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RUSSIAN NATIONAL BALLET

Giselle | Tuesday, January 22, 2019, at 7pm

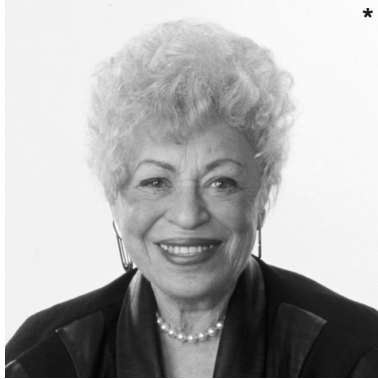
The Sleeping Beauty | Wednesday, January 23, 2019, at 7pm

Tryon Festival Theatre

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PROGRAM

TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2019

GISELLE

Full-length ballet in two acts

Music by Adolphe Adam

Libretto by Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges and Théophile Gautier

Choreography by Marius Petipa

Sets by Lev Solodovnikov

Costumes by E. Radchenko

Additional choreography and staging by Iryna Kovalova

ACT I

A Rhineland Village

20-minute intermission

ACT II

Giselle's Grave in the Forest

Giselle

Hanna Zimovchenko

Alexandra Krukova

Count Albrecht

Dmitriy Sitkevich

Nurlan Kinerbaev

Aidos Zakan

Hilarion, the Forrester

Evgeniy Rudakov

Alexander Daev

Berthe, Giselle's Mother

Veronika Ermakova

Wilfred, Albrecht's Sword Bearer

Pavel Evtushenko

Myrthe

Elena Khorosheva

Maria Klueva

The Wilis

Daria Lednikova

Julia Stukonoga

and the Corps de Ballet

Russian National Ballet appears by arrangement with:

Columbia Artists

5 Columbus Circle

1790 Broadway, 16th Floor

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SYNOPSIS

ACT I

A Rhineland Village

Giselle, a peasant girl, has fallen in love with Count Albrécht, who has led her to believe that he is a villager named “Loys.” Her superstitious mother, Berthe, hoping that Giselle will marry the forester Hilarion, warns her against Loys to whom she has taken an instinctive dislike.

In order to discourage Giselle’s love for Loys, Berthe further recounts the legend of the Wilis—ghosts of young girls who have been jilted and die before their wedding day. To avenge themselves, they dance to death any man who crosses their paths between midnight and dawn. But Giselle disregards her mother and joins with her beloved in the celebrations that mark the end of the grape harvest where she is crowned Queen of the Vintage.

Wilfred, Albrécht’s squire, secretly warns him that a hunting party is approaching led by the Duke of Courland and the Countess Bathilde (Albrécht’s future bride), who are staying at Albrécht’s castle for the betrothal ceremony. Albrécht hides, but Hilarion has witnessed this meeting and decides to break in to Loys’ cottage to discover the secret of his identity. The hunting party arrives. Giselle dances for the nobles, and when she tells Bathilde that she, too, is engaged, the Countess gives her a necklace. Bathilde, tired from hunting, asks to rest in Berthe’s cottage, but the Duke decides to continue the hunt and orders a hunting horn to be left by the cottage door so that he and the rest of the party may be recalled when Berthe is ready to rejoin them. Hilarion now reappears from Loys’ cottage. He has found Albrécht’s sword, and when he compares it with the hunting horn, he sees that they bear the same crest; this gives him the evidence for which he has been looking.

Not realizing that the hunt is still nearby, Albrécht returns. Hilarion interrupts the dancing and reveals the truth about Loys. He sounds the horn, the hunting party returns, and Bathilde, coming out of the cottage, claims Albrécht as her fiancé. The shock is too much for Giselle, and she loses her reason. In her madness, she relives her love for Loys and seizing his sword, she kills herself.

ACT II

Giselle’s Grave in the Forest

Hilarion keeps vigil by Giselle’s grave, which lies deep in the forest in unconsecrated ground. It is midnight, the time when the Wilis materialize. Hilarion flees in terror when confronted by these apparitions. Myrthe, their queen, now arrives from the marshes and summons her Wilis. She draws Giselle from her grave to be initiated into their rites. The Wilis disperse as Albrécht approaches, searching for Giselle’s grave. He lays flowers at the cross, and when Giselle’s spirit appears to him, he follows it into the forest.

