

# The Starter Ballet You Must See: 'Snow White'

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# The Starter Ballet You Must See: 'Snow White'

Pacific Northwest Ballet's lovely performance for children is the perfect ballet primer

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**PHOTO:** Angela Sterling/Pacific Northwest Ballet

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Most people only attend student performances when they have a student who is performing or other connection to the school. But when the school in question is [Pacific Northwest Ballet School](#), and many of the students are on the cusp of joining professional *corps de ballet* around the world, paying for a student performance starts to seem like a pretty great idea — and a good deal.

The Pacific Northwest Ballet School is recognized as one of the top ballet training institutions in the United States. Every year the school performs a one-act story ballet for the general public on the same stage that the professional dancers use. This year's ballet is the charming and beloved ballet "[Snow White](#)." Choreographer Bruce Wells, using music by Jules Massenet, created "[Snow White](#)" specifically for the uninitiated and the very young. Shorter than a movie, the one-hour performances require no intermission.

"[Snow White](#)" is accompanied by an onstage narrator (local actor Tim Hyland, who has performed in 25 productions at [Seattle Children's Theatre](#)). The narrator serves to guide the audience through the story. However, it may still be helpful to **explain in advance to younger viewers that "and then they danced" is a big part of the performance.** When she saw "[Snow White](#)" three years ago, my then-six-year-old confused herself by trying to find literal meaning in every moment of the dance.

Despite that small difficulty, she was thrilled that the dancers — there are more than 70 of them — were all children and teenagers. The seven dwarves, who were danced by the smallest students in

the performance, particularly captured her fancy. The very pretty choreography of "Snow White" is not quite as challenging as what you will see in PNB's company performances, but the experience is still more akin to watching a professional performance than a student dance recital.



*Credit: Angela Sterling/Pacific Northwest Ballet*

Lovely and accessible dances, beautiful costumes and a familiar, straightforward story make it easy for even the youngest viewers to sit (mostly) quietly for an hour. In an audience full of families, the occasional whispered question or emergency rush to the restroom are more easily overlooked than in an evening performance. Special activities in the lobby — craft projects and mini dance lessons — make the event feel extra special and keep

mini-dance lessons — make the event feel extra-special and keep little kids occupied until the curtain bell. PNB's "[Snow White](#)" is a perfect opportunity to expose younger children to ballet for the first time.

## Ready for more ballet?

If your family is ready for the next step in ballet appreciation, the professionals of Pacific Northwest Ballet perform "[Director's Choice](#)" March 16–25. "Director's Choice" is a mixed rep performance (four short ballets will be performed instead of one full-length one) chosen by artistic director [Peter Boal](#) each year to represent **the most innovative and exciting choreography in modern ballet**. Instead of tutus, at this show expect red leotards and electric violin in "Ulysses Dove's Red Angels."

Watch for dancing on tables in "One Flat Thing, reproduced" and swinging from harnesses in "Slingerland Duet" (both by William Forsythe). Plus, witness a world premiere choreographed by one of PNB's own dancers, Ezra Thomson. (Kids might get a kick out of knowing he often performs the role of Herr Drosselmeyer in PNB's "[George Balanchine's The Nutcracker](#)").

### If you go...

**When:** There are only three performances of '[Snow White](#);' buy tickets soon.

Sunday, March 18 at 12:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 18 at 3:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 24 at 3:30 p.m.

**Where:** [Marion Oliver McCaw Hall](#), 321 Mercer St., Seattle.  
Find it on the north side of Seattle Center.

**Tickets:** \$25–\$60. Every family member must have a ticket, but children's tickets are on the less expensive end of the range. Purchase [online](#) or by phone 206-441-2424.

**Parking:** The Mercer Garage (around \$20) is connected to McCaw Hall by a sky bridge. Other pay lots in the neighborhood have similar pricing. Street parking is limited to 4 hours, and hard to come by. Consider taking transit.

### Tips for parents:

There are no bad seats at McCaw Hall so do not hesitate to buy the cheapest seats available.

Allow lots of time for traffic around Seattle Center and arrive early to find parking, collect booster seats, participate in pre-show activities and get settled.

The PNB site has an overview of the story on the ['Snow White' page](#) if you want to review it with your crew in advance.

If you need to zap some wiggles before or after the show, head to Seattle Center's [Artists at Play playground](#) between the [Armory](#) and [MoPop](#).

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