Serge De Diaghileff's Ballet Russe

Souvenir

SERGE DE DIAGHILEFF'S BALLET RUSSE

SERGE DE DIAGHILEFF ET SA VIELLE BONNE
BY LÉON BAKST

SOUVENIR

SERGE DE DIAGHILEFF'S BALLET RUSSE

With
ORIGINALS
by
LÉON BAKST *and* OTHERS

METROPOLITAN BALLET COMPANY *Inc.*
NEW YORK

Metropolitan Opera Company

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SERGE DE DIAGHILEFF'S BALLET RUSSE

ARTISTIC unity and harmonious co-operation are the keynotes of the Russian Ballet. It is important to remember that the supreme technical excellence of individual dancers is the least remarkable element contributing to the sensational success of M. Diaghileff's organization. The art of his famous *maître de ballet* would lose half its significance in a commonplace setting, or accompanied by banal music. On the other hand, to appreciate properly the genius of a Stravinsky, we must be assisted by the interpretations of the mimes and dancers. The *maquettes* of the great decorators, Bakst, Roerich, Anisfeld and the rest, glow like Persian miniatures on walls, and art connoisseurs are justified in prizing them highly. But how much more thrilling their work becomes when magnified on an ample stage! A perfect performance is essential to intensify the values and originality of these various elements, and it would seem that the Diaghileff Company alone can give such performances. America is fortunate in being offered a dazzling repertoire in which every phase of their amazing versatility will be given full scope.

STORIES OF THE BALLETS

LE PAVILLON D'ARMIDE

Tableau Choreographique; presented at the performance in honor of the coronation of King George V. at London: Music by N. Tchérepnine; book, scenery and costumes by Alexandre Benois; choreography by M. Fokine

THIS ballet breathes the atmosphere of Versailles, and is altogether charming in its eighteenth century spirit of careless gaiety. A young Vicomte is lodged for the night in an enchanted "Pavillon" decorated with exquisite Gobelins, depicting the story of Armide. In the course of the evening the woven tapestries come to life. The young man becomes infatuated with the broidered Armide, and his happiness is crowned by the consent of the King, in whom he recognizes none other than his host, a notorious magician. When the Vicomte awakens he finds to his amazement the scarf of Armide at his side. Realizing that he is the victim of an enchantment, he dies of fear and horror before the gloating eyes of the villainous man whose hospitality he had accepted.

L'OISEAU DE FEU

Conte Russe in one act: Music by Igor Stravinsky; book and choreography by M. Fokine; scenery and costumes by Léon Bakst

STRAVINSKY, bold innovator of harmonies, will himself arouse a great deal of discussion. It is for this ballet, too, that Bakst devised his latest brilliant setting. The Tsarevitch has captured a bird with flaming golden plumage, while he is out hunting, but he cannot resist its mute appeal and he lets his precious captive escape, accepting one of its magical feathers as a token of gratitude. The feather afterwards brings him consummate happiness, for hardly has the Firebird flown away when he is warned by a group of exquisite maidens, that the forest is enchanted and that its ruler, the green-eyed monster Kotschei, will petrify him if he remains on the scene. The marvelous grace and beauty of one of the girls has, however, already overpowered him and he refuses to save himself by flight. The weird retinue of the ogre rushes upon him, but with the aid of the feather he calls "L'Oiseau de Feu" to his aid. The power of the sinister Kotschei is broken by the bird, which forces his evil followers to dance madly until they fall asleep overcome with exhaustion. The monster is then killed and the Tsarevitch and his love are permitted to live happily ever afterwards.

