

A New Adventures Production



Matthew Bourne's

# SLEEPING BEAUTY

A GOTHIC ROMANCE

Music by Tchaikovsky

Director, Choreographer & New Scenario  
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**RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**



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# 1. Using this resource pack

This pack aims to give teachers and students further understanding of Matthew Bourne's *Sleeping Beauty*.

It contains information and materials about the production that can be used as a stimulus for discussion and practical activities.

There are worksheets containing information and resources that can be used to help build your own lesson plans and schemes of work based on *Sleeping Beauty*.

This pack contains subject material for Dance, Drama, English, Design and Music.



**Discussion**



**Further reading**



**Practical Exercises**



**Written work**

The symbols above are to guide you throughout this pack easily and will enable you to use this guide as a quick reference when required. They will appear through the pack as symbols highlighting further work that can be done.

There are also a number of related activities, practical exercises and discussion ideas that can be used to develop ideas, workshops and as a starting point on which to use for your own course requirements.



## 2. Introduction to Matthew Bourne's *Sleeping Beauty*

### Synopsis

#### Act One - 1890 The Baby Aurora

**"Once upon a time, there lived a king and queen who were very unhappy as they had never been blessed with a child"**

*Sleeping Beauty* opens with Carabosse the dark fairy conjuring up the baby Aurora to give to the King and Queen. Thunder claps and a baby cries over Tchaikovsky's score and the use of silhouette lighting brings the shadow of Carabosse ever larger towards the audience. The baby Aurora first appears as a puppet, her wilful and playful nature is clear as she sends Miss Maddox (Aurora's nanny) and other royal staff scurrying around after her becoming instantly well behaved as the King and Queen enter. The scene closes with Aurora being put to bed and the window left open for the fairies to visit.

The fairies are first seen travelling across the back of the stage in front of a moonlit backdrop. Each has a specific personality: Ardor the fairy of passion; Hiberna the fairy of rebirth; Autumnus the fairy of plenty; Feral the fairy of the untameable; Tantrum the fairy of temperament and the fairy king Count Lilac. Each fairy offers a gift and protection to Aurora before they exit. As Miss Maddox is tending to the baby Carabosse and her attendants enter, she feels the King and Queen haven't shown their gratitude to her for giving them a baby. After terrorising Miss Maddox and awakening the King and Queen, Carabosse briefly disappears only to return holding the baby Aurora. Carabosse starts to place a curse that will send Aurora into an endless sleep after she pricks her finger on a rose at her coming of age. Count Lilac intervenes as a grown up faceless Aurora acts out the curse and changes the curse to 100 years of sleep from which Aurora can only be awoken by the kiss of her true love (Leo, the palace gamekeeper). Act One comes to a close back in the baby Aurora's bedroom with Count Lilac and the fairies forming a protective circle around the baby princess, safely returned to her cot.



➤ Garden Party

#### Act Two - 1911 Aurora's coming of age

Text projected onto a gauze tells the audience that Carabosse has died in exile but that her curse has not died with her, another seeks revenge - Carabosse's son Caradox.

We now see Aurora as a young adult in her bedroom. She hasn't grown out of her wilful and playful nature, as her long suffering nanny attempts to get her ready for her coming of age party. Leo, the royal gamekeeper, Aurora's secret true love enters her bedroom through the window. He has to hide from Miss Maddox (under the bed) and is then seen mimicking the Queen from behind the curtains, if he were caught in her room he would be in serious trouble.

The scene then moves to the Palace garden where Aurora's coming of age party is in full swing. We see couples waltzing, playing tennis and croquet, picnics and a line of eligible suitors for Aurora. As she dances with each suitor, Leo looks on, jealous of all the male attention. Caradoc enters as charismatic stranger. He dances with Aurora and has her in a hypnotised state, trying to persuade her to take the dark rose. A sudden summer shower sends everyone scattering for shelter. Aurora finds her way to Leo, who is tending



the gardens. In a duet we see a reluctant Leo shunning Aurora's attentions but he soon responds and their playful relationship develops into something much more passionate. Aurora pricks her finger on a black rose that Caradoc has planted and starts drifting into a lifeless state. As Leo frantically seeks help from the guests, Aurora is revived briefly but succumbs to the curse and falls into a deep sleep. Caradoc points to Leo as the culprit, after a chase he manages to escape. Count Lilac appears, casting his counter spell and sending the whole Palace to sleep. He then takes Aurora into the sleepwalking world where she will stay for the next 100 years. The Palace gates are shut behind her as Leo enters - he is too late. Count Lilac (a vampire fairy), who sees Leo's genuine despair and gives him the gift of eternal life so he can wait to be reunited with Aurora when she awakes.

#### **INTERVAL - 100 years**

### **Act Three - 2011 Aurora wakes up**

The gates are now overgrown and we see a group of tourists visiting the now famous Palace gates, having their pictures taken. Leo emerges from a small tent dressed in modern day clothing with small, fledgling wings - he now belongs to the fairy world. Count Lilac appears and offers Leo the key to the Palace gates and as they open we are transported into the sleepwalkers forest. In Leo's search for Aurora, we see her in a weightless, lifeless state, gently manoeuvred by the sleepwalkers but always just out of Leo's reach.

The scene switches to Aurora's bedroom where she is lying asleep guarded by Caradoc and his henchmen. We see Caradoc's attempts to awaken Aurora fail, he becomes more frustrated and his hatred is clear to see. Guided by Count Lilac, Leo eventually finds his way to Aurora's bedroom, unaware of the trap Caradoc has laid for him. As Leo kisses Aurora Caradoc's henchmen grab him and wrestle him away. Caradoc takes his place at Aurora's bedside. She awakens and believes Caradoc to be the man who has broken the spell with a kiss of love.

### **Act Four - Yesterday The Wedding**

The Palace is now a contemporary backdrop for the wedding between Caradoc and Aurora. The guests wear masks and are dressed in red creating a cult-like atmosphere. Aurora appears dressed in white a stark visual contrast to the guests. Leo and Count Lilac have infiltrated the wedding gathering in disguise and watch on as Caradoc shows off his bride to be. He lays Aurora on banquettes, as if she is about to be sacrificed and looms above her revealing his true self and drawing a dagger. Count Lilac appears behind Caradoc, garbs the dagger and plunges it into Caradoc's heart as Leo snatches Aurora away to safety. Aurora is still under Caradoc's spell but as Leo embraces and kisses her again she begins to awaken. She is momentarily confused and frightened but sees Leo and realises she is safe and with her true love. The spell has finally been broken. The lovers are guarded by the fairies as they lie in their leafy bed. In the final scene we see the fairies, Aurora and Leo, now parents themselves. Their baby has little wings and takes flight with a similar wilfulness and playfulness we'd seen in Aurora as a baby. As the curtain drops, the audience see a happy family-like photograph and the words "..... And they all lived happily ever after" projected onto a gauze.



➤ **Wedding Ensemble**





## Q&A with Matthew Bourne [1]



***New Adventure's productions of Nutcracker! And Swan Lake are two of the most popular dance productions ever created and have become classics in their own right, but these were created back in the early nineties. What prompted you to return to Tchaikovsky in 2012?***

Following the success of my *Nutcracker!* and *Swan Lake*, it had obviously crossed my mind, on more than one occasion, that I should find a way of completing Tchaikovsky's trilogy of ballet masterworks some day but I had always struggled to hit on the perfect idea. Whilst musically brilliant and glorious, I had always found it a daunting thought to try and approach a score that was so associated with the pinnacle of classical ballet form and grandeur and to be honest, the story had always left me a little cold. Last spring, the company and I were in Moscow with our production of *Cinderella* and I was offered the chance of a private tour of Tchaikovsky's country retreat, just outside of the city in Kiln. At that time I was searching hard for an appropriate way to celebrate my company's silver jubilee and was in need of inspiration, so I gladly accepted. Standing alone in the great composer's bedroom, with its tiny iron bed in one corner and its simple wooden table at the window; it was easy to imagine the great man watching the changing seasons and writing some of the most unforgettable music ever composed. I decided in that moment, corny though it may sound, that this was a sign and I should make Tchaikovsky's *The Sleeping Beauty* my next project. What better way to celebrate our 25th birthday? I returned home to London with a waltz in my step and a summer of research stretching before me.

***As well as the legendary Tchaikovsky and Petipa ballet of 1980, there are many versions of the Sleeping Beauty story from Perrault's 1697 original to the Brother's Grimm 1812 tale, Little Briar Rose (this year celebrating its 200th anniversary) to the most well known re-telling of the myth in 1959 by Walt Disney (which also utilized an adapted version of Tchaikovsky's score). Which of these influenced you the most when you started your research?***

I started by reading all versions of the story that I could find. Of course, they all have much in common and in turn they all have big difference too. Perrault's original has a very grisly, rarely remembered second half, in which Aurora's children are almost served up as dinner for her new ogre step-mother! This I chose to ignore as it feels like two separate stories and indeed there is a theory that they are in fact two different tales tacked together. The Grimm version, known as Little Briar Rose is much closer to the story we all know and the Disney animated film version took more liberties than one might have expected; no 100 year sleep for example! I certainly took something from each of these versions but if one is approaching *Sleeping Beauty* as a piece of dance theatre then it is the music that Tchaikovsky wrote for his collaboration with choreographer Marius Petipa that must give the piece its structure. What the ballet score gives you that the fairy tale does not, is reasons to dance, or ideas for dance; fairy variations, a lengthy vision scene, a hunting scene and several pas de deux, trois and quatre! It dictates the action and adds emotion, drama and character. In fact it becomes the script.

