



TPAC Education's  
Humanities Outreach in  
Tennessee presents

*Nashville Ballet's*  
**NUTCRACKER**

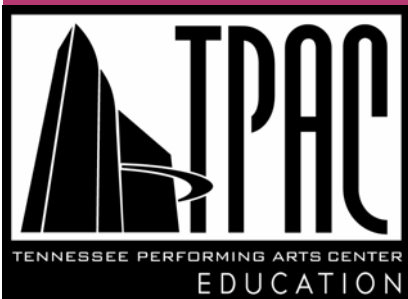


Teacher  
Guidebook  
2007

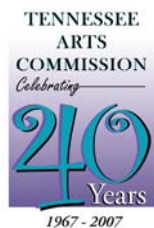


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# Dear Teachers

Welcome to Nashville Ballet's *Nutcracker*! We are excited to transport you and your students to the land of the Dew Drop Fairy as we follow Clara on her adventures with the Nutcracker Doll.

The arts are so important to a child's education and we at the Ballet applaud you for ensuring your students get to experience this holiday classic. By being here today you are opening new doors of creativity, motivation, self-discipline and teamwork for your students.

Enjoy *Nutcracker*!

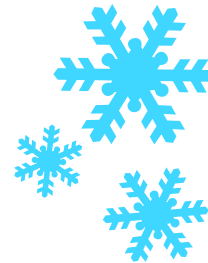
Sara Youngblood-Ochoa  
Nashville Ballet

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# The Story of Nutcracker



(As adapted for Nashville Ballet's HOT Performance)

## Act I

The scene is Christmas Eve in a small town in the late 19th century. Clara and her family are celebrating the Christmas holiday. In the midst of the festivities, a magician named Drosselmeyer appears. Herr Drosselmeyer is Clara's godfather. While entertaining the family with magic tricks, Drosselmeyer produces a magnificent nutcracker doll and chooses Clara to receive the handsome nutcracker as her gift.

As the evening draws to a close, Clara's father calls her to bed. She tenderly places the Nutcracker under the grandfather clock and goes upstairs. Too excited to sleep, Clara creeps downstairs to get her Nutcracker and falls asleep on the sofa with the treasured Nutcracker by her side.

Clara's dreams transport her to a fantasyland where wondrous creatures and fanciful delights reign. A wicked Mouse King does battle with the Nutcracker, who has come to life. The Mouse King seems to be winning until Clara throws her shoe at him. The Nutcracker is saved and turns into a prince. Overjoyed by the victorious rescue of her Nutcracker Prince, Clara journeys into the Snow Kingdom, where the Snow Queen dances for her.

## Act II

Next Clara enters the Land of the Sweets, where she is entertained by dancers from many lands. Spanish dancers, an Arabian dancer, Chinese dancers, and Russian dancers each present a dance for Clara and the Prince. The shepherd and shepherdesses also dance. Clara enjoys a beautiful pas de deux (dance for two) by the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier. These festivities are wondrous and entertaining, but Clara must say goodbye to her new friends. As the ballet concludes, Clara is seen once again fast asleep on the sofa. Was it a dream or did it really happen?



Sugarplum Fairy Pas de Deux

# Getting to Know the Story

If your students are familiar with the story and characters of the ballet it will greatly enhance their enjoyment and understanding of the performance.

The library will have several versions of the Nutcracker appropriate for various age levels. Or the synopsis in this guidebook will serve as a read-aloud version (and represents how Nashville Ballet will adapt the production for the HOT audience.)

On page 4 of this guidebook is a short synopsis of the story, and on page 5, a description of how the scenes are abbreviated for the HOT performance. At the performance an off-stage narrator will help to set the scene and fully explain the action of ACT ONE. Children will enjoy the chance to create these characters and scenes for themselves, incorporating some gestures and expressions of their own. Younger children can explore the story by investigating what is “real” and what is imaginary in the Nutcracker.

## About the Nutcracker Ballet

The Nutcracker Ballet is based on the book called “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King” written by E.T.A. Hoffman. In 1891, the legendary choreographer Marius Petipa commissioned Tchaikovsky to write the music for the Nutcracker ballet. Petipa died before the ballet was completed, and Lev Ivanov stepped in as his replacement as choreographer. In 1892, the first showing of the Nutcracker took place at the Mariinsky Theatre of Russia, home of the Kirov Ballet.

