

IN CURRENT REPERTORY

TIMING: Act 1/2 - 70:00
Act 3/4 - 45:00

SWAN LAKE

Choreography by Kevin McKenzie, **after** Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov

Music by Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky

Scenery and costumes by Zack Brown

Lighting by Duane Schuler

Prologue: Long before our story begins, Odette, a beautiful princess, falls under the spell of von Rothbart, a wicked sorcerer.

Act I - The Prince's Birthday Party: It is Prince Siegfried's twenty-first birthday and he is celebrating with friends. The Queen Mother arrives to give him his present, a crossbow, and reminds him that, as he is to become King, he must choose a bride at the ball the next evening. She leaves, bidding him to enjoy himself, but reminding him again to think about his royal obligation to be wed. Siegfried, realizing that his carefree days are at an end, leaves the party at the height of the festivities to seek the solace of the woods. Benno, his friend, finds him and suggests they go hunting. Siegfried declines, preferring to be alone.

Act II - Some hours later. By the Lake: Prince Siegfried enters a moonlit clearing in the forest and sees a magnificent swan in flight. He carefully takes aim, but, to his astonishment, the bird transforms into a breathtakingly beautiful girl, and he withdraws into the trees to observe her. Unable to resist his curiosity, he steps out, only to startle and frighten her. He assures her he will do her no harm and asks her to explain the marvel he has just seen. Impressed by his gentleness, Odette unburdens the story of her plight. She tells him she is a Princess of high birth who fell under the spell of an evil sorcerer, and now her fate is to be a swan; only in the hours of darkness may she assume her human guise. Indeed, this very lake is

(more)

SWAN LAKE - Synopsis - Page 2

filled with her mother's tears. She tells him she is condemned for eternity, and only if a virgin youth swears eternal fidelity to her and marries her can she find release. Only then can the spell be broken. But if he should forswear her, then she must remain a swan forever. At that moment the sorcerer appears. The Prince, in his passion, reaches for his crossbow, but Odette immediately protects the sorcerer with her body, for she knows that if he is killed before the spell is broken, she too will die. The sorcerer disappears, and Odette slips away into the forest. Siegfried realizes his fate is now entwined with hers. Dawn approaches and Odette is compelled by the spell to return to her guise as a swan. Siegfried is left awestruck.

Act III - The Great Hall: Heralds and trumpets announce the start of the ball. Eligible young princesses from all over the world arrive to be introduced to Prince Siegfried so that he may choose a bride. They present their national dances for the entertainment of the Prince and the Queen Mother. The prospective brides dance for them, and the Queen Mother reminds Siegfried that he must choose one for his wife. As Siegfried struggles with his responsibility to marry, his mind remains with Odette and he cannot choose. Trumpets announce an un-invited guest. It is von Rothbart with his daughter Odile. Siegfried is seduced by her, as von Rothbart holds the court in thrall. Siegfried announces his intention to marry Odile. Von Rothbart asks Siegfried to swear fidelity. He realizes too late that he has been the victim of a terrible plot. The scene darkens; Odette is seen at the castle door, weeping. Grief-stricken, Siegfried rushes to the lakeside.

Act IV - The lakeside: A great storm rages. Siegfried, bursting into the glade, discovers Odette and begs her forgiveness. Odette tells Siegfried she must kill herself, or she will forever be a swan. Siegfried, knowing that his destiny is forever changed, declares he will die with her, thus breaking von Rothbart's power over her.

As dawn approaches, von Rothbart appears. The lovers answer his threat by throwing themselves into the lake. Von Rothbart is vanquished and his power ended.

(more)

APOTHEOSIS: The lovers are united in life after death.

The first production of *Swan Lake*, with choreography by Julius (Wentzel) Reisinger, received its World Premiere by the Russian Imperial Ballet at the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow on March 4, 1877, danced by Pelagias (Paulina) Karpakova (Odette-Odile) and Stanislav Gillert (Prince Siegfried).

Swan Lake as we know it, with the Petipa/Ivanov choreography, was given its first full-length production at the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, on January 27, 1895, with Pierina Legnani as Odette-Odile and Pavel Gerdt as Prince Siegfried.

American Ballet Theatre (then Ballet Theatre) first performed Act II of *Swan Lake*, with choreography by Anton Dolin after Lev Ivanov and Marius Petipa, at the Center Theatre, in New York City on January 16, 1940, with Patricia Bowman as Odette and Anton Dolin as Prince Siegfried. Mr. Dolin also choreographed the grand pas de deux from Act III as the “Black Swan Pas de Deux,” which was given at the Metropolitan Opera House on October 23, 1944 with Tamara Toumanova as Odile and Anton Dolin.

Act II of David Blair’s staging for ABT was first given at the New York State Theater on January 18, 1966 with Lupe Serrano and Royes Fernandez. The first performance of the complete ballet staged by David Blair was given by ABT at the Civic Opera House, Chicago on February 16, 1967 with Nadia Nerina as Odette-Odile and Royes Fernandez as Prince Siegfried. It received its first New York performance at the New York State Theater on May 9, 1967 with Toni Lander and Bruce Marks. A re-staged production of *Swan Lake* received its American Ballet Theatre premiere in Washington, D. C. at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on March 27, 1981 with Martine van Hamel as Odette-Odile and Kevin McKenzie as Prince Siegfried.

A new production of *Swan Lake* with choreography by Lev Ivanov and Marius Petipa and additional choreography by Mikhail Baryshnikov was given its world premiere on December 2, 1988 at the Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa, California, danced by Susan Jaffe (Odette-Odile)

(more)

SWAN LAKE - Synopsis - Page 4

and Andris Liepa (Prince Siegfried). This production received its New York Premiere on May 8, 1989 at the Metropolitan Opera House, danced by Susan Jaffe (Odette-Odile) and Ross Stretton (Prince Siegfried).

Swan Lake was revived, with staging by Kevin McKenzie and lighting by Thomas Skelton, on May 21, 1993 at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, danced by Susan Jaffe as Odette-Odile and Jeremy Collins as Prince Siegfried.

The World Premiere of ABT's current production, choreographed by Kevin McKenzie, after Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov, was given on March 24, 2000 at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D. C., danced by Julie Kent (Odette-Odile) and Angel Corella (Prince Siegfried).

The New York Premiere of this production was given on May 19, 2000 at the Metropolitan Opera House, danced by Susan Jaffe (Odette-Odile) and Jose Manuel Carreño (Prince Siegfried).

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