

NEW/ADVENTURES

Matthew Bourne's **SLEEPING BEAUTY** A GOTHIC ROMANCE

PRE-SHOW RESOURCE

Find out more about the dance company New Adventures and our latest show, *Sleeping Beauty – A Gothic Romance*. This Pre-Show Resource is designed to introduce the show and provide ideas and exercises to explore with your students prior to watching.

ABOUT NEW ADVENTURES

New Adventures is an iconic and ground-breaking dance-theatre company. Since 1987, we have been known for creating works that have altered the public perception of what is possible when it comes to telling stories without words. The company is led by celebrated choreographer and director, Sir Matthew Bourne.

AN INTRODUCTION TO SIR MATTHEW BOURNE'S *SLEEPING BEAUTY – A GOTHIC ROMANCE*

Matthew is renowned for shattering stereotypes and exploring and pushing new boundaries in dance. Key to his creative approach is the creation of new work from familiar titles that are accessible to audiences unfamiliar with dance. However, Matthew's aim is not to simply re-tell a well-known story but instead put his own spin on the narrative that provokes the audience to think, feel and consider the story in a new light.

New Adventures' adaptation of *Sleeping Beauty* is no exception and may prompt you to think differently about your preconceptions of the show! It is a new adaptation of the original ballet of *Sleeping Beauty* by the choreographer Marius Petipa, featuring the same famous score by composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

KEY THEMES

New Adventures' reimagining of *Sleeping Beauty* explores many themes that appear in the ballet, but also includes Matthew's trademark approach to reinvention, including surprising twists and a host of new characters. Here is a list of some of the key themes in the production:

- **Good vs Evil**
- **Gothic**
- **Growing up and rebirth**
- **Sleep**
- **Eras & Time**
- **Fairies & Vampires** (How the perception and representation of them has changed over time)

You can discuss how these aspects might appear in the show with your students.

THE PRODUCTION

To put on a show like *Sleeping Beauty*, we rely on the skills of lots of talented people. Before and during the rehearsal period, a creative team work closely together to determine what the show will look, feel and sound like, including:

- **Director & Choreographer** – Sir Matthew Bourne
- **Designer (Set & Costumes)** – Lez Brotherston
- **Lighting Designer** – Paule Constable
- **Sound Designer** – Paul Groothuis
- **Associate Artistic Director** – Etta Murfitt
- **Resident Director** – Neil Westmoreland
- **Associate Choreographer** – Christopher Marney

Sleeping Beauty is performed by a cast of 27 dancers. They are supported by a technical team, including electricians, stage managers and staff who look after the wigs, make-up and costumes that are worn by the performers.

To visit New Adventures website to find out more about the people involved with staging the show, [click here](#)

TASKS

Now you have learnt more about the show, here are a few movement exercises that will introduce your students to aspects of the choreography they will see on stage.

1. SIGN AND DESCRIBE (FROM ACT 4'S CLUB SCENE)

This task uses actions and gesture as a way into exploring character. By introducing rhythm and musicality to the gestures, we build a physical value to the movement.

Act 4 of *Sleeping Beauty* is set in a modern-day club, where the character of Caradoc is hosting a masked ball. The guests are Caradoc's followers and represent the 'evil' element of the story. They are fierce, sinister, stylish and have tons of attitude. Ask your students to keep this in mind as they work through the task.

Working on their own:

- Think of 3 pieces of clothing that are part of an outfit you would wear to the party.
- Think of 1 pose or move that represents your attitude.
- Without speaking describe what you are wearing through actions and finish with your pose.

Think about the detail of your clothes – does your hat have a feather? Does your shirt have ruffles? How do you feel in the outfit?

- Choose music to work with – something modern that has a clear driving beat.
- Listen to the rhythm of the music and fit your actions in time with this – this should be no longer than 2 counts of 8. Think about changing the pace of your actions so they aren't all even, you can even add in a pause.
- Exaggerate the movement actions to make your outfit come to life even more – you can add a turn, a jump or travel.

- Now practice your movement sequence so it flows and is clear.
- Perform your movement sequence as though you are speaking to someone else and explaining to them what you are wearing.

If you are working in a group you could work with a partner and take it in turns to perform your sign and describe to each other or take turns around a circle, being sure to keep in time with the music.

2. TASK EXTENSION

Now you can take your outfit to the party!

Imagine you are a celebrity out at an event:

- Set up an imaginary red carpet.
- Strut down the carpet in your outfit.
- Stop halfway.
- Perform your sign and describe phrase and end with your pose for a photo moment.
- Strut off into the party.

Things to consider:

- How does your character walk?
- How does your character feel in their outfit?
- Try and strut to the music listening to the beat.
- If you are working in a group, you can set the scene and have students playing fans and photographers and then swap characters.



FIND OUT MORE

- To watch the trailer for *Sleeping Beauty*, [click here](#)
- To watch a Two Minute Tale with Sir Matthew Bourne, [click here](#)
- To find out more about New Adventures, [visit our website](#)

Thank you for reading the *Sleeping Beauty* Pre-Show Resource. We hope you enjoy the show!



Pre-Show Resource written by New Adventures
Contributions from and with thanks to the creative team and company of *Sleeping Beauty*

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