red pointe shoes, aiding the narrative to show that this is Lermontov's grand idea for his next major ballet.

During *The Red Shoes* Ballet, white light is used to emphasize the block colour of Brotherston's set design creating a stark visual contrast from previous scenes. Lighting also helps to create various atmospheres and intentions. As Vicky's character in the ballet journeys to a dance hall, a chandelier provides light but gradually the lack of light causes the cast to appear as silhouettes, making the characters around Vicky appear less real and the atmosphere more sinister. Within the Dance Hall scene, the lighting changes to a harsh red state representing flames and implying this is a place of vice, lust and passion.

Vicky's spotlight shakes and flickers to show that the shoes are taking on a life of their own and continue to control her until her death.

ACT TWO

As the curtains open for the second half, dark blue lighting is used to reinforce the time of day (night time) and to complement the seaside location. However, yellow lighting is used throughout Vicky and Julian's pas de deux to create an atmosphere of romance, warmth and blossoming love.

As rehearsals resume for the company's next ballet, a sudden burst of red light is cast over the stage as Julian and Vicky leave Ballet Lermontov, showing the characters' anger, the dramatic atmosphere and highlighting the climactic plot development. Darker, shadowy lighting states are used not only in the dingy Music Hall but also in the bedroom scene. This illustrates the contrast in the artistic calibre and success experienced by Vicky and Julian which helps the audience to understand their artistic frustrations.

As Vicky returns to Ballet Lermontov, she steps into a spotlight, indicating that this is where she belongs and feels happy. A red light is shining from upstage left on a diagonal pathway to create a dramatic split stage, aided by the curtain which is also on a diagonal. This lighting helps to create a surreal atmosphere with a sense of foreboding, and emphasises the sinister nature of the choreography as Lermontov mimics the choreography of The Pimp. As Vicky puts on the red shoes, floor lights are used downstage to show that she is back 'on stage' in her role within *The Red Shoes* Ballet before tragedy strikes.



ACTIVITY: Written Work

Looking at the image below describe the type of light, its intensity, colour, position and descriptions of any patterns or projections used. To extend your knowledge, write one sentence for each description to explain how it is effectively used.



*Referring to the lighting design, find 10 different purposes of lighting used in Matthew Bourne's production of *The Red Shoes*. Write the purpose in one colour and the description of the lighting state in another. Discuss your findings as a class.*

*Essay – Compare the lighting design in *The Red Shoes* with another of Bourne's works.*

*Essay – Integrated use of costume, lighting, sound, scenery and props are a stylistic feature of Bourne's repertoire. Discuss how the lighting designs in *The Red Shoes* contribute to this.*

Aural Setting

Music always plays a major role in the works of Matthew Bourne. He is often heavily influenced by music, and uses it as a stimulus, source of inspiration and even a choreographic tool when creating his productions. Bourne decided against using the original score of the *The Red Shoes* film and instead explored other composers' works that would support the rich narrative of the production, as well as to capture a sense of the era, the drama and the emotional journey of the piece. He found what he was searching for in the scores of Oscar winning composer, Bernard Herrmann.

Herrmann, like Bourne, developed a love for music during his childhood and his career quickly gained momentum upon leaving Juilliard and landing a job at CBS radio. He composed nearly 50 film scores, winning an Oscar for his score for *The Devil and Daniel Webster* and gaining international fame with his haunting scores for the Alfred Hitchcock movies *Vertigo* and *Psycho*. Bourne chose to work with his long-time collaborator Terry Davies, New Adventures Associate Artist, to piece together and arrange a variety of works by Herrmann to create a brand-new score for *The Red Shoes*.

Powell and Pressburger's *The Red Shoes* was made in 1948 so Bourne wanted to focus on finding music from and before that era. This means that a lot of the score consists of Herrmann's early concert works and pre-Hitchcock films. Music from *Currier and Ives Suite* (1935) and four key movies was used to create the final score – *Citizen Kane*, *The Ghost and Mrs Muir*, *Hangover Square* and *Fahrenheit 451*. *The Ghost of Mrs Muir* and *Citizen Kane* were both set in the 1940s which influenced his decision to research early Herrmann works.

Bourne is renowned for using well known musical scores in his works from Tchaikovsky (*Nutcracker!*, *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*) to Prokofiev

(*Cinderella*) to Danny Elfman (*Edward Scissorhands*) but Herrmann is an unusual choice for the world of dance. Most of Herrmann's earlier scores have not been used in theatre before and Bourne was delighted to discover that despite its complex time signatures, the music was perfect for narrative dance. After listening to a score intensely, Bourne reworks the choreography to fit the tempo, rhythms and pitch creating an action-to-music relationship known as direct correlation.

Q&A with Terry Davies



/ Terry Davies (*The Red Shoes* Orchestrator and New Adventures Associate Artist) working with Dominic North (*Julian Craster*)

When did you and Matthew Bourne first meet to discuss initial ideas for *The Red Shoes* and what time scale did you have to create the final score?

We started discussing it in broad terms a couple of years before the production and thinking about whether or not using Herrmann's music would work. In October 2015, having decided on a potential instrumentation, I recorded a scoring of four or five pieces from different Herrmann sources to demonstrate that the line-up would work and that we would have a unified score, despite the very different sources.

What was it about Herrmann's scores that appealed to Bourne and had he decided on the music before, or after your initial discussions?

He has always loved them and had wanted to use them in a dance piece. For him, they are natural dance music and are, of course, highly dramatic. Naturally, he had favourites, such as the music for *The Ghost and Mrs Muir* and many of these are in the final score. We wanted to limit the number of sources as there would be a danger of having a disjointed score.

What process did you go through to get from an initial draft to the final score?