***What are the challenges of creating a new interpretation of this centuries old fairy tale for contemporary audiences?***

When I first looked at this story I asked myself what was it that made it less than satisfying as a narrative and two things were clear, in the ballet scenario at least; no love story and no narrative tension in the last act





once Aurora has woken up. Unless you believe in love at first sight the love of Aurora for her Prince is very unconvincing, with the hero and heroine only really meeting at the very end of the story. It's impossible to feel anything for them. Interestingly, Walt Disney, one of the 20th Century's great storytellers, also recognised this flaw in the story for a modern audience, even in 1959. In Disney's narrative, Aurora, as a young girl, meets her Prince, thinking he is a commoner and falls in love just before her fate is sealed with the prick of her finger and the century long sleep. The dilemma becomes how can the Prince break the spell and keep their love alive. This creates a beautiful tragic love story and a logic and dramatic tension in one stroke. Thank you Walt!

Disney also recognized one of the central themes of the story; good versus evil. He built up the character of Carabosse (Magnificent in the Disney classic) to keep that central battle going right to the end of the story. The Tchaikovsky ballet creates a wonderfully malevolent musical world for Carabosse in the Prologue but then those themes barely appear again in the ballet and therefore the great character Carabosse is sidelined. Without giving too much away, I believe we have solved that narrative problem too with the introduction of another new character, Carabosse's faithful son, Caradoc.

All versions of *Sleeping Beauty* begin with the lines "Once upon a time there was a King and Queen who had not been blessed with an heir" or "could not have a child" or some such phrase. I have taken this as the starting point of the tale and have tried to give the dark fairy Carabosse a more compelling reason to want to do harm to the child. Maybe the Royal couple went to the dark side to obtain a child to call their own? This, in turn, threw up lots of ideas about Aurora herself. Was she the child of an ordinary working family rather than a Royal Princess, a gypsy child? An interesting character formed in my mind - a feisty, nature-loving, wild child, happier running through the forest barefoot than the stuffy life of a Princess. In movement terms, and considering our time-line, as a young girl she could be an Isadora Duncan figure - new kind of forward looking emancipated young woman?

### ***Any Freudian or psychoanalytical influences come into play here?***

The reason that these fairy tales and myths are still around and constantly re-invented is that they do still have things to say or reveal to us. As well as the classic good versus evil story, *Sleeping Beauty* is also a story about growing up and rebirth, what contemporary writers would call a "rites of passage" story. It is also full of fascinating symbolism. The prick of the finger and the letting of blood, are clearly symbolic of a young girl's journey into womanhood. At the end of the story the "kiss" of true love and the eventual acceptance of the Prince, who has also had to prove his manhood, suggest that they are now both ready for physical love and fulfilment. The "sleep" also seems to symbolize that lethargic period in a teenager's life when they don't want to engage with the world and how the parents often want to 'protect' their young and prevent them from growing up too quickly.

One tends to think of these ideas as very modern concerns and thoughts but I was encouraged to read how Petipa's original ideas for the famous "Rose Adage" in the ballet were saying just this! For those that know their classical ballet, the Rose Adage has today become all about the ballerina balancing on pointe, on one leg, with her arms above her head (an invention, incidentally of Dame Margot Fonteyn some 50 years or so after the ballet was created). Petipa actually took his inspiration from the traditions of the Commedia dell'arte in which a young man would present a rosebud to his beloved to represent their blossoming love. If she accepted, she was in turn declaring her interest. In Petipa's original choreography Aurora takes a rose from each of her noble suitors but then throws them dismissively to the floor, as if to say "I'm not ready for love (or sex) yet". In today's more prettified versions, she is more likely to hand the roses to her mother, the Queen, who sniffs them sweetly. Quite a different meaning! curse. The dilemma becomes, "how can he still be around for her when she wakes up in 100 years time?" For those of you that know your vampire lore, I leave you to guess what happens but a clue could be in the name of our "Lilac Fairy" figure, Count Lilac!





It is extraordinary to note that around the time of the premiere of the ballet in 1890, well over 50 percent of the population if asked the question - "Do you believe in fairies?"- probably would have answered, "yes". Even by 1917, Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle, author of Sherlock Holmes, was supporting the existence of fairies at the bottom of the garden, supposedly captured in photographs by two young girls in the famous case at Cottingley. So I find it quite natural that in the 1890 ballet, the fairy community is invited into the human world and to the christening of the young Princess to give their blessings. Since our story eventually takes us into the present day, a time when very few believe in such things as fairies, I find it equally logical that they are no longer present; shut out in their own world waiting to be believed in again.

***Your new scenario takes us from the late Victorian period, through the Edwardian era, to the present day. Research must play a big part in the recreation of a period for you and your designer, Lez Brotherston?***

One of the initial things that really attracted me about the potential of this story was the enormous time-line of the narrative. To make it really exciting, I felt immediately that we had to end up in the present day. By a process of working backwards, good luck would have it that we ended up with Aurora's birth at the time of the creation of the ballet in 1890 and with her coming-of-age in the famously golden Edwardian summer of 1911.

This presented Lez with many challenges and the most costumes he has ever had to design for one of our pieces together! Lez has a genius for detail and a vast knowledge of historical costumes and clothing. He insists on correct period detail but also knows how to make those costume "dance". As well as the specific eras that we are re-creating, it has also been a chance to create fantasy or supernatural figures and worlds, such as the possibly vampiric fairies and the "land of the sleepwalkers". Finally coming bang up to date with designs inspired by the latest catwalk fashions, the wardrobe and wigs departments have never been so busy!

Similarly to the demands on the design department, the recreation of the different eras has meant that

the company has had to be very versatile, as we have attempted to give a flavour of the dance styles of each period. Act One, set in 1890, the year of the Petipa ballet's creation, takes on the feeling of a classical ballet complete with Fairy variations (solos) with more than a passing nod to the Petipa originals. Act Two is set in 1911, when the Waltz was still king but we suggest the introduction of 'new dance crazes' from America, inspired by the legendary dancing partnership of Vernon and Irene Castle; "The Castle Walk" and "The Maxine" in particular. Act Three, in which Leo (our Prince figure) enters the "land of the sleepwalkers" where Aurora is trapped until saved by a kiss, is led by our heroine's personality and a free spirited dance inspired by Isadora Duncan. Act Four, set in the present day, finds Aurora about to be wed; the movement is boldly confrontational, confident, sensual and dangerous. The unsettling atmosphere suggestive more of a cult ritual than a fairy tale wedding!

***As with all New Adventures productions, this Sleeping Beauty has many surprising twists to the familiar tale as well as a host of new characters that owe nothing to the existing fairytales, films or ballets. Are you worried that you are sometimes talking liberties with a much-loved story? How is it possible to be "faithful" to a story that already has so many well-known versions that are all so different?***

I said right from the beginning of this project that whatever logic I applied to it, or whatever inventions me and my collaborators came up with, it must still be a Fairy Story beginning with "Once Upon a Time...".

As I said before, I think that these stories are still around possibly because they are simple enough to allow for any number of interpretations. Indeed, the *Sleeping Beauty* tale has inspired not just Disney and Petipa but also erotic novels by Anne Rice and dark stories by Angela Carter. It's true that I may have taken a few liberties with Tchaikovsky, which I hope he will forgive, as he, above all others, is the reason why I had to make this piece. As this completes my trilogy of the maestro's only three complete ballets, I humbly dedicate this production to his memory.







## Similarities and differences

### ***Sleeping Beauty* - A Classic in Every Respect [2]**

In the pantheon of great classical ballets, *Sleeping Beauty* sits with *Cinderella*, *Coppelia*, *Giselle*, *La Sylphide*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake*.

In the annals of contemporary choreography, Matthew Bourne is firmly established as re-inventor, re-interpret, re-imaginer second to none. Therefore, bringing his Tchaikovsky trilogy to completion, after *Nutcracker!* and *Swan Lake*, is a satisfying and long-awaited dance dream brought to life. Styling it a 'Gothic Romance for all ages' set in 1890 when 'fairies, vampires and decadent opulence' fed the popular imagination, suggests the typical, innovative Bourne approach to keeping audiences on their toes.

#### **Origins of the Tale**

The original story goes back into the mists of folk lore and legend. The Ninth Captain's Tale in the 1001 Nights; *Perceforce* (1528); *Sun Moon and Talia* by Giambattista Basile (1575 - 1632); *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* by Charles Perrault (1697) and *Little Briar-Rose* by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm all contain elements of what we now recognise as the fabled *Sleeping Beauty*.

The story is good against evil, darkness defeated by light. The account of the innocent young woman condemned through the 'fault' of others to sleep beyond her era, awakened by a young, handsome new life force is both appealing and accessible. It has inspired and fascinated all ages across the generations through drama, music, dance, film and pantomime.

In the 19th Century, it was the popularity, particularly in England, of the harlequinade, the extravaganza, the burlesque and what became the pantomime that led to this fairy tale with a happy ending being in such popular demand. *Sleeping Beauty* fitted that bill in every respect and established itself as a firm favourite.