## Recommended Websites

Lesson Plans

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/3754/>

History of Nutcracker ballet and music

<http://www.balletmet.org/Notes/NutHist.html>

Lesson Plans with Weblinks:

[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/education/plan\\_nutcracker\\_overview.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/education/plan_nutcracker_overview.html)

## Nashville Ballet's NUTCRACKER Abbreviated for HOT

**Nutcracker** in its full length runs over two hours. To accommodate school day schedules, the performances for HOT will be shortened to 90 minutes.

### Act One

Using Clara, Fritz, their Parents, Drosselmeyer, Mouse King and Nutcracker Doll, most of the first act will be told with voice over and some movement. Dancers will perform some of the action as described by the narrator. This will bring us to the transformation of the Nutcracker Doll into the Prince and the **Snow King and Queen's pas de deux** only (without full snow scene).

### Act Two

Second act will also be told with voice over during the Dew Drop Fairy and Clara Act II opening and into the regular second act minus Mother Ginger.

Sections that will appear the same as a regular show (minus youth cast):

### Waltz of the Flowers

Spanish

Marzipan

Arabian

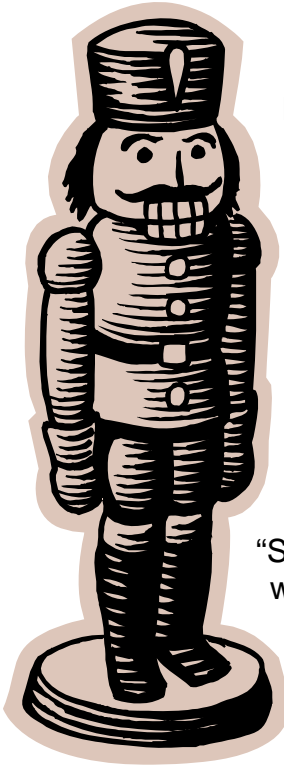
Chinese (without Dragon)

Russian (without Ladies)

Sugar Plum Pas de deux (full with variations and coda)

# What is a Nutcracker?

*That's a Tough Nut to Crack!*



Historians have documented that nuts have been part of the human diet for thousands of years and getting to the tasty part inside has led tool makers to experiment with many different solutions. Rocks and hammers will do the trick, but fortunately a little creativity has led to more efficient and amusing solutions. Nutcrackers vary widely from simple hinged metal devices to sophisticated machines with handles and screw mechanisms. But the decorative type favored by collectors, and made famous in the Nutcracker ballet, are carved out of wood and are originally a German craft.

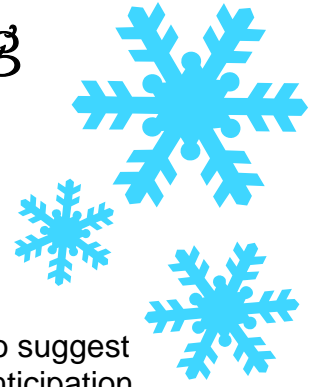
According to the Leavenworth Nutcracker Museum's website, "Standing wooden nutcrackers in the form of soldiers and kings were shown in the Sonneberg and Erzgebirge regions of Germany by 1800 and in 1830, the term "Nussknacker" appeared in the dictionary of the Brothers Grim. It was defined as "often in the form of a misshaped little man, in whose mouth the nut, by means of a lever or screw, is cracked open". In 1872 Wilhelm Füchtner, known as the "father of the nutcracker," made the first commercial production of nutcrackers using the lathe to create many of the same design. The Leavenworth Nutcracker Museum shows an 1880 miner of Wilhelm Füchtner along with a miner presently made in the Füchtner family workshops."

[www.nutcrackermuseum.com/history.htm](http://www.nutcrackermuseum.com/history.htm)

Many children and likely many adults, have never see whole, un-cracked nuts. Many grocery stores stock unshelled nuts, especially around the holidays. If nuts are permitted in your classroom, students would probably be surprised at the variety of shapes and sizes of whole nuts and how hard it can be to crack one open.



# Telling a Story Without Speaking



## Warm Up

Discuss: In what ways can we understand one another without speaking? **USING OUR FACES:** Demonstrate by frowning, shaking your finger and tapping your foot. Ask students to name your emotion. Demonstrate a few more simple gestures and facial expressions, or ask for volunteers. **USING OUR BODIES:** Ask students to suggest descriptive words from the Nutcracker story (examples: excited, anticipation, surprised, strong, jealous, disappointed, magical, dreaming) As you call out each word, have students silently create a full body gesture to communicate that word.