LES SYLPHIDES AND PAPILLONS

Reveries Romantique: Music by Chopin and Schumann; choreography by M. Fokine; scenery and costumes by Alexandre Bénois

THESE ballets are like elusive poetry and perfume. In the first, the generous regisseur hands us a lovely old-fashioned nosegay, in which the central male blossom is surrounded by the most fragile rosebuds of the *corps du ballet*, and the whole is set in a *toot* of rarest lacework of Chopin's masterpieces, just as Papillons is a pretty episode around which Schumann's melodies are woven. There is no story here, but each of us can invent one,—*chaque à son imagination.*

THE BLUE SULTANA IN "SCHÉHÉRAZADE"

PELERIN IN "LE DIEU BLEU"

ODALISQUE IN "SCHÉHÉRAZADE"

ADOLESCENT IN "SCHÉHÉRAZADE"

LE SPECTRE DE LA ROSE

Tableau Choreographique from a Poem by Théophile Gautier: Music by Carl Maria von Weber; scenery and costumes by Léon Bakst

THE gifted Charles Conder would have loved this exquisite *pas de deux*, which is danced to the familiar music of Weber's "Invitation to the Waltz," orchestrated by Berlioz. The dream of the beautiful girl who falls asleep after her return from the ball, with a full blown rose in her hand, has been charmingly told by Gautier and should have been translated by our own Lafcadio Hearn. The delicate flower is the symbol of her romance, and as she dreams, clasping it to her breast, it comes to life in the shape of a wondrous phantom, with whom she dances. Alas! Her happiness is too great. She awakens to find only a few fragrant petals scattered about her dainty feet, where but an instant before her dream lover had been kneeling.

NARCISSE

Poème Mythologique in one act: Music and book by N. Tchérepnine; choreography by M. Fokine; scenery and costumes by Léon Bakst

OVID, Pausanias, and a host of other classical authors have given us variations of the story of Narcissus, the youth who was distinguished for his remarkable beauty. As a setting for the present version of the ancient myth, Bakst has created a sacred grove full of mystery. Here the glowing youth rejects the love of Echo, a graceful mute tanagra, and is punished by the Gods to be the victim of a love which cannot be returned. He has been sporting with a bevy of nymphs who are all enamoured of him, when he stoops to drink from a crystal pool which mirrors his own beauty. In vain does he attempt to make the reflection share his passion for himself, and as he falls exhausted by the cool waters, he is transformed into the lovely golden flower which still bears his name.

SCHÉHÉRAZADE

Drame Choreographique in one act: Music by M. Rimsky-Korsakov; book by L. Bakst and M. Fokine; choreography by M. Fokine; scenery and costumes by Léon Bakst

SCHÉHÉRAZADE has long been considered the masterpiece of Bakst. Its story is the famous prelude to the Arabian Nights. The Schah Zeman is incredulous when his brother, the Sultan Schariar, sings the praises of his favorite Zobeide, and persuades the Sultan to test her fidelity by pretending to go on a hunting expedition for several days duration. Hardly have the lords departed when the Harem is in an uproar. The fat Eunuch is soon wheedled into opening the bronze and silver doors which lead to the apartment of the stalwart negro slaves. Finally he opens the golden door behind which Zobeide's lover, sleek as polished ebony, is waiting. He bounds into Bakst's marvelous room, and the two start a voluptuous orgy which reaches its maddest height when the Sultan, a sinister tragedian of silence, returns unexpectedly. It is a magnificent entrance. His vengeance is swift and we see everything through a veil of blood. All are massacred. Zobeide after vainly imploring pardon of her royal spouse, stabs herself at his feet, to avoid the fate of the other inmates of the Harem.

XENIA MAKLEZOWA IN "L'OISEAU DE FEU"

SADKO

Poème Fantastique in one scene: Music by M. Rimsky-Korsakov; choreography by Adolf Bolm; scenery by I. Anisfeld; costumes by M. Gontcharova

THE legend of Sadko occupied the attention of Rimsky-Korsakov for thirty years. His symphonic poem (the first in Russia), was inspired by it, and in 1895 he used the same story for an opera. The charming personality of Sadko, a poor roving musician, has attracted Volkhowa, daughter of the ruler of the Sea. She endows him with the power of catching fish with scales of gold from the lake, and with wealth thus acquired he undertakes a voyage, which is interrupted by the King, her father. The latter demands a human victim to be thrown into the sea, and Sadko, realizing that he must sacrifice himself, dives into the angry waters. Arrived at the bottom of the ocean he finds himself in the court of the great ruler, and he sings a hymn glorifying the realm of clear waters. The King, charmed by the gracious youth, bestows on him the hand of the lovely Volkhowa, and the nuptials are celebrated by a grand submarine fête in which naiades and marine monsters take part. This tableau from the opera will be utilized by M. Diaghileff's troupe for one of its remarkable soirées.