Hilarion, pursued by the Wilis, returns and is forced into an endless dance. Exhausted, he is driven into the lake where he drowns. The Wilis now seek out Albrécht, and when Myrthe commands him to dance, Giselle urges him to the safety of the cross, but he is powerless when Myrthe orders Giselle to entice him away by dancing with him. Giselle tries to sustain him, but as the night wears on, he becomes weaker and weaker. Just as he is about to die, dawn breaks. Daylight destroys the Wilis’ power, and the ghostly dancers fade away. Giselle, whose love has transcended death, returns to her grave, her spirits freed from the power of the Wilis, leaving Albrécht sorrowing and alone.

PROGRAM NOTES

GISELLE: THE MUSIC AND ITS CREATOR

Adolphe Adam was born in Paris in 1803. His father, Louis Adam, came from Alsace and was a well-known pianist, professor at the Conservatoire de Paris and author of a best-selling piano method. Surprisingly, he was opposed to any musical education for his son, but eventually allowed him to enter the Conservatoire. After a slow start, Adolphe became a pupil of Boieldieu, composer of *La Dame Blanche*, and began to write with remarkable facility. At age 22, he received the Second Prix de Rome, and in 1830, his opera *Daniłova* was presented at the Opéra Comique. During the next 18 months, he composed four operas, all staged in Paris. He married the sister of Pierre Laporte, director of the Covent Garden Theatre in London. This connection brought him to London in 1832 for the premieres of his two English comic operas, *The First Campaign* and *The Dark Diamond*. A year later, he returned with a ballet score, *Faust*, for the King's Theatre.

More than 50 stage works followed, many of them enormously successful, including the comic operas *Le Chalet*, *Le Postillon de Longjumeau*, *La Poupée de Nuremberg*, and *Si j'étais Roi* and the ballets *Le Diable à Quatre*, *La jolie fille de Gand*, *La Fille du Danube*, *Le Corsaire*, and of course, *Giselle*, his acknowledged masterpiece. Adam became one of the most popular composers of his time, as well-known in Berlin and St. Petersburg as in Paris and London. His last stage work was a delightful one-act operetta, *Les Pantins de Violette*, given its premiere on April 29, 1856, at Offenbach's Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens. Adam died in his sleep four nights later.

The apparent simplicity of Adam's music is deceptive, because the piano editions of his operas and ballets, published for sale to a mass market of amateurs, required such basic presentation. He was, in fact, expert at creating instant theatrical effects with short, melodic motifs tailor-made for character or situation, and with unexpected harmonic progressions to control the audience's emotional tension. Like his compatriots Auber and Hérold, similarly involved in *opéra comique*, he benefited from the influence of Rossini and Donizetti. If all three were inevitably under the shadow of Meyerbeer when attempting grand opera, they were nonetheless totally successful in providing high-class entertainment for most of Europe for well over half a century.

Adam's accounts of composing *Giselle* vary. In one place he recalls having written the score in eight days; elsewhere, he mentions three weeks. The historian Ivor Guest has examined a manuscript score which records dates of completion for separate sections ranging from April 11, 1841, to the last entry on June 8. Adam may well have been referring to first sketches. At any rate, he seems to have enjoyed the collaboration between himself, the rising young star Carlotta Grisi, and her choreographer-mentor Jules Perrot. Adam stated, "I composed the music in high spirits. I was in a hurry, and that always fires my imagination. I was very friendly with Perrot and Carlotta, and the piece evolved, as it were, in my drawing room."

Although *Giselle* was not the first ballet to adopt an elementary leitmotif procedure, it is certainly the earliest that is still in the repertory. The first act contains more examples of this device than the second, because the first lends itself more to the mime scenes necessary to establish the plot in the earlier part of the ballet than it does to set dance pieces. One obvious example is the short, stabbing, unharmonized motif associated with Hilarion; another is the repeated and flexible use of the love theme for *Giselle* and Albrécht, recalled towards the end of the first act in fragmented form and chromatically raised pitch layers. The set dance sections are composed in the form of their aria and ensemble counterparts in operas of the time: quadrilles, waltzes, polaccas, galops, nocturnes, or tarantellas. Adam uses these forms with a certain freedom and juxtaposes them effectively.

The enormous popularity of *Giselle* has had a curious effect on its music. Since the mid 19th century, the numerous productions in different countries have brought about many changes of detail in choreography and scenario. It was not normal practice to import orchestral material for new productions of ballets of that period. The choreographer would rehearse the dancers to

the sound of one violin, sometimes two, playing from a violin conductor part prepared from the original score. An orchestration would then be ordered from a local musician, inevitably reflecting whatever changes had been made. That is why the great centers of ballet culture have inherited variants of the original music and its instrumentation. Adam's orchestral score was never published, and the foregoing comments may perhaps explain why there had been no urgent search for it.

