

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

MOSCOW FESTIVAL BALLET





photo (above and cover): Alexander Daev

State Theatre New Jersey is delighted to welcome you to our school-day performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*, from the renowned Moscow Festival Ballet. This full-length production presents the beloved fairytale with breathtaking choreography, exquisite costumes, and Tchaikovsky’s beloved music.

These *Keynotes* provide information to help you and your students prepare for the performance. Included are discussion questions and suggested activities to help you make the most of your experience.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

The Moscow Festival Ballet was founded in 1989, when Sergei Radchenko, legendary principal dancer of the Bolshoi Ballet, fulfilled his vision to create a company that would bring together the highest classical elements of the great Bolshoi and Kirov Ballet companies. Featuring leading dancers from across the Russia, the company performs both timeless classics as well as exciting new ballets they have commissioned from Russia and abroad. Since its inception, the ensemble has toured to great acclaim across Europe, Asia, and North America.

CONTENTS

Welcome!.....	2
About the Ballet	3
The Music	4
<i>Sleeping Beauty</i> Stories	5
Ballet Vocabulary	6
Ballet Positions	7
Mime Time.....	8
Amazing Athletes!	9
Do & Discuss	10
At the Show	11
Resources	12



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The Sleeping Beauty is the second of three famous ballets for which Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky wrote the music (the other two being *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker*). The ballet premiered at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia, on January 15, 1890. The choreographer was Marius Petipa, ballet master of the Imperial Ballet.

The basic story of the ballet was based on the version of *Sleeping Beauty* written by the Brothers Grimm. Colorful characters from well-known fairytales by Charles Perrault—including Puss 'n Boots, Goldilocks, Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, and the Bluebird—were added to the wedding celebration at the end of the ballet. The main theme of the ballet, however, is the struggle between good (the Lilac Fairy) and evil (Carabosse).



The original cast of *The Sleeping Beauty*

THE STORY

PROLOGUE: The Christening

The King and Queen and their guests are celebrating Princess Aurora's **CHRISTENING**. Six fairies come forward to give gifts to the baby; the Princess receives honesty, grace, prosperity, song, and generosity. Suddenly, the wicked fairy Carabosse arrives. She is furious because Catalabutte, the Master of Ceremonies, left her name off the guest list. In revenge for this insult, Carabosse curses the baby and warns that on her 16th birthday, Princess Aurora will prick her finger and die. Fortunately, the sixth fairy—the Lilac Fairy—has not yet presented her gift. She is not powerful enough to completely lift the curse, but she is able to change it: now, when the Princess pricks her finger she will not die, but instead fall asleep for a hundred years, until she is awakened by the kiss of a prince.

CHRISTENING - a special naming ceremony for a newborn child

SPINDLE - a wooden rod that is used to spin wool into thread

ACT I: The Spell

People dance at Princess Aurora's 16th birthday party. Aurora herself appears, and dances with four princes who have come to seek her hand in marriage. Each one gives her a rose. Carabosse, disguised as an old woman, offers her a **SPINDLE** as a birthday gift. When Aurora takes the gift, she pricks her finger on a needle that is hidden on it. The evil spell that Carabosse cast at the Princess' christening has now come to pass. The Lilac Fairy works her magic, and the Princess does not die. Instead, she and the whole kingdom fall into a deep

sleep. The Lilac Fairy summons a forest of thorns, thickets, and enormous shrubbery to grow around the sleeping court.

—Intermission—

ACT II, SCENE ONE: The Vision

A hundred years have passed. Prince Charming and some lords and ladies are hunting in the forest. His cheerful companions amuse themselves with dances and games, but the Prince is tired of their company and wanders off by himself. Suddenly, the Lilac Fairy appears and shows him a vision of Aurora. He falls instantly in love and begs to be taken to the Princess. The Lilac Fairy guides him to the sleeping kingdom, which is completely overgrown by a dense and tangled forest.

ACT II, SCENE TWO: The Awakening

The Prince finds Princess Aurora and awakens her with a kiss. They fall in love at first sight and vow to marry. The King and Queen appear and joyfully greet the couple.