It was the pantomime that gave the story the simple device of waking the sleeping heroine with a kiss, though darker versions have included rape and pregnancy of the young girl. There have been versions which have adapted other tales and tagged them on, such as *Sleeping Beauty and the Beast* (1900).

It is probably the case that pantomime also introduced elements of comedy into the story, although as panto is derived from the Italian Commedia dell'arte, that's no surprise. Bourne picks up on comedy time and again in all his works.

To describe somebody as a 'sleeping beauty' is to suggest a time-wasting daydreamer. There is a rare 'Sleeping Beauty' condition (Kleine-Levin Syndrome) where sufferers experience long sleep episodes.

In the expressive arts where ideas feed off each other, this story is continually adapted and changed, yet remains at its heart, a simple narrative with which people can identify or use to escape reality or both at once.

#### **The Ballet**

That the composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky should be drawn to the tale is not surprising, despite the lukewarm welcome given to his earlier *Swan Lake*. He put the folk tale of the beautiful sleeping maiden into a ballet in prologue and three acts, first performed in St Petersburg in 1890. The evil and good leitmotifs are maintained to thread the plot together and to link the music with the movement.

It took nine years to be premiered in Moscow by the Imperial Bolshoi Theatre and then followed significant stagings at La Scala, Milan (1896), Alhambra Theatre, London (1921), Philadelphia (1937), Royal Opera House, London (1946), with London Festival Ballet in 1968 and 1992's reworking in Basel with a new narrative around Anna Anderson's claim to be the Grand Duchess Anastasia.

Today, a version of *Sleeping Beauty* is worked or re-worked in one medium or another on average every week of the year somewhere in the world.



### **Bourne and Ballet**

Matthew Bourne is a worldwide head grabber - someone who has attracted countless sceptics to the world of dance - and converted them to its joys! He is undoubtedly someone who shatters stereotypes, makes huge technical demands on his performers and who is constantly restless to explore and push new boundaries. *Swan Lake* with its all male swans is but one example of breaking the walls of convention and expectancy.

As a postmodern choreographer, he is eclectic in his influences that range from old films to musical theatre. And he collaborates with his designers, composer, technical team and dancers in ways unheard of in post generations.

In creating his choreography, he counts the score as he hears it rather than how a musician would read it, allowing him to follow the emotional journey of the music, which is recorded specifically for his productions.

So just what is it, this *Sleeping Beauty*? Fairytale? Yes. Folk legend? Of course. Ballet? Naturally. In Bourne's hands it is all of that and still more. It's a performing art for yesterday, today and tomorrow.

### **Similarities and differences**

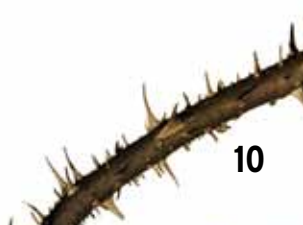
Comparing the traditional story with the plot synopsis of Bourne's version some key similarities and differences become apparent.

Like most traditional fairytales, Bourne's interpretation has the similar opening "Once upon a time..." However in the New Adventures version of the story the original prologue has become Act One. Like the classic tale, the King and Queen wish for a child, which is granted to them, although in Bourne's version this child is brought to them by Carabosse, the evil fairy. In keeping with the traditional story line, we are also introduced to the fairies who leave gifts to protect the baby Aurora. In Bourne's version these fairies take on different characteristics to those in other versions. The Tchaikovsky score from the Petipa Ballet is central to Bourne's production. However, Bourne has changed the order to reflect the plot adaptations he has made. The music has been specially recorded and layered with sound effects.

One of the key differences in Bourne's version is the portrayal of romance. We see Aurora's love Leo, the royal gamekeeper which is reciprocated. In most of the traditional tales including the Petipa Ballet, once the Prince awakens the Princess, they immediately fall in love having never met: "very unconvincing unless you believe in love at first" [3]. Bourne wanted a more realistic love story that the audience can buy into. This is something that the Disney film also incorporates as Prince Phillip and Aurora fall in love before her fate is sealed. However in the Disney version, the Prince breaks this spell before much time has passed. As Bourne wanted to keep to the original pause of 100 years, he was then faced with the challenge of creating a way for Leo still to stay alive. The Lilac Fairy becomes Count Lilac, a vampiric fairy who bites Leo giving him eternal life. Leo does not age and he and Aurora can continue their love when he awakens her from her 100 year slumber. Having set the opening in 1890 and Aurora's coming of age in 1911, Bourne brings his version up to date in 2011 with a contemporary set and costumes.

Another main change to the plot is the introduction of the character Caradoc who is Carabosse's son. In Bourne's version, Carabosse dies and it is her son who carries out his mother's curse and seals Aurora's fate. In Bourne's production both characters are played by the same (male) dancer and played by a male dancer.

In most classic tales except the Perrault version, the story ends with the Prince kissing Aurora and waking her up. In Bourne's version, there is an additional Act Four where Leo is taken away before Aurora realises it is he who has kissed her and she is tricked into a wedding with Caradoc. Although Bourne's version ends with the famous line, "and they all live happily ever after" which in his version they do, the story is far from a light hearted fairy tale. The character of Carabosse and Caradoc are especially dark and the final act incorporates a more cult like, sacrificial ceremony before Aurora is saved by Leo.





## Main Characters

### Petipa Ballet /Disney

#### Princess Aurora/ Briar Rose

A curse laid upon her at birth where on her 16th birthday she will suffer a terrible fate. In the Brothers Grimm version she is referred to as Briar Rose. In the Disney version she is also given the name Briar Rose whilst in hiding.

She pricks her finger on a spindle.

#### Prince Desiré

A stranger to Aurora who is guided to her, falls in love and awakens the princess with a kiss.

#### The Lilac Fairy ( Fees des Lilas)

The fairy of protection, responsible for changing the curse to a 100 year sleep and for guiding the prince to the princess. Traditionally a female role.

#### Carabosse

The evil fairy who places the curse upon Aurora at birth as a reaction to being left out of the christening celebration. Portrayed as a frightening figure. Also referred to as Maleficent in the Disney version.

#### King Florestan XIV

Princess Aurora's father.

#### Queen

Princess Aurora's mother.

#### The Fairies

Candide, Coulante, Fleur de farine, Miettes qui tombent, Canari qui chante and Violente.

### Matthew Bourne/New Adventures

#### Princess Aurora

A strong willed, carefree, playful Princess Aurora who is put under a curse as a baby that seals her fate on her 21st birthday. Bourne has taken Isadora Duncan as inspiration for creating the character. Bourne portrays the baby Aurora using a puppet.

She pricks her finger on a black rose thorn.

#### Leo, The Royal Gamekeeper

Aurora's childhood sweetheart. Their relationship is kept a secret as Leo is a commoner (the royal gamekeeper) and Aurora is royalty.

#### Count Lilac

The King of the Fairies who changes the curse and acts as a guardian. As a vampire fairy, he gives Leo eternal life and guides him to Aurora.

#### Carabosse/Caradoc

The evil fairy who places the curse on Aurora after the King and Queen do not show her enough gratitude for providing them with a child. Carabosse's son, Caradoc carries out the curse on Aurora's 21st birthday. Both roles are played by the same male dancer.

#### King Benedict

Aurora's father.

#### Queen Eleanor

Aurora's mother.

#### The Fairies

Ardor- the fairy of passion, Hibernia- the fairy of rebirth, Autumnus - the fairy of plenty, Feral - the fairy of spirit, Tantrum - the fairy of temperament.

## Activity



### Questions:

1. Discuss these and other similarities and differences between the traditional fairytale or the Disney 1959 film and Matthew Bourne's interpretation. For example, Bourne's decision to create the character of Leo, the royal gamekeeper rather than the more traditional Prince role and how this affects the story?
2. Bourne's interpretation has created a way for Leo to stay alive for 100 years in order to be reunited with Aurora. What does this add to the story and the audience's experience? What do you think about the introduction of vampires?

### Other topics that can be used for discussion:

1. The three time periods Bourne explores in his interpretation - 1890, 1911 and 2011.
2. The evil fairy Carabosse and Bourne's introduction of Caradoc, her son. Discuss why Bourne has developed a second character and why he cast the same (male) dancer to perform both roles.





## Key Themes



➤ Carabosse

### Good versus Evil

“Disney also recognized one of the central themes of the story; good versus evil. He built up the character of Carabosse (Maleficent in the Disney classic) to keep that central battle going right to the end of the story. The Tchaikovsky ballet creates a wonderfully malevolent musical world for Carabosse in the Prologue but then those themes barely appear again in the ballet and therefore the great character Carabosse is sidelined. Without giving too much away, I believe we have solved that narrative problem too with the introduction of another new character, Carabosse’s faithful son, Caradoc”. [4]

#### Activity



Write a back story for Carabosse. Does she have siblings? Where did she grow up? What was her childhood like? Did she have friends or was she more of an outsider? Was she always an evil fairy or did events make her that way?

This could be a creative writing exercise or a practical exercise, where students can ‘hot seat’ each other and share their back stories with the wider group. A useful point of reference is the musical *Wicked* which follows Elphaba’s journey to becoming the Wicked Witch of the West in the now iconic 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*, and explains why she became ‘wicked’.

### Sleep

Sleep is an intrinsic element of the story. In Bourne’s production, much of Act Three takes place within the wooded grounds of the Palace where Aurora and blindfolded sleepwalkers move in trance like states in a 100 year slumber. The movement is based on poses and positions of sleep, dancers have their arms outstretched before them or are curled up against a tree trunk.

