

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET

PETER BOAL, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Petipa Exotique

Presenter:

Doug Fullington, Dance Historian

Violinists:

Michael Jinsoo Lim, Concertmaster

Brittany Boulding, Associate Concertmaster

Dancers:

Lesley Rausch

Seth Orza

Leta Biasucci

Amanda Clark

Angelica Generosa

Liora Neuville

Carli Samuelson

Kyle Davis

Our presentation is a program of dances by legendary French ballet master Marius Petipa (1818-1910), whose stories are set in what for 19th-century European audiences would have been exotic locales. Revived from century-old dance notation, excerpts from Petipa's famed *La Bayadère* (India) and *Le Roi Candaule* (Lydia), as well as his staging of the swashbuckler *Le Corsaire* (Turkey), will be presented by PNB dancers accompanied by two violinists from the PNB Orchestra in the traditional rehearsal medium of 19th-century St. Petersburg.

Doug Fullington has reconstructed the late 19th- and early 20th-century versions of these dances recorded in St. Petersburg using the Stepanov choreographic notation system. The notations are now housed at the Harvard Theatre Collection, as are the violin rehearsal scores (*répétiteurs*), which he has also edited.

Petipa Exotique will be presented on the Guggenheim Museum's Works & Process series on February 23 and 24 in three sold-out performances.

Acknowledgements

Choreographic notations and violin *répétiteurs* courtesy of Harvard Theatre Collection, Susan Pyzynski, acting curator.

Rehearsal music in late-19th century Russia

Ballets in late-19th century St. Petersburg were rehearsed to the accompaniment of two violins, performing an arrangement (called a *répétiteur*) of the full score. The melody was played by the first violin and the accompaniment by the second.

Here is a page from the *répétiteur* of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*—the familiar swan theme:

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for the Swan Lake theme. At the top left, the title "Съездъ" is written in Cyrillic. To its right is a circular stamp of the Imperial Russian Library. Further right, the title "Violine Répétiteur" is written in cursive. Below the stamp, the word "Quintette" is written. The main title "Съездъ" is written in large, stylized Cyrillic letters. The score is written on a grand staff with two staves for the piano and two staves for the violin. The piano part is marked "Solo" and "Moderato". The violin part is marked "Violine Répétiteur". The score consists of several measures of music, including a prominent melodic line in the violin and a complex accompaniment in the piano.

Le Corsaire

Original Music: Adolphe Adam

Original Choreography: Joseph Mazilier; subsequent additional and revised choreography by Marius Petipa

Original Production Premiere: January 23, 1856; Paris Opéra

Russian Premiere: January 24, 1858; Imperial Ballet (St. Petersburg); staged by Jules Perrot, assisted by Marius Petipa

Petipa Production Premiere: February 5, 1863; Imperial Ballet (St. Petersburg); Petipa's final Revival on January 25, 1899, after which time the choreographic notation was made

The swashbuckler ballet *Le Corsaire* (The Pirate) is an adaptation of Lord Byron's epic orientalist poem of 1814, which inspired a number of 19th-century ballets. The libretto is by Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges, who with Théophile Gautier also wrote the libretto for *Giselle* in 1841.

Act III: Pas de trois des odalisques

Music: Adolphe Adam (1856) and Cesare Pugni (1858)

The "Pas de trois des odalisques" was expanded, with the addition of three variations and a coda, for the 1858 Russian premiere production of *Le Corsaire*. The odalisques are harems slaves in the court of Pasha Seyd.

Entrée (Adam)	Leta Biasucci, Amanda Clark, Liora Neuville
Variation 1 (Pugni)	Amanda Clark
Variation 2 (Pugni)	Leta Biasucci
Variation 3 (Adam)	Liora Neuville
Coda (Pugni)	Leta Biasucci, Amanda Clark, Liora Neuville

Act II: Scène dansante

Music: Adolphe Adam

The 1899 St. Petersburg libretto of *Le Corsaire* describes this love scene between the pirate Conrad and the heroine Medora: "The canopy is opening. Medora is reclining on a sofa with Conrad sitting at her feet. Conrad, after letting a maid depart, offers to share his supper with Medora and brings her to the table to serve her. She refuses and instead asks to serve the supper to him. He accepts. While dancing and entertaining him, Medora brings Conrad sorbet, wine, and a pipe. Conrad, seduced to the fullest by Medora's attractions, expresses excitement and embraces her while vowing his eternal love."

