

# LATER LIFE LEARNING

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## SERIES A: Best of Ballet

**Mondays, 10:00 – 11:45 am, September 17 to November 26, 2018**

**No class October 8, 2017 for Thanksgiving**

**Innis College, Town Hall**

### **Lecturer:**

*Former Canadian Oxford Dictionary editor, Katherine Barber, is known to legions of fans as “Canada's Word Lady” for her knack for making word histories lively and entertaining, but ballet is her real passion. She has taken ballet classes for over forty years, has seen thousands of performances all over the world, and organizes ballet-themed group vacations. A popular teacher of ballet appreciation courses, Ms. Barber is a highly knowledgeable balletomane who vivaciously communicates her love and knowledge of the art form while demystifying its sometimes intimidating aspects.*

### **Overview:**

Ballet, one of the world's greatest life-enhancing high art forms, beautifully combines visual arts, music, drama, and movement in one package. If your experience of ballet begins and ends with Nutcracker, you will be surprised and elated to discover how rich, varied, exciting, and downright enjoyable ballet is. If you are already a ballet fan, enrich your experience with insights into its history and all its aspects as developed over 200 years by the great choreographers whose works form the backbone of the repertoire. Video clips and demonstrations will help you identify distinctive choreographic styles and understand the physical challenges inherent in ballet.

### **1. September 17: Women in White: French Romantic Ballet (Giselle, La Sylphide)**

19th-century Romanticism and its obsessions – emotion, the supernatural, the individual, an idealized view of women – have left their mark on ballet to this day.

### **2. September 24: Jumping for Joy: Danish Ballet (Napoli, La Sylphide)**

Denmark owes its own particularly ebullient style of ballet to its great 19th-century choreographer August Bournonville.

### **3. October 1: Impressing the Tsar: The Grand Imperial Russian Style (The Sleeping Beauty)**

When you think "ballet", you see a regal-looking ballerina in a short tutu performing feats of virtuosity, and you owe that vision to Marius Petipa and his late-19th-century ballets.

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**4. October 15: *Swans and Sugarplums* (*Swan Lake, Nutcracker*)**

The collaboration between Tchaikovsky and the choreographers of the Russian Imperial Court takes ballet to new heights as a serious art form.

**5. October 22: *Ballet discovers sex* (*Les Sylphides, Scheherazade*)**

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the radical reformer Michel Fokine insists that dance, music, and design be equal partners in ballet and that they all serve the cause of authenticity in storytelling.

**6. October 29: *Seeing the Music and Hearing the Dance* (*Jewels*)**

The great 20th-century Russian-American choreographer George Balanchine creates a new, plotless style of "neo-classical" ballet in which the dance serves great music, and reinvents ballet as a vigorous, athletic North American art form.

**7. November 5: *English Charm* (*La Fille mal gardée, The Dream*)**

Frederick Ashton puts an indelibly English stamp on a French-Italian-Russian art form in ballets that celebrate love and warm the cockles of the viewer's heart.

**8. November 12: *Freeing the Women to be Women and the Men to be Men* (*Onegin*)**

John Cranko liberates ballet from storylines dependent on fairytales and disembodied spirits by focusing on human dramas.

**9. November 19: *The Dark Night of the Soul* (*Mayerling, Manon*)**

The 20th-century British choreographer Kenneth MacMillan pushes ballet in new directions, exploring its ability, like all great art forms, to portray the darker side of the human condition, in ballets renowned for their heart-wrenching duets.

**10. November 26: *Broadway and Ballet*: (*West Side Story, The Concert, In the Night*)**

Jerome Robbins, famous for such Broadway hits as *West Side Story* and *The King and I*, brings pizzazz to ballet.