There are medical conditions where symptoms include involuntary sleep. Narcolepsy sufferers have no control over short episodes of sleep, it can happen anywhere at any time. “There is a rare ‘Sleeping Beauty’ condition (Kleine-Levin Syndrome) where sufferers experience long sleep episodes [5].

Many people sleepwalk, carrying out simple or complex and sometimes dangerous activities with no recollection when they wake (somnambulism or noctambulism). Perhaps students in your group sleepwalk or know someone who does?

There is also a lot of research into teenage sleep and the amount of sleep they need or don’t need, the findings vary. Although there does seem to be a consensus on the impact of lack of sleep in teenagers - their academic studies can suffer.

“It’s well-known that teenagers are often night owls and sleepy during the day, so it may be cheering to know that there’s a reason for it.

Research shows that adolescent body clocks differ from those of adults and they do need more sleep. While the average nine- to 10-year-old requires eight hours sleep a night, their older teenage siblings might well need an extra hour and a half.

Lack of sleep is a common cause of under-performance, according to research by the National Sleep Foundation in the US. It found that students obtaining lower grades went to bed later and had fewer hours’ sleep than their higher-achieving classmates.

Difficulties in remembering or concentrating on work in class are associated with sleep deprivation because the brain continues to work while we are asleep, processing new information that enhances the learning process. Some teens can suffer mood or personality changes and may have physical symptoms such as headaches.” [6]





“They often protest that they need the extra hours in bed. But getting too much sleep could in fact be leaving teenagers behind at school, according to research. A study found that they performed better academically if they cut down on lie-ins and had more regular sleep patterns.

And while many think they need nine hours, the optimum amount of sleep for a typical 16-year-old is just seven a night, according to scientists at Brigham Young University, in Utah. Eric Eide, study author, said: ‘We’re not talking about sleep deprivation. The data simply says that seven hours is optimal at that age.’ Reporting the findings in the Eastern Economics Journal, the team said the right amount of sleep decreases with age. The optimum amount of sleep for a ten-year-old is around nine hours while for 12-year-olds it is eight hours. [7]

#### HOW MUCH SLEEP IS OK?

Most studies suggest teenagers need at least nine hours sleep. And previous studies suggest that children between age seven and 12 need 11 hours in bed. But, according to this latest research by Brigham Young University, the right amount - in terms of testing best in exams - is as follows:

Aged 10: nine to 9.5 hours

Aged 12: eight to 8.5 hours

Aged 16: eleven hours.

#### Activity



It may sound like science fiction but Cryonics is the science of using ultra-cold temperature to preserve human life with the intent of restoring good health when technology becomes available to do so. It is possible for people to be ‘suspended’ in a sleep-like state. Imagine you have been asleep for 100 years. What might the world look like when you awake: would you recognise it, how might technology and communication have moved on? What would houses or schools look like? How would transport have developed?

#### Activity



##### Exercise 1

Introduce the idea of sleepwalking. Ask your students if they or anyone they know sleepwalks? Do they have any stories of what they or people they know have done while sleepwalking?

There should be no talking during this exercise. This is a trust and physical command exercise and students should be fully focused on their partner. Working in pairs, one should take the role of A, the leader and the other B, will be led. Instruct all the B’s to close their eyes. A will direct B around the space using simple touches (not pokes, slaps or punches) to the body.

Touch to the top of the back = GO

Touch on the top of the head = STOP

Touch to the chest/collar bone = BACKWARDS

Touch to the left arm = TURN LEFT

Touch to the right arm = TURN RIGHT

Touch to the lower back = 180 DEGREE TURN

Ask the B’s how it felt to be led. How was the body affected by being ‘blind’? Did they move differently, more tentatively? Ask the A’s how it felt to lead. Did they feel a sense of responsibility for their partner? Were there students who took more risks than others?

Repeat this exercise where A and B swap roles and again discuss.

Split the group in half, sending each half to opposite ends of the space, facing each other. The aim is to swap sides, with A’s guiding B’s. As the two groups reach the centre ground there will be a lot of congestion so A’s need to be very careful in guiding B’s through this safely and without any collisions. You can swap A’s and B’s around. Again, this should be done in silence and with care. Discuss as above.





## Exercise 2

Ask your students to individually create four sleeping positions on the floor. Ask them to share these. You can make suggestions to help link each pose or they can work in small groups and help each other.



Here are some link suggestions:

Standing up between one position and the next

Walking backward or forward with arms forward

Shifting the position on the floor in different directions

Introducing runs.

Students can also play with tempo, quickening or slowing movement down within the phrase.

Divide the students into trios (duets are also an option). Each trio decides who will be sleepwalking using the phrase they have created, who will be the 'carer' and who will be the 'pillow'. Allow the groups some time to develop their trios (or duets) where the carer will always guide, manipulate or support the sleepwalker and the pillow will move around the sleepwalker being in the right place for the sleepwalker to rest his/her head on.

Introduce music and see if/how it changes the trios. Different music can have different effects on the movement. If time allows, play around with this.

## Activity



Bourne's title is *Sleeping Beauty - A Gothic Romance*. Ask your students to research this term in more detail, where it has come from. They can look for books, stories, films, plays etc that are also described as Gothic Romance. Research can be done individually or in groups and then shared.

## Activity



In small groups, ask students to choose a fairy tale (not necessarily *Sleeping Beauty*) or another story that inspires them. Ask them to decide on an overall artistic style if they were adapting this story for the stage. They need to create your own research list as general context or background as well as specific books, music, films, games, politics, art, anything they can find that links in to their artistic vision. Then share and discuss. This could be a longer term visual arts/design project with costume and set drawings.

## Gothic

The term 'gothic' originates from the 4th Century and has subsequently re-emerged and been re-invented over the centuries. It is probably best known today from a revival in the Victorian era. It was these references that Bourne used as part of his own initial research and research for the dancers in developing their characters before and during rehearsals. Bourne created a list of books, films, music and subjects for his cast to google. For example the dancers cast as Aurora and Leo looked at *Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights* (published in 1847).

## Eras

Bourne's production spans three eras

1890 - Victorian era

1911 - Edwardian era

2011 - Present Day

A trademark of Bourne's work is the social dance, something he weaves into all his productions. In Act Two of *Sleeping Beauty*, we see the garden of the Palace, the setting for Aurora's coming of age party. Guests, the King and Queen and Aurora all take part in a social dance. In Bourne's research he looked at period dances and particularly at Vernon and Irene Castle whose 'Castle Walk' became extremely popular.





### Activity

Research what social dances are and what they were in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. These could be dances that develop in other countries. Youtube may be a good resource to see examples of some of these dances. Students can learn a dance (maybe adapt it) and teach it to the rest of the group.



Gangnam Style is an example of a modern day social dance. Are there any others the group can think of? Your group could create their own social dance.

### Activity



#### Creating a fairy character

Look at the character traits the fairies in Bourne's production have or the more traditional fairy characters from the Petipa Ballet for inspiration but create something unique to you. This could be done in pairs where A creates a character for B and visa versa or individually. The following should be included in creating a character profile (add more detail if time allows):

Type of fairy (wood, water, air, urban etc)

Age

Gender (not necessarily the same as the students)

Nickname/s

Character traits (5 at least)

Physical traits (if any)

Back story: parents, siblings, key moments in your life (good or bad)

Read them out to the rest of the group without saying the name of the character you have chosen and the group should try and guess what fairy character you have chosen to create from *Sleeping Beauty*.

Below is some research material Bourne suggested his dancers look at to help develop their characters and the world they inhabit:

*A Midsummer Nights Dream* (Shakespeare) Oberon, Titania and other fairies

*The Fairy Bible* - book (Moorey T, Godfield, 2011)

*The Fairies in Tradition and Literature* - book (Briggs, Katherine M, Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 2002)

*Petipa Ballet* (especially the Prologue with Carabosse, Lilac and other Fairies) - 1890

*True Blood* - TV series

#### Other research suggestions:

Look at different types of fairies, different periods in time for example modern portrayal of fairies in films such as the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Look at how fairies are depicted in different art forms: visual art, books/poetry, photography, film, etc.

Once these fairy characters have been created, they can be developed and brought to life. There could be natural groupings of fairies or groups that are enemies?

## Fairies and Vampires

Tastes and attitudes change in different eras. Fairies in folklore could be powerful creatures to be respected and sometimes feared. Around the time the Petipa Ballet was created, fairies would have been a thing of interest and curiosity, less so today. The Cottingly Fairy photographs (1917) became a massive scandal, as the images that had enchanted the nation were proved to be fake.

The fairies in Bourne's production bring the baby Aurora gifts and form protective circles around her cot but they do have darker sides to their personalities. Their movement has bird-like qualities and their wings are designed from different types of birds. There is a very striking 'otherness' about them.

Vampires have come back into vogue with TV series and films like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *The True Blood* and *Twilight Saga*. Bourne drew on the *True Blood* series as an inspiration for the fairies as well as looking at a world where humans and non-humans live side by side.



