

BLOCK 4: EXPLORING CLASSICAL BALLETS

'Exploring Classical Ballets' is all about bringing the magic of stage productions into the dance class. Capitalizing on the wonder of canonical ballet works, this block aims to close the gap between the relatively discrete and disconnected exercises in early childhood dance classes and the professional world of dance. By bringing the spectacle of full-scale ballet production into the classroom, we make visible the steps, movements, and concepts that build ballet and we show how movements are theatricalized to tell stories and convey meaning.

This block develops and refines content taught in previous blocks with increased focus on story-telling, expression, pantomime, and creative movement. New creative movement activities were custom-made for this block of learning and can be used, with or without Swan Lake motifs, throughout the year.

Learning Outcomes for Three Year Olds

Explore how movements express themes and stories

- develop movement-based communication and story-telling skills
- interpret stories through movement

Develop an appreciation of movement, music and artistry in ballet productions

- explore story and themes of Swan Lake
- perform age-appropriate variations of key scenes motifs and characters

Develop technicality and musicality in a story-based setting

- develop awareness of energy and weight in port de bras
- work as a team to make lines and formations
- use technical movements and skills to tell a story

Extend cognitive, social and emotional skills

- exposure to multi-part instructions
- increased opportunities for independence, interpretation and decision-making

Variations on Block 1 content

Circle dance	Magical spells seated port de bras	p. 4
Underwater Explorers	Swans peer out of nests by the lake, glide on water in superman pose, duck dive.	p. 5
Stretching Swan Pliés	With port de bras to open 5th and wrist touch; introduce demi-pliés in 1st position.	p. 6
Swan Retiré/Passé	Lift leg then arm on same side.	p. 7
Magic Spells Tendu	Tendu and cast strong spell to one side.	p. 8
Looking for Swans Retiré Walk	4 x retiré/passé walk, pause in parallel to look for swans.	p. 11
Bourrée Across Lake	Bourrée forwards, in one place, forwards, and turning in one place to cross the lake.	p. 12
Feed Cygnets Gallops	Share ribbon ring with partner to side gallop and feed the hungry cygnets.	p. 13

New Exercises in Block 4

Swan Hatchlings	Balance as swan eggs, and stretch out to hatch into baby cygnets.	p. 5
Cygnets Take Flight Sauté	Introduce controlled sauté – plié, sauté, plié, stretch – to try to fly out of nest.	p. 10
A Day At Swan Lake	Dance-a-story creative movement: interpret a story about a swan.	p. 14
Swan Shapes	Free dance and use body to make shapes (circle, triangle, heart, star).	p. 16
Von Rothbart's Magic	Swans dance under different spells – fly, freeze, turn.	p. 17
Flock of Swans	Fly free around dance space, form lines.	p. 18

Warmup		Center Barre		Center Work		Across the Floor		Creative Movement	
Exercise	Pg #	Music	Props	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	
Warm Up Dance Teacher's choice of movements building in skills from previous blocks.	4	KIDS #1	--	Same	Same	Same	Same	Same	
Circle Dance: Magic Spells Seated Port de Bras Dancer taking turn as swan, seated dancers as magicians casting flying spells. Smoothly pushing PDB forwards to make dancer fly, strong, bound arm movement to freeze swan as they return to place.	4	SWAN PLAYLIST #1 or #5	• optional 2 x large ostrich feathers, or 2 small feathers	Introduce	Same	Add 'standing spell'. Teacher calls out the name of new 'swan', magicians' raise hands upwards while 'swan' stands up.	Add a 'turning' spell after 'freeze' spell.	Option: add 'sitting spell' – 'swan' returns to place, magicians' lower hands to ground and swan sits.	
Swan Hatchlings In ball pose, hover one leg return; hover other leg, return. Hover both legs to ball pose, return. RPT. Flex and spine to sit upright, arm open 5th and lower, RPT with L arm. 2 x flex and stretch feet. 6 x quick, bushes down, legs. 2 counts continuous brush up legs through 5th position and open.	5	KIDS #4	--	Introduce	Same	Option: alternate hands to brush down outside of opposite leg	Same	Same	
Underwater Explorers (Swan Variation) Look R/L, tilt, head R/L, 4 x look up & down, dive into lake. 4 counts superman hold, 4 counts rest. RPT. Press up into cobra pose and lower to duck dive and explore under water. Repeat 3 times. Return to nest.	5	KIDS #5	--	Introduce	Same	Same	Same	Same	
Stretching Swans Demi-Pliés 4 x demi-plié PL, arm open 5th and lower, L arm open 5th and lower, back arms open 5th to 4th and down, lower. RPT. Repeat fly return to place in small sit position. RPT in sit position. Free pose to finish.	6	SWAN #1	• 2 different color feathers (1 of each color p/student)	Introduce	Same	Option: add coordinating part de bras with plié (forward for PL plié, demi-second for plié in list).	Same	Same	
Swan Reité / Passé PL reité R, R arm high, V, L reité and L arm. Rise, bourrée sur place, lower PL RPT starting with L leg.	7	SWAN #10	• 2 different color feathers (1 of each color p/student)	Introduce	Same	Add bourrée en tournant (turn around self in one place)	self Before the exercise begins, ask students to end in a high level pose	Same	
Magie Spells Tendu 3 x tendu [R, L, R], cast strong magic spell to R. RPT tendu L, R, L, and magic spell to L. RPT.	8	SWAN #3	--	Introduce	Same	Same	Cast spells at different levels	Same	
Battement Piqué in the Lake 5 x R, close parallel brush R hand down L arm, then L hand down R arm. RPT. Piqués with L side. RPT both sides once more.	8	SWAN #6	--	Introduce	Same	Same	Option: call out different body parts to brush (legs, backs etc.)	Same	
Rock Cygnets to Sleep Cradle animals, 8 x sideways rocks starting R. Mime listening, hug swan, 'Shh'. RPT sideways rocks starting L, 'Shh', RPT, listen, 'they're asleep'. Lay swan in nest.	9	SWAN #13	• 1 x stuffed swan or animal p/ student • 1 x LNL mat per student	Introduce	Same	Encourage expression: little bounces – happy, slow sauté – concentrating final sauté – confident, proud	Same	Same	
Cygnets Take Flight Sauté Small bounces sur place, 1 x slow sauté, RPT, fly, RPT bounces & sauté.	10	SWAN #16	• 1 x LNL mat per student	Introduce	Same	Same	Same	Same	
Looking for Swans Passe/Retiré Walks 3 x step passe walks, close parallel, pantomime looking for swans, RPT.	11	SWAN #18	• blue and red LNL mats	Introduce	Same	Add zig zag pathway	Option: add a different color mat at end. Student's jump onto last mat and catch their swan.	Same	
Bourrées Across the Lake Bourrée en avant w swan wings. RPT sur place (option to turn in one place), RPT, fly away.	12	SWAN #20	• red and yellow LNL mats	Introduce	Introduce	Same	Option: fly side by side with a partner	Same	
Feed the Cygnets Side Gallops Sharing ribbon ring with a partner, gallop de côté to place ribbon ring in nest, fly away. RPT.	13	SWAN PLAYLIST #2	• ribbon rings • painters tape/line • empty basket • 2 x LNL mats	Introduce	Remove prop line	Option: next pair begins when the pair in front places their ribbon rings in the nest	Encourage students to get ready to dance (hold ribbon ring/hands, downstage leg stretched)	Same	
A Day At Swan Lake Teacher reads a layered story about a swan. On the second reading, students interpret the story through movement and expression.	14	--	• 'A Day At Swan Lake' story cards • LNL mats	Introduce	Add second layer	Add third layer	Option: remove some or all mats	Assistant no longer dances with students	
Swan Shapes Free dance, use body to interpret shape of flashcard.	16	SWAN PLAYLIST #7 #8 & #9	• Two Swans' artwork • Swan Shapes flashcards	Introduce	Same	Same	Option: add more shapes, e.g. diamond	Same	
Von Rothbart's Magic Students are swans under the spell of magician Baron von Rothbart. Move freely with a flying spell (continuous, flowing PDB movement), stop in place when a freeze spell is cast (strong and bound arm movement).	17	SWAN PLAYLIST #1 or #4	--	Introduce	Introduce	Same	Add 'turning' spell	Add 'levels' spells	
Flock of Swans Bourrée/fly in the dance space, teacher calls out name of 'lead swan' and students align into a vertical line. RPT.	18	SWAN PLAYLIST #5 or #6	• Flock of Swans' artwork • 1 x red LNL mat	Introduce	Same	Option: add horizontal line format on	Option: no mats or props	Option: no mats or props	

