

## **Les Sylphides**

Music by Frederic Chopin  
(suite of piano pieces orchestrated by Alexander Glazunov)  
Choreography by Mikhail Fokine  
Premiere: June 2, 1909 Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, France

*Les Sylphides* grew out of Chopin's Seventh Waltz and had its premiere on February 23, 1907. The favorite oeuvre of its creator, Mikhail Fokine, this work has now become standard repertoire for many of the world's leading theatres.

*Les Sylphides* does not have a traditional plot. The curtain opens to reveal a picturesque group of ballerinas, frozen in anticipation, the embodiment of the Young Man's dream. The women rise like a romantic vision, circle around the Young Man, spread out like a light fog and then freeze again in their original poses.

This ballet is in one regard, a timeless poetic example of stylization, and in another, a work set distinctly in its own period. Fokine incorporated the cultural experiences of the past and the blossoming ideas of the present, thus saturating the work with universal significance. It is not the characters in the ballet that develop, but rather the themes, moods, and feelings.

## **-INTERMISSION-**

### **ROMEO AND JULIET**

AFTER WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY  
Full-length Ballet in Two Acts  
Music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikowski  
Choreography by Elena Radchenko based on sketches by Marius Petipa  
Sets and costumes by Sergei and Elena Radchenko  
Premiere: March 3, 1881 Marinski Theatre, St. Petersburg, Russia

#### Scene 1

The Capulets are hosting a magnificent celebration. By their house a crowd of guests is dancing in the square. The Montagues, who are the Capulets enemies and rivals, are naturally not invited.

There are Mercutio and Benvolio with friends. They try to persuade their friend Romeo, Lord Montague's son, to put on a mask with them and sneak into the feast. Romeo

agrees. In the course of the merriment and dancing, Romeo meets Juliet, who unmask him. They instantly fall in love with each other.

Lady Capulet's nephew, Tybalt, is a desperate rake and squabblor. On seeing the strangers at the celebration, he starts a fight with Mercutio. However Mercutio makes fun of Tybalt and cheers everybody up. Mercutio, Romeo's best friend, gets villainously killed by Tybalt in a brawl. Romeo confronts and accidentally slays Tybalt, who dies before the Capulets' eyes.

They are in grief and ask for revenge. Romeo runs away. He hurries to a rendezvous with his beloved Juliet. Risking his life, Romeo gets into Juliet's bedroom.

## Scene 2

The loving couple meet. They carry on a dialogue. They vow fidelity until death parts them and become a husband and a wife. Suddenly a nurse appears and warns that Juliet's parents and Paris are coming. They have chosen him as a rich fiancée for their daughter. The parents have a stern conversation with Juliet, who doesn't want to marry Paris. The father is outraged. He tells Juliet that she will marry Paris tomorrow. The three of them leave the bedroom.

Juliet is stricken with the news. She asks Friar Laurence to give her a hypnotic drug so that she looks dead and the wedding with Paris can be cancelled. Juliet takes the drug to fall asleep, but Romeo does not know anything about it. Learning about Juliet's death, he runs into her bedroom to die next to her. Romeo sees Juliet and believes that she is dead.. He cannot imagine life without her so he has some poison prepared and he takes it. Before his death Romeo has visions and then everything plunges into darkness. Having woken up, Juliet sees her dead Romeo. He hasn't left even a drop of poison for her. Juliet then stabs herself with Romeo's dagger hoping to see her beloved and unite in the next world.

“For never was a story of more woe than this of Juliet and her Romeo”