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A delightful performance

Moscow Festival Ballet 'effortlessly' reinterprets Tchaikovsky classic

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Thursday night, the Moscow Festival Ballet brought the classic "Swan Lake" to life for a full crowd at Jorgensen. The show started with the mellifluous composition of Tchaikovsky winding through the speakers while dancers mysteriously moved behind a purple curtain. The music rose and fell until suddenly, the curtain was whisked away revealing a bright scene. Dancers dressed in bright colour pirouetted to life on a colourful stage. It was a splendid court as the dancers celebrated their handsome prince's twentieth birthday as the ballet's story began. The dancers celebrated gaily, leaping gracefully to the swells of the triumphant music. The mastery of all of the dancers was evident in this scene. They pirouetted and jumped with grace and made the dance seem effortless.



RACHEL WEISS/The Daily Campus

Members of the Moscow Festival Ballet perform a scene from Tchaikovsky's 1876 work "Swan Lake" on Thursday night to a full crowd at the Jorgensen.

While Prince Siegfried is celebrating with his court, his mother, the regal queen, walks in. She tells him that his childhood has now ended, and announces that it is time for him to find a bride and start the next part of his life: one of a king. She presents him with a crossbow and leaves him to enjoy the festivities. He returns to the revellers and the audience is regaled by the antics of the skirt-chasing Jester and old Steward. Soon the celebrations are over as swiftly as they had started, replaced by the blue gloom of Swan Lake, and the Prince enters to test his new crossbow.

While the Prince is wandering in the gloom, the evil magician Rotbart appears in a puff of smoke, unseen by the Prince. He menacingly follows the unwitting Prince until the Prince stumbles upon the ethereal, white clad Odette. Enchanted by her beauty, he follows her wandering the forest till he finally catches up with her and her many swan companions. Slowly he earns her trust until she finally tells him of their predicament. Haltingly, she tells him that Rotbart has cursed her and her companions to live as swans unless the curse is broken

by true love. However if one was to falsely promise her, she and her companions would be cursed forever. Moved by her beauty, the prince kisses his middle and index finger and raises them to the heavens, swearing that he will undo her curse. Overcome with joy, Odette and her companions dance with the Prince until suddenly it is sunrise and she is forced to flee before she takes on her swan form. The scene ends with the Prince bewildered at her abrupt departure with the bat-like Rotbart shadowing him ominously in the gloom.

The ballet was gripping and fascinating, even to first time attendees. The physical control and grace of the dancers was marvelous. The choreography created by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov was perfect with the composition. Although there was no dialogue, the story was clearly presented in their gestures and expressions. The swan-like grace of Ekaterina Egorov, who played Odette, told the story of the cursed princess perfectly. Fifty dancers strong, the Moscow Ballet wove a beautiful tale and created an enchanting night.