



Mountain West Ballet's Outreach Program

Stride Forward

Dear Audience Members;

We welcome all of you to an exciting dance experience with Mountain West Ballet. This year's **Stride Forward** performance, *The Frog Prince*, is a dynamic look into our ballet production that we are sure you will enjoy. We look forward to seeing you on May 15, 2008.

Going to the Theater;

Have you ever been to the theater? In some ways it is similar to the movie theater, and in other ways it is quite different. Think about these connections.

Like going to the movie theater, you quietly enter the theater and take your seat. This part of theater is called the "house." When the curtain is down and the house lights are on, feel free to quietly converse with your neighbor as you wait for the show to begin. Behind the curtain, dancers are warming-up and the production team is making sure the lights and music are set to go.

Like all the dancers backstage, you too have an important part to play in this production in order for it to be a success. You are the audience member! Your job is to see, listen and appreciate.

See all you can as you watch every dancer. Try to remember what shapes they create with their bodies. How are they moving – fast or slow? Do their bodies seem light or heavy? Listen to the music. Does it match the dance or does it create a contrast? How does the music make you feel?

When the dance is over, this is your chance to show your appreciation. So be sure you offer a gracious applause to the dancers and production team. This is how you say “thank you” to them. Screaming, yelling and whistling are never appropriate. When the performers take a bow, this is how they say “thank you” to you for coming to the performance. It seems somewhat like a conversation, doesn’t it?

When the performance is over, turn to your neighbor and quietly talk about one thing you noticed, one thing you liked and one question you have.

You are welcome to share some of these with us. Just e-mail or send us a letter.

In the next pages, you will find a guide for *The Frog Prince* to be performed at the **Stride Forward** Outreach performance on May 15, 2008. Also included are topics and sample activities to promote discussion about your experience at the theater.

Enjoy the Show!

Mountain West Ballet

Paul Murphy
Artistic Director



The Frog Prince

Music:	Jacques Offenbach, Isaac Albeniz
Original Choreography:	Paul Murphy
Additional Choreography:	Yvette Mignerey Atkin, Constanza Blankenship, Linda Fenton, Andrea Johnson, Masie Lancaster,, Christy McQuaid
Costume Design:	Stephanie O'Bryant, Kerali Reynolds, Lynn Moran
Set Design:	Jeff Moon, John Moran

The Frog Prince May 15, 16, 17, 2008 – 8:00 p.m. Sandy Amphitheater

The Frog Prince is a fun diverse ballet with its fantastical plot filled with romance, sorcery and betrayal.

History of The Frog Prince

The Frog Prince also known in many cultures as **The Frog King** dates back to thirteenth century Germany where a Latin version of the tale was written as well as in Scotland in the sixteenth century. Despite its early roots in literary form the tale has been well-known by storytellers in almost every European country. But it was the Grimm Brothers to first write down the lasting version of the tale as it is known today.

Synopsis

The Frog Prince

Story adapted by Paul Murphy

Act I

Scene 1 – The woods outside the castle.

A Frog in the woods dearly loves a Princess. His friend the Skunk teases him about his infatuation. The Princess, playing with her golden ball, enters the forest with her sister-princesses, including the Brat, who is self-centered and tired of all the attention given to her older sister. The Frog tries to talk with the Princess, but the Skunk ruins the moment. Then the sisters play keep-away with the Princess' golden ball, ending with the Brat throwing the ball down a well. The Frog offers to retrieve the ball, and the Princess is ecstatic because (she tells him) she knows the story; he will retrieve the ball, she will fall in love with him and kiss him, and he will turn into a handsome Prince and they will live happily ever after!

“Except,” the Frog tries to explain, “I am not a Prince.” The Princess, too caught up in her fairy story fantasy, pushes the Frog into the well, squeals with delight, and runs off the castle. The Frog returns to the surface carrying the golden ball and is hauled out of the well by a laughing Skunk. Despite the ridicule, the Frog sets out to the castle to return the ball.

Scene 2 – In the hall of the castle.