It was an organic process with everything developing from the scenario, which we approached in sections. After discussions with Matthew, I produced computer demos for the scenes in question and once we were both happy with the result these went into the collection of demos that would be used for the rehearsals. The orchestra and conductor only arrived at the very end of the rehearsal process and, after working with me for four days in London, the live music was finally heard by the cast for the first time in the technical rehearsals.

Which instruments are used and how do they support the narrative?

Julian is a pianist so there's clearly a piano. In fact I chose two pianos. There's a grand piano for 'performances' and grander situations but also an upright for rehearsal rooms and the more modest music hall. Although subtle, the upright also has a different character to the grand. At times Julian's piano plays against the prevailing musical mood to highlight his creativity and stubbornness. His piano playing is also sometimes virtuosic – a considerable challenge to our pianist in the pit – which leaves no doubt as to Julian's talent. We used Herrmann's 'Concerto Macabre' in particular for this, composed as a piano concerto.

The sparring of the grand and upright pianos gave me scope for extra character conflict as well as opportunities to be playful, with the pianos sharing passages or battling them back and forth. Whilst the string section can be lush and powerful, it can also be very intimate and I have often reduced the section to solo players, particularly for the more tender scenes between Vicky and Julian. This also gave important extra textural variety.

Although pianos can be impressively percussive, I included a percussionist to give added colour and edge, and in the bigger dance routines, drive.

What problems did you face when arranging the score and how did you overcome them?

The main challenge was to unify the score. I decided that this would succeed best if there was a restricted instrumentation rather than a wide range of instrumental colours. I knew that I wanted strings and this was broadened to include the strings of two pianos and a harp.

Our budget for live music permitted only 16 musicians but I drew on my approach from *The Car Man* some time ago, deciding to have 10 live string players bolstered by two carefully written keyboard parts. These keyboard parts would support the live players with string samples, requiring particularly sensitive keyboard playing and sound mixing to give the effect of a sizeable string section.

I had to take account of the grand piano having potentially more power than the upright or the harp and this is dealt with in the dynamic markings in the orchestral parts.

Harp writing always requires particular care as there are only seven strings per octave instead of the piano's 12. For some music, this is not a problem but with more 'chromatic' music like Herrmann's the harpist has to juggle seven pedals to make the necessary changes. This means the harp

pedalling always has to be carefully planned and the harp will sometimes not be available to play. In orchestral music there are often two harps sharing the material.

How did you create contrast between the story of Ballet Lermontov and The Red Shoes Ballet?

From the earliest discussions I wanted the ballet to sound different to the rest of the score. To achieve this, the pianos, which are heavily present in the rest of the score, do not play at all. I also introduced metal percussion instruments, not used anywhere else. Principal amongst this are the glockenspiel and vibraphone, allowing new and sometimes other-worldly textures. They only reappear towards the very end of the evening when Vicky recalls elements of the ballet in her nightmare.



ACTIVITY:
Practical Exercise

Find three contrasting pieces of Bernard Herrmann music. Improvise to the music one piece at a time, letting your body respond to the mood and atmosphere created. Discuss your physical responses and compare and contrast elements of pace, dynamic, fluidity, movement volume, focus, imagery and feeling evoked.

Bernard Herrmann (1911–1975)



“No composer contributed more to film than Bernard Herrmann, who in over 50 scores enriched the work of such directors as Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock, François Truffaut, and Martin Scorsese.”
Steven C Smith

From his first film, *Citizen Kane*, to his last, *Taxi Driver*, Herrmann was a master at evoking psychological nuance and dramatic tension through music, often using unheard-of instrumental combinations to suit the dramatic needs of a film. His movie scores are amongst the most distinguished ever written, ranging from the fantastic *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *Fahrenheit 451*, through the romantic *Obsession*, *The Ghost and Mrs Muir*, to the terrifying *Psycho*.

It seems fitting that a composer who blazed new trails across the emerging media of the 20th century – radio, cinema and television – is finding fresh appreciation in the age of connectivity, as his influence on the art of dramatic music continues to grow into the 21st century.

Born in New York City on 29 June 1911, he studied conducting and composition at the New York University and the Juilliard School, where his teachers included Philip James and Percy Grainger. He became part of Aaron Copland's Young Composers Group and at the age of 22 made his first major public appearance as a conductor.

In 1934, Herrmann was appointed as conductor of the CBS Symphony Orchestra and composed several works for radio drama pioneers such as Norman Corwin and Orson Welles. Welles asked Herrmann to write the music to *Citizen Kane* in 1940. During the following decade, Herrmann managed to align a film career that included his Oscar-winning *The Devil and Daniel Webster* and the classic *The Ghost and Mrs Muir* with his New York-based appearances as conductor and composer for CBS.

In 1951, after CBS was forced to shut the radio orchestra, Herrmann moved to Hollywood as a freelance composer, working in films for artists such as Robert Wise, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*; Fred Zinnemann, *A Hatful of Rain*; Ray Harryhausen, *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*; and, most importantly, Alfred Hitchcock, with whom he collaborated on classics including *North by Northwest*, *Vertigo* and *Psycho*. By the 1960s he had relocated to London, where he recorded his musical works for major labels, notably Decca, and composed for a new generation of directors, including François Truffaut on *Fahrenheit 451* and Brian De Palma on *Obsession*. He died on the morning of Christmas Eve 1975, having just completed recording his score to Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*.

Herrmann was married three times: to novelist Lucille Fletcher from 1939 to 1948 (two daughters); then to Lucy Anderson from 1949 to 1964; and, finally, to Norma Shepherd – a journalist, producer and presenter for the BBC in London – in 1968.