ACT III: The Wedding

The court celebrates the marriage of Princess Aurora and Prince Charming. Famous fairytale characters appear to entertain the guests: Puss in Boots; Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf; and the Bluebird and his Princess. Then the newlywed couple dance together. As all the guests join the dancing, the Lilac Fairy bestows her blessing on the happy couple.

At the performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*, the dancers will be performing to music written by Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) for the original ballet in 1890. Tchaikovsky was a Russian composer who wrote symphonies, operas, concertos, and ballet music. His style was very much influenced by his studies of Western European classical music, flavored with traditional Russian rhythms, melodies, and themes.

Tchaikovsky loved writing dance music and often used dances in his symphonies and other non-ballet music. When writing ballets, he worked closely with the **CHOREOGRAPHER** to make sure his music matched the story and also the steps that would be created for the dancers. For *The Sleeping Beauty* choreographer Marius Petipa provided Tchaikovsky with an outline to follow. The outline went scene by scene, instructing Tchaikovsky to write a specific amount of music in a particular style, rhythm, and **TEMPO**. Here is an example of Petipa's notes for *The Sleeping Beauty*:



Tchaikovsky

ADAGIO, ALLEGRO, LARGO - terms used in music to indicate tempo. "Adagio" means fairly slow. "Allegro" means fast. "Largo" means very slow.

BAR - in music, a way of measuring. Each bar of music contains a specific number of beats, indicated in the time signature. When Petipa wrote "6/8 for 24 bars," he was instructing Tchaikovsky to write 24 bars of music with six beats in each bar: 144 beats in all.

CHOREOGRAPHER - a person who creates the choreography (the steps and other movements) for dancers.

TEMPO - the speed at which a piece of music is played; how fast or how slow.

VARIATION - A solo dance in a ballet.

Act 2 Scene 3

No. 11 With a new wave of the fairy's magic wand Aurora appears and rushes onstage. 6/8 for 24 **BARS**. A voluptuous **ADAGIO**. Coquettish **ALLEGRO** - 3/4 for 48 bars. **VARIATION** for Aurora.

No. 12. "Where is the divine being you showed me?" Very agitated, passionate music. 32 bars for the transition into the panorama.

No. 13. The boat is underway. The length of the music depends on the extent of the panorama.

No. 14. With a wave of her wand the fairy orders the gates to be opened. The entrance way is visible. A thick mist enshrouds the stage. A tender melody is heard. 32 bars of **LARGO**.

Tchaikovsky created musical themes for the main characters that painted a sound picture of that character's personality. Every time Carabosse appears, for example, the music becomes scary and harsh. To make the character themes more interesting as they were repeated throughout the ballet, Tchaikovsky sometimes used different combinations of instruments, different speeds, and other slight changes. You'll need to listen carefully to catch all the themes!

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN *THE SLEEPING BEAUTY**



STRINGS	WOODWINDS	BRASS	PERCUSSION	OTHER
violins	piccolo	horns	timpani	harp
violas	flutes	cornets	triangle	piano
cellos	oboes	trumpets	tambourine	
basses	English horn	trombones	side drum	
	clarinets	tuba	cymbals	
	bassoons		bass drum	
			tam-tam	
			glockenspiel	

**The Sleeping Beauty* will be performed with pre-recorded music.

SLEEPING BEAUTY STORIES

There are stories similar to *The Sleeping Beauty* from many different cultures. Some are more than a thousand years old!