## Activity

1. Now assign characters: (Excited Little Girl, Mischievous Little Boy, Mysterious Stranger, King and Queen) Standing in a circle ask students to pose as these characters using face and body language – freeze! Ask the students to look around and notice each of the characters. Invite students to silently walk across the floor as these characters and return to the circle.
2. Pass out phrases to students or groups of students:
  - It is Christmas Eve and guests are arriving for a grand party at my house!
  - Look! My new toy is broken!
  - Its been a long day and I can't stay awake any longer.
  - Toy soldiers chase away mice.
  - A toy nutcracker turns into a prince.
  - Welcome to the land of the Sugarplum Fairies. Sit here and watch!

Ask each student (or groups) to figure out how to communicate the phrase with gestures or mime. Perform each one for the class and let the others students discuss what they saw.

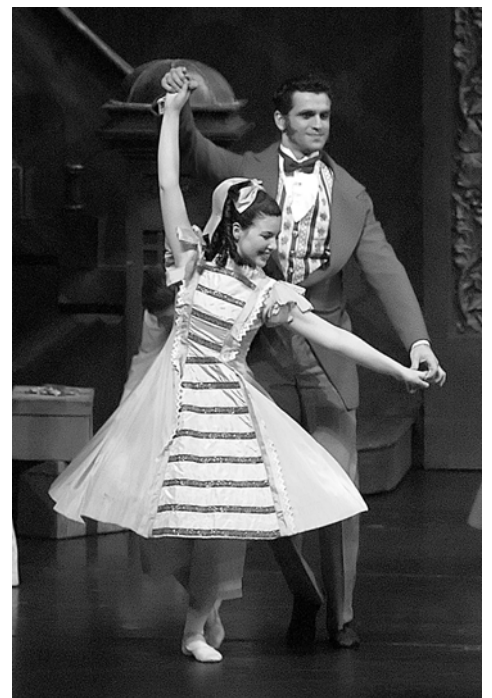
3. Recall a different fairy tale with students. How would they mime some of the characters and scenes from these stories? Compare their choices to some of the common ballet pantomimes on page 12.

## Summary

Discuss the choices students made to communicate their phrases and characters. What did they do with their bodies and faces that best helped communicate?

## Extension

After students have created pantomimes for their phrases from the Nutcracker or another story, proceed to the activity on page 9 that addresses using **MOVEMENT** as a way of communicating. Ask students to incorporate one or more of the Elements of Dance to their pantomimes (i.e. make a movement higher or lower, make it faster or slower, make it stronger/make it lighter).



# Real and Not Real (Younger Students)

Most of Nutcracker takes place in Clara's dream— where her imagination makes things possible that cannot really happen. Animals take on human characteristics, toys come to life, and a little girl becomes a princess.

## Discussion

Ask the students to tell the difference between reality and fantasy (real and not real). Encourage them to share their ideas about each (and give examples). As you read each of the following statements, encourage the students to decide whether each statement shows reality or fantasy (show which by raising their hands).

- You are given a Nutcracker doll as a present. It is broken by another child.
- Your Nutcracker doll turns into a handsome prince.
- You fall asleep and dream about a strange land filled with candy.
- You are watching a ballet dance that is telling a story without words.
- You are eating delicious cakes, cookies, and candy at a party and you get sick.
- You meet a beautiful fairy and she takes you on a sleigh ride.
- Something scary suddenly appears and you are frightened.
- A little girl is dancing on stage pretending to be another little girl named Clara.
- Flowers come to life and begin dancing.

## Project

Provide paper and crayons for the students. Have them fold their papers in half and draw a picture (of anything) based on reality on the left side, and a picture based on fantasy on the right side. Perhaps they can draw a picture from a dream. As the children share their pictures with the class ask them to explain their pictures.

Read the synopsis of the Nutcracker story to the class. (Many illustrated books are also available.) Discuss – is this ballet story real or fantasy? (Answer: both are represented, recall examples.) Compare to other books with dreams or imaginary settings.





# Introducing the Elements of Dance: Communicating through Movement

Dancers communicate feelings, emotions, even stories, not through words but through the use of their bodies. While students are seated at their desks, (or on the floor in a circle) ask them to perform this sequence of tasks:

1. Moving only your head, show me how you would let me know you are sad. (Probably students' heads will drop.) Moving only your head, show me how you would show joy/happiness. (Heads may turn or nod).
2. Using only your arms, show me that something is large. Show me small. (Arms probably extend far out to the side, then in toward the body.)
3. Using only your hand or arm, how would you get my attention? (Arms will likely wave or shake, or fists may pound.)
4. Using only your hands/arms, show me something is very, very heavy. Show me something that is light. (Arms will go down, then up.)