➤ Cottingly Fairies (1917)





# Rehearsal Diaries

Written by Phil Jack Gardner

(Bertie the footman, Archie the footman and Leo the gamekeeper)

## Week One

The first day of rehearsals at Sadler's Wells and at our meet and greet Matthew [Bourne] talked about the production and outlined what must be accomplished and how the set and costumes worked etc. Inspiring stuff! Six weeks rehearsal time, a stack of material to create and learn, an uncalculated amount of counts to get used to and at least three roles or more to learn.

Imagine, if you will, the rehearsal period being like an enormous puzzle with a time limit.

The production meeting was like seeing the image on the cover of the puzzle box and now we have to put it together. Some puzzles say 7-10 years on the box, this one says 6 weeks. We learned pre-choreographed and workshopped sections of material that would later fall into different acts. This gave us a taste of what each act was going to be like stylistically and allowed us to prepare for the mood of the act. We can liken these pieces of material to the edge pieces of the puzzle. Now that we have the outline of what we're going to achieve we can press on to develop these into the bigger picture.



## Week Two

Here we find ourselves stepping into the world of scenes and storytelling. Just as you start building the picture in the centre of the puzzle, a brow-furrowing concentration descends. Something that came to light throughout this week was that scenes took the longest time. You may have thought that learning choreography was the hardest part but the actual sustaining of an emotional scene -

be it just you or a group - through nothing more than your own actions, emotions or acting can be the most difficult part of the show to get right. The reason being that you have to know exactly what you want to get across, clearly and concisely with little room for ambiguity but without dancing or miming or making the whole thing look like hammy ballet gestures. Simultaneously, of course, you have to do this within a frame of time and with musical cues. As ever though, experimental direction from both Matthew and Etta Murfitt [Associate Director] put each moment exactly where it needs to be and the continuity of both style and humour is as seamless as ever.

Now each group has to tell this story through movement alone, each character must have a clear journey. Students can as inventive as they wish but they must be true to the story and the feelings their character is going through in their movement. Think about levels, think about pauses - not everyone needs to be moving all the time. Think about facial expressions and how that can show feeling and emotion.

Aim to create 4 8's to set the story up and introduce the characters, up to 4 8's for the dramatic moment and 4 8's for the reaction or resolution. Share these with the group. Now add music of your choice and give the groups a bit of time to make any adjustments, there may be particular punctuations that require a different movement or timing. Again, each group performs their story with music. It is up to the audience to then describe the story they have seen. Is it accurate? Has each group been clear in their intentions? If appropriate, the audience can offer suggestions to each group.







## Activity



Phil talks about sustaining the narrative, character and emotion across a scene. This exercise is to help students 'perform' a story and portray a character. What you want to see is a clear story line with clear characters interacting with each other and to what's happening as well as an emotional journey.

In small groups, discuss and decide on either a short part of the story or groups can create their own take on the *Sleeping Beauty* story (or as a whole group decide on one idea that everyone works from). It must include a dramatic moment that affects narrative and characters (e.g. Aurora is dancing at her party with her guests, pricks her finger and falls unconscious). Work through the action moment by moment so the story is very clear, what each character's role is within the story and how they each respond to the dramatic moment or are affected by it. Each member of the group must have a character or role in the story.

## Week Three

We begin to fill the puzzle gaps by running scenes. All the sections that we had been learning began to form two of the four acts. With the work from the dancers and the powerful music contributing beautifully in every scene the show is already taking shape as a believable and emotional piece of theatre. If this is possible in a black and dark studio space then the show is going to hit the stage with a polished veneer of poignant storytelling and true to life characters. I know that seemed like a gushing outburst but...well I suppose it was.

## Week Four

Week four was a sleepy one. Not because we hadn't done anything but we began waking Aurora from her 100 year sleep. Enter bed props and the developed material from the workshopping that had occurred months before. It had finally come together to make a scene!

So, after wig fittings, shoe fittings, costume fittings, books to read, DVDs to watch, scores to listen to, people to study, mannerisms to perfect, documentaries to view, notes to take and more mysteries that can't be unveiled yet, there is still so much more to be said and done... and we're over halfway there already!!

The puzzle is there and nearing completion. Aurora may be missing a rose and Leo may not have his feet yet but with all puzzles they end up coming together. [9]

## Week Five

In week five there has been: more costume fittings, mask fittings, shoe fittings, late night rehearsals and new movement created. The show is taking shape and with one week to go, things are becoming increasingly exciting.

As we pressed on through the show we learned new material for Act Four's dark and sinister cult scene. In Act Four Aurora is kidnapped by the crazed and vengeful Caradoc and surrounded by a gathering of disturbed followers. Scary masks, fights that got The Car Man veterans excited and violent ritual choreography fills the act with the drama that we need before the final scene.

The overriding and overpowering focus this week (and indeed in the past weeks) has been the music. Everyone knows dancers like to count in eights and usually no higher, but this week when the phrase "lets go from the 23rd 8" was announced, my brain cried. As soon as you become familiar with the music you no longer need to count it constantly and this familiarisation takes you from dancing to the music, to dancing with the music. This can be argued to be easier said than done when counting it is concerned. At the beginning of rehearsing a scene Matt started counting to the music and immediately eyebrows began to twitch and confusion arose. All because of he started counting with an "and-a-one-and-a-two" and not "one-and-a-two", neither of which made any sense in the first place because the music was a 6/8 time signature. If any of you found the last sentence confusing, don't be afraid. I have managed to replicate the feeling of the rehearsal space in your own home/train as we are all bamboozled.

However, after a while there was no longer a need for a "5678" (or to be more accurate in this scene, a 456 - is your brain crying too?) because it was there for us to hear. Now as you may remember from last week's blog I touched on the creation of scenes. The mood for each scene is dictated by the music. Tchaikovsky's scores are evocative and it's easy to imagine the classical ballets being created with such a clear score to work with. Tchaikovsky's eloquent and expressive score has a huge part to play in breathing new life into an old story and with the New Adventures creative team's attention to musical detail, it will eventually be hard to imagine *Sleeping Beauty* any other way.





The final day of Week Five was a day for Leo's and Aurora's as we tackled the last scene. That was an incredibly productive day. It's amazing what you can achieve when everyone involved develops the scene by describing the moment that each of you think your character should be feeling. The lovers personalities were fleshed out by us and when the day is over and you're left with this scene/dance that contains nothing but honest emotion you know your Sunday is going to be a good one.

The music, the movement and the story is slowly being woven together. With the music as the constant, our efforts must match up. "Let the music be your script" - Matthew Bourne.

And on that note - 5678...11

### Activity

Set your students the task of writing some extracts from Aurora and/or Leo's diary. It would be useful to write an extract from the beginning, middle and end of the story to show their journey. They can decide whether to write it as a handwritten diary or a blog.

## Week Six

A perfect time for rehearsals for new parts then! The rich tapestry that is *Sleeping Beauty* is out there for all to see! We moved out of London to Plymouth's Theatre Royal. Make up was set on the dressing rooms tables, dancewear was unpacked, water bottles were filled and we were ready to go...to another rehearsal space!

I should explain that when we move into a new theatre, the technical crew go ahead of us to set up. To say our crew were nocturnal would imply that they sleep during the day...they don't. They work tirelessly and constantly to get this show ready for the first week of rehearsals. On a show that has already been created, the crew have a good idea of what will happen and generally what is the best order for things to happen. On a new show there is a great deal more preparation that needs to happen to ensure that all the set, props, back drops, sound and lighting happens in the right order and at the right time.

So to help this, we stayed out of the theatre for the best part of the week and they had the run of the theatre. This meant getting taxis to the Theatre Royal's rehearsal space: TR2. It was at TR2 that we took

class and rehearsed scenes and group numbers and also finished the show! We had all arrived in Plymouth knowing that we still had the last eight 6s to practise and put into place. There was a fight between the vampire fairy Count Lilac and the evil Caradoc to create and the prologue to add - which I'm proud to announce I am a part of! Good old Bertie the footman will be the first face you see in this gothic masterpiece.

Once we finished the show we had a week of rehearsals either at TR2 or at the theatre later on in the day to space the show before the dress run just to ensure that all the entrances and exits that we'd planned still fitted in with where the set was and also to see if the costumes were an issue. One entrance had to be changed because Carabosse's extravagant and winged costumes barely fitted through the wing that was previously planned. It's the little things that surprise you when everything is sewn together.

For those of you who aren't familiar, before we open a show for the first time we will have both a technical rehearsal and a dress rehearsal. A technical rehearsal is the crew's time to plot any lighting they need to, fly set in and out as they need through our run of the show and also allow the local crew to learn the show and where they need to be.

For the company, we can use this rehearsal as a chance to space things on the stage. A dress rehearsal is then our chance to do what is essentially a performance to run through everything, including costume and make up for the show. This means practising our quick changes and also any wig changes.

Now to ensure everyone gets a run at some of the show, a lot of us swapped in and out of the technical rehearsals. Now although this meant that not everyone got a full run of the show, it was still the fairest way to go about rehearsing the show. This also meant that mostly, everyone who performed on the opening night in Plymouth had never done a full run of the show. Although thoroughly rehearsed, there's nothing like practising the show full out with wigs and costume before going onstage! However, this is not a luxury that's often afforded. You could say it adds to the magic of show biz.

So along with costume changes, wig changes and quick changes there is also the odd drama when there is no costume to change into. I play the same role as Luke Murphy whose costume wasn't ready for opening night in Plymouth so I had to go on for his Act Four because mine was ready. It's a very strange feeling entering a show



three quarters of the way through fresh as a daisy when everyone else has been dancing the whole show so far.