Steven C Smith

“As a composer I might class myself as a Neo-Romantic, inasmuch as I have always regarded music as a highly personal and emotional form of expression. I like to write music which takes its inspiration from poetry, art and nature. I do not care for purely decorative music. Although I am in sympathy with modern idioms, I abhor music which attempts nothing more than the illustration of a stylistic fad. And in using modern techniques, I have tried at all times to subjugate them to a larger idea or a grander human feeling.”

Bernard Herrmann

8 Matthew Bourne



Sir Matthew Bourne OBE is widely hailed as the UK's most popular and successful choreographer and director. For 30 years he has been creating and directing dance for musicals, opera, theatre, film as well as his own highly successful, award-winning companies.

Matthew is the creator of the world's longest running ballet production, a seven-time Olivier Award winner, and the only British director to have won the Tony Award for both Best Choreographer and Best Director of a Musical. He has been recognised by over 40 international awards, including following Dame Margot Fonteyn as only the second dance recipient of the Hamburg Shakespeare Prize for the Arts and being the first recipient, in the arts category, of The British Inspiration Award. He is also the proud recipient of the *Evening Standard* Award, *South Bank Show* Award, *Time Out* Special Award, Drama Desk Award, six Los Angeles Drama Critic Awards and the Astaire Award for Dance on Broadway. In 2007 he received a Special Theatre Managers Association Award for services to dance touring and audience development and was awarded the OBE for Services to Dance in 2001.

Matthew started his dance training at the comparatively late age of 22. He studied Dance Theatre and Choreography at The Laban Centre (now Trinity Laban) graduating in 1985 and spending a further year with the college's performance company Transitions. Matthew danced professionally for 14 years creating many roles in his own work.

As Artistic Director of his first company, Adventures in Motion Pictures from 1987 until 2002 Matthew created many award-winning works for the Company including *Spitfire* (1988), *The Infernal Galop* (1989), *Town and Country* (1991), *Deadly Serious* (1992), *Nutcracker!* (1992), *Highland Fling* (1994), *Swan Lake* (1995), *Cinderella* (1997) and *The Car Man* (2000). The most iconic productions have been revived for New Adventures, which was launched by Matthew and his Co-Director Robert Noble in 2002. Ground-breaking new productions were added to the repertoire including *Play Without Words* (2002 – a co-production with the National Theatre), *Edward Scissorhands* (2005), *Dorian Gray* (2008), *Lord Of The Flies* (2011 – Director Only), *Early Adventures* (2012 – a compilation of his early work) and *Sleeping Beauty* (2012). New Adventures is now the most successful and busiest dance company in the UK and a major exporter of British dance across the world.

Matthew's choreography for classic musicals includes Cameron Mackintosh's productions of *Oliver!* (1994 and 2009 Olivier nomination), *My Fair Lady* (2002 – Olivier Award), and the National Theatre's revival of *South Pacific* (2002). In 2004 Matthew co-directed with Richard Eyre and choreographed with Stephen Mear the hit West End musical *Mary Poppins* for which he won an Olivier Award for Best Theatre Choreographer, and two Tony nominations when it opened on Broadway. *Mary Poppins* has recently returned and is currently touring throughout the UK.



His film work includes television productions of his stage work including *Matthew Bourne's Christmas* (Channel 4, 2012), *Swan Lake* (1996 Emmy nomination and 2011 in 3D), *The Car Man* (2001 and 2015), *Nutcracker!* (2003) and *Sleeping Beauty* broadcast by the BBC for Christmas 2013 prior to worldwide cinema screenings. Original work includes the John Betjeman inspired *Late Flowering Lust* (1993) with Sir Nigel Hawthorne. Matthew was the subject of a South Bank Show in 1997, a BBC Imagine documentary in 2012 and a Channel 4 documentary, *Bourne to Dance*, which was broadcast on Christmas Day 2001. His production of *Swan Lake* features in Stephen Daldry's hit film *Billy Elliot*. In 2015 his recent revival of *The Car Man* was broadcast on SKY TV and screened in cinemas worldwide throughout 2016.

Other theatre and dance work includes *As You Like It* (RSC/John Caird), *Children of Eden* (West End/John Caird), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Aix en Provence/Robert Carsen), *The Tempest* (NYT), *Show Boat* (Malmo Stadsteater, Sweden), *Peer Gynt* (Barbican/Yukio Ninagawa), *Watch With Mother* (NYDC), *Boutique* and *The Infernal Galop* (Images of Dance and The Sarasota Ballet), *Watch Your Step* (Irving Berlin Gala), *French and Saunders Live* in 2000 (UK tour), *Dearest Love* (Ballet Boyz), and *Highland Fling* (Scottish Ballet).

In 1999 Faber and Faber published *Matthew Bourne and his Adventures in Motion Pictures*, edited by theatre and dance writer, Alastair Macaulay, and a new edition was published in recognition of Bourne's 25th Anniversary Celebrations in 2012.

In addition to being a prolific choreographer, Matthew supports the wider dance industry and its future. He is proud to be an Associate Artist and Resident Company at Sadler's Wells where New Adventures have played record-breaking Christmas seasons since 2002. In 2008 he established Re:Bourne to increase opportunities to inspire young

people with a passion for dance, and in 2010 he created the New Adventures Choreographer Award (NACA) to enhance opportunities and showcase the talents of emerging choreographers. In 1997 Matthew was made an Honorary Fellow of his former college, The Laban Centre, becoming a Companion of Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in 2012. He has six Honorary Doctorates from The Open University, and the De Montfort, Plymouth, Kingston and Roehampton Universities, as well as the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He is also a Companion of Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts and a proud patron of many organisations, including The Arts Educational School, Laine Theatre Arts, CREATE and Shoreditch Youth Dance. In 2017 Matthew was appointed an Associate Artist for the Center Theatre Group in the USA.