Explain that you just did, on a small scale, what dancers do on a large scale: you communicated with your body. The elements you used are those that a dancer uses. You are practicing the elements of dance:

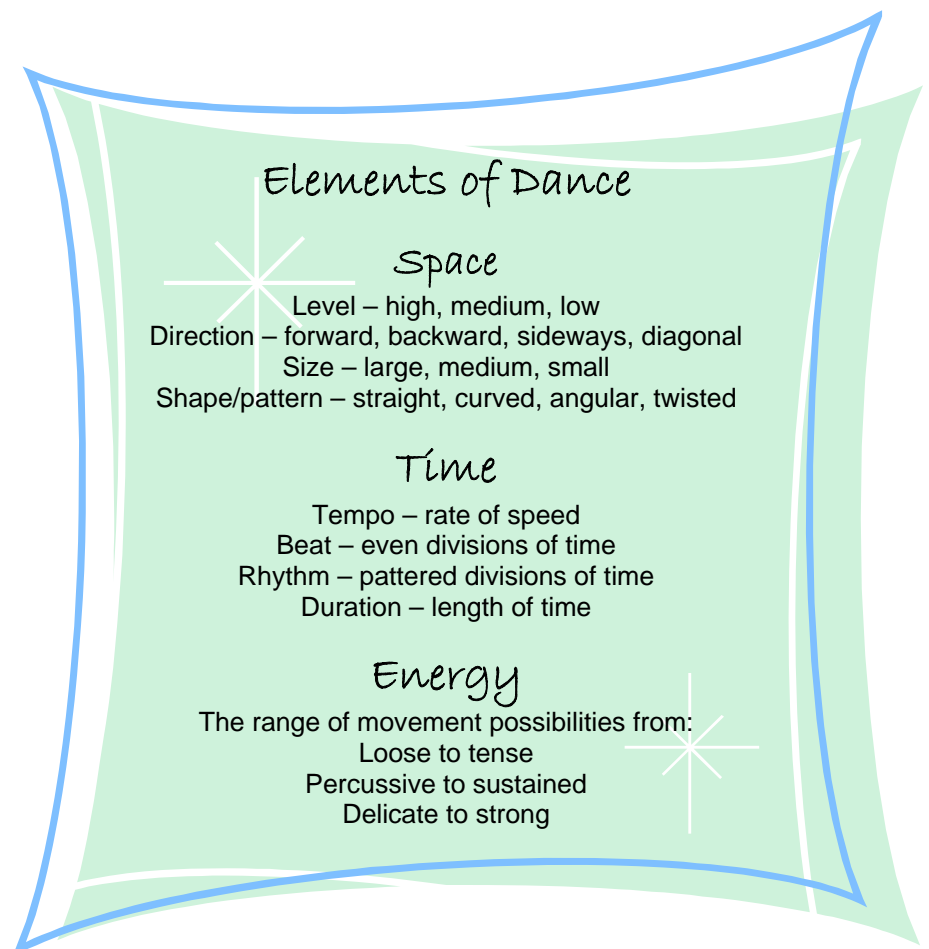
**Space** – When you made wide or small arms, you illustrated the element of space.

**Time** – When you moved quickly, then slowly, you illustrated the element of time.

**Energy** – When you made a strong or soft movement, you illustrated energy or force.

**Weight** – When you made a heavy or light movement, you illustrated weight.

As you create and practice movement in the classroom activities suggested in this guidebook, remember to add the elements of dance. It will help transform a pantomime or gesture sequence into dance. It may be helpful to write the 4 elements on the board during other activities.



# Pas de Deux

## Introduction

There are two *pas de deux* in *Nutcracker*: the Dance of the Snow Queen and King at the end of Act One, and the Sugarplum Fairies Dance in Act Two.



## Activities

Prepare students to look for the two examples of Pas de Deux in *Nutcracker*. The performance sequence for the two dancers is: 2 – 1 – 1 – 2.

Younger Children: Work on sequences and patterns with younger children using shapes, numbers or colors. Can they spot this pattern?

Introduce the words “duet” and “solo.” What activities do we do solo? What might we do as a duet? Talk about how they will see dancers performing alone, in pairs, and sometimes in large groups in *Nutcracker*.

Older children can prepare their own Pas de Deux.