THAMAR

Drame Choreographique in one scene after a poem by Lermontow: Music by M. Balakirev; choreography by M. Fokine; scenery and costumes by Léon Bakst

ONE of Bakst's most vigorous works is a portrait of Balakirev, who composed the superb music to "Thamar," a ballet which is still regarded as an amazing triumph, even for Bakst. The rise of the curtain discloses the fantastic court of the seductive Caucasian queen, Thamar. Her castle is surrounded by the turbulent waters of the river Terek, where so many of her unfortunate lovers have met their fate at the hands of her strange companions, who are now discovered dancing grotesques and trying in vain to free her of ennui. She ignores them. Her terrible eyes survey the wild Dariol mountain pass which can be seen through the great window. A stranger is approaching the castle and at her command he is brought into her baleful presence. When the scarves which conceal the face of the youth are removed he proves to be very handsome, and for a brief hour he enjoys the feverish pleasures of Thamar's favor, and the strange secrets of her barbaric entourage. But even his beauty palls on the listless queen, and he is thrust to his doom even while her hungry eyes seek their next victim among the pilgrims lost in her mountain fastnesses. The story is based on a poem by Lermentow, who is often styled the poet of the Caucasus.

LE CARNAVAL OF SCHUMANN

Scènes Romantiques in one act: Music by Robert Schumann; book and choreography by M. Fokine; scenery and costumes by Léon Bakst. Orchestrated by Rimsky-Korsakov, Liadow, Glazounow and Tchérepnine

THE various episodes of "Le Carnaval of Schumann" furnish an opportunity for revealing the rich humor and simple pathos of the art of the Russians, and are in the nature of a pendant to "Les Sylphides." All the characters of the delightful Italian puppet plays appear. Pierrot and Columbine, Harlequin and Florestan and all the rest are here eager to transport us, by means of ironical romantic episodes, into a land of dreams where Goldoni and Pulci and Carlo Gozzi reign supreme.

ADOLF BOLM IN "PRINCE IGOR"

PRINCE IGOR

Polovtsiennes Dances: Music by A. Borodine; choreography by M. Fokine; scenery and costumes by N. Roerich

IN these wild native dances we are introduced to the music of the second act of Borodine's opera, which the Metropolitan has recently produced in its complete form. While the dances have no special significance, they are superbly barbaric and the mad frenzy of the participants is unforgettable. The fiery performance is intended to delight and distract the Slavic Prince Igor, who although a prisoner of the Khan Kontchak, chief of a nomadic tribe, is treated with all respect, in the hope that he will consent not only to a lasting peace with the Polovtsi, who are ruled by the great Khan, but also to the union of Igor's son Vladimir with Kontchakovna the chief's beautiful daughter.

PETROUCHKA

Four Tableaux Burlesques: Music by Igor Stravinsky; book, scenery and costumes by Alexandre Benois; choreography by M. Fokine

PETROUCHKA is another fantasy of the amazing Stravinsky. It is a Russian pendant to "Pagliacci." The tragedy is enacted in the large square of Petrograd. Crowds are coming and going, and an old necromancer, manager of a puppet show, displays his grand, life size marionettes,—a pretty dancing girl, and her two admirers, the ugly but romantic Petrouchka, and a wicked but fascinating Moor. Their creator has endowed these images with human emotions, and the hero bitterly resents his uncomeliness as contrasted with the Moor's gorgeous appearance, which enslaves the dancing girl. The poor grotesque Petrouchka is mad with jealousy and when the Shrovetide festivity in the square is at its height, he is suddenly killed by his black rival. Consternation seizes the crowd, but the old showman assures them that Petrouchka was only a thing of sawdust and plaster,—a creature of his own magic power. When the people disperse however, he is horrified to see the tragic ghost of his marionette menacing him from the quiet shadows of the booth.