Giselle was first seen in Moscow in 1843, just two years after its creation in Paris, and a year after it was staged in St. Petersburg. The ballet's history in Russia since that time has shown a continuous sequence of performances with Jules Perrot—one of the great originators of the choreography—providing a basic text, which has been illuminated by the care and genius of generations of ballerinas and producers. When *Giselle* was forgotten everywhere else in Europe—it was dropped from the Paris Opera repertory in 1868—Russian dancers and ballet-masters preserved and honored it. The Russian National Ballet's production maintains the Russian tradition of scrupulous production and loving concern for this gem of the Romantic ballet.

PROGRAM

 WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2019

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Full-length ballet in three acts

Music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Choreography by Marius Petipa

Libretto by Marius Petipa and Ivan Vsevolozsky

After-stories by Charles Perrault

Sets by Lev Solodovnikov

Costumes by Simon Virsaladze

Premiered on January 16, 1890, Marinski Theatre, St. Petersburg

Additional choreography and staging by Iryna Kovalova

PROLOGUE

ACT I

The Spell

20-minute intermission

ACT II

Scene One: The Vision

Scene Two: The Awakening

ACT III

The Wedding

Princess Aurora

Alexandra Krukova

Maria Kluyeva

Hanna Zimovchenko

Prince Désiré

Eldar Sarsembaev

Aidos Zakan

Dmitriy Sitkevich

King Florestan

Evgeniy Ermakov

Queen

Natalia Ivanova

Master of Ceremonies

Pavel Evtushenko

Fairy Carabosse

Alexander Daev

Evgeniy Rudakov

Lilac Fairy

Elena Khorosheva

Fairy Tenderness

Daria Lednikova

Fairy Boldness

Elena Galushka

Fairy Generosity

Julia Stukonoga

Fairy Carelessness

Milena Stashina

Fair Canary

Valeria Mala

4 Cavaliers

Dmitriy Vorobey

Nurlan Kinerbaev

Azamat Askarov

Alexeu Belan

Princess Florine

Julia Stukonoga

Blue Bird

Vladimir Tapharov

White Cat

Sabina Omonova

Puss-in-Boots

Sergey Kotov

Little Red Riding Hood

Daria Lednikova

Wolf

Alexander Yakovlev

And the Corps de Ballet

Russian National Ballet appears by arrangement with:

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1790 Broadway, 16th Floor

New York, NY 10019

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SYNOPSIS

PROLOGUE

King Florestan XIV declares a grand christening ceremony to be held in honor of the birth of his daughter, Princess Aurora, named after the dawn. An entourage of six fairies is invited to the christening to be godmothers to the child. They are the Candide Fairy, the Coulante Fairy, the Miettes Fairy, the Canari Fairy, the Violente Fairy, and—most importantly—the Lilac Fairy, who is the last to arrive. As the fairies are happily granting gifts of honesty, grace, prosperity, song, and generosity, they are suddenly interrupted by the arrival of the wicked fairy Carabosse, who is furious at the King's failure to invite her to the ceremony. The King and Queen begin to remonstrate, and the Master of Ceremonies Catallabutte intervenes to take responsibility, whereupon Carabosse rips off his wig, laughing. With spite and rage, Carabosse declares her curse on Princess Aurora: she will prick her finger on her 16th birthday and die. But all is not lost—the Lilac Fairy, fortunately, has not yet granted her gift to the Princess. She acknowledges that Carabosse's power is immense, and she cannot completely reverse the curse. However, she declares that the Princess shall indeed prick her finger, but will not die, and instead sleep for 100 years until she is awakened by the kiss of a prince. Carabosse departs, and the curtain falls as the good fairies surround the cradle.

ACT I

The Spell

Act I opens at Aurora's 16th birthday party. Brightly clad peasant girls dance a *divertissement* with flower garlands. Holding the arched garlands overhead, they dance in multiple circles, weaving in and out to a waltz tempo. All await