DATE	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	THE STORY
800–900 AD	Persia	<i>One Thousand and One Nights</i> includes the story of Sittukhan, who falls into a deep sleep after getting a piece of flax (a plant used for making thread) caught under her fingernail. The sultan’s son goes to kiss her hand, notices the flax and pulls it out, thereby awakening her.
late 13th century	Scandinavia	The goddess Brynhild angers Odin by taking the wrong side in a battle. Odin pricks her with a sleep-thorn, imprisons her in a castle, and condemns her to marry a mortal. The hero Sigurd awakens Brynhild by removing her helmet and cutting off her armor. He falls instantly in love with her and marries her.
1528	France	In Ancient Chronicles of Perceforest, Zellandine falls asleep and is ravished by a prince named Troilus who wanders by. She gives birth to a baby without awakening from her enchanted sleep.
c. 1635	Italy	Giambattista Basile’s <i>Tale of Tales</i> includes the story “Sun, Moon, and Talia.” The hero is a king who is already married when he finds the Sleeping Beauty (Talia) in a deserted palace in the woods. Like Sittukhan in <i>One Thousand and One Nights</i> , Talia was put into a deep sleep by a piece of flax caught under her fingernail.
1697	France	In Charles Perrault’s tale, <i>The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood</i> , the hero is a Prince who awakens Sleeping Beauty by kneeling beside her (without kissing her). They soon have two children, Aurora and Day. The Prince, however, is afraid to bring his family home, because his mother the Queen is an ogress with a fondness for eating children!
1812-22	Germany	<i>Children’s and Home Tales</i> , by the brothers Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, includes the story “Little Briar Rose.” Their tale focuses on the enchantment and awakening and ends with the marriage. This is the version of the <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> story familiar to most people today.
1890	Russia	Marius Petipa choreographs a <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> ballet with music by Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky. Based on Charles Perrault’s fairytale, Petipa’s ballet has four sections: a prologue and three acts. The first performance takes place at the Mariinsky Theatre, home of the Kirov Ballet.
1959	United States	Walt Disney Studios releases their animated film of <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> , inspired by Charles Perrault’s tale.



Pictured above:

Sleeping Beauty illustration by Walter Crane from an 1882 edition of Brothers Grimm stories.

Book cover for a Dutch version of the story by Johann Georg van Caspel

German postage stamp showing the evil fairy putting a curse on the princess.

BALLET VOCABULARY

Ballet began in France more than 300 years ago. For this reason, most of the vocabulary used in ballet today is French. Here are some common ballet terms:

ARABESQUE (are-ah-BESK) - a position where the dancer stands on one leg with the other leg stretched straight out behind, parallel to the floor



ARABESQUE

ATTITUDE (ah-tee-TUDE) - a position where the dancer stands on one leg with the other leg curved to the back



ATTITUDE

BARRE (bar) - a horizontal wooden bar fastened to the walls of the ballet studio. The dancer holds onto it for support while practicing. Every ballet class begins with exercises at the barre.

CHAÎNÉS (sheh-NAY) - a series of quick turns done moving forward in a straight line or circle

CHASSÉ (shah-SAY) - a series of steps where one foot "chases" the other across the floor

CORPS DE BALLET (CORE duh ba-LAY) - the dancers in a ballet who do not perform a solo part



EN POINTE

DÉVELOPPÉ (day-vlaw-PAY) - a move in which one leg is raised with the knee bent, then slowly extended into an open position

EN POINTE (ahn PWAHNT) - dancing on the tips of the toes. Dancing en pointe gives the impression of floating on the air. In ballet, only women dance en pointe.

FOUETTÉ (fweh-TAY) - a quick "whipping" movement of the raised leg, usually as part of a pirouette

GRAND JETÉ (GRON zhuh-TAY) - a broad, high leap with one leg stretched forward and the other back like a "split" in the air



GRAND JETÉ

PAS DE DEUX (PAH de DUH) - a dance for two people, usually a male and female. The pas de deux sections of a ballet usually express intense emotion, such as love, sadness, or joy.

PORT DE BRAS (por duh brah) - the way the arms are held and moved

PIROUETTE (peer-oo-WET) - a whirl or spin done on one foot

PLIÉ (plee-AY) - lowering the body by bending the knees

TOUR JETÉ (TOOR zhuh-TAY) - a jump from one foot to the other while making a half turn

TURNOUT - a basic ballet position where the feet and legs turn outward from the hips in a 90-degree angle

TUTU (too-too) - a costume worn by ballerinas. The skirt has many layers and can either be long and bell-shaped, or very short and stiff.



PLIÉ WITH TURNOUT

Ballet is a highly technical type of dance that takes years of study and practice to perform well. Dancers learn special techniques for executing the movements beautifully and with perfect precision—and for making it all look effortless! Besides training their bodies, ballet dancers have to learn a complicated movement vocabulary: the different body positions, movements, and patterns. One of the first things dancers are taught are the five basic foot and arm positions that are the building blocks of ballet.



FIRST POSITION



SECOND POSITION



THIRD POSITION



FOURTH POSITION



FIFTH POSITION

STAYING ON YOUR TOES!