Our revival of this scene is based on post-1899 choreographic notation, which differs in some details from the printed libretto.

Medora	Lesley Rausch
Conrad	Seth Orza

Pierina Legnani and Pavel Gerdt in the "Scène dansante" from *Le Corsaire*, St. Petersburg, 1899:



Marie Petipa and Sergei Legat:



Marie Petipa and Sergei Legat:



Le Roi Candaule (or *Tsar Kandavl*)

Original Music: Cesare Pugni

Choreography: Marius Petipa

Premiere: October 29, 1868, Imperial Ballet (St. Petersburg); revival on December 6, 1891, with additional and revised music by Riccardo Drigo; Petipa's final revival on April 21, 1903, after which time the choreographic notation was made

Petipa co-wrote the libretto for *Le Roi Candaule* (King Candaules) with Saint-Georges, basing it on writings by Herodotus and Plutarch. Candaules was king of Lydia (part of modern-day Turkey) from 735 to 718 BC and was the subject of books, paintings, and other artwork in the 19th century. Gautier published the historical fiction novel *King Candaules* in 1844 and Petipa's ballet followed in 1868. *Le Roi Candaule* (also known as *Tsar Kandavl* in Russia) was performed in its entirety for the last time on September 2, 1923.

The story concerns the intrigue surrounding the arrogant Candaules, his corrupt wife Nisia, and the warrior Gyges, who succeeds Candaules as king of Lydia. Throughout, a variety of *divertissements* are presented, some whose pretexts are unrelated plot of the ballet.

Act II: Le berceau du papillon

Music: Cesare Pugni, revised by Riccardo Drigo (1891/1903)

This divertissement—"The cradle of the butterfly"—was danced as part of the famous second act "Venus Victrix" scene, during which Nisia is declared the new Venus. The action involves the birth of a mischievous butterfly.

Butterfly **Leta Biasucci**
with **Amanda Clark, Angelica Generosa, Liora Neuville, Carli Samuelson**

Olga Preobrazhenskaya is the ballerina named in both notations of this dance. These photos, courtesy of Alexei Ratmansky, may represent one of the costumes she wore:



Act IV: Pas de Diane (or *Les Amours de Diane*, excerpts)

Music: Cesare Pugni, revised by Riccardo Drigo (1891/1903)

This pas de trois—for Diana, virgin goddess of the hunt; Endymion, the hunter; and a satyr, half man/half goat—was performed during the final divertissement in the fourth act of *Le Roi Candaule* and consisted of an entrée, adagio, three variations, and coda. The story of Diana and Endymion, their eventual tryst, and discovery by a satyr comes from the writing of Pliny, Sapho, and Lucianus.

The tale has been the subject of paintings, sculpture, and other art works. Of particular relevance to its inclusion in *Le Roi Candaule* may be the 1849 painting of “Diana and Endymion surprised by the Satyr” by St. Petersburg-born artist Karl Bryullov:



George Balanchine danced the role of the Satyr in the “Pas de Diane” for a gala at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre in 1922. The 18-year-old Balanchine was also the subject of a pastel portrait that year by Zinaida Serebriakova (1884-1967), in which he is identified as Bacchus in the ballet *Le Roi Candaule*. Because satyrs were the attendants to Bacchus, one wonders whether or not he might actually be dressed in the Satyr costume:



In 1937, Agrippina Vaganova reorchestrated the “Pas de Diane” as a pas de deux for Diana and Acteon, rather than Endymion, joined by twelve female corps de ballet. This dance was interpolated into her 1938 production of the ballet *La Esmeralda* for the Kirov Ballet and is widely performed today.

Our revival is based on notation made circa 1903 and includes the entrée and adagio, as well as variations for the Satyr and Diana, who carries a bow. The photographs below are of Anna Pavlova in the role of Diana, the first taken in 1900 and the second taken in 1907. Pavlova kept the dance in her subsequent touring repertory under the title “Les Amours de Diane.”