However, to go one better with drama we have to look to Dominic North. Dommy (aka saviour of the people) who plays the lead role of Leo was thrown on in a last minute drama for the role of the Fairy Autumnus due to one of the dancers having a back injury. Dommy, having not rehearsed that role for three weeks, had emergency rehearsals for his solo through his lunch break, ensemble spacing for Act Three in the interval and performed a very calm and relaxed show...and then another four very calm and relaxed shows to finish the week. Dominic we salute you.

So as the casting for that week changed, this meant that principals were put together who hadn't yet danced these roles alongside each other. It was going to happen

eventually, casting always mixes people together in the end but in the initial stages becoming comfortable with the story that you are about to tell is a lot easier if you begin performing with the person you created the story with. Of course the story is still the same but the emotional story between two people can be different. The excitement is watching it being told by different dancers in slightly different ways and New Adventures is lucky enough as a company to have such versatile dancers.

Despite minor mishaps, a whole lot of set to get used to and the cast playing swapsies, *Sleeping Beauty* received an enthusiastic welcome in Plymouth. With British humour cleverly woven in, every laugh was in the right place. What came as a pleasant surprise were the laughs that weren't intended - but they're in there now! Plymouth was a great start to a tremendous tour of a new take on an old love story.





## Sadler's Wells and beyond

Our time at Sadler's Wells has been and gone - and what a time that was. Press nights dotted here and there allowing journalists, article writers and bloggers to get their teeth into, show their praise towards and award their stars to the new production. As gracious as the writers have been there is no denying the laughter and cheers of a responsive, happy and generally standing audience (not during the production though. That would be silly).

The weeks have gone by quite pleasantly after moving back into Sadler's - much like a uni student would move home after travelling. A star studded reception on press night with Darcey Bussell and Sir Ben Kingsley to name but a few and a continuously positive reception by the public have us a encouraging boost at the beginning of the run.

Now these pressures do lend themselves to encourage the dancer to do, lets say 25% more than they would normally give to a performance. Now believe it or not, that old chestnut of "less is more" is the golden rule of a New Adventures' production. So this note was duly...noted.

The production is truly at its current best with everyone settled in to their roles.

I have been rehearsing my ensemble cover role and gone through yet more costume fittings. This costume, along with the other that I already have, will leave me fully equipped to perform the role of Archie as well as Bertie. This then adds another possible equation when it comes to fitting people into the weekly casting. I was fitted for my principle cover role, Leo, at the beginning of the tour (and believe me you'll know when I'm rehearsing that).

With more people knowing more roles, a disaster like illness or injury is easily solved by slotting someone else in. An example of this is when I had just finished teaching other members of the cast the Cot Puppet role, I was off for a week with a virus. This meant a lot of team work with people jumping into the puppet black suits who had never rehearsed it before. But as one famous Queen said: "the show must go on".

And it did. EVEN with the snow. Yeah, notice that we all SOMEHOW managed to get in with the INCHES of snow that...melted.



# Production Elements

## Set and Costume Design - Lez Brotherston

There are many ways a designer will go about creating the world of a piece of dance, theatre or film. For *Sleeping Beauty*, the conversations about set and costume design begins early on in the development process. Bourne has been collaborating with Lez Brotherston for many years so a rapport and understanding of each other's creativity and vision already exists.

A 'storyboard' is created of the plot scene by scene and from this: intention, mood and the characters journey through each section is formed. This also helps develop the story's logic and narrative in areas where Bourne moves away from the traditional tale. This develops over a period of time and a number of creative meetings. This process enhances the cohesion between Bourne's vision and Brotherston's physical realisation of the world of *Sleeping Beauty*.

A design budget is allocated to Brotherston from which costume, props and set need to be created. Brotherston carries out his own extensive research around each of the three eras *Sleeping Beauty* is set in. Each character's costume is developed through 'mood boards' which include images, material samples, colour palettes etc. The costume materials that are chosen and how they are made is an important consideration for the designer as the dancers need to be able to move in them and they need to be robust enough to survive eight shows a week for around an eight month tour. Each dancer has his/her measurements taken for costume and wigs. Each dancer learns three roles and alternates on different 'tracks' of casting throughout the tour, so each needs a costume for each role. There are more costumes and wigs in this production than any previous show. Some costume and props items are bought others are made specifically for the production.

In creating the set, Brotherston has to take into account the different stages *Sleeping Beauty* will perform on, that the set has to be packed up each week into trucks, again it has to be robust, it has to serve the narrative and the dancers performing on and around it. A model box is created to scale so the creative and production team can look at how each section works and any potential issues can be addressed before the set is constructed.

In *Sleeping Beauty* there are a few elements that New Adventures have not used before. Travelators (sections of floor which move) play an intrinsic part of the design, placed upstage on a slightly raised platform, two sections of floor move across the width of the



► Set Design

stage in opposite directions, giving a powerful sense of movement and dramatic entrances and exits. The fairies first entrance in Act One is enchanting, eerie and mysterious, as the dancers appear to glide across the stage before stepping off the travelators to offer their gifts to the baby Aurora. The sleepwalkers also use the travelators in Act Three in the woodland held in limbo under Caradoc's spell. The sleepwalkers weave across the stage with arms outstretched or effortlessly drop to the moving floor as if unable to control their need to sleep. Using this moving floor takes a lot of practice in rehearsals, so dancers become comfortable in stepping on and off with ease and safely.

The other new element is the use of puppets. Bourne's acute sense of wit saw an opportunity in portraying the baby Aurora and Aurora and Leo's fairy daughter as puppets, brought to life by members of the cast. This use of puppetry gives the audience a very clear picture of Aurora's wilful, strong character at the start of the show that we then see in her as a young woman. This arc continues through to the climax of the production and the 'happy ever after' final scene where the audience are introduced to Aurora and Leo's fairy baby. During rehearsals, puppeteer/director Sarah Wright worked with the company to develop the skills needed to bring the baby Aurora to life. Sarah's parents Lyndie and John Wright set up the Little Angel Puppet Theatre in Islington, London over 50 years ago. The puppets (there are a variety of baby Aurora puppets) movements, like every other detail in Bourne's productions are choreographed in time to the music.



➤ Aurora Garden Party Costume Design



➤ Lilac Fairy Costume Design



➤ King Nightgown Costume Design



➤ Sleep Walker Costume Design



## Music

### Tchaikovsky, Composer

The illustrious Russian composer, Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky, lived for 52 years and in a relatively short working life-span produced a large output comprising symphonies, operas, ballets, chamber music and the 1812 Overture. Some of his compositions rate among the most popular pieces in the 19th Century classical music repertoire today but none more so than his well-loved trio of ballet scores – *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker* and *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Despite his musical precocity, Tchaikovsky was destined for a career as a civil servant but against the wishes of his family, he pursued, thankfully, a musical course instead, studying at the St Petersburg Conservatoire from which he graduated in 1865.

If Tchaikovsky shone (and spoke) through his music, he endured a tormented and unhappy life punctuated by personal crises and depression. Contributory factors include leaving his mother for boarding school, her early death, his suppressed homosexuality and the collapse of the one seemingly-lasting relationship of his adult life, his thirteen-year-old association with the wealthy widow and Russian businesswoman, Nadezhda Filaretovna von Meck, the dedicatee of his F minor fourth symphony.

She supported him financially over this period enabling him to devote himself to full-time composition. Their relationship, however, was a divided one and, strangely, they never met.

Death came at an early age for Tchaikovsky. His death is generally ascribed to cholera but some scholars attribute it to suicide. Who knows? His music was, by all accounts, popular, but a few critics dismissed it as lacking in elevated thought. It was not until the end of the 20th Century that his status as a significant composer had become secure. His greatest ballet score, *Swan Lake*, was premiered in 1877 by the Ballet of the Moscow Imperial Bolshoi Theatre (today better known as the Bolshoi Ballet) and billed as *The Lake of the Swans*. The choreographer assigned to the production was the Czech-born dancer, Julius Reisinger.

However, it was not well received, with heavy criticism being levelled against the dancers, orchestra and set design. Unfortunately, Tchaikovsky's masterful score was lost in the debacle surrounding the poor production and

although there were a handful of critics who recognised the score's virtues most considered it to be far too complicated and loud for ballet.

Thirteen years later (in 1890) *The Sleeping Beauty* arrived on the scene and following its success, Tchaikovsky was commissioned to compose a double-bill featuring both opera and ballet. The opera was *Iolanta* and for the ballet Tchaikovsky joined forces with the French ballet dancer, teacher and choreographer, Marius Petipa (with whom he had collaborated on *The Sleeping Beauty*) in an adaptation of ETA Hoffmann's story *The Nutcracker* and *The Mouse King* by Alexandre Dumas pere called *The Tale of the Nutcracker*.

### Putting the Score In Place - Brett Morris, Musical Director and Conductor [8]

"I think it would be fair to say that one of the hallmarks of a Matthew Bourne dance piece is the way in which the various production elements (stage and costume design, lighting, sound, choreography and music) are unified into a cohesive structure, which serves to tell a dramatic story to the audience. Sometimes the search for a dramatic narrative will lead Matt to commission a new piece of music specifically for the production, as in, for example, *The Car Man*. In the case of *Sleeping Beauty*, we adapted an existing classical score in order to arrive at a performance version which best-served Matt's vision of his dance piece.