In the performance, you'll see some of the female dancers performing en pointe—on the tips of their toes. With this technique, the dancers appear to be floating. It takes years of special training for a dancer to be able to do all those steps and turns while balanced on the ends of her toes. Girls usually begin to dance en pointe when they are 11 or 12, when their bones are hard enough and their muscles in their feet and legs are strong enough to support their full weight en pointe.

Ballerinas wear special shoes—pointe shoes—that are designed to help them dance en pointe. The parts of a pointe shoe are:

RIBBONS - Hold the shoe on the foot. They are made of cloth and tied with a special flat knot. The ribbons are crossed over the ankle to help give support—just the way athletes strap up their ankles with tape.

SHANK - The “backbone” of the shoe. This stiff inner sole is made of heavy leather. The shank helps transfer the dancer’s weight from the toes into the arch, which is the strongest part of the foot.

BOX — Made of layers of cloth hardened with glue. The front end of the box is flattened to help the dancer balance. The stiff inner shell protects the dancer’s toes, softening the impact of steps and jumps.



Ballet tells stories using just the body—the performers do not speak. In some ballets, you will occasionally see the dancers stop their leaps and twirls to act out parts of the story with gestures and facial expressions. This is called **MIME**. Mime helps the audience understand what is happening and what characters are thinking and feeling. Ballet has a whole vocabulary of mime gestures that help dancers tell the story.

In *The Sleeping Beauty*, one place to look for mime is when the evil fairy Carabosse puts the death curse on baby Aurora, and then when the Lilac Fairy changes the curse so that Aurora won't die, but will instead sleep for 100 years. This video from Nashville Ballet demonstrates the mime gestures in this scene and explains what they mean.

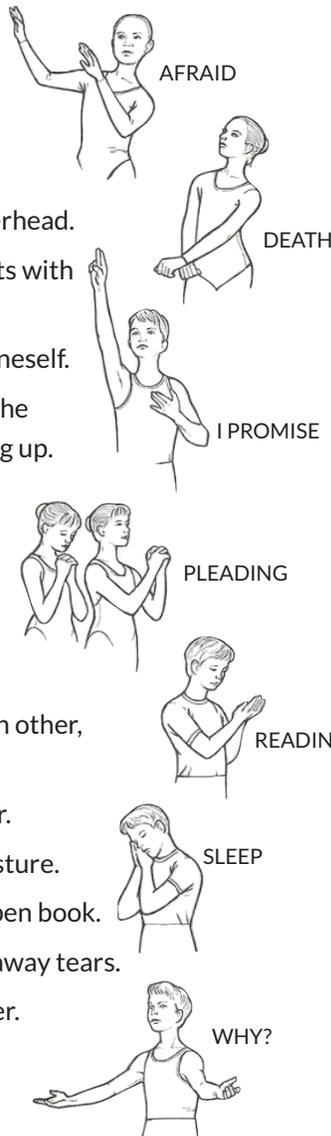
www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wl488igOoQ



Carabosse and the Lilac Fairy.
Production: Pacific Northwest Ballet. Photo © Angela Sterling

MIME VOCABULARY

- Afraid: Hold out arms with palms facing forward.
- Anger: Shake fist strongly.
- Beautiful: Hand circles face.
- Dancing: Roll hands from front of body to overhead.
- Death: Arms straight in front, crossed at wrists with hands in fists.
- I/me/mine: Hand points to chest to indicate oneself.
- I promise: Place one hand on chest and raise the other arm in the air with three fingers pointing up.
- Love: Hands over heart.
- Marriage: Index finger points to ring finger of left hand.
- Money: Rub thumb and fingers of one hand together.
- No/Never: Palms down, hands wave over each other, crossing at wrist.
- Obey: Point strongly to floor with index finger.
- Pleading: Clasp hands together in begging gesture.
- Reading: Open hands with palms up like an open book.
- Sad: Fingers trace tears down cheek or wipe away tears.
- Sleep: Rest cheek on hand with palms together.
- Think: Touch or point to temple.
- Why?: Hold out arms with palms facing up.



EXPLORING PANTOMIME

How is pantomime different from dance? How can you use gestures and facial expressions to tell a story?