Our reconstruction of the satyr variation, for which only a ground plan and brief written description of steps are preserved in the choreographic notation, also draws on written accounts by Akim Volynsky and Fedor Lopukhov.

Diana	Lesley Rausch
Endymion	Seth Orza
Satyr	Kyle Davis

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Entrée	Lesley Rausch and Seth Orza
Adagio	Lesley Rausch and Seth Orza
Variation 1	Kyle Davis
Variation 3	Lesley Rausch



La Bayadère

Music: Ludwig Minkus

Choreography: Marius Petipa

Premiere: February 4, 1877; Imperial Ballet (St. Petersburg); Petipa's final revival on December 15, 1900, after which time the choreographic notation was made

La Bayadère was one of Petipa's most popular and enduring exotic ballets. The story may have been based somewhat on *Sacountala*, a ballet produced in Paris two decades earlier by Petipa's brother, Lucien. In an attempt at verisimilitude, transliterated Sanskrit words were included in the *Bayadère* libretto. The Orient was evoked in costumes and scenic designs ("ethnographically true costumes," according to one review of the original 1877 production), and character dances evoked local color, in alternation with purely classical dances.

The melodramatic plot involves Nikia, a bayadère (Indian temple dancer), who loves Solor, a great warrior. The two pledge eternal love, but Solor is obligated to marry the rajah's daughter, Gamzatti, who plots and murders Nikia. Solor dreams that he meets Nikia in the Kingdom of the Shades, where the bayadère warns him not to betray her. In the final wedding scene, the spirit of Nikia appears to Solor and, as he and Gamzatti are wed, the temple is destroyed by an earthquake, killing all within. Nikia and Solor are reunited, flying over the peaks of the Himalayas.

Act III, Scene 5: The Kingdom of the Shades (excerpts)

Nikia **Liora Neuville**

Solor **Seth Orza**

Shades **Leta Biasucci, Amanda Clark, Angelica Generosa, Carli Samuelson**

Petipa revived *La Bayadère* for the last time in December 1900, at which time much of the ballet's choreography was carefully notated by Nikolai Sergeyev in the Stepanov system. The notation of the pas de deux from the "Kingdom of the Shades" scene includes detailed partnering instructions for both the ballerina and the cavalier, providing what amounts to a technical manual for late 19th-century partnering technique. Originally performed on a fully lighted stage, this scene was now set in the dark and craggy Himalayas. Petipa's corps de ballet of Shades numbered 48 in 1900. Our reconstruction includes a corps de ballet of four. As the pas de deux begins, the shade of Nikia has just disappeared, leaving Solor alone amid vast groupings of the corps before she returns. (Photo: *La Bayadère*, Kingdom of the Shades, 1900.)



Detail of Nikia (Mathilde Kshessinskaya) and Solor (Pavel Gerdt), St. Petersburg, 1900:

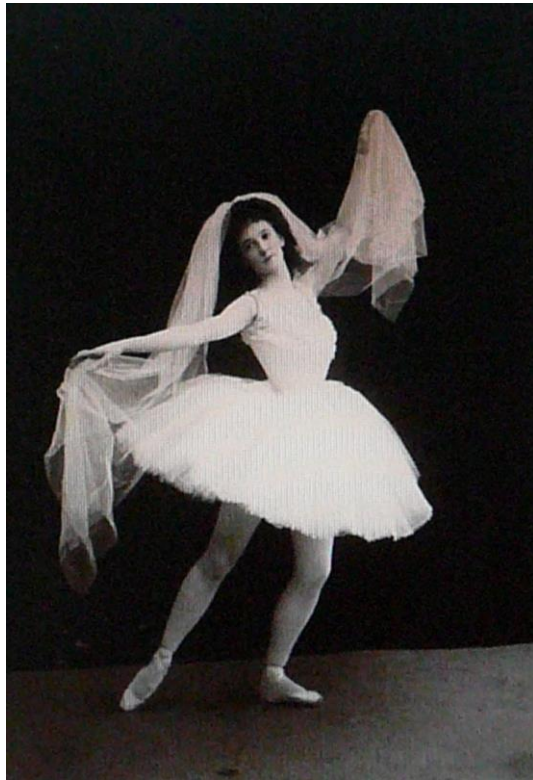


Variation 1 **Leta Biasