Coppélia

2019-20 AUDIENCE STUDY GUIDE
Presented by the Department of Community Engagement
We celebrate our 50th anniversary by bringing Coppélia back to life! This ballet was the company's first, full-length production, premiering in the Marcus Center's Uihlein Hall in 1970.

A Brief History

Coppélia was the Company's first, full-length production, premiering in Uihlein Hall in 1970 starring Cynthia Gregory and Ted Kivitt from the American Ballet Theatre in the lead roles. This ballet set the course for success. Kivitt became Artistic Director in 1980, contributing to the innovative artistic journey that continues today.

The Story

This classical favorite follows the tale of a dancing doll created by the mysterious inventor Dr. Coppélius. The doll, Coppélia, is so lifelike that a villager named Franz falls in love with it. Swanhilda, who wants Franz for herself, concocts a clever plan to show Franz his folly.

The First Premiere

Coppélia premiered in May 1870, choreographed by Arthur Saint-Léon with composer Léo Delibes, just a few months before France declared war on Prussia. That winter, Paris fell under siege until January, when it surrendered. The ballet was only performed 12 times before the theater was shut down in September, and the theater was used as a storage facility during the siege.
**Act One**

**Town Festival**

The scene begins in a small town in Poland as local villagers prepare for the day's work, including Swanhilda, the daughter of the town's innkeeper. Across from the inn sits the mysterious house of Dr. Coppélius. Perched on the balcony, a beautiful - and very still - young lady named Coppélia reads. Trying to catch the attention of the girl, Swanhilda offers Coppélia flowers. Coppélia gives no response and Swanhilda leaves in a huff off to find her friends.

Swanhilda's finance, Franz, is also captured by the unusual but beautiful girl. He gives Coppélia a respectful bow and she responds with blowing him a kiss. Franz offers Coppélia the flowers Swanhilda discarded as Swanhilda and her friends return. Swanhilda is outraged.

The villagers return along with the Burgomaster, who announces the lord of the manor will give money to a few betrothed couples to celebrate the new harvest. He encourages Franz and Swanhilda to wed, but Swanhilda is still upset. The Burgomaster describes the traditional folk tale of the corn: if the couple can hear the ear of the corn rattle, then all will be well.

Swanhilda leaves to dance with her friends and soon forgets about the corn until she sees Franz dancing with another girl. Upset again, Swanhilda and her friends leave.

Dr. Coppélius emerges from his house and stumbles upon a group of village youths who rile him up. During the scrap, Dr. Coppélius drops his keys. Swanhilda and her friends can't resist the opportunity to meet the mysterious Coppélia. Franz has the same idea.
Act Two

Dr. Coppélius' House
Swanhilda and her friends enter Dr. Coppélius' household and find Coppélia sitting behind some cupboards, still reading. It doesn't take long for Swanhilda to realize the object of Franz's affection is merely a mechanical doll. Dr. Coppélius enters his workshop and everyone flees except Swanhilda who hides.

Dr. Coppélius thinks he's rid of the intruders when he hears Franz coming through the window, and demands an explanation for the intrusion. Franz admits he's in search of the beautiful girl who blew him a kiss. Dr. Coppélius is angry at first, but then considers this may be the perfect opportunity to test his skills as a magician.

Dr. Coppélius pretends to be friendly, shows Franz his other dolls and offers him a glass of wine. Franz drinks one glass and asks for another. Dr. Coppélius pours a sleeping potion into the glass, unbeknownst to Franz, and Franz falls into a deep sleep. Excited his plan is in motion, Dr. Coppélius fetches "Coppélia", which happens to be Swanhilda disguised as Coppélia. Dr. Coppélius consults his magic book to bring Franz's lifeforce into Coppélia. Swanhilda pretends to come alive.

Ecstatic by his own abilities, Dr. Coppélius soon becomes worried he can't control the doll. He tries to distract her by giving her a Spanish mantilla and fan, and then a tartan scarf to dance with. The town begins to wake - Dr. Coppélius must get rid of Franz! He drags Franz to the window after putting the doll away. The other mechanical dolls begin to buzz and in the confusion, Swanhilda reveals she fooled Dr. Coppélius and was pretending to be Coppélia all along.
Act Three

Wedding Bells

The village hustles and bustles to prepare for the wedding celebrations when Swanhilda and Franz escape Dr. Coppélius’ house. The Burgomaster tells them to hurry and dress for the wedding if they want to take part. The festivities begin; the ladies perform beautiful dances symbolizing the "Morning Hours", "Dawn" and "Prayer". Four men perform a hearty work dance before the betrothed couples dance.

Franz is carried into the square. His solo ends as Dr. Coppélius furiously interrupts the celebration demanding justice for the destruction of his workshop. Swanhilda asks the Burgomaster for her dowry, which she presents to Dr. Coppélius as an apology.