Without speaking, can you say 'yes,' 'no,' 'I don't know,' 'hello,' 'goodbye'? Experiment with changing the speed and the energy (tense, relaxed, heavy, light, smooth, choppy, etc.) of your movements.

Without speaking, perform one of the gestures from the mime vocabulary for the rest of your class and see if they can guess the meaning. Then create a brief "sentence" using pantomime and perform it for your class.

In *The Sleeping Beauty*, the scene where Aurora receives the spindle and pricks her finger is acted out using pantomime. Create your own pantomime to create this scene. Your pantomime must include gestures showing Aurora being presented with the spindle, accepting the gift, and pricking her finger. After the performance, discuss differences between the pantomime in the show and your own version.

Dancers are not just performers—they are elite athletes. They have amazing flexibility, muscular strength, balance, and both physical and mental endurance. They are able to leap, land, and turn with grace.

To stay in top condition, professional ballet dancers follow a rigorous training routine. A typical day starts early with a 90-minute class to warm up and work on their technique. Class is followed by four to six hours of rehearsals, sometimes followed by an evening performance.

Training to become a professional ballet dancer starts at about seven. Dancers can usually perform into their early to late 30s—sometimes a little longer. After retiring from performing, some dancers continue their career in ballet as teachers or choreographers.



photo: Alexander Daev

FUN FACTS

The average NBA player can jump 2½ feet in the air. Ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov was said to have jumped 5-6 feet in the air.

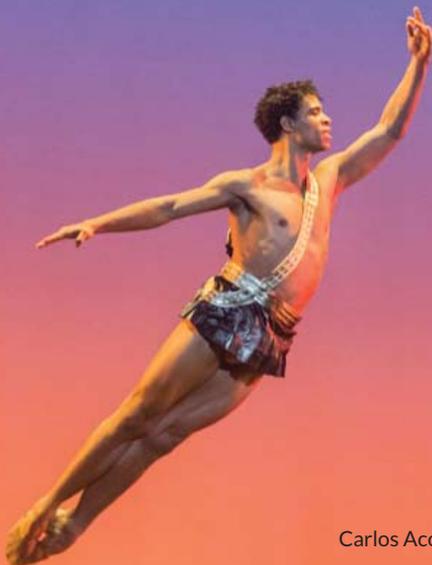
Based on a U.S. Department of Labor database, the most physically demanding job is professional dancer. It ranked higher than fitness trainer and aerobics instructor (#2), forest firefighter (#5), and competitive athlete (#7).

To keep from getting dizzy when they do all those amazingly fast spins, ballet dancers are taught a trick called “spotting.” Before they begin turning, they find a fixed object to look at—a clock, a door, a light. Then they try to keep looking at it as they spin around and around. Ice skaters use the same trick.

MEN IN BALLET

When a lot of people think of ballet, they think of women in frilly tutus, dancing gracefully on the tips of their toes. But ballet dancing is not just for women and girls. As a matter of fact, for part of ballet’s history, women were not even allowed to appear on stage!

Ballet was born in the 15th century in the royal courts of Italy and France. Up until about 1680, all the dancers were male—female roles were danced by men wearing masks and women’s clothing. By the 19th century, however, women dancers dominated the ballet stage. In the early 1900s, Vaslav Nijinsky—one of the greatest dancers of all time—set the stage for other male dancers, including Rudolf Nureyev, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Edward Villella, and Carlos Acosta. They showed that men could be ballet superstars, too!



Carlos Acosta

THE BEST GIFT

At Princess Aurora's christening the good fairies each give her the gift of a special virtue (a good or admirable quality or trait). They give her **TENDERNESS, BOLDNESS, PLAYFULNESS, GENEROSITY,** and **CHEERFULNESS.** Discuss with your classmates:

- Why do you think these would be considered valuable gifts?
- In the ballet, does Aurora display any of the virtues she received from the fairies? Give specific examples.
- If you were invited to the christening, what special virtue would you bestow upon the Princess?

Choose a virtue that you think would be the best one to give a baby princess or prince. Design and construct a gift that represents the virtue you have selected.