SWAN LAKE

tracklist

LEAP 'N LEARN – SWAN LAKE ALBUM

1. Swan Lake – Pliés A
2. Swan Lake – Pliés B
3. Swan Lake – Tendus A
4. Swan Lake – Tendus B
5. Swan Lake – Dégagé/glissé
6. Swan Lake – Piqués A
7. Swan Lake – Piqués B (slower)
8. Swan Lake – Piqués C (faster)
9. Swan Lake – Rotation & rise
10. Swan Lake – Passé/retiré A
11. Swan Lake – Passé/retiré B
12. Swan Lake – Passé/retiré C
13. Swan Lake – Temps lié de côté A
14. Swan Lake – Temps lié de côté B
15. Swan Lake – Temps lié en avant & en arrière
16. Swan Lake – Sautés
17. Swan Lake – Échappé sauté
18. Swan Lake – Walks A
19. Swan Lake – Walks B
20. Swan Lake – Bourrées A
21. Swan Lake – Bourrées B
22. Swan Lake – Bourrées C
23. Swan Lake – Assemblé

EXPLORING CLASSICAL BALLETS – SWAN LAKE SPOTIFY PLAYLIST

1. Warm Up (Swan Lake) – Nate Fifield
2. Frappé 1 (From "Swan Lake", Op. 20: Act III) – Craig Wingrove, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
3. Swan Lake, Op. 20, TH 12, Act I, No. 2: Valse. Intrada (Tempo di valse – Valse) – Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Neeme Järvi, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
4. Swan Lake, Op. 20, TH 12, Act II, No. 14: Scène (Finale) [Moderato – Più mosso] – Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Neeme Järvi, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
5. Opening – Bruce Brubaker, Philip Glass
6. Beyond This Moment – Patrick O'Hearn
7. Go Do – Jónsi
8. Swan Lake, Op. 20, TH 12, Act II, No. 13, Danses des cygnes: I. Tempo di valse – Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Neeme Järvi, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
9. Coda (Swan Lake) – Nate Fifield



WARMUP DANCE





Build in movements and skills from exercises in previous blocks, for example:

- moving in and out of the circle
- bourrée en tournant sur place (turn around self in place)
- free movement away from place and returning to place
- arms or poses at different levels

CIRCLE DANCE – MAGIC SWAN SPELLS

NEW! ✨

Students cast magic spells as Baron von Rothbart, one dancer travels around the circle as a swan under the spell.

-  Flow (bound & free), dynamics, fine motor skills, port de bras qualities, teamwork, pantomime, eye-tracking.
-  Track 1 or Track 5 in song suggestions playlist (see page 3)
-  Optional: 2 x large ostrich feathers, or two smaller feathers.
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 - The arm movements introduced in this exercise appear in a creative movement exercise later in the lesson ('Von Rothbart's Magic').
 - Tell students about the magician in Swan Lake, Baron von Rothbart, and how he puts a spell on the swans. Explain that when students are sitting in the circle they will be the magician, and one at a time they will take turns being the swan and fly around the circle.
 - Using two large ostrich feathers encourages an expansive free port de bras and gives students a signifier for when it is their turn.
 - Describe and demonstrate the quality of the arm movements being used:
 - swan flying – smooth, flowing, free
 - freeze spell – strong, bound
 - Encourage eye-tracking – swans should watch magicians to see the spells, and magicians should watch the swan to know when to cast the spell.
 - Additional 'spells' can be added over the coming weeks (see Progressions).
 - You may wish to use the original ballet score (Act II, #14, or Track 10 in playlist) but the dramatic music and changes in dynamics can be scary and overwhelm younger dancers.