About six months before the recording was made, Matt and I began to meet for a series of conversations about how we might best utilise Tchaikovsky's score for the new production. Composed in 1888-89 for the Imperial Ballet in St Petersburg, *Sleeping Beauty* is one of the most loved scores in the classical ballet repertoire, brimming with beautiful melodies and colourful orchestration. At the same time, it posed two major challenges for us. Firstly, it is the longest of the three Tchaikovsky ballet scores and because of this it is seldom performed in its entirety: each production always being slightly different. Secondly, it contains extended periods pure classical dance music (the Fairy variations in the Prologue, and all the character dances in Act Three for example), which are less suitable for the dramatic narrative style of Matt's theatrical approach.





So my task was to help select which numbers we would use and in what order, for our production, and then to find solutions to the inevitable musical problems that arise when a work is not presented whole in the way the composer originally conceived. Over the course of several meetings we gradually came to piece together a musical structure that served the characterisation and narrative that Matt had in mind. Developing a detailed understanding of the dramatic vision of the choreographer/director is always essential to me during pre-production discussions, in order that I am able to bring out the pertinent dramatic aspects musically during the recording sessions and/or live performances.

The re-ordering of certain pieces posed particular challenges for us musically. Tchaikovsky, like all good composers, was very mindful of the interrelationship between the different keys and styles of the individual numbers he wrote, in order that the music flowed naturally from piece to piece and that the overall musical structure was cohesive. In changing the order of some of the pieces in the score we had to transpose certain passages into different keys, and even compose small linking passages of music in a style that was indistinguishable from Tchaikovsky!

When Matt and I had arrived at a final version of the score, the orchestral parts of our new version had to be prepared and then closely checked for any errors to ensure that we did not waste any time rectifying problems in the recording studio. Because the orchestration of each piece varies (some using the full orchestra whilst others using smaller groupings within it for example), it was essential to plan how best to utilise our time in the recording process. Our recording producer Terry Davies devised a very detailed recording schedule, which entailed recording numbers that shared similar orchestrations within the same session. Therefore, the score was not recorded in the sequence in which it is heard in the show, and this places special demands on the conductor. I had to be able to convey to the orchestra the exact tempo and dramatic character of each piece as it occurred within the recording session, so that when the pieces were edited together into performance order, the original vision of the piece as a whole remained.

We recorded the score with a sixty-six-piece orchestra in eight three-hour sessions across four days, frequently

needing to use every last second of recording time to ensure that we got the perfect "take". Each evening following the recording sessions Terry and I would listen back to all the takes made that day to decide which ones we wanted to keep, which edits had to be made and what might need to be re-recorded during another session. Matt was present throughout the recording process and this ensured that the dialogue and creative process between us remained alive and on-going whilst recording. Occasionally, for example, we would record slightly different versions of the same piece, in order that Matt had some freedom to experiment with different ideas in the rehearsal studio with the dancers.

Lastly, following the sessions, the recorded material was edited into its final performance order, and re-balanced by the engineer and producer in order to achieve a good sound in performance in the theatre (which is different from the balance required for listening at home). The musical component of the production was now complete."

### Activity



"In creating his choreography, [Bourne] counts the score as he hears it rather than how a musician would read it, allowing him to follow the emotional journey of the music, which is recorded specifically for his productions" [9].

Choose a Matthew Bourne production and ask your students to write down five words to describe the music for each scene (or selected scenes). Try to listen to the music in isolation from the action (students should close their eyes or look away from the screen).

Once they have completed this task for each scene look at the journey the music has taken the listener on. How does this reflect what happens on stage? Go back and look at the scenes in their entirety. Comment on this and discuss how the other production elements; costume, set and lighting work together to inform the story.







## Lighting Design - Paule Constable

"My process as a lighting designer starts when the director - in this case Matthew Bourne - first asks me to do a show. Is it something I like the sound of? Is it something I think I can help bring to life? I believe you have to love the piece to bring it to life - there has to be a hook. With *Sleeping Beauty* I was fascinated by it because it's a classical ballet. The productions I have seen have often been period pieces but I also love Angela Carter and Grimm Tales and knew that Matt and Lez [Brotherston - set and costume designer] would let me explore the darkness underneath. As soon as we started to talk about the source material, from Arthur Rackham to *True Blood*, I was hooked!

Matt and Lez have such a unique relationship I am led by them both. Lez has such a strong, clear sense of how to tell the story. I use his source material and design storyboards and then Matt shares his whole landscape so we can pick up on lots of ideas from that too. It's like a patchwork of ideas, of qualities and images from films, books and pictures. You dive in and see what works for you. We improvise and make a little, like the dancers Matt works with.

Matt and Lez are my main points of contact in the process. However there is a team of people involved in each stage of the production process. I also liaise with the production manager in terms of budgets, where I want lights and how to fit the scenery and the lighting into the same stage space! The sound designer and I have a similar negotiation. I work with my production lx [lighting] on how we're going to make the show - how we build it, what lights to use and where - all the logistics. I also work with a wider team of a programmer and lighting technicians who tour with the show and work on it every night.

The technical period is the toughest time for me. Everyone else can try out ideas in a corner, in the safety of a studio. The set has a model box. The costumes are sketched and then built up through a series of fittings. Choreography can be tried in a rehearsal room.

I have to do all of this once we're in the theatre so it can be very quick and you need to have good, clear ideas before you start. A good sense of humour is vital and you have to spend lots of time in rehearsals so you have a clear idea of what you want to light and when before you start the technical rehearsal in the theatre!" [10]



➤ Good Lighting

### Activity



1. Discuss with your students how they might differentiate between the three time periods in *Sleeping Beauty* in terms of lighting (simple things e.g. Victorian - gaslight, Edwardian - early electricity, contemporary - neon, fluorescent) or perhaps the colours of Rackham versus the more filmic world of the 20s (Paule Constable used a kind of Peter Greenaway's *The Draughtsman's Contract* feel) versus modern (think MTV!).
2. Ask your students, either individually or in groups to research and feedback on the following roles Paule Constable mentions. The internet, local theatre or arts centre, touring companies etc could be sources:

- Production Manager
- Sound Designer
- Production Lighting
- Programmer
- Touring lighting team





## Sound Design - Paul Groothius

Sound design is a relatively new creative genre, which has developed out of technology becoming more sophisticated and integral to live performance. The sound design plays a significant role in Bourne's creative vision. It helps to add to depth to the score, reinforce a feeling or emotion being portrayed and helps to enhance a particular setting or scene.

In Bourne's revival of *Cinderella* in 2010/11, set at the time of the London Blitz in WWII, surround sound was used to really place the audience in the middle of an air raid or a bomb explosion. The sound reverberated around the auditorium giving an almost 3D experience for the audience. Sound was also used to change the atmosphere, for example when the Angel [Godmother] enters, a cold, mysterious wind sound emanated suggesting someone 'other' has entered.

In *Sleeping Beauty*, sound plays an equally crucial part in realising the artistic vision. Groothius, having been involved in creative meetings to establish what specific atmospheres, moods or sound effects are needed and at what points throughout the narrative, would then research and source sound effects or record them specifically for the production. Both Morris and Constable have alluded to the collaboration and integration of sound with music and lighting, so this is an ongoing process for Groothius who also spends time in the rehearsal studio with continuous discussion with Bourne.

In Act One, as we see Carabosse conjure the baby Aurora, violent thunder claps are heard, adding to the powerful imagery on stage, through costume and lighting. Sound for the baby Aurora is an important element in bringing

the puppet to life. Baby cries are heard from the basket left at the Palace gates and we see and hear the toddler Aurora crying at her displeasure in having to take her medicine. These two examples pose different challenges for the sound designer. Where do the audience need to believe the sound is coming from? The thunder fills the space as if rumbling across a vast sky whereas the noises the baby Aurora makes need to appear to come from the puppet itself. Again in Act One, as the King and Queen check on their baby daughter, a large moon is present upstage right, a star backcloth twinkles indicating night. We hear an owl hoot, stopping the King and Queen in their tracks. Just that one sound effect is enough to unsettle the King and Queen momentarily as well as the audience and suggests an impending uncertainty or potential danger.

In the final act, as Caradoc is overpowered by Count Lilac and stabbed with the blade with which he intended to 'sacrifice' Aurora's life, Caradoc released an anguished, almost demonic scream as he dies, finally releasing Aurora completely from the curse and setting her free. As Bourne is not one to shy away from the dark, violent or grotesque, it's a heightened moment in the story contrasted immediately by an idyllic reunion of Aurora and Leo in the wooded, leafy fairy world.

This is a time consuming and detailed process, as the sound designer needs to fully understand the creative vision and the production and to equally be familiar with the music, set and lighting intentions moment by moment. The sound design must also support and enhance the audience's experience, something absolutely central to Bourne's vision.



# Worksheets

## Worksheet A: Developing and Devising Ideas

Bourne and his Associate Director Etta Murfitt use different exercises and tasks in a collaborative process to devise and develop movement with the dancers. Here are some examples of exercises used during the rehearsal process, the results of which you can see on stage.

### Activity



#### Sign and Describe

Stand your group in a circle. Each student in turn verbally describes four things about their own appearance (clothing, hair, build etc). This can be actual or imagined. A physical gesture is assigned to each of the four descriptions. You may want to repeat this a few times, so the students remember or have the chance to change their minds.