the arrival of the Princess Aurora. The ballerina princess bursts onto the scene, dancing a brief and vivacious solo in the manner of a carefree young girl. She is then ceremoniously introduced to the four princes who have come to seek her hand. The *Rose Adagio*, the famous *pas d'action* expressing a young girl's blossoming into womanhood, is about to start. Aurora begins the adagio with one leg raised and bent behind her, one curved arm raised overhead. Some have read in this "attitude" pose, which Aurora repeats often, a kind of gentle questioning or youthful uncertainty. One after the other, each of the suitors turns and displays her while she maintains her pose. She releases the hand of the suitor supporting her, and raising both of her arms overhead, balances momentarily, as if tentatively testing her abilities. She then takes the arm of the next prince and begins the sequence again. After a brief interlude in which the princess dances alone, she returns to accept a rose from each of the suitors (hence the title, *Rose Adagio*). She pirouettes slowly and accepts each rose; one prince supports her while the next offers his flower. At the end of the adagio, she returns to her attitude position, and supported in turn by each prince, she releases her hand and balances for an extended time. Finally, as she frees her hand from the clasp of the fourth prince, her curved attitude straightens into a sharp, arabesque extension. She retains her balance poised confidently on one toe, as if she has visibly come of age before the eyes of the adoring suitors. The Princess continues dancing a joyful solo until her attention is suddenly distracted by a strange woman dressed in black who offers her an unfamiliar object. Before anyone can stop her, Aurora seizes the dreaded spindle. The unwary

Princess pricks her finger, grows weaker, and falls to the floor in a swoon. Just as those assembled lapse into despair, the Lilac Fairy steps forward. Waving her wand soothingly, she reminds them that the Princess will only sleep, and she casts everyone into deep slumber along with her. The Lilac Fairy summons a forest of thorns, thickets, and enormous shrubbery to grow around the sleeping court.

ACT II

Scene One: The Vision

Act II takes us to a neighboring kingdom 100 years later. Prince Charming and his lord and lady friends are out for a hunt. The cheerful retinue amuse themselves with dances and games, but the Prince is tired of everyday diversions and stays behind to wander about alone. Suddenly the Lilac Fairy floats in on a boat with gossamer sails. She offers to show the melancholy Prince a vision of Aurora. The Prince is utterly enchanted by the sight of the Princess dancing lyrically and romantically amidst a tableau of fairies and nymphs, bathed in a bluish light. He pursues her, but can only hold the Princess in his arms for a moment before she eludes him and disappears. She is after all only a spectral image conjured by the Lilac Fairy. The Fairy offers to take the Prince across the lake through the dense and tangled forest to the castle where the real Princess lies asleep.

Scene Two: The Awakening

The Prince approaches the canopied bed set on a high platform and, as the music heightens, he plants the awakening kiss. Aurora greets him. The King and Queen appear from either side of the stage and welcome the awakened Aurora and her Prince with joy.

ACT III

The Wedding

The final act ushers us into a sumptuous hall, graced with statuesque columns and a circular gold staircase crowned by a blue sky. It is here that the royal wedding of Prince Charming and Princess Aurora will take place. A full series of celebratory divertissements is performed by the inhabitants of fairyland: Puss in Boots, Bluebeard and his wife, Goldilocks and a bear, Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf all dance. A highlight is the *pas de deux* of the soaring Blue Bird and his Princess. First dancing together and then separately, they compete with each other, spinning and fluttering in sparkling flight, sometimes jumping so high they seem virtually suspended in the air. The man's variation in particular, which features many beating jumps while he arches his body backwards and forward (*brises voles*) is one of the most famous and demanding in the international repertory. *The Bluebird's Dance* ends with the female lifted on the male's shoulder. The celebration then climaxes with the *Grand Pas de Deux* danced by the Prince and Princess. They are regal, formal, and confident dancing together. Prince Charming supports his bride's pirouettes and displays her long extensions and secure balances. The Prince jumps and spins during his solo, and the Princess spins on pointe with even surer mastery than she showed in the *Rose Adagio*. Finally, Aurora whirls into the Prince's arms and dives toward the floor; the Prince catches her around the waist and supports her in the famous inverted pose known as the fish dive. All join the bride and groom for a spirited mazurka, and the Lilac Fairy, standing in their midst, bestows her blessing on the happy couple.

PROGRAM NOTES

The Sleeping Beauty, a crowning jewel of Marius Petipa's career, is often considered the finest achievement of the Classical ballet. It is a grandiose and refined blending of the traditional mime, expressive *pas d'action* and spectacular divertissements in a lavish theatrical setting. Tchaikovsky was delighted with the invitation to write the music for a ballet based on Charles Perrault's well-known fairy tale. A baby princess, condemned at her christening by an evil fairy to prick her finger and die on her 16th birthday, is saved by the gift of the good Lilac Fairy who declares the princess will only sleep until awakened by the kiss of a prince. The fairy tale, replete with a king and queen, fairies both good and evil, a beautiful princess and dream prince, magical stage effects, and courtly splendor, lent itself perfectly to the full evening ballet that was Petipa's pride.