Exercise:

Teacher chooses the first 'swan' and they stand up, holding feathers.

i) Swan: bourrée around the circle with free port de bras, return to starting position.

ii) Magicians: When the swan arrives at their starting position, 'freeze' the swan – bring closed fists in front of torso and extend strongly forward with fingers splayed.

Swan: freeze in place, before handing feathers to next student and sitting down.

Progressions & Variations

1) Add a 'raising' (standing) or 'lowering' (sitting) spell. When the teacher calls out a student's name, magicians raise their hands in the air and the swan stands up. After the swan returns to their place in the circle and freezes, magicians lower their hands to the floor and the swan sits down. Remind students that when they are the swan they need to watch the magicians to know when to stand and sit.

Transitions

"Tuck yourself into a tiny ball – we're going to be swans hatching from eggs".

SWAN HATCHLINGS

Builds on the 'Wish Upon A Star' exercise from Block 1 (see page 6) as students pretend to be cygnets (baby swans) hatching from eggs.

🎯 Core strength, spine and ankle articulation,

🎵 KIDS! – Track 4: 'Neck & Back Stretches'

- 💡 • Explain that students will begin as cygnets (baby swans) still in their eggs. Slowly they will hatch out of their shell and stretch their wings and legs.
- Practice lifting one foot of the ground and lowering it, then the other foot, then both feet, so that they are just balancing on their bottom. This is a fun way to build core strength and improves considerably over time. Sometimes children will rock backwards, but this ties in with the 'egg' theme, and children find it quite funny! This helps lower the stakes and provides a more relaxed environment to work on more challenging skills.
- 💬 • Turning on music: "How small and still can your egg be?"
- If students lose balance: "Oh no, we lost an egg! Quick, back into your shell!"

Exercise:

Start in a 'ball' position, with knees bent, holding shins and chin to chest.

- | | |
|---|-------|
| i) Lift one foot slightly off the floor and lower toes to floor. | 1-2 |
| ii) Repeat with other foot. | 3-4 |
| iii) Lift one foot then the other to balance only on bottom. Lower toes to floor. | 5-8 |
| iv) Repeat steps i) to iii) | 1-8 |
| v) Hatch out of shell by slowly extending spine to sit upright. | 1-4 |
| vi) Reach one arm up to open 5th and lower. Repeat with other arm. | 5-8 |
| vii) Slowly flex and stretch ankles two times. | 1-4 |
| viii) 6 x quick, sharp brushing movements down the legs, using both hands. | 5-6&a |
| ix) Slowly brush hands upwards over legs and torso, through 5th position, finishing with arms stretched outwards and fingertips hovering off the floor. | 7-8 |

Progressions & Variations

In Step viii), alternate hands to quickly brush down the outside of the opposite leg (right hand brushes outside of left leg, left hand brushes outside of right leg).

Transitions

"I can hear some creatures. Tuck your legs to one side and stay safe in your nest".

UNDERWATER EXPLORERS (SWAN VARIATION)







Same as Block 3 (see page 4), adapting to the Swan Lake theme.

Progressions & Variations

Students are swans in their lakeside nests, looking through the reeds to check for other animals before diving into the lake. Instead of swimming, hold a 'superman' pose (raise straight arms and legs a few inches off floor and hold) to 'glide' across the lake. Cobra pose becomes a 'duck dive' to explore under the water.

STRETCHING SWANS DEMI-PLIÉ

Our swans are getting ready to fly by stretching their wings beside the lake.

-  Demi-plié, port de bras, 1st position (feet), dynamics (adage)
-  Swan Lake – Track 1: ‘Pliés – A’
-  Two different colored feathers (e.g. all students hold one blue and one white)
-  Standing in a circle in the center of dance space, feet parallel, hands on hips.
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 - This is the first time students are introduced to 1st position – it should only be a 'small v'. Do not stress or emphasize turnout at this age. Ask students to imagine a small slice of pizza, or make a little 'v'/triangle with their feet. This can be very tricky for some students – it will come over time as they develop strength and balance. Pretending to place a “little bit of glue” on the insides of students’ heels can be an effective cue.
 - Tell students that when they bend and stretch, or demi-plié, in parallel, their knees travel forwards and stay together; when they demi-plié in 1st position, their knees travel sideways and separate to create a little diamond shape in their legs. Have students demi-plié in 1st position and look for their 'diamond'.
 - Different color feathers are used to scaffold students to use both arms. Have students practice lifting up and looking at one color feather, then the other, then both. Some students may need hand-over-hand assistance to find the position where the backs of wrists touch.
 - When free-flying, cue students to return to their mats a little earlier than usual to allow processing time to set feet into their baby-V 1st positions.
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 - Introducing 1st position: "Feet in 1st position. Make a small v, like a little slice of pizza. If it's too small [demonstrate parallel] we'll be hungry, but it shouldn't so big that there isn't pizza left for anyone else to enjoy."
 - During the exercise: "Blue feather up, white feather up. Both feathers up, and touch!"

Exercise:

- i) 4 x demi-plié in parallel. 1-8
- ii) Raise right arm to open 5th and lower, then repeat with left arm. 1-4
- iii) Raise both arms to open 5th, touch the back of both wrists together, lower. 5-8
- iv) Repeat plié and port de bras sequence in steps i) to iii). 1-16
- v) Fly free around the room and return to their place with feet in 1st position. 1-16
- vii) Repeat pliés and port de bras in 1st position, finishing in student's choice of 'swan' position. 1-16

Regressions

1. Remove the pliés in 1st position and repeat in parallel once more.
2. Remove the wrist touch and replace with two port de bras to open 5th.