Next, go round the circle again, each student repeating their four gestures, this time without the verbal description, encouraging each student to make their movement clear and precise. Then link each movement so each student has an 8 count phrase:

Count 1 - Description 1  
Count 2 - link  
Count 3 - Description 2  
Count 4 - link  
Count 5 - Description 3  
Count 6 - link  
Count 7 - Description 4  
Count 8 - link



➤ Rehearsals

Repeat as many times as needed so each student's movements are set and physically embedded.

Now your students are going to create a conversation with their phrases. Split the group into 2 and ask them to line up facing each other so everyone has an opposite partner. Ask one line then the other to 'shout' their 8 count phrase. Ask them to imagine they are trying to communicate with their partner opposite who is on a distance mountain, making it 'louder'. Make sure the movement stays the same and encourage them not to lose the original feel and detail of the movement in making it louder. Now ask each line to 'whisper' the 8 count phrase, so it becomes very small and compact, again not losing the original impetus and detail.

Students now have three eights of movement, the original, the shout and the whisper. Continue to play with this in different group sizes, tempos, travelling, levels etc. Add music and see what happens. You may find some movement fits the music as if it's been choreographed that way. You may find the movement fights against the music.

You can develop this idea further by placing the students in a situation e.g. a doctor's waiting room or a party. Split the students into groups, now they have to interact with each other non-verbally, in the given situation, only using their phrases. Each student's movement will help them find a character base. They simply keep repeating their three 8's, they can change the order if they want to.



## Activity



### Act Four - Yesterday (Club scene)

This exercise is about creating duets as conversations. This research was used to create the movement for the party at Aurora's impending wedding to Cardoc.

Research and print off the 12 Zodiac signs that include descriptions. Establish who in your group is which zodiac sign and give them the relevant sheet. Each student needs to choose three words from their star sign. For example:

Movement 1 - the image of the sign

Movement 2 - the first letter of their sign (describe it using a body part)

Movement 3 - 1 other word taken from the sign's descriptions (or more if time allows)

As they create and practice their moves, start introducing some music or a tempo and ask them to keep their moves within that tempo (a waltz or mazurka are good for this exercise). The movement needs to be set, once the students are happy with it.

Create two groups, the first group moves on 1-2-3 and pauses for 4-5-6. The second group will pause for 1-2-3 and move on 4-5-6.

Now pair up the group - a 1-2-3 with a 4-5-6 and give them time to create a duet where they are having a conversation by "speaking/moving" on the different counts. You can swap the counts half way through so that the second group starts "speaking/moving" on the 1-2-3.

Once the duets/conversations feel embedded and flow, start giving your students tasks for each 6 and manipulate the phrase they already have.

Example:

1-2-3-4-5-6 - make the material go to the floor (either one or both)

2-2-3-4-5-6 - swap places

3-2-3-4-5-6 - manipulate the other person

4-2-3-4-5-6 - introduce jumps

5-2-3-4-5-6 - introduce a look to an imaginary person in the room

6-2-3-4-5-6 - link a body part (a hip, a hand, an ankle etc)

Eventually the original material looks very different and what the students have developed is a much more intricate duet.

Depending on time, you can then add a situation so your students create a scene. For example, one half of the duets could be at a nightclub, the other half

are vampires who arrive at the club, walk around and chooses a victim - their duet partner. You can play around with groupings, bring duets together in groups of 4 or 6 or more. The possibilities are endless.

OR

As above, research and print off the 12 Zodiac signs that include descriptions. Establish who in your group is which zodiac sign and give them the relevant sheet. Each student needs to choose three words from their star sign. For example:

Movement 1 - the image of the sign

Movement 2 - the first letter of their sign (describe it using a body part)

Movement 3 - 1 or 2 other words taken from the sign's descriptions (or more if time allows)

Put these movements together and make them work to six counts, practice and set. Then travel across the room with one of these movements, freeze during another and spin on the floor with the final movement.

Now create groups of six. One student teaches two group members their three movements and another student teaches the other two group members their movement. One half of the group asks a question with their Zodiac movement to the other half of the group then answer with their learnt movements.

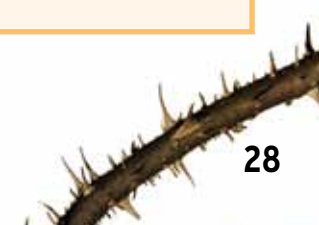
Ask the groups to add in a key theme from *Sleeping Beauty* (for example good versus evil) and devise a scenario around this. Then act out this scene in silence and with no dance. Once the story is clear for each group, add in the Zodiac movements to complete the scene.

Add music (you can experiment with different types of music) and see which parts of the music work best for each group's scene.

Perform each scene to the rest of the group. Comment on the key themes explored, what stood out in each scene, how clear was each story (movement and character)?



➤ Club Scene





## Worksheet B: Creating Characters

### Activity



### Self Destruct - Solo work

Caradoc, the son of Carabosse begins to hate everything about himself. He hates who he is and what he has become. He wants to destroy the hatred that is inside of him.

As a group brainstorm words that describe how Caradoc is feeling at this point and write them down. Here are some initial suggestions but encourage your group to come up with their own:

Frustrated  
Distorted  
Uneven  
Angry

Each student working solo imagines their body comprising two parts/halves: the right side is evil and wants to destroy the left side; the left side is good and determined not to let the right side win. The right side stops the left from:

Walking  
Jumping  
Turning  
Shouting  
Running  
Crawling  
Lying still

Work on the moments where the left side almost wins and then the right side fights back. Try experimenting with the right side and left side both taking turns to be the stronger side. Work each movement to a set number of counts. The phrase will be more effective if you vary the levels of movement. For example: Jumping > Crawling > Running > Lying Still. Focus on the consistency and fluidity into each movement as this will enhance the energy of the piece.



➤ Caradoc

Try a variety of different pieces of music that reflects the struggle between good and evil, left and right before deciding what to use. Discuss as a group how different types of music effects movement. Allow each of the group to perform their solo pieces, commenting on each. How clear was the struggle? Was there anything that stood out and why? Make suggestions to try.





## Activity



### Fairy Back Story - duet work

Ask each member of the group to think of a character from a classic fairytale and then write a character appraisal of them, using key words to describe their characteristics:

Describe the character physically - what they look like

What clothes they are wearing

How they communicate with other people

What makes your character angry?

What makes them happy and sad?

Write down three key events in the story that your character is involved in and how they react.

Now place your character in a contemporary setting:

Think about how they might alter to fit into this new and alien setting.

Does their name change?

Does their appearance change in any way?

Think about/discuss how the contemporary setting affects the three key events you wrote about. Have things changed? If so how? Does your character have a different reaction to any of the situations? Think about the environment your character is now placed in.

What other things do you have to consider when placing your character in a contemporary setting: Think about the people your character comes into contact with.

Working in pairs use the key words you used to describe your character originally and find a shape for each word. You may create more but decide on three shapes and think about how you might move from shape to shape.

Now repeat this exercise for your character in the contemporary setting. Keep repeating the two phrases until they feel embedded. Then start working on ways to link and integrate the two phrases, moving from historical to contemporary and back again.

One of you may wish to play the historical character while the other one plays the contemporary character, think of ways that the two characters interact with each other and look at the similarities and differences. Or you could both play the same character at the same time and create a journey together from historical to

contemporary, thinking about the physical and character transformation and the change in environment.

Add music and start practising your phrases to the music. Then each pair performs Perform to wider group and discuss.

If you want to do further work on this, you can bring the pairs into groups and work on how individuals interact with each other. Larger groups can also further develop the story.



➤ Fairy



# Reflecting and Reviewing

## Reviewing Live Performance

### General overview:

- Summarise the plot in 3-5 sentences
- Describe the style of the production
- Did it remind you of any other productions you have seen or know?
- What was your personal response to the production?
- What theatrical devices and conventions were used?

### Direction and choreography:

- What do you think the director/choreographer was trying to convey through the production?
- Do you think that the choreography, set design and staging supported and conveyed this?
- Was there an interesting and varied use of stage space?

### Dancing:

- How would you describe the dancing style?
- What different styles of dance did you recognise?
- Were they all successfully used within the production?
- What can you say about the dancing in comparison with the dancing in other productions you have seen?
- Who gave the most notable performance? Try to be specific about why in your answer.

### Design:

- Describe the set, costume, lighting and sound.
- What kind of statement did each of these make?
- How did the design contribute to the production's meaning?
- Give examples of how the lighting enhanced the narrative.





# Further Work

## Essay Questions

1. Choose another example of a modern take on a fairytale or fable (film, book, live production) and compare and contrast with Matthew Bourne's *Sleeping Beauty*
2. Discuss the ideas and context of Gothic Romance, using examples and references from literature, film, art, live performance etc.

## Footnotes

- [1] Bourne, Matthew. Interview, 2012
- [2] Porter, David. Article - Tracing the journey undertaken by *Sleeping Beauty* from folk legend to contemporary ballet, 2012
- [3] Bourne, Matthew. Interview, 2012
- [4] Bourne, Matthew. Interview, 2012
- [5] Porter, David. Article - Traces the journey undertaken by *Sleeping Beauty* from folk legend to contemporary ballet, 2012
- [6] Green, F. Article Daily Telegraph, 2007
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- [10] Constable, Paule. Article, 2013

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