

## Ballet Class Activities

### Ballet 1A, 1B, 2, and 3

Video Playlist: [Midsummer Night's Dream](#)

Orchestral Music: [Mendelssohn: A Midsummer Night's Dream](#)

#### Fairy Forest

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a complicated but light comedy ballet set to Shakespear's A Midsummer Night's Dream. It opens in a forest near Athens, Greece. We meet Puck, a trickster, and a group of forest fairies. The scene is light and magical.

Have your students practice runs en demi pointe, bourrées (traveling), and bourrée turns (for spotting practice) as the fairies in A Midsummer Night's Dream. For older students working on pirouettes, you can also have them practice a pirouette combination. As fairies, their movement should be light and airy. You may also modify arms, as desired—high or low Vs, or one arm high and one low while extended and fluttering like a fairy.

#### Theseus' Court

We later come upon Theseus' Court. For this activity, students will practice walking, step-brush, and marches as if they are royalty. Talk to your students about posture and how a royal king or queen would stand. What might they be wearing? How might they walk? What posture would they maintain as they walk?

Divide your class into two groups and have each group line up on opposite sides of the room. Students will begin facing upstage. The most upstage student on each side will then lead their side down the diagonal (all together, with the stage left student always crossing in front of the stage right student). Once they've made it down the diagonal, they should travel straight upstage, then downstage across the other diagonal.

Have students complete the patterns several times. Start with a simple traveling step and let students work their way up through more difficult ones. Remember to maintain correct ballet posture—like royalty!

#### Puck's Mistake

Puck has been assigned, by Oberon, to take a flower that has been pierced by Cupid's Arrow to Oberon's bride-to-be, Titania. (The two lovers recently had a quarrel.) Puck mistakenly annoints a mortal, Lysander, who is wandering through the forest, instead. The event causes all kinds of mishap and quarrels between mortal couples wandering through the forest.

Let's dance as Puck! In your petit allegro or grand allegro combination, have students dance as Puck on his mission to take the flower to Titania. Puck dances light, spritely, and lively. Can your students dance like Puck in their jumps?

Optional: At the end of class, give each of your students a flower prop to dance with as Puck. Play music from the ballet as your students listen to the music for a minute or two and think about how they will dance. (The opening of the overture is a great selection for this.) Next, play the music and allow your students to improvise (with ballet steps, of course) to the music. If you have a very large class, you can divide your class into groups. After students have had a chance to improvise, ask your students about how they chose to dance. Why did they do the steps they did? Why might they have acted a certain way as they danced? Were they thinking about anything specific as they danced?