Progressions & Variations

1. Add coordinating – arms float forwards in plié parallel (“knees forward, feathers forwards”); arms float to demi-seconde in 1st position plié (“knees out, feathers out”).

Transitions

[transition into Swan Retiré/Passé exercise] “Ok swans, time to show off our wings!”

SWAN RETIRÉ / PASSÉ

Our swans are showing off their impressive wings by moving them one at a time.



Passé/retiré, single leg stability, isolation, coordination



Swan Lake – Track 10: ‘Passé/Retiré A’



Two different colored feathers (e.g. all students hold one blue and one white)



Standing in a circle in the center of dance space, feet parallel, hands on hips.



- Explain that students will lift their leg and then their arm on the same side of their body.
- There should be no expectation to understand rights and lefts at this early age. Using two different color feathers helps to cue which side of the body students need to move, reducing the likelihood of repeating movements with the dominant leg or arm each time.



- Turning on music: “Wiggle your blue feather. Now shake the leg on the same side as your blue feather. We’ll lift our arms and legs on the blue side first”.
- During exercise: “Blue feather up, and leg closest to blue”.

Exercise:

- | | |
|---|------|
| i) Retiré/passé with right leg, then close parallel. | 1-2 |
| ii) Raise right arm to open 5th and lower down by side. | 3-4 |
| iii) Repeat retiré/passé with left leg, and raise and lower left arm to open 5th. | 5-8 |
| iv) Rise slowly to demi-pointe bringing both arms to open 5th. | 1-2 |
| v) Bourrée sur place (on the spot) moving arms freely. | 3-7 |
| vi) Lower heels to parallel, return arms down by sides. | 8 |
| vii) Repeat entire sequence starting with left leg. | 1-15 |
| viii) Students’ choice of end position. | 16 |

Progressions & Variations


Complete a turn on the spot during the bourrées.


Transitions


“Place one feather on the palm of one hand, and the other feather on the palm of your other hand. If you need help let us know. Now let’s keep our elbows and wings tucked close to our body and tiptoe slowly to pack them away” (Note: this activity develops shoulder control required to correctly hold and use scissors – it can be used for any small props, like a feather, leaf, petal etc. Some students may need help placing feathers on palms at first but this is part of motor skill development).


MAGIC SPELLS TENDU


This exercise builds on Block 1 as students cast 'magic spells' as Baron von Rothbart.

 Tendu, dynamics, energy, timing, pantomime.

 Swan Lake – Track 3: 'Tendus A'

 Standing in a circle in the center of dance space, feet parallel, hands on hips.

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- Remind students of the strong, bounded 'magic spell' movement from the 'Seated Port de Bras: Magic Spells' exercise. Briefly explain how the tendus are smooth and stretched but the magic spells are strong.
 - Encourage students to use both sides of their body by having them practice casting a spell to one side, and then the other side.

- 
- During exercise: "Smooth, stretching, tendus; strong arms"

Exercise:

- | | |
|---|------|
| i) 3 x parallel battement tendu devant alternating legs | 1-6 |
| ii) Bring closed fists in front of torso and extend both arms strongly to the right with fingers opening to cast a 'magic spell'. Return hands to hips. | 7-8 |
| iii) Repeat alternating tendus starting with left foot, casting spell to the left. | 1-8 |
| iv) Return hands to hips and repeat entire sequence. | 1-16 |

Progressions & Variations


This track is longer than the exercise above. If students are still engaged, ask them to march around the room, then freeze and cast a spell in any direction you call out.


Transitions

[casting a gentle magic spell across the class] "We're transforming into swans!"

BATTEMENT PIQUÉ IN THE LAKE

Swans are splashing in the lake on a hot day, brushing off any water from their wings.

 Swan Lake – Track 6: 'Piqués A'

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- Explain students are swans standing at the edge of a lake on a hot – they'll stretch their swan legs to dip their toes in the lake and cool off, and brush off any water from their wings.

Exercise:

- | | |
|--|------|
| i) 5 x parallel battement piqués devant with right leg. | 1-5 |
| ii) Close feet in parallel. | 6 |
| iii) Brush one hand down one arm, then repeat with the opposite arm. | 7-8 |
| iv) Repeat piqués with the left leg, and brushing movements. | 1-8 |
| v) Repeat all on right and left leg. | 1-16 |

Transitions

"Can you hear something? I think our baby swans need us. Fly over and find them".

ROCK CYGNETS TO SLEEP

Similar to Block 1 (see page 14) with increased repetitions and structured sequence.



Pantomime, multi-part instructions, independence, impulse control, eye-tracking.



Swan Lake – Track 13: 'Temps lié de côté A'



Leap 'N Learn mats; Plush swan or other soft toy (1 per student)



Standing in a circle, feet parallel and hands by sides. Place a mat in front of each student and hand them a plush swan to place on their mat.



- This exercise builds on the Rock A Bye Baby Animals exercise in Blocks 1-3 with increased repetitions and a more structured sequence. Explain to students that the cygnets (baby swans, or other animals) are restless/crying in their nest and need to be rocked to sleep.
- There are also greater expectations for students to set up their props and get ready to dance, developing exposure to multi-part instructions, recall skills, spatial awareness, independence, and impulse control. Students collect a swan [or other animal] and a mat from the teacher/assistant, return to their place in the dance space, placing their 'nest' (mat) in front of them and the swan on top of the mat.
- See Verbal Cues for suggestions on multi-part instructions. We also recommend using your fingers to 'count' the instructions.
- Encourage dancers to watch their swan/animal as they rock side to side.