1. Select a winter or holiday activity to be the theme: Ice Skating, Decorating a Christmas Tree, Playing in the Snow, etc.
2. Give the pairs some time to experiment with all the gestures and movements associated with their theme.
3. Tell them they will develop their own movement phrases using these actions. They need to put their phrases in the pattern of the pas de deux: first the duet (slow), then one partner, then the other partner, then the duet (livelier).
4. Guide them to organize the movement phrases into 8 counts for each section. It will be helpful to clap the beats together to set the pace. But note that even with in the 8-count pace they can move faster or slower than the counting.
5. As they are working on their movement phrases, remind them to add the elements of dance – space, time and energy – to make it more interesting.
6. Allow time for the pairs to perform for one another, with the audience practicing their best and most attentive behavior.

## Discuss

Which did they prefer – performing as a pair or alone? In what ways did they have to cooperate with their partner? Reflect on choosing the theme, suggesting different actions, working into 8-counts, and adding elements of dance. Did they always agree with their partner? Would they change anything if they had more creative time or more rehearsal time?

**A *pas de deux*** (pah-de-DUH) is a specific form of ballet for two dancers, usually performed by a man and a woman. In French, “pas” literally means “step”. In the classical tradition, the *pas de deux* follows this form:

1. A slow and stately section (the adagio) performed as a couple (duet).
2. A solo for each dancer (each with variations), first the man, and second the woman.
3. Finally the partners dance together again, in what is usually called the coda (the finale).

The adagio often is a series of lyrical sustained movements, while the coda is filled with bravura -flashy and bold choreography. Through careful partnering, the dancers are able to accomplish lifts, turns and balancing acts that would be more difficult or impossible alone.



# We Are All Performers: Practicing Good Theater Behavior

Addressing  
Audience Behavior

1. Provide to students, (or ask the classroom to write down) actions, animals, or a situation (i.e. "you left your homework on the bus") on index cards.
2. Divide the classroom into 2 groups.
  - Have one group draw from the cards, and give them a few minutes to prepare to perform what is on the card.
  - Ask one group to form a line and explain they are entering the "theater." Guide them into a comfortable setting as the audience. If possible, lower the lights in the "audience" area to signal that the performance is about to begin.
  - (If your school has a theater and a stage, perhaps you can use it for this activity).
3. Ask the students with the cards to silently act out what was on their card, (Group them to manage time if performing one by one will take too long).
4. After the students have taken a turn performing, ask them all to come take a bow together and the audience to applaud.
5. Ask the performers to list some of the audience behaviors they noticed while they or their fellow actors were performing. e.g. laughing, frightened, bored, noisy, wiggly, quiet, etc.
6. Ask the performers to describe how they felt when they saw the audience behaviors.
7. Then have the other group perform, while the first group watches. See how audience behavior changed. (i.e. were the students more or less respectful to the performers after experiencing it for themselves?)

Alternative or extension: Videotape the classroom during the performance, but video tape the audience instead of the performers. Have them watch their reactions and discuss them.

Discuss the differences between a live performance and watching TV or a movie. In general, the time spent in TPAC's theaters during an HOT show is an extension of the classroom – and the same expectations of appropriate behavior apply.



Students waiting for a HOT performance to begin in TPAC's Jackson Hall



## Ballet Pantomime

Many pantomime gestures have been developed to help the audience understand the emotions in a dance. Pantomime includes gestures of the hands, facial expressions, and the general attitude of the body. When you become familiar with the pantomime samples given below, watch for them in the ballet performances you see and notice how they are used.

- LOVE            Hands cupped under the heart.
- A PROMISE OF LOVE    One hand on heart, the other hand reaches up in front of him with two fingers together
- BEAUTIFUL    With the back of the right hand, circle the face in a caress.
- SADNESS      Trace tears running down the face with fingers.
- WEEPING      Hide the face in both hands or rub eyes with clenched fists.
- DANCE         Circle the hands around each other above the head.
- KISS            Touch the lips with the finger.
- BEG            Clasp hands, elbows dropped.
- ANGER         Arms above the head, clenched fists are shaken.
- QUEEN         With the thumb in and fingers lifted, make a three-pointed crown above the head.
- STOP            Hold up the hand, palm out.
- FEAR           One arm is bent and hiding the face and other arm is crossed at waist, bent like a wing.
- NO             Hold arms at the side, then cross them before the body.
- FORGOT        Hold the hands out loosely, palms up and shake head.
- OBEY            Point to the floor with a very decided gesture.