In 2014 Matthew Bourne was awarded the prestigious De Valois Award for Outstanding Achievement at the National Dance Awards and later that year saw the opening of the Matthew Bourne Theatre, named in his honour, at his old school in East London, Sir George Monoux College. In 2015 he became the first dance figure to be given The Stage Award for Outstanding Contribution to British Theatre presented by the UK Theatre Awards. He was knighted in the Queen's New Year Honours 2016 for services to dance and awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award in recognition of his outstanding services to the art of ballet, which is one of the most coveted honours in the world of dance. In 2017 Bourne was presented with the inaugural Trailblazer in Dance and Theatre Award from The International Institute of Dance and Theatre.

In 2016, New Adventures presented the World Premiere of Matthew Bourne's *The Red Shoes*, based on the classic Powell & Pressburger film with music by Bernard Herrmann. *The Red Shoes* has since been performed to sell out audiences across the UK and won two Olivier Awards in 2017 for Best Entertainment and Matthew Bourne for Best Theatre Choreographer.

9 The Creative Process

Most of Bourne's choreographic works are based heavily or entirely on well-known ballets, books, films, musicals, pieces of art or compositional scores; his most famous being *Swan Lake* and *Nutcracker!* Like *Edward Scissorhands*, *The Red Shoes* joins the New Adventures canon as a work adapted from a famous film.



/ Liam Mower and Ashley Shaw during the creation period of *The Red Shoes*

Bourne is renowned for creating work that attracts large audiences and is accessible to those unfamiliar with the world of dance. A new work with a familiar title encourages newcomers to the audience. Although Bourne wants audiences to feel that they have a way into the work, he also wants them to experience something new. It is not his aim to simply re-tell a story but instead to put his own spin on the narrative that provokes the audience to think and consider the story in a new light.

Stylistic Features

Bourne himself would argue that it is difficult to describe his style because of the nature of his choreographic process. He is inspired by a plethora of stimuli, eras, dance styles and references. The movement content is deeply rooted in the background and context of the story. All movement is generated through intention-based tasks, creative exploration and play. In the context of *The Red Shoes*, romantic ballet and swing dance were predominantly used to help differentiate between Bourne's narrative and the various 'featured' ballets presented by Ballet Lermontov such as *Les Sylphides* and Lermontov's *The Red Shoes Ballet*. Social dances such as swing were used to develop phrases in order to portray Ballet Lermontov in a more relaxed state, for example as seen in the company's end of season party at the beginning of Act Two.



/ Matthew Bourne directing the New Adventures company during *The Red Shoes* creation period

When making his earlier works, Bourne choreographed much of the movement on himself and his small company, then known as Adventures in Motion Pictures, and with that came a more personal sense of style, with movement that suited the group of people he was working with. As the company has grown and developed so too has the choreography, as Bourne works closely with his dancers to let them bring their own creative ideas to the table and celebrates their diverse stylistic backgrounds. As he works with dancers from a mixture of contemporary, musical theatre and ballet training, he blends all of these genres to create something unique, but always the focus is on storytelling, using the body instead of words.

Earlier in his career, Bourne's work had a very witty, quirky and comedic approach. As his career has progressed, Bourne has become more interested in moving people emotionally. The structuring of the narrative journey of his pieces has also developed and, working similarly to a film director, Bourne constructs his scenes carefully, to create a cohesive flow punctuated with moments of comedy, drama and emotion. Often, Act One will allow the audience to build their understanding of the characters, themes and initial plot. The act will culminate in 1 moment of drama or high stakes and then Act Two will often open with a lighter, humorous and entertaining tone, to relax the audience and bring them back after the interval. The second half on the show can then build in dramatic intensity and plot development, exploring themes in more depth, before resulting in the climax of the piece.



/ Matthew Bourne (Artistic Director, *New Adventures & Re:Bourne*) with Etta Murfitt (Associate Artistic Director, *New Adventures & Re:Bourne*)

Choreographic Approach & Role

Once Bourne has established the story and the structure with his creative team, he goes into a phase of workshops. For *The Red Shoes*, this workshop phase happened two years prior to the rehearsal period, using the company's Associate Artists and a small number of principal dancers. This process is where initial phrases of choreography are created. Bourne instructs choreographic tasks which generate phrases of movement which are developed and manipulated under Bourne's direction. The movement is then filmed for reflection and future reference. The motives behind the tasks are deeply rooted in the intention of the narrative scene. A second phase of workshops is then used to explore ideas further and generate more choreography in advance of full company rehearsals.



/ The Red Shoes company dancers researching their characters and reflecting during the creation period

For Bourne's production of *The Red Shoes*, videos were a huge source of primary research. Videos of the film's actors, famous ballet dancers of that time, videos of 1940s dance etiquette and portraits of prima ballerinas were all referred to. Once the dancers are cast the company enter a six-week rehearsal process leading up to the show's premiere performance. The dancers share and teach each other sections of choreography and, once learnt, Bourne can start to shape and refine the material and is very much like a film director during the choreographic process. He has to be responsible for not only polishing and improving individual scenes and performances but has to oversee the bigger picture and how these changes could affect the narrative.

Bourne states that his choreographic process has developed over time. The more he has worked with new dancers with an increasingly technical background, the more the movement vocabulary has become more complex and intricate. It may seem unusual for dancers to be involved in so much research and in the choreographic process but Bourne wants a company of 'thinking dancers' that are fully immersed in the work and the creation. Bourne believes it is vital for the dancers to know where their movement comes from and why they are performing it, so that it has authenticity and intention behind it. He wants all the characters to be fully realised and fleshed out with backstories. This creates a rich world and helps the audience to relate to the characters and understand their narrative journey and struggles. Creating choreography is a collaborative process where the dancers have to have ownership over their character through developed interpretation and research. Bourne on the other hand allows the artists within his company to develop their characters and to push themselves as performers and artists, not just as dancers.