- Preparing students to set up their props: "For this exercise you need to do three things. That's a lot! Let's listen to them all before we move. [Holding up one finger]. First, you need to get a Swan[animal] and a mat from [teacher/assistant]. [Holding up two fingers]. You take your swan and mat to to your place in the dance space. [Holding up 3 fingers] Then put your mat down in front of you like a nest, and your swan on top". What was the first thing you have to do?..."

Exercise:

- In the introduction, students bend down to pick up and cradle their swan, bringing one foot to each side of the mat in a 2nd position.
- 8 x alternating temps lié starting to the right. 1-8&a
- Pantomime listening to the swan, give the swan a hug, hush the baby swan to sleep gesturing "shh" with index finger, return arms to cradling position. 1-8
- Repeat temps liés 8 times beginning to the left. 1-8&a
- Pantomime 'listening' to the swan, use expression to show happiness or relief that they are asleep, tiptoe forwards to lower the swan to their 'nest', quietly tiptoe back to starting position. 1-8


Transitions


"Gently pick up your swan and put it on your back. Let's crawl to pack away. Try to crawl smooth and slow so your swan doesn't fall off".


CYGNETS TAKE FLIGHT SAUTÉS



Dancers are cygnets learning to fly as they sauté out of their nest for an adventure.

 Sauté, spatial awareness, interpretation, dynamics (allegro), terminology.

 Swan Lake – Track 16: ‘Sautés’

 Leap ‘N Learn mats (1 per student)

 Standing on a mat in a circle or in the centre of the dance space, feet parallel with hands on hips.

-  • This exercise progresses the jumps from previous Blocks by introducing a more structured sauté with a clear plié in both the preparation and landing. This is physically demanding and will take time for some students to develop the strength required to elevate from the floor.
- Students help set up the exercise by choosing a mat as their nest and placing it in the dance space.
- Explain that students will be cygnets (baby swans) learning to fly so they can go on an adventure. They will practise bouncing small, then jumping high. With enough height, they’ll be able to fly away from their nest before returning after a big adventure.
- Explain the sauté movement before the exercise, emphasizing a strong push into the ground with toes stretching towards the floor in the air and landing the jump with bent knees.
- Have students say: “Plié, sauté, plié, stretch” as you demonstrate and as they practice.
-  • Setting up/performing slow sauté: “Plié, sauté, plié, stretch”.
- After exercise: “Where did you fly today?”

Exercise:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| i) Small bounces (sautés) freely on the spot. | 1-4 |
| ii) Plié to prepare to jump high. | 5 |
| iii) One big sauté landing in plié then stretch legs (single count for each). | 6-8 |
| iv) Repeat i) to iii) | 1-8 |
| v) Dancers fly away from their nest and then return to their place. | 1-8 |
| vi) Repeat small and big sautés. | 1-8 |

Regressions

Some classes may benefit from performing 3 ‘bounced’ sautés (counts 1-3) with a pause on count 4 to allow planning time before the sauté.

Progressions & Variations





1. Call out different cues when dancers fly away from their nest, e.g. “toward the mirror”, “to the corner near the stereo” or “fly low”.
2. In step vi), cygnets show how proud they are of their new jumping skills by performing two slow sautés to finish.

Transitions

“Pick up your nest and balance it on one elbow. Keep it very still while you flap just one wing to fly and pack away”.



SEARCHING FOR SWANS RETIRÉ/PASSÉ WALKS

Dancers pretend they are Prince Siegfried searching for swans near the lake.

-  Passé/retiré, single leg stability, head movement, expression, pantomime.
-  Swan Lake – Track 18: 'Walks A'
-  Blue and red Leap 'N Learn mats
-  Standing in one or two vertical lines at the back of the dance space; hands on hips; mats laid out as below:

Start 

Start 

- 
 - Remind students that retiré/passé walks are just like the flamingo retiré/passé, except they travel forwards. They're like flamingo walks.
 - Talk about what happens at a red traffic light – remind students that when they get to the red mat they will stop with their feet together and look for swans. Ask them to show you how they can look out across the lake for swans.
 - Some students may favor one leg in passé/retiré as they develop this skill. Try using alternating Leap 'N Learn mats to distinguish between different legs.
 - If you're running short on time, use the exercise regression and have all students go at once in a free-movement adaptation of the exercise.
- 
 - Exercise set up: "When you're in the car or walking down the street and you see a red traffic light, what do you do? [stop!]. That's right! So when we get to a red mat, we will stop and look for swans".
 - While turning on music: "Have a look across the lake. Can you see any swans?"
 - During exercise to prompt alternating legs: "One knee, other knee..."

Exercise:

- i) Step into parallel passé/retiré, alternating legs on each blue mat.
- ii) Step onto red mat with feet in parallel and gesture 'looking' (hand held above eyes, palm facing down) to the right and the left.
- iii) Replace hands on hips. Repeat all.

Regressions

1. This exercise can be done with other traveling steps (e.g., tip toe walks, marches).
2. Instead of traveling across the floor, dancers move freely around the dance space altogether. Lay out red mats around the space (with enough for each dancer plus a few extras) – these will be 'lookouts' where dancers can get a good view of the whole lake. Retiré/passé walk around the space until the teacher calls out "find a lookout!". Dancers stand on a red mat looking for swans. Repeat.

Progressions & Variations

1. Introduce different pathways, e.g. straight, curvy, or zig-zag
2. Work with a partner – hook 'magic strings' and travel side-by-side.

Transitions

Everyone pick up 1 [or 2] mats. Hold them behind you like a tail, and fly to pack away".

BOURRÉES ACROSS THE LAKE

Dancers imagine they are swans floating across the lake.



Bourrées en avant, turning in one place, recall. 2-3 part instructions.



