



Making a ballet

There are several important artistic jobs that are involved in the creation process:

Choreographer - A choreographer must create the steps of the ballet, the movement or motion of the piece. The choreographer is typically a dancer or retired dancer and usually is responsible for all the other artistic staff when creating a ballet.

Composer - Occasionally a new ballet will commission (or hire) a composer, someone to write the music for a ballet. Other times the choreographer will choose a piece of music already written. Arrangers, composers and musicians who change musical scores, may also be used to adapt a piece of music to the wishes of the choreographer. The music sets the tempo, tone and mood of many ballets - try watching a dance piece with the volume down first, then turn it up and see the difference.

Set and Costume Designer - One or more designers work with the choreographer to create a look of the stage and its dancers. Creating interior scenes of bedrooms and ballrooms or exterior scenes of city squares or forests is but half the job while costumes can identify characters in story ballets, where crowns and rich fabrics signify important or royal characters and jesters, towns-people and villains each have a specific appearance created by the costume designer.

Lighting Design - Lighting not only illuminates the stage, it provides color, emphasizes or hides parts of the stage, dancers or sets, and can almost work as part of set or the mood of the ballet. Lighting changes between dance scenes and during dances add to the experience.

The Process

Ballets have different styles and are created in a number of different ways. *Story ballets* (those with characters and a plot) need a much more focused approach to incorporate the use of all the creative people, tell the story through sets, costumes, dance, mime, etc. *Abstract ballets* (ballets that have no story but rather explore movement and mood) also use the creative team above but in a looser style:

Story Ballet:

- Script
- Music
- Identify scenes and match music to story
- Envision look of ballet - olden days, futuristic...

- Convene artistic team
 - Work with set and costumes design - drawings
 - Begin choreography - dancers in a studio
 - Refine dance, sets, costumes...
 - Design lighting
 - Build sets
 - Dress rehearsal in theater - focus lighting
- (More to come.....)

What is a gala performance?

A special celebration of dance and dancers

Uniting special group of dancers

Performing a set of repertoire that may be very specific or not

It is an evening of surprises and usually followed by a special reception for artists and guests after the performance