ACTIVITY: *Further Reading*

Research the following dancers and feed back your findings to the rest of the class – Svetlana Beriosova, Robert Helpmann, Pamela May, Wilson & Keppel, Alicia Markova. Try to unearth as much information as possible about your chosen dancer regarding their background and personality.

Q&A with Matthew Bourne

You are renowned for reworking major classics or well-known stories. What was it about *The Red Shoes* that made you pick this film for your latest dance production?

I think it was my love of the film. It was the period, the atmosphere, and the relationships. I like the idea of two artists who come together to produce something but also two people who fall in love through their art – that’s what brings them together. When they haven’t got their art, their relationship doesn’t quite work; they need the other side to their life.

I wanted to show more about what their life was like when they weren’t with the company and supposedly, the highest level of artistic achievement. I wanted to show them in a cheap musical; perhaps they were hungry and they weren’t doing well. I wanted to show why she might leave him. It’s not all about being selfish, it’s about showing that she needs her career and that he needs his; they are both artists. I thought that people would identify with the relationship; they get that this is a girl who has dreams that are crushed; and hopefully that is why the audience will be moved because they understand that. Dreams are universal.

Clearly the film is a huge source of inspiration for ideas and developing the plot but did you use anything else as a stimulus?

Lots of dance history! I’m a very big fan of dance history and I’ve always enjoyed it. I try to go back and capture different styles and different periods. I also refer to lots of classical ballets that are not featured in the film, but are based on ideas of ballets that might have been around at that time. Ballet Lermontov should be a company that tries a bit of everything – some classical (such as *Les Sylphides*) and some modern. Modern dancers often did pieces in heels, flat foot, barefoot sometimes – they all experimented with different techniques which is why I felt that our company was the right company to do this piece. It’s not all en pointe and they experimented with different styles of dance.

I also used lots and lots of old videos of dancers of that period as well as documentaries. It was really easy to research this piece. We based a lot of the characters on the life stories of different dancers of that time and we brought that into play. So I’d say that dance history was the biggest influence.

There are other films that are not about dance like *All About Eve*. It’s a film about a girl who wants to become a great actress, so a similar story but she’s quite calculating which gives us a bit of an edge to work with. *A Star Is Born* is another one; films about people who become a star, what it takes to be a star or have star quality. They were really useful.

Can you describe a movement task you gave your dancers during the workshop phase?

During the bedroom scene between Julian and Vicky, I gave them two tasks for two duets and was very simple. The first one was all about her taking his hands away from the keys of the piano. Simply the girl taking the guy's wrist and moving them away and initially seeing what you do without letting go and what shapes can you make. The other task was 'what can we do with the guy holding the girl's ankles? What can we do? What shapes can we make?'. It was very simplistic – she wants him to stop composing on the piano, he wants her to stop dancing. In a way, that's the thing that is coming between them and that is how the duet started.



/ Vicky Page (Ashley Shaw) during the bedroom scene

When casting your productions, do you have a preference when it comes to their training?

I have to have dancers who can dance technically but I also need dancers that know how to perform to an audience. I have a lot of dancers who have trained at Central Ballet School, Rambert School of Contemporary Dance, Laine Theatre Arts and Royal

Ballet School. Ballet dancers know how to perform to an audience; all of the movements are projected out towards the audience and it's the same with musical theatre. I don't have a preference of where they train but they have to be able to perform and portray character roles.

Did you use existing company dancers or did you audition for dancers?

Very few people auditioned for this show; they are mainly dancers who I have worked with in other shows. Some of them have come back after a period of being away such as Michela who plays Irina. Sam, who plays Lermontov, he's been with me a long time on and off but most of the cast were in Sleeping Beauty last year and I had them in mind for these roles for quite a long time.



ACTIVITY:
Practical Exercise

Choreographing a dance using Bourne repertoire that underpins technical and physical skills.

Using YouTube, source several short clips from various Bourne shows. Write a list of the dance moves evident in each clip. Choose 4–6 of your favourite moves and recreate them one by one. Decide on an order and number them. Link the moves together to create a short phrase.

10 Worksheets – Devising

Having identified some of Bourne’s characteristics in the previous section the exercises and activities outlined on these worksheets suggest ways to capture some of Bourne’s style and some methods used in the devising and rehearsal process.

For some of the tasks you may wish to refer to the New Adventure’s *The Red Shoes* Spotify Playlist to source music for the creative exercises.

[Click here to listen to our playlist](#)

TASK 1 CREATING A MOTIF

Read the plot and pick one simple aspect of the story that you will use for a stimulus e.g. Julian Craster’s thought process when composing *The Red Shoes*.

Create a short motif then teach it to a partner. Once they have learned the motif, they will be responsible for developing this motif using repetition, embellishment, direction, level, force, tempo, dynamics and fragmentation. You will do the same with theirs.

Perform back to your partner and allow them to critique the performance. Is the intention clear? Does the original motif still shine through? Does the new phrase build and maintain the audience’s interest? Write down the critiques in your book as targets.

Spend the next lesson improving your motifs before showing them back to the class. The rest of the class will need to guess which part of the narrative is your stimulus.

TASK 2 ADAPTING A PHRASE TO DIFFERENT TEMPOS

Create a playlist of songs with different time signatures and speeds.

Learn an excerpt of choreography from another Matthew Bourne production. Rhythm and timing is integral in Bourne’s works. Try to ensure that the timing of the phrase is as accurate as that on the video by putting counts to the movement. Once you can confidently perform the phrase, use your playlist and dance the phrase to different pieces of music. This will test your musicality but also get you to think about how different time signatures can affect the accents and flow of a phrase.

TASK 3 CREATING A NARRATIVE BASED ON YOUR CLASS

Discuss and annotate different emotions or scenarios that you would expect in most dance classes, through good times and bad.