The King is promising his throne to the son of an evil Sorceress if he will marry one of the Princesses. The spoiled son agrees, but is infuriated that the eldest Princess, the supposed heir who he had wanted to marry, is not present. As they argue, the Princess bursts in and tells her father that she has met the man she will marry. The King, shocked, immediately orders the entire castle to assemble for a grand procession, much to the fury of the Sorceress. All the inhabitants of the castle dance in a grand celebration. The Brat, who has her own plans for the throne, flirts with the Sorceress' Son, as do the other Princesses, now that their oldest sister has found another. The celebration ends abruptly as the Frog enters. The King is dumbfounded, then disgusted but the Sorceress erupts in laughter. She thinks it is hilarious that the King is to be father-in-law to a frog. This infuriates the King, and he banishes the Sorceress and her son from the Kingdom. The Sorceress, in return, summons her Demons. They grab the

Princess. A herald, tries to save the Princess, but the Sorceress transforms him into a pig. Then the Sorceress and her Demons steal the Princess away.

The King, in his grief, throws everyone out of the hall, but the Frog remains behind. He offers to find and return the Princess. The King promises the Frog the Princess' hand in marriage if he can save her. The King's Court dresses the Frog in finery for his journey and sends him on his quest.

Act II

Scene 1 – 3 – In the forest.

On his journey to find the Princess, the Frog meets a Songbird and rescues her from three brutish Trolls. He then rescues a Wolf from a trap, despite the Wolf's obvious hunger. The Skunk joins the Frog. In another part of the forest, the Sorceress is taking the Princess to her Fortress. Her son flatly refuses, throne or no throne, to even consider marrying the frog-loving Princess and heads back to the castle. The Sorceress storms off in a rage. Her Demons discover some turtles and beg to eat them. The Sorceress acquiesces and leaves them, but the Frog and Skunk arrive in time to save the turtles. The Frog then departs again in search of the Sorceress' Fortress.

Scene 4 – Inside the Fortress.

When the Frog finds the Fortress, the Princess hears him through the thick walls. She is so happy to see him and confesses her love for him. Even if he is a lowly frog, he is a Prince to her. The Frog promises to bring help.

Scene 5 – Inside the castle.

The Frog rushes back to the King's castle. He expects that the King will send soldiers to rescue the Princess, but instead he finds that the Princess' bratty sister has not only stepped in to the role of Princess, she is accepting marriage to the Sorceress' son! She is quite happy being the center of attention. The King seemingly couldn't care less about his eldest daughter, and the inhabitants of the castle seem content with the new arrangements. The King dismisses the Frog and gives no help at all.

Scene 6 – 7 – From inside the Fortress to the forest.

The Frog, still determined, rushes back to the Sorceress's Fortress. Bravely, he sneaks in and fooling the Demon guards, rescues the Princess. The Sorceress and Demons pursue the couple into the forest and all seems lost. Then the Skunk, Songbird, Wolf, Turtles and all the other animals come in and force the Sorceress and Demons to run. Before she does, she casts one last spell upon the Princess, transforming her into a frog.

Scene 8 – The woods outside the castle.

Back in the woods, the Princess Frog is embarrassed to be seen. The Frog comforts her and lets her know that he has always loved her, and that she finds her more beautiful than ever. The rest of the woodland animals, encouraged by the stories told by the Songbird, Turtles and Wolf, proclaim the two King and Queen of the Wood. And they live happily ever after.

Discussion Topics

- What elements help the dancers look like animals?
- How does the costume help?
- What moves does the dancers perform that remind you of a particular animal?

Genre

The Frog Prince is a story that reflects the elements of myths and fairy tales such as incompatible worlds and a central character who transforms.

- Identify some of the major themes in the story of the Frog Prince. What are the similarities and differences between some common fairy tales in our own culture?
- If you were to choreograph a dance about a frog prince, what choices might you make that would help communicate this to your audience?
 - What would be the costume design?
 - What would the stage be like?
 - What kind of movements might the dancer perform?
 - What would the music be like?
- When the idea came to mind to stage **The Frog Prince**, these questions and others similar had to be addressed. Once you have seen the ballet, think about different choices that could have been made.