Swan Lake – Track 20: 'Bourrées A'



Leap 'N Learn mats; Feathers or scarves (2 per student);



Standing in one or two lines along one side of the dance space with feet in parallel and a feather or scarf in each hand down by sides. Two mats are laid out in the pattern below:



- This exercise builds on Butterfly & Hummingbird Bourrées from Block 3, building in greater physical and cognitive demands.
- In the share space, explain that students will be swans flying from one side of the lake to the other to see their swan friends. The lake is very big, so they'll rest on the rocks (red mats) in the middle of the lake. Ask students to show you how they can fold their wings over their heads to rest (arms reach overhead, crossing at wrists/forearms, with head tucked).
- When they reach the other side of the lake (yellow mats) they'll do a turn on the spot (bourrée en tournant sur place) because they're so excited to see their friends. Don't focus or emphasize the the direction of the turn.
- Remind students to take quick, little and light steps on their tiptoes, called bourrées, so they don't disturb the water on the lake when they're flying.
- Use feathers or scarves in each hand to encourages smooth, flowing arms.



- Exercise set up: "Show me what you have to do on the red mat?...And what do you have to do on the yellow mat?"
- Turning on music: "Warm up your swan wings!"

Exercise:

- Dancers rise onto demi-pointe and bourrée en avant to the red mat with arms moving freely between open 5th and down by sides as 'swan wings'.
- Pause on the red mat in a 'resting swan position': arms reach overhead, crossing at wrists/forearms, with head tucked.
- Repeat bourrées en avant to the next mat.
- Bourrée en tournant sur place on the mat (turn around on tiptoes) with 'wings'.
- Finish by flying freely towards the other side of the 'lake' to wait for other dancers.

Regressions

Remove the turning element – use two red mats so students 'rest' both times.

Progressions & Variations

Students fly in pairs, trying to stay in line with their partner as they fly across the lake.

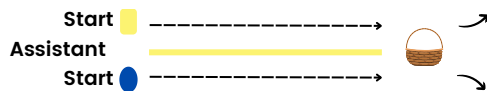
Transitions

Find another swan and stand side by side, wing-to-wing, and fly to [next location].

FEED THE CYGNETS SIDE GALLOPS

Dancers work with a swan friend to deliver worms to hungry little cygnets in the nest.

- 🎯 Gallops de côté, partner work, relationships to others, spatial awareness
- 🎵 Track 2 in song suggestions playlist (see page 3)
- 🧩 Leap 'N Learn ribbon rings; Leap 'N Learn mats; basket or hula hoop; line (optional)
- 🚩 Two lines at one side of the dance space; leader of each line on a mat; partners face each other sharing a ribbon ring in the downstage hand (closest to the nest) and holding their partner's upstage hand; props laid out as below:



- 💡
 - This exercise builds on 'Sleepy Jellyfish Walks' from Block 3, and lays foundations for a Swan Lake 'Dance of the Little Cygnets' adaptation in LNL 4 and above.
 - Explain that students are swans delivering worms to hungry cygnets in the nest. After feeding their worms, dancers wave goodbye to their swan friend and fly away from each other on opposite sides of the room to join the back of the line (demonstrate this with the assistant/a student).
 - To work both sides, after students have had two turns, have them swap mats with their partner (e.g. student who started on blue now starts on yellow).
 - To get a new ribbon ring, the assistant kneels slightly behind the starting position for each line to hand each pair a new ribbon ring and help them get ready to dance. For a more independent group, you can place a container of ribbon rings on one side of the room –when students start on the blue mat it will be their job to fly back and forage for worms, letting students know that they will swap mats so everyone gets a turn to collect the worms.
 - After a few weeks, students are often able to start preparing themselves to be ready to dance. Encourage this with prompts such as "Show me how you get ready – ribbons in the hand closest to the nest".
- 💬
 - Setting up pairs with ribbon rings: "One hand for sharing the ribbon ring and one hand for holding your partner's hand", or "One hand for sharing, one for holding".
 - Turning on music: "Wriggle your worms – but don't drop them!"
 - After delivering worms: "Wave bye to your friend and fly away"
 - Independent set up: "Show me how we get ready to deliver worms to the nest".

Exercise:

- i) Gallop de côté in pairs to place the ribbon ring in the basket.
- ii) Wave goodbye to partner and fly away to the sides of the dance space to join the back of the line and get another ribbon ring.
- iii) Repeat on the same side, then swap starting position with partner. Repeat twice.

Regressions

Tiptoe walk, march or bourrée side-by-side sharing a ribbon ring.

Progressions & Variations

1. Remove line after Week 1 or 2, or as familiarity increases.
2. Gallop en avant, holding partner's hand or sharing a ribbon ring side by side.

Transitions

"Let's wriggle like worms to ... [location of next exercise]"

CREATIVE MOVEMENT – A DAY AT SWAN LAKE

NEW! ✨

Explore characterization and story telling through movement as students interpret a story about a swan enjoying a day by the lake.



Listening skills, creative interpretation, responding to cues, decision-making, recall.



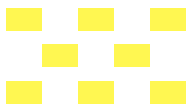
Optional and played softly: Track 3 in song suggestions playlist (see page 3)



'A Day at Swan Lake' story cards (3-4 year olds); Yellow, blue and red Leap 'N Learn mats (1 of each colour per student)



Set up mats to match the layer being used (e.g. Layer 1 requires yellow and blue mats only). Students begin on a yellow mat pretending to sleep in a nest, with blue mats set up in one corner as the lake:



- The story has layers. Start with Layer 1, introducing a new layer each week.
- Talk to students about how dancers tell stories using their bodies, and that today we're going to tell a story called 'A Day at Swan Lake' with ours – they will pretend to be the Swan in the story and when you tell the story, they will act out what the swan is doing.
- Begin by sitting and reading Layer 1. As you read, use gestures, movements and expression to act out the story, modelling some ways we can bring the story to life with our bodies and faces.
- Explain that mats will represent different things from the story – the yellow mat will be the swan's nest, the blue mats will be the lake.
- Having an assistant dance the story is an effective scaffolding tool.
- Be sure to pause between sentences and clauses (see reverse page of the 'A Day At Swan Lake' resource cards for suggestions).
- If using music, lower the volume so students can hear the story cues.