Then as a class, choose some of these scenarios and put them into an order to create a narrative storyboard. Choose a piece of music for your piece to be performed to.

Get into groups and each group take a part of the story. Discuss and decide who each person is playing in the scenario and act it out. Repeat, but act it out without speaking. Think about the conversations that are happening and discuss how to exaggerate, clarify and highlight the narrative so that the audience can understand it without words.

Practice and solidify your section so that it can be consistently performed.

Spend time piecing all the groups together and work on the musicality and flow of the piece.

TASK 4 TOP AND TAIL TASK

This exercise is about creating unusual solo material. This task was used to make material for the final *Red Shoes* Ballet reprise in Act Two. It has a nightmarish quality and represents the thoughts and anxieties in Vicky's mind.

Find a partner in the group. Decide who will be A and who will be B.

A's will be Top – Make a 16 count phrase with just the upper body (you can include arms/head/waist/curves/arches and classical ports–de –bras).

B's will be Tail – Make a 16 count phrase with the lower body (you can travel and incorporate classical vocabulary in the phrase but don't over complicate it).

For both phrases be very precise and clean with the counts, rhythm and accents and make the movement consistent every time.

Once the material is clear and consistent, go back to your partner. Now, you will put the top on the tail.

Work together to fuse the phrases together so they become one phrase of choreography. Try to stay as true to the original timing and dynamics you created on your own – this will be challenging and take practice to find a flow.

Once the phrase feels learned and comfortable start to add focus. Try to look in directions that don't feel natural – this adds to the nightmare quality. E.g. focusing behind you as you move forward.

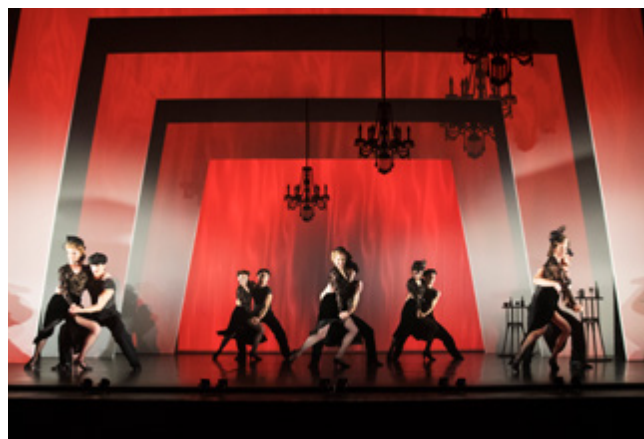
Now start to think about the nightmare in Vicky's head and the intensity of focus and performance needed.

Perform your Top and Tail phrases to the rest of the group. N.B This task can be adapted and used in other contexts.

Beach Ballet:

Top – Swimming moves

Tail – Crazy Feet (See Task 5)



TASK 5 CRAZY FEET

Bourne often uses social dances as inspiration for movement. This exercise uses Swing Dance steps and rhythms to create a social dance style contact duet. This was used to create choreography for the dancehall section in *The Red Shoes* Ballet and *The Company Party* in Act Two.

Suggested Music:

- It Don't Mean a Thing (If it Aint Got That Swing)
Louis Armstrong & Duke Ellington
- Shim Sham Shimmy
- Charleston

Research the Swing Era and the different types of Swing Dance. Find images and clips on YouTube to get a sense of the style. Can you find some of these steps?

- Apple Jack
- Shorty George
- Fall off the Log
- Sways
- Kick Ballchange
- Charleston

Using your research as inspiration, work on your own to create a 16–24 count footwork phrase (Toe, Heel, Knee to Knee, Charleston) Focus on the rhythm and timing of the phrase so it is clear and consistent (You will need to count your phrase)

In pairs, work your phrases around each other trying to maintain some kind of physical contact at all times (holding hands, hand on shoulder, ballroom grip, arm in arm) to create a social dance style duet. Keep working to your own individual rhythm and the timing that you have set.

Add a lean, assistance or a lift, two changes of direction, a freeze and two head changes (up/down/head circles)

Add music (you could use swing music here) and set your duet to the music. Practice the duet to find the ease of style and concentrate on focus and performance.

ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Split the whole group in two.

Now imagine you are at a party. Find an opening position to set the scene and as a group decide who and how you will perform your duets (two/four couples at a time/ starting all together/ starting in a canon.) Find a finish or exit.

Once each group has set the scene, concentrate on focus. How can you create a party scene through building relationships and eye contact? Consider your role as an individual – Are you having a good time? Do you know anyone at the party?

Now perform your party scene to each group. Discuss what worked within the scene and why, did the social dance aspect of the duets help to set the scene?

TASK 6 ANKLES VS WRISTS

This task is inspired by the bedroom duet between Vicky Page and Julian Craster in Act Two. It represents the struggle and pull between their love for each other and their love and ambition for their art.

Working in pairs, label yourself A and B. Begin with As holding onto Bs ankles – the aim is for A to maintain contact with at least one hand at all times. Improvise for 5 minutes and where possible film the work. Try and investigate what shapes you can make, how you can travel, what levels you can use even with this restriction. Think about the intention of the duet and investigate the push and pull and struggle.

Review the footage and spend 15 minutes trying to recreate some of your favourite moments into a phrase. Film the outcome.

Now begin a second improvisation where B has to hold onto 'A's wrists with one or both hands. The same rules apply here – so B's will need to maintain contact at all times.

Improvise for 5 minutes (filmed). Teachers, monitor your students and ensure that one is not dominating. B should try to control A whereas A should be trying to break free and dance. Encourage lifts, supports, moments of stillness and counter balances to inspire students to experiment with innovative choreography.

Review the footage and create a second phrase.