SNÉGOUROTCHKA

Mimed scenes from the opera: Music by Rimsky-Korsakov; scenery and costumes by M. Larionof

THE sub-title of this opera, composed in 1880, by Rimsky-Korsakov, is "A Tale of Springtime." The heroine, Snégourotchka, is the daughter of King Winter and his spouse Spring, and while the action transpires in the fantastic period of pagan Russia, in the reign of the Czar Berëndéy, the story is really a symbol of the triumph of beauty over the forces of evil. The divine princess, attracted by the songs of the shepherd Lell, has left her wintry domains to mingle with human beings. Lell is the personification of popular Russian poetry, but the princess is not in love with him. She becomes the bride of a young Russian, but during the celebration of her nuptials, which takes place in June, she suddenly disappears, melting away before our eyes under the rays of the hot summer sun.

DAPHNIS ET CHLOE

Poeme Pastoral in three scenes: Music by Maurice Ravel; book after Longue and choreography by M. Fokine; scenery and costumes by Léon Bakst

DAPHNIS ET CHLOE, a ballet in one act and three tableaux by Michel Fokine, arranged to music by M. Maurice Ravel, is a work remarkably sweet, tender and suggestive.

In front of the altar of the nymphs a crowd of young girls bearing garlands prostrate themselves. Daphnis and Chloe are among these devotees. The ceremony resolves itself into a religious dance. Daphnis has not awakened to the fact that he loves Chloe, and she in turn fears that he is not master of his own heart, but jealousy lays bare their mutual regard. Chloe suffers at seeing the maidens embrace Daphnis in their dances and Daphnis resents the presence of the young men about Chloe.

In innocence Chloe draws into the dance the clownish herdsman, Dorco. Whereupon the company propose a contest between the herdsman and Daphnis, and a kiss from Chloe shall reward the victor.

Dorco dances a grotesque figure; Daphnis follows with steps light and gracious. Daphnis and Chloe fall into mutual embrace while the crowd admire their beauty. Chloe runs away while Daphnis lapses into dreaming languor, not responding to the wiles of Lycenion.

Presently is heard the shout of voices in alarm, and a group of women pursued by brigands cross the scene. Daphnis flies to the aid of Chloe, whose life is perhaps in danger. An instant later Chloe reappears, distracted, and throws herself before the altar of the nymphs, but a group of brigands seize her and carry her off. Daphnis returning, finds a sandal lost by a young girl in the mêlée. He curses the gods and falls inanimate. Lights grow dim and the statues of the nymphs one by one become endowed with life, and leaving their pedestals descend to console Daphnis. They invoke the god Pan, who emerges from a rock.

The scene changes to the camp of the brigands where Chloe is a prisoner. She performs a dance of supplication. Briaxis, the pirate chief, woos her, when suddenly the atmosphere changes, strange gleams light up the night, Pan appears in a cloud and enfolds Chloe.

The limpid serenity of the first scene is again resumed. Search is made for Daphnis and Chloe, and when their companions bring them back and Daphnis beholds his beloved, he knows that his dream was prophetic and that Pan has really intervened in his behalf.

Then Lammon, the old countryman, tells to all that Pan has graciously acted in memory of his ancient love for the nymph Syriux. Whereupon the assembled company join in a dance to the celebration of this old love-tale and end in joyous applause to the betrothal of Daphnis and Chloe.