- Exercise set up: "When dancers are on stage, they use their bodies, not their words, to tell stories. Today I'm going to read you a story, and you're going to use your body to tell the story. This story is about a swan enjoying a day at the lake. When I say the story again, you will act out what the swan is doing".

Exercise:

Read the story aloud by sentence or clause, pausing to give students time to respond to and explore each narrative cue.

Regressions:

Repeat each layer for two weeks

Progressions & Variations:

Remove the mats so students must decide where in the dance space they will perform the movements for each featured location (nest, lake, rock, etc.).

Transitions:

"Time to pack away our nests. Balance it on your head and fly away in a curvy pathway. Try to keep your swan neck long.

A Day At Swan Lake – Layer 1

Once upon a time there was a swan that lived in a nest by the lakeside. Each morning, the swan would wake from a deep, deep sleep. The swan would unfold its magnificent wings and extend its long neck to look around. "It's a beautiful day to visit the lake!" The swan stood up, ruffled its feathers and stretched its wings up in the air. It lifted up onto its toes and began to fly up in the sky. The swan flew high and low; side to side; and all around. Finally, the swan arrived at the lake and landed by the water's edge. The swan tested the water with one toe, and then the other. It took a big step forward and jumped right in. The swan splashed the day away until the sun began to set then flew back to the nest. Kneeling down into its nest, it folded its arms over its head, and fell into a deep, deep sleep.

A Day At Swan Lake – Layer 2

Once upon a time there was a swan that lived in a nest by the lakeside. Each morning, the swan would wake from a deep, deep sleep. The swan would unfold its magnificent wings and extend its long neck to look around. "It's a beautiful day to visit the lake!" The swan stood up, ruffled its feathers and stretched its wings up in the air. It lifted up onto its toes and began to fly up in the sky. The swan flew high and low; side to side; and all around. All that flying was tiring. The swan spotted a big rock near the lake and flew down to have a rest. The swan needed to stretch out its wings, so it lifted one wing up and watched it float back down then lifted the other wing up and down. It did one final big stretch of both wings, then flew off once again. Finally, the swan arrived at the lake and landed by the water's edge. The swan tested the water with one toe, and then the other. It took a big step forward and jumped right in. As the swan splashed the day away, the sun began to set. "It's time to fly back to the nest!" The swan spread its wings open, lifted up onto its toes and began to make the long journey back home. The swan flew all around the sky; side to side; and high and low. At last, the swan had arrived back home. Kneeling down into its nest, it folded its arms over its head, and fell into a deep, deep sleep.

A Day At Swan Lake – Layer 3

Once upon a time there was a swan that lived in a nest by the lakeside. Each morning, the swan would wake from a deep, deep sleep. The swan would unfold its magnificent wings and extend its long neck to look around. "It's a beautiful day to visit the lake!" The swan stood up, ruffled its feathers and stretched its wings up in the air. It lifted up onto its toes and began to fly up in the sky. The swan flew high and low; side to side; and all around. All that flying was tiring. The swan spotted a big rock near the lake and flew down to have a rest. The swan needed to stretch out its wings, so it lifted one wing up and watched it float back down then lifted the other wing up and down. It did one final big stretch of both wings, then all of a sudden, a noise echoed from the forest near the lake. It gave the swan a fright – "I'd better hide!" The swan quickly flew to hide amongst the long reeds at the side of the lake. Kneeling down, the swan buried its beak in one wing; shut its eyes tight; and waited. The swan lifted its head to check the coast was clear. "Phew, the danger is gone, that was close!" It flew off once again. Finally, the swan arrived at the lake and landed by the water's edge. The swan tested the water with one toe, and then the other. It took a big step forward and jumped right in. As the swan splashed the day away, the sun began to set. "It's time to fly back to the nest!" The swan spread its wings open, lifted up onto its toes and began to make the long journey back home. The swan flew all around the sky; side to side; and high and low. At last, the swan had arrived back home. Kneeling down into its nest, it folded its arms over its head, and fell into a deep, deep sleep.


CREATIVE MOVEMENT – VON ROTHBART'S MAGIC


Students are introduced to the Swan Lake overture and the magician, Baron von Rothbart, who can cast magic spells.

 Pantomime, energy (weight, flow), responding to visual cues, recall, interpretation, music appreciation, impulse control.

 Track 1 or Track 4 in song suggestions playlist (see page 3)

 Props go here


 Anywhere in the dance space in an interpretive swan pose of dancers' choice.

 • Talk about the story of Swan Lake, including the magician Von Rothbart who can cast spells. In this exercise, the teacher will be the magician casting the spells and students will be the swans under the magician's spell.

• Review the magic spell movements used in the circle dance, ensuring dancers understand the cues to 'fly' (a continuous, soft pushing forwards port de bras motion, indicating dancers need to keep moving) and 'freeze' (a strong, bound 'freeze' spell).

• Remind students that as they dance they should keep their eyes on the teacher/magician to see when the spells change.

• When first introducing this exercise, you may need verbal cues to match your movements as a scaffolding tool. Aim to reduce verbal cues over time.

 • Exercise set up: "I will be the magician casting spells, and you will be the swans under the magician's spell. If I move my hands continuously with light, smooth, flowing energy [demo], you need to fly lightly and smoothly too. Show how you can fly light and smooth. If I move my hands out quickly with strong, sharp energy you need to freeze – how still you can be?"

• While turning on the music: "Ok swans, imagine you've been put under a spell and are frozen in place".

• During exercise: (if needed) "This is a flying spell. Fly smooth and light around the dance space"; or, "Oh! A freeze spell!"

Exercise:

i) Magician (teacher): raise hands in front of torso, palms facing forward, continuously push forward with a ripple effect through fingers.