PROGRESSION

Beginner – Chose one of the two routines. Refine the routine's timing, dynamics and accuracy and focus on the intention of the duet.

Intermediate – Perform phrase one and then phrase two to create one continuous routine. Your choreographic challenge will be to create a transition between the two routines. Think of the intention of the duet and how you can create the tension between you both.

Advanced – students should try to cut together, edit and blend phrase 1 and 2, interchanging between each routine in order to create the 'argument' between Julian Craster (represented by the hands) and Vicky Page (represented by the feet) i.e. feet, hands, feet, hands, feet etc. The challenge is creating flow and pace with interesting transitions and creating the tension of an argument.

TASK 7 INSPIRED BY JULIAN'S SOLO WHERE HE DREAMS OF SUCCESS AS A CONDUCTOR

Imagine you are holding a conductor's baton. In the air, draw your name. This will become your motif.

Develop this phrase using these three developments whilst practicing to music by Bernard Herrmann from the film, *Fahrenheit 451*:

- Change the tempo
- Change the dynamics
- Change the accent/ emphasis/ force for each letter

Write down your date of birth and coordinate the number of steps needed for each letter in order to make the phrase travel:

E.g. KERRY 03/06/75 = 0 steps for K, 3 steps for E etc.

The slash marks indicate that you need to add a jump or jumping turn.

Then, add in the idea of conducting an orchestra by conducting each letter to a different instrument or element of the orchestra. To increase the difficulty, you could develop the phrase by conducting the motif using different body parts.



/ Dominic North as Julian Craster in *The Red Shoes*

TASK 8 CHANCE CHOREOGRAPHY USING NUMBERS

Write down a list of numbers from 0–9.

As a group, assign a movement to each number OR the teacher can write on a white board specific commands.

E.g. 0 = sit, 1 = Jump, 2 = Low Turn, 3 = Shift, 4 = Suspend, 5 = Balance, 6 = Roll, 7 = Travelling jump, 8 = Stand/freeze, 9 = Travelling turn or Floor

N.B You can use more advanced movement language or specific terminology where appropriate

Write down your own phone number. These numbers will correlate with the movements on the board.

Using your phone number and following the formula above as your template create a solo.

E.g. Phone number 07578 682 357 will equal: Sit, travelling Jump, balance, travelling jump, stand, roll, freeze, low turn, shift, balance, travelling jump.

Development:

Work in groups of four or five and find a starting point and position in the room. Now dance your solos around each other. At this point the teacher will add in new commands they have determined beforehand. For example:

Every time a dancer has a 7 in their solo it needs to be an assisted travel or Jump

Every time a dancer has an 8 in their solo all the dancers need to freeze

Every time a dancer has a 0 in their solo they need to find contact with one other dancer.

This will take some time to work out. Now practice dancing the quartet; finding the flow in the movement and refining your ability to dance as a group.

TASK 9 BEACH BALLETT

This exercise is inspired by the Beach Ballet in Act One when the company arrives in Monte Carlo.

Suggested music for this task: Wells Raises Kane-Ragtime from Citizen Kane

N.B It is very useful to use images to add context to this task and build a mood board for inspiration. Find Pictures of beach life and the seaside of the 1930's



/ Beach holidays in Blackpool in 1937 by Fortunino Matania
Photograph: Alamy

Improvisation – Define your space into three areas. The sea, the beach and the promenade. Discuss all the different activities you do or things you see at the seaside. Using the Beach Ballet music, begin an improvisation with the whole group that uses all three areas. You can move between all areas and enter whenever you like. To help get you started, you can think of an entrance, and event in that area (e.g. paddling) and an exit. You can interact with others in the space too.

Using the mood board and the improvisation for inspiration, work on your own to choose four separate static beach positions. Make each position clear so that the rest of the group can guess what activity you are doing. E.g. Sunbathing

Working in groups of 3–5 use your positions to create four montages (Like seaside postcards) Add musicality and timing. E.g. hold for 4 move for 8.

Using your 8-count transition time, develop the transitions between each postcard (use rolls, turns, jumps, change of levels and pace) Ensure we see the difference between transitions and the frozen images of the postcards.

Look at the relationships within the postcards. Use the transitions to build a story adding focus and intention. You may need to adapt things slightly to allow this to unfold.

Now each group will decide on an entrance point in the room and find a travelling phrase/movement to enter as a group and begin your postcard performance (E.g. all synchronized swimming/ travelling in the first frozen position/eating ice creams) This should be as musical as the Postcard phrase so set counts and rhythm to the music.

DEVELOPMENT

You can use the Top and Tail (see task 2) to create more movement to continue the scene.
Tops – Swimming arms / Tails – Swimming legs/ foot patterns



ACTIVITY: *Written Work*

Create your own choreographic diary

Experiment using some of the techniques in the any of the 'practical tasks' found in this pack and document your progress. What went well? What did you learn? What could you improve for next time?

11 Essay Questions

Matthew Bourne

- Compare the backgrounds of Matthew Bourne and one other choreographer that you have studied and the effects that upbringing, education, inspiration and influences have had on their repertoire.
- Matthew Bourne is widely celebrated as being one of the most successful choreographers in the UK/ Europe with entertainment and accessibility being at the core of his company ethos. Discuss this statement. Refer to examples from repertoire you have studied in order to support your answer.
- Discuss Matthew Bourne's influences and where these influences can be seen in his works.
- Discuss how the repertoires you have studied from 2000 to the present day reflect the stylistic features of Matthew Bourne's New Adventures.
- Discuss the ways in which the choreographic language and style of New Adventures has developed over time. Refer to examples from Bourne's repertoire to support your answer.
- Discuss the influences which affected the development of the movement styles of two practitioners from the independent dance scene in Britain (2000–present day). You should refer to appropriate examples from the works of the two practitioners to support your answer.
- Matthew Bourne traditionally explores how themes from well-known stories can be made relevant to modern day audiences. Discuss this statement and refer to how the themes have developed alongside the advancement of the company.
- Discuss how Matthew Bourne's repertoire has evolved to reflect the development of contemporary, dance theatre in Britain.