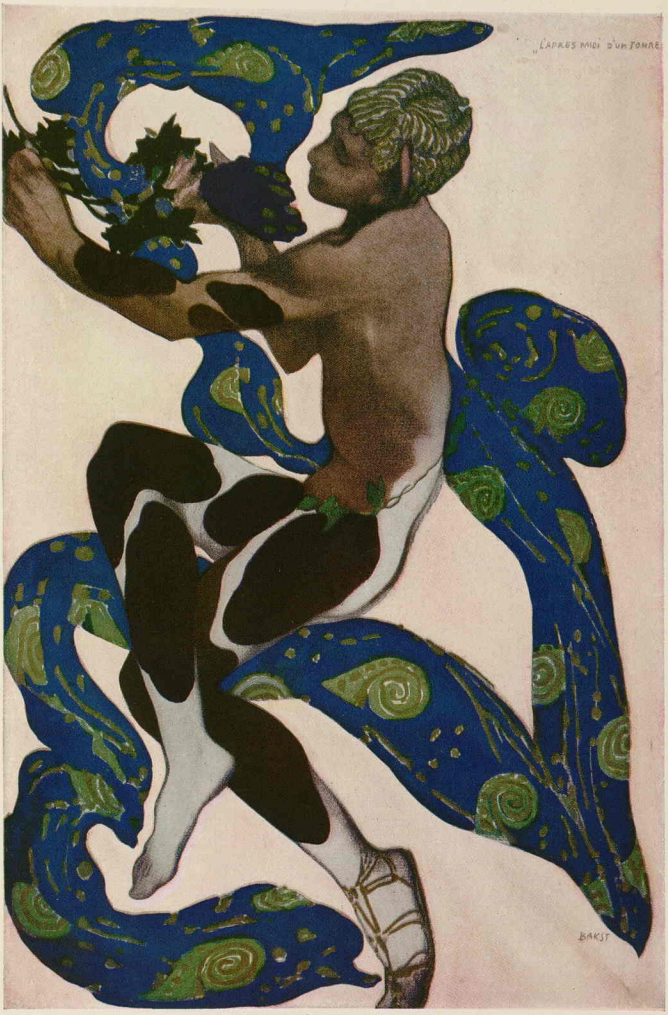
EPHEBE IN "NARCISSE"

BACCHANTE IN "NARCISSE"

ALMÉE IN "SCHÉHÉRAZADE"

DÉCORS FOR "SCHÉHERAZADE"

THE PERI FROM "PERI"



FAUN IN "L'APRÈS-MIDI D'UN FAUNE"

EUNUCH IN "SCHÉHÉRAZADE"

L'APRÈS-MIDI D'UN FAUNE

Episode Choreographique by Nijinsky: Music by Debussy; scenery and costumes designed by Bakst

OF L'Apres-Midi d'un Faune there is practically no story. It is an animated decoration conceived within the rigid limits of an antique bas-relief. The principal figure is the faun. The scene at the back is merely decoration without attempt at natural representation. The unearthly, haunting strains of Debussy's music guide the action of the faun who is lifted for a brief space out of the nebulous somnolence of brutish existence by the bright apparition of a company of nymphs. They appear from the left, moving in the conventional attitudes of painted figures, arms and legs in angular disposal first three, with arms interlocked, then one, and again three. They stand rigidly posed below the faun's retreat. Startled from his revery and scenting the presence of beings that stir his sensual yearnings, the faun leaves his perch and descends to their level. Surprise, fear, curiosity, such swift emotions are interpreted by strange, elemental movements of the hands and arms. Startled, the nymphs flee, but immediately return, while the faun, growing bolder, seeks to woo them. Again they disappear and one returns for a final view of the woodland male. They lock arms, but a sudden panic sends her gliding away, leaving behind a filmy scarf that the faun picks up and carries to his rock perch. Some subtle odor prolongs the stimulus to his aroused sensations and he settles down with it into voluptuous dreams.

LE DIEU BLEU

Conte Hindou in one act: Music by Reynaldo Hahn; book by Jean Cocteau and N. Madrazzo; choreography by M. Fokine; scenery and costumes by Léon Bakst

THIS superb Indian myth illustrates anew the versatility of all the creators of the Russian Ballet. There are strange ritualistic dances, introduced when the young hero is invested with the robes of priesthood. After the investiture, the fiancée of the young man enters, and appeals to him,—as only an Indian maiden can,—to renounce his religious vows. Her methods enrage the elders, who thrust her into a dungeon to be devoured by curious monsters which come crawling in from hidden grottoes. She is overcome with terror and prays to the Blue God, who suddenly appears and delivers the helpless girl into the hands of the stupefied priests. She is quickly restored to her lover, and the Blue God of love and happiness disappears in radiant glory.