With Coppélia’s doll identity unveiled, Swanhilda is no longer angry with Franz and they marry. With his blessing of health and happiness, Dr. Coppélius returns the dowry, vowing henceforth his home is open to all, so everyone in the village can enjoy his mechanical creations.

Can't get enough Coppélia?

In 2020, a new “Coppélia” film will be released bringing together animation and ballet. Dutch National Ballet soloist, Michaela DePrince, will be dancing Swanhilda with Dutch National Ballet principal dancer, Daniel Camargo as her Franz.
Did you know?

FUN FACTS

1. If the story of a doll coming to life in a ballet sounds a bit familiar, it's because it was written by E.T.A. Hoffmann, who also gave us The Nutcracker.

2. The lead role of Franz was originally en travesti, meaning it was played by a woman. Franz would be continued to be played by a woman up until WWII.

3. Coppélia is the most performed ballet in the history of the Paris Opera Ballet - ballet's first and longest running company.

4. Coppélia was the first ballet to include national folk dances and music, including the Czárdás (Hungarian) and the Mazurka (Polish).

5. At the time of Coppélia's premiere, people were not that interested in ballet. They often attended just to meet people and socialize.

6. The National Ballet of China created a version including modernized costumes: jeans for men and short, tight skirts for women. Some of the women danced on roller skates.

"Milwaukee Ballet brought an old-school ballet to exquisite life."

- Shepherd Express
Choreographer
AND 5, 6, 7, 8!

Michael Pink, Artistic Director
Michael Pink began his tenure as Artistic Director of Milwaukee Ballet in December of 2002. Since that time, he has established himself as a prominent member of the Milwaukee arts community, demonstrating his commitment to the future of dance through education and collaboration. His artistic vision for Milwaukee Ballet is both exciting and challenging. Pink’s dramatic productions of Dracula, Esmeralda, Romeo & Juliet, Beauty and the Beast and Peter Pan have taken narrative dance drama to a new level of interpretation. His production of Coppélia charms and induces laughter for audiences.

What is a Choreographer?
Coppélia’s production is so deeply rooted in tradition that Milwaukee Ballet often gives partial choreography credit to Arthur Saint-Léon, the original choreographer of the 1870 production. While there is a formal system of dance notation, most people don't use it. Ballet is taught by memory and by video. There is no true documentation that dancers today are performing Saint-Léon’s actual choreography; the steps for the principal dancers have been handed down from generation to generation. The rest of the ballet is Michael Pink’s creation and is comparable to a comic opera.
Were You Paying Attention?

1. When and where did Coppélia premiere?
   a. 1884 in St. Petersburg.
   b. 1870 in Paris.
   c. 1906 in London.
   d. 1877 in Rome.

2. What is the story based on?
   a. A Brothers Grimm fairy tale.
   b. A Victor Hugo novella.

3. What kind of ballet is Coppélia?
   a. A tragedy.
   b. A neoclassical ballet.
   c. A comic ballet.
   d. A romantic ballet

4. Who is Dr. Coppélius?
   a. A mad scientist
   b. A toy maker
   c. Coppélia's assumed father.
   d. Both B and C.

5. Coppélia incorporates traditional folk dance and music. True or False?

6. Milwaukee Ballet uses only the original choreography from Arthur Saint-Leon. True or False?

7. Swanhilda and Franz don't get married by the end of the ballet. True or False?

8. Who is Swanhilda engaged to, but is angry with due to his infatuation of another woman? ______________

9. Where does the opening scene take place? ______________

10. How does Swanhilda enter Dr. Coppélius' home? ________________

Answers in the back!
NATIONAL FOLK DANCES

Dzien Dobry!
Polish for, "Good day!"

Czárdás
Czárdás is a national Hungarian dance. It's a courting dance for couples with a slow introduction (lassu) and a fast, wild finish (friss). The individual dancers carry themselves proudly and improvise on a simple fundamental step, their feet snapping inward and outward, the couples whirling. The music, often played by a Gypsy orchestra, is in 2/4 or 4/4 time with compelling, syncopated rhythms. The czárdás developed in the 19th Century from an earlier folk dance, the magyar kör. A ballroom dance adapted from the czárdás is popular in Eastern Europe. The dancers are both male and female with the women dressed in traditional wide skirts, which form a distinctive shape when they spin.

Mazurka
Originating in the 16th Century, Mazurka is a lively national Polish dance in triple time at a lively tempo. It's typically for a circle of couples, characterized by stamping feet and clicking heels, and traditionally danced to the music of a village band. The music is in 3/4 or 3/8 time with a forceful accent on the second beat. The dance, highly improvised, has no set figures. More than 50 different steps exist. The music written for the dance is also called "mazurka". It eventually spread to Russian and German ballrooms. By the 1830s, it had reached England and France.
Milwaukee Ballet

IN THE 1970s

Our History
The curtain rose on Milwaukee Ballet’s inaugural performance on April 24, 1970. Audiences crowded into the School of Fine Arts at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. They were enraptured by excerpts from Polovetzian Dance, The Hill and a pas de deux from Le Corsaire. Audiences were enchanted by stunning performances from guest stars Lupe Serrano and American Ballet Theatre principal dancer Ted Kivitt.