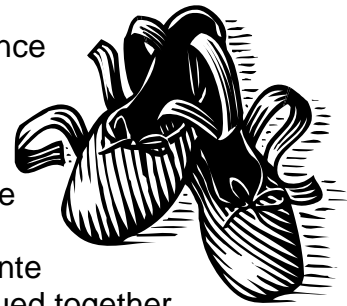
Reference: Cincinnati Ballet  
[http://www.wguc.org/cincinnati/ballet/ed\\_academy/outreach/pantomi2.html](http://www.wguc.org/cincinnati/ballet/ed_academy/outreach/pantomi2.html)

# Fun Facts

## From Nashville Ballet

### **What are pointe shoes made out of?**

Pointe shoes are worn by female dancers so that they can balance and turn on their toes. Originally starched satin slippers with a darned tip, pointe shoes enabled dancers to poise on the tips of their toes for only a moment. The fascination and popularity of dancing en pointe has caused the shoes to evolve into a more supportive structure. Made of satin and shaped like narrow slippers, they have no heel and there is no wood or metal in pointe shoes. The area covering the toes is made of layers of fabric glued together in the shape of an oblong "box" and hardened. The sole of the shoe is hard leather which lends slight support to the arch of the foot. Pointe shoes are worn two to three sizes smaller than street shoes. To keep them on tightly, dancers sew satin ribbons and elastic bands to the sides and tie them securely around their ankles. A pair of shoes cost approximately \$70.00; Nashville Ballet's pointe shoe budget is \$31,000 annually.



### **Why do dancers wear tutus?**

A classical tutu has an average of 25 layers of tulle, a net-like material, which is cut into layers of differing lengths to help the tutu stand out from the ballerina's hips. They are designed to give ballerinas a light, airy look, as if they are floating when they move across the stage.

### **Why don't male dancers wear pants? Why tights?**

Dancers used to wear heavy fabric robes and head dresses that greatly restricted their movement so male dancers began to wear short jackets and tights so their jumps could be higher. Dancers were able to discover and perform more difficult and athletic movements without so many clothes in the way. As ballet changed through the years, the costumes also became simpler. Today many ballets are performed in simple leotards and tights so that audiences can fully enjoy the shapes dancers' bodies create in motion.

### **Why don't dancers get dizzy when they turn?**

Dancers learn a helpful trick called "spotting." Before they begin a turn, they choose something to focus on--a clock or door, for example. As they turn they try to keep their eyes focused on that object until they have to whip their head around quickly to find the spot again. This helps the dancer keep a steady balance during consecutive turns.

To learn more about Nashville Ballet and the School of Nashville Ballet, visit <http://www.nashvilleballet.com/>



**Humanities Outreach in  
Tennessee Season  
2007-2008**

**THE CRUCIBLE**  
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Nashville Ballet  
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*TPAC Education is an arts-learning community, dedicated to providing ways for students, teachers, families and adults to engage in life-long learning, embrace the diversity of the world we live in, and discover and value artistic expression. Our programs include:*

Humanities Outreach in Tennessee (HOT) presents outstanding professional performances of theatre, dance and music for student audiences at TPAC. Subsidized tickets, travel grants, and related educational materials ensure that every student can have access to a rich variety of cultural and educational programs. HOT Educator workshops include topics such as Shakespeare in the classroom and technical expertise in the high school theater. HOT has served approximately 1.4 million students across Tennessee's 95 counties since its inception in 1981.

TPAC's Family Field Trip is an entertaining series of matinee performances of music, dance and theater that children and adults will enjoy together. Explore and learn about each performance in hands-on activities in TPAC's lobby starting one hour before show time.

ArtSmart is a unique classroom-based partner to the HOT season. Through ArtSmart Residencies, students arrive at the theater with an expanded capacity to engage with the performance they are about to see. Specialized training enables teachers and teaching artists to guide arts-based activities that challenge young people to imagine, to practice, and to reflect. Every year, thousands of Nashville children, from kindergarten through seventh-grade, benefit from this 22 year-old instructional practice.

Wolf Trap Early Learning Through the Arts brings the magic of the performing arts into preschools and Head Start Centers. Residencies partner teaching artists with teachers to target early childhood developmental goals and help children learn.

TPAC InsideOut is for adults who want to grow in their knowledge and enjoyment of the performing arts. InsideOut events take place at TPAC and in community settings, and include a series of lunch seminars in partnership with Vanderbilt University, pre-performance "Arts Appetizers", Inside Broadway workshops, sneak previews behind the scenes and more.





[www.tpac.org/education](http://www.tpac.org/education)



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