Swans (students): bourrée to fly throughout the dance space.

ii) Magician: raise hands in closed fists in front of torso and extend strongly outwards in front with fingers opening as arms extend [hold position].

Swans: freeze in place.

iii) Dancers are 'released' to continue their bourrées when the teacher pushes softly out in front with a ripple effect through fingers ('flying' spell). Repeat.

Progressions & Variations:

1. Add a turning spell, where hands are rolled over each other continuously in a 'roly-poly' motion, and dancers must turn around.

2. Add the concept of levels to the spells, e.g. if spell is cast high dancers must freeze in a high position, or freeze low for a low spell.







Transitions:

"There's one spell left – let's see where it takes us! [move hands towards where you'd like students to be, and students follow]."

CREATIVE MOVEMENT – FLOCK OF SWANS

NEW! ✨

Dancers are migrating swans flying in formation

-  Spatial awareness, formations (circle, vertical line), responding to cues, teamwork.
-  Teacher's choice; or Track 5 or Track 6 in song suggestions playlist (see page 3)
-  Flock of Swans activity cards; 1 x red Leap 'N Learn mat
-  One red mat placed downstage center of the room (or anywhere with enough space for all dancers to line up in a vertical line)
- 
 - Explain how birds migrate to other parts of the world during certain seasons – the birds always fly together in formation as a group, but the leader changes.
 - Show the dancers the Flock of Swans vertical line card. Explain that when they make a vertical line, one person will be the leader. They will fly around the space, and when you call someone's name, they will fly to the red mat and all the other swans will line up behind them.
 - Practice making a vertical line and remind them that when they're standing in a vertical line, their tummy will point to the back of the dancer in front of them.
 - Provide students a concrete location or object in space to help orient the lead swan to the 'front' – e.g. "Tummy to the mirror/door/stereo".
 - When first introducing this exercise, use a red mat for the lead swan. Some students may also need a prompt to stand on the mat as the lead swan. Over time and as skills progress, reduce the scaffolding by taking away the mat.
- 
 - Exercise set up: "When birds migrate, they fly in a group in different formations, but the leader changes. Today we will be swans flying. We'll fly anywhere we like, and then I'll call out the name of our lead swan. They will stand on the red mat, and we'll line up in a vertical line behind them".
 - During exercise: "Anika is our lead swan. Make a vertical line behind Anika"; "Our next swan leader is Kenji" (at first, some students may need prompting, e.g. "Kenji stand on red").
 - Horizontal line progression: "Let's make a horizontal line – a line where everyone is the leader. Stand shoulder-to-shoulder, wing-to-wing".

Exercise:

- i) Dancers free fly around the dance space.
- ii) Call out a student's name to be lead swan – they stand on the red mat while other dancers line up behind them, moving arms and bourréeing in place.
- iii) On your cue, dancers return to free flying. Repeat exercise with a new lead swan.

Progressions & Variations:

1. Follow the leader – students bourrée around dance space in vertical line.
2. Challenge problem-solving and spatial awareness by removing the red mat. The 'lead swan' freezes with wings up high so the other students can find them.
3. As familiarity with the exercise develops, introduce horizontal line formation. Show dancers the horizontal line card and explain that a horizontal line is where everyone is the leader, and dancers stand shoulder to shoulder, or 'wing-to-wing'. When first introducing, the assistant stands in the center of the room to help anchor the line.

Transitions:

"Oh no, a slow motion spell! Let's fly oh-so-sloow to... [location of next exercise]."

CREATIVE MOVEMENT – SWAN SHAPES

The swans in this picture make a shape with their bodies. Let's make shapes with ours.



Shape identification, spatial awareness, creativity, interpretation, problem solving



Teacher's choice; or Track 7 in song suggestions playlist, or Track 8 and Track 9 in song suggestions playlist (see page 3).



Two Swans artwork; Swan Shapes cards (△, ○, ♥, ☆);



Standing anywhere in the dance space.



- In Share Space, show the Two Swans artwork and ask what students see. Most classes quickly get to the shape the swans make with their necks (a heart). If not, guide them by asking an explicit question (see Verbal Cues).
- Explain how students will use their bodies to make different shapes (triangle, circle, heart, star).
- Show the Swan Shapes cards and ask students to show you how they could use their body to make that shape. Some classes may need prompts or examples to begin. Encourage and valorise experimentation and exploration by highlighting different ways students are making the same shape, or asking them to consider different ways to make the same shape.
- Provide clear identifying features for each shape, e.g. "We know it's a circle because it's round and has no corners" or "We know it's a triangle because it has three sides, and three corners".
- Explain to students that they will dance around the space, and when you call out a shape and hold up the card, they will make that shape with their body.
- During the exercise have students call out the shape on the flashcard.



- Showing artwork: "What can you see in this picture".... "Yes, there is a heart shape. What body parts are the swans using to make that shape?" [necks, beaks] Show me how you can use your body to make a heart".
- Artwork prompt if required: "These swans are working together to make a shape – a heart. Can you see it? What body parts are they using to make the shape?"
- Introducing shapes: "What shape is this?" [circle] Yes, it's a circle! It's round and has no corners. How can you make a round shape with your body?"
- During exercise: "Oh, I can see a triangle in Amir's legs, and Jazmin has made a triangle with her hands".

Exercise:

- Students dance freely around the dance space.
- Teacher draws a card and shows students asking them to call out the shape. Students interpret the card with their body by holding a position.
- Cue dancers to fly away (free dance) and repeat with a new card.

Progressions & Variations:

- Students interpret the shape at a particular level, e.g. a heart shape that is low, or a star shape that is high.
- Gradually introduce more shapes, e.g. a diamond, square, rectangle etc
- Call out cues for students to follow while free dancing.

Transitions:

'Time to fly back to the nest! [Student name] lift your wings up high to the sky so we can find you. You're going to lead us back to the nest. Line up behind [student name] – let's fly home!'