Although different productions have cast the kingdom of King Florestan and his Queen in varying centuries, it is really a storybook kingdom set in the realm of the imagination. In the Prologue, the hall of the palace where the christening is about to take place is resplendent with color and imposing with its high ceilings and great stone archways. The Master of Ceremonies, pages, heralds, ladies in waiting, and finally the King and Queen all promenade into the royal setting, looking most distinguished in their elaborate dress. Next, the fairies of the kingdom join the scene of courtly pageantry with the Lilac Fairy, six cavaliers, and maids of honor entering last. All dance in honor of the King and Queen and baby Aurora, about to be christened. Each of the fairies dances her own solo, presenting a gift to the Princess. Just as the Lilac Fairy finishes her dance, a strange and frightening rumble is heard.

Its meaning soon becomes clear: the Master of Ceremonies has forgotten to invite the evil Fairy Carabosse!

The grotesque woman, her face a white mask, her long dress black and tattered, enters in a huge black coach drawn by four ugly rats. Stepping down, she gesticulates with her hand and threatens with her stick that they will have to pay the price for their omission. In mime, she delivers the ominous curse that the Princess will prick her finger on a spindle and die. The Master of Ceremonies is in disgrace; the King and Queen are in despair. But the Lilac Fairy has not yet given her gift. She steps forward and assures the royal court that on her 16th birthday the Princess will indeed prick her finger, but then fall asleep for 100 years. Carabosse speeds off in a rage while the others surround the infant's cradle as if to protect her from further harm.

The Sleeping Beauty was the first of Petipa's classics to be seen in Western Europe. Under the title *The Sleeping Princess*, it was presented by Serge Diaghilev (1872-1929) in London in 1921. In 1939, it was remounted in Great Britain and has been considered the foundation of the Classical ballet repertory in that country ever since. It has now been adopted worldwide, and performance of the leading role remains a kind of initiation rite for aspiring ballerinas.

The Sleeping Beauty is a supreme demonstration of the challenge of Petipa's style—steel point work, sharply accented spinning turns, soaring leaps, high extensions, brilliant battery (beats in the air), daring lifts, and in addition, it gives a fairy tale plot lavish stage treatment. However, its production actually checked a growing tendency toward shapeless extravaganza in 19th-century

ballet, adhering closely to the principle of choreographic symphonism. Like the composition of a symphony, it had a certain formal structure. *The Sleeping Beauty* was choreographed in strict association with Tchaikovsky's music. There are themes developed and resumed throughout the ballet, and each act is a unity unto itself. Tchaikovsky willingly took instruction from Petipa as to the length, tempo, and character of each musical sequence (as he would also do in *The Nutcracker*). The themes—a young girl's coming of age and the triumph of good over evil—are developed dramatically and musically during the course of the ballet. Each of the three acts includes an adagio for Princess Aurora, the first celebrating her girlhood, the second her falling in love, and the third her marriage. In these *pas d'actions*, Petipa makes fuller use than previous choreographers of the dramatic potential of the Classical ballet, as when Aurora's curved (questioning) attitudes become sharp (exclamatory) arabesques, and her balances grow steadily surer.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

The Russian National Ballet Theatre was founded in Moscow during the transitional period of Perestroika in the late 1980s, when many of the great dancers and choreographers of the Soviet Union's ballet institutions were exercising their new-found creative freedom by starting new, vibrant companies dedicated not only to the timeless tradition of classical Russian Ballet, but also to invigorate this tradition as the Russians began to accept new developments in the dance from around the world.

The company, then titled the Soviet National Ballet, was founded by and incorporated graduates from the great Russian choreographic schools of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Perm. The principal dancers of the company came from the upper ranks of the great ballet companies and academies of Russia, and the companies of Riga, Kiev, and even Warsaw. Today, the Russian National Ballet Theatre is its own institution with

over 50 dancers of singular instruction and vast experience, many of whom have been with the company since its inception. In addition to their extensive tour history, beginning in January 2017 the company will embark upon a four-month, coast-to-coast tour of the United States.

In 1994, the legendary Bolshoi principal dancer Elena Radchenko was selected by presidential decree to assume the first permanent artistic directorship of the company. Radchenko is the founder of the Russian National Ballet Theatre, and she has focused the Company on upholding the grand national tradition of the major Russian ballet works and developing new talents throughout Russia, with a repertory of virtually all of the great full works of Petipa: *Don Quixote*, *La Bayadere*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, *Raymonda*, *Paquita*, *Coppelia*, and *La Sylphide*, as well as productions of, among others, *The Nutcracker*, *Sylvia*, and *La Fille Mal Gardee*.