- Discuss the subject matter used in the choreography of Matthew Bourne between 2000 and the present day. You should refer to examples from the works of at least two practitioners to show how the subject matter is communicated.

The Red Shoes

- How typical is *The Red Shoes* of Bourne's choreographic style? Give examples of movement vocabulary seen and how it either epitomizes his unique movement language, or differs from it.
- What contribution does the use of the set, costumes and lights make to the understanding of the narrative within Bourne's production of *The Red Shoes*?
- Discuss the use of duet and partner work in *The Red Shoes* and outline their significance within the choreography.
- Bourne's work as a director and choreographer has often been described as theatrical. Discuss this statement in connection to *The Red Shoes*, providing examples to support your answer.
- Identify how Bourne has reinvented *The Red Shoes* but played tribute to the heritage of the original film.
- Discuss the role of the creative collaborators and the contribution they have made in bringing Bourne's production of *The Red Shoes* to the stage.
- Choose another example of a dance production that has been adapted from a famous film and compare and contrast with Matthew Bourne's production of *The Red Shoes*.
- Discuss the theme of obsession in other theatrical works and describe how this is portrayed on stage, citing examples and then compare and contrast with examples of obsession from *The Red Shoes*.

12 Reflecting and Reviewing

In developing skills in evaluating professional theatre and dance work, it is worth considering an approach that students could take and possible questions that they could ask when reflecting on the production. In the case of *The Red Shoes* it is worth contemplating the use of the constituent features of a dance that have been discussed earlier within the resource pack. One could think about the following, remembering that students should always provide evidence or movement examples from the work to support their perspective and evaluation of the piece.



/ Neil Westmoreland, Resident Director & Assistant Choreographer for *The Red Shoes* and *Re:Bourne* Associate Artist, working with Sam Archer, Choreographic Assistant for *The Red Shoes* and Boris Lermontov

The Plot Or Narrative

- Can you summarise the plot or narrative?
- What were some of the key themes and can you state a scene where this is evident?
- How is the treatment of the plot different to other Bourne works that you have seen?
- What are some of the main similarities and differences between the film and Bourne's stage production?
- What theatrical devices were used and where could they be seen?

The Physical Setting – Design

- Describe the proscenium arch used in *The Red Shoes*.
- Explain how this was used effectively in the production.
- State up to 10 ways in which set was used effectively in *The Red Shoes*.
- How was lighting used effectively?
- Give an example where lighting was used to help draw the audience's focus to a specific part of the choreography.
- How did the costume design help the audience to understand the characters being portrayed on stage?
- Describe two costumes from *The Red Shoes*.



Aural Setting

- Who was the composer and who arranged the score?
- Why was this particular composer chosen?
- Which instruments were used and how do they help to create atmospheres or emotions?

Movement

- In stages, explain how Bourne created movement for *The Red Shoes* over a two-year period.
- Which dance styles are used in *The Red Shoes*?
- How are set, music and lighting integrated into the choreography?
- Describe a motif from *The Red Shoes* using action, space and dynamics in your answer.
- What does this motif show?
- How did a split stage aid the narrative?

Dancers

- Research the background of some of the dancers in *The Red Shoes* and discuss their training and career history. Can you identify any similarities or differences?
- What performance qualities do you think Bourne looks for in his dancers?
- What skills or qualities do you think they possess in order to be cast in a New Adventures production?

Read The Reviews

- Using the articles and reviews listed on page 44, choose one for the class to discuss and highlight the key points in the review. Summarise the writer's view and have a critical discussion with the class arguing the validity of the writer's opinion in comparison with that of your own.



13 Resources and Further Reading

- [Bernard Herrmann \(2017\)](#)
- *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*. Garafola, L, (2009) Da Capo Press
- *Fifty Contemporary Choreographers*, Poesio, G in M. Bremser ed. (1999) London: Routledge
- [Insight Conversation with Matthew Bourne \(2013\)](#)
- *Matthew Bourne and his Adventures in Dance*, Macaulay, A. (2011) Faber and Faber
- Matthew Bourne's *Nutcracker!* DVD (2003)
- Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake* DVD (2012)
- Matthew Bourne's *Sleeping Beauty* including *Imagine: A Beauty is Born* (Bonus Documentary) DVD (2013)
- Matthew Bourne's *w* DVD (2001)
- [Matthew's Top 20 of Bernard Herrmann \(2016\)](#)
- *The Red Shoes* DVD (1948)
- [The Red Shoes Press Launch \(2016\)](#)
- *The Red Shoes – The Golden Age of Illustration Series*, Christian, H, (2015) Pook Press.

- [Powell & Pressburger \(2017\)](#)
- Sadler's Wells – Dance House, Crompton, S. (2013) Oberon Books Ltd

Reviews and Articles

- [Matthew Bourne takes risk on ballet version of The Red Shoes – Guardian, 2016](#)
- [Sir Matthew Bourne to stage Red Shoes ballet – BBC, 2016](#)
- [Matthew Bourne's The Red Shoes works its magic at Sadler's Wells – Telegraph, 2016](#)
- [Matthew Bourne delivers obsession with a flourish – Guardian, 2016](#)
- [Matthew Bourne's The Red Shoes review at Sadler's Wells, London – 'built to last' – The Stage, 2016](#)
- [A homage to a golden age of dance and film – Evening Standard, 2016](#)
- [Review: The Red Shoes \(Sadler's Wells\) – What'sOnStage, 2016](#)

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