CLÉOPÂTRE

Drama Choreographique in one act by Léon Bakst.
Dances by M. Fokine. Music by Arensky-Glazounow

THIS remarkable ballet is also based on one of Gautier's exotic tales. An amorous Egyptian youth has seen the queen of the sapphire Nile and has defied her courtiers, renounced his humble mistress Ta-or, and has offered his life for a sign of Cleopatra's favor. The queen is amazed by his devotion and while her slave girls dance bacchanales with black *serviteurs*, and strew sweet scented rose leaves on her gilded couch, she succumbs to his passion. But his triumph is short. Swift death by some rare poison follows it. The vast hall supported by massive columns is deserted, and as the royal galley carries its precious burden down the sacred stream, the faithful Ta-or falls lifeless on the body of her faithless lover.

LUBOV TCHERNICHOWA AND LEONIDE MASSIN IN "L'OISEAU DE FEU"

FLORE REVALLES IN "CLEOPATRE"

LEONIDE MASSIN

FLORE REVALLES AND ADOLF BOLM IN "SCHEHÉRAZADE"

LUBOV TCHERNICHOWA

SHEPHERD IN "DAPHNIS ET CHLOE"

VALSE NOBLE IN "PAPILLONS"

LADY IN "PAPILLONS"

NYMPH IN "L'APRÈS-MIDI D'UN FAUNE"

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Business Comptroller,
Metropolitan Opera Co.

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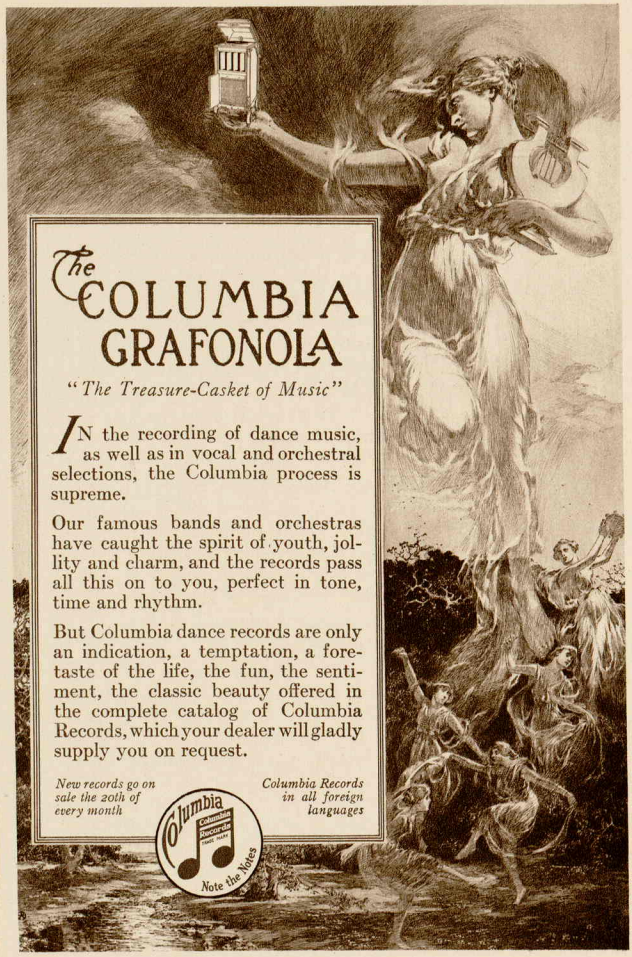

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Note the Notes

THE ITINERARY

THE itinerary of Serge de Diaghileff's Ballet Russe, which makes its first American tour this season after six years of consistent success in Europe, starts with a two weeks' engagement at the Century Theatre in New York. The tournée comprises also performances at the following cities: Boston, Albany, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Kansas City, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Washington, Philadelphia and Atlantic City. The Diaghileff troupe spends its last four weeks in America at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, where it replaces opera during the month of April.

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