As Milwaukee Ballet grew in popularity, it began to present works never before seen by Milwaukee audiences. Before it was a year old, the company presented Coppélia, its first three-act ballet starring American Ballet Theatre's Cynthia Gregory and Ted Kivitt. For the first time, this performance allowed Milwaukee Ballet patrons to see ballet in Uihlein Hall at the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts.

Throughout the 1970s, Milwaukee Ballet continued to thrive. In addition to experiencing the arrival of artistic director Jean-Paul Comelin, in 1974 Milwaukee Ballet opened Milwaukee Ballet School. In 1977, Milwaukee Ballet began performing The Nutcracker, one of America's most popular ballets. In 1978, Milwaukee Ballet II started as the organization's second dance company. It has now become a strong training ground for students who have finished their dance education and are interested in becoming professional dancers. Today, Milwaukee Ballet is ranked among the top 12 ballet companies in the United States.

Want to learn more?
Check out the historical display in the Marcus Center lobby during the Coppélia production, October 17-20, 2019, to learn more about the classical ballets we've performed and the Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra.
Ballet Basics

GET UP AND MOVE!

Positions of the Arms

A dancer's technique includes positions of the arms or port de bras. It describes how dancers move their arms from one position to another. When doing proper port de bras, dancers will move their arms from their back and shoulders (without lifting the shoulders upwards), while trying to move as smoothly as possible. The shape of the arms should be rounded so there is no visible break at the elbows and wrists. Give it a try!

![Positions of the Arms](Photo Jennifer Mazza)

en bas  1st Position  2nd Position  5th Position

Positions of the Feet

A dancer's technique also includes positions of the feet. All ballet positions of the feet and legs are turned out; this is shown by having the toes pointing away from the middle of the body, to the side. It's important that dancers not just turn out from their feet, but use their entire leg to rotate outwards so that the knees are pointed in the same direction as the toes - this is known as turnout. Now you try!

![Positions of the Feet](Photo Jennifer Mazza)

1st Position  3rd Position  5th Position
2nd Position  4th Position
HOW TO BE A Good Audience

After weeks of rehearsal in the studio, the Milwaukee Ballet is excited to perform for our audience! To make it the best experience for the dancers and audience members, please respect our following rules:

1. Arrive at the theatre with plenty of time to find your seats. Late arrivals cause disruption for audience members and dancers.

2. No cameras or phones. Light is dangerous for dancers and unapproved photos and videos violate copyright laws.

3. Please feel free to post about your Milwaukee Ballet experience during intermission or after the show! Follow us on Facebook and Instagram @milwaukeeballet #MKEBallet

4. No running or shoving in the lobby.

5. No whistling or yelling during the performance. The performance has begun when the orchestra starts playing or when anyone enters the stage. You are welcome to laugh if someone on stage is being intentionally funny or applaud at the end of a solo. Feel free to shout “Bravo!” at the end of the performance to show the dancers and orchestra how much you loved the performance.

6. No talking or whispering during the performance. You will have plenty of time to discuss your impressions at intermission or after the show.

7. No gum, food or drink in the theatre.

8. Use the bathroom before the show begins or at intermission, not during the performance. However, if you must leave during the show, please sit on the end of a row when you return. Don’t walk across people to return to your seats.
ANSWER KEY

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8. Who is Swanhilda engaged to, but is angry with due to his infatuation of another woman? Franz.

9. Where does the opening scene take place? The town hall.

10. How does Swanhilda enter Dr. Coppélius' home? She finds his dropped keys.
Learn Ballet

BECOME AN MBSA STUDENT

About the School & Academy

Grow in confidence, in agility, in dedication and be inspired. Through structured classes in classical ballet technique for novice through pre-professional, we build a foundation that helps our students elevate both their art and confidence to their highest potential. See how much you can gain on and off stage.

Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy (MBSA) is nationally accredited by the National Association of Schools of Dance. We are one of less than 15 professional ballet schools in the country to be accredited and the only one in the Midwest, this accreditation recognizes MBSA meets a rigorous set of national standards for excellence in dance training and organized operation.

Here's How

To learn more, visit our website, milwaukeeballet.org/school-academy/. Get information about locations, National Association of Schools of Dance, financial assistance and more! Or contact Alyx Johnson, MBSA administrator at Milwaukee Ballet, ajohnson@milwaukeeballet.org or (414)-902-2149.