REFLECTION AFTER THE SHOW

- What happened in the story?
- Who were the characters?
- What did you see and what did you hear?
- What was your favorite part of the show? Why?
- What questions did the show raise for you? ("I wonder...")
- How was the ballet different from other versions of *Sleeping Beauty* you have read or seen? How was it the same?
- Besides ballet, what are some other kinds of dancing you have seen...or maybe even done yourself? How is ballet similar to these other dances? How is it different?
- Would you like to see another ballet?

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

What do you think happens to everyone after the story has ended? Do Princess Aurora and Prince Charming live happily ever after? Is Carabosse ever heard from again? Write your own sequel to *The Sleeping Beauty*.





Going to see a show at the theater is not the same as going to a movie or watching TV. The performers will be right there with you and the rest of the audience, which makes

it very exciting! It also means you have a special responsibility to respect the performers and the rest of the audience so everyone can enjoy the show.

Here are some important rules for being a good audience member:

- When the show starts, give the performers all your attention.
- Don't talk during the show.
- Stay in your seat.
- If you have a phone, make sure you turn it off before the show starts. Keep it off until the show is over.
- Don't take pictures or video of the show.
- Don't eat or drink in the theater. And no chewing gum, please!
- If you liked the show, let the performers know by applauding when it's over.

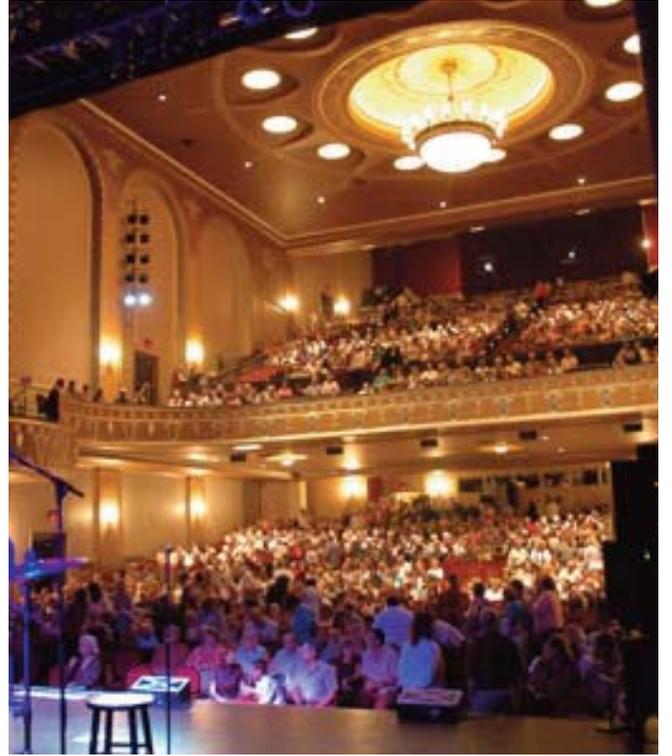


photo: Alexander Daev





photo: Alexander Daev

BOOKS

Appreciating Dance: A Guide to the World's Liveliest Art, by Harriet Lihs. Princeton Book Company, 2009. A comprehensive guide to all forms of dance. Includes questions for discussion.

Ballet School, by Naia Bray-Moffatt and David Handley. DK Children, 2003. Grades K-3.

The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales, edited by Jack Zipes. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Sleeping Beauty: The Ultimate Collection. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014. Eight different versions of the classic story, with both familiar favorites and lesser-known variations.

VIDEO

The Sleeping Beauty. Bel Air Classiques, 2012. A full-length performance by the Bolshoi Ballet.

A Ballerina's Tale. MPI Home Video, 2016. A behind-the-scenes look at the career of Misty Copeland, the first African American woman to be made a principal dancer of American Ballet Theater.

WEBSITES

American Ballet Theatre's Ballet Dictionary. Features video clips illustrating the dance terms
www.abt.org/education/dictionary/index.html

State Theatre New Jersey's podcast lecture about *The Sleeping Beauty*
www.statetheatrenj.org/education-and-outreach/learning-resources/performance-insights-podcasts

SurLaLune Fairy Tales: The Annotated Sleeping Beauty. Includes history, illustrations, biography, other interpretations of the story.
surlalunefairytales.com/sleepingbeauty



EDUCATION & OUTREACH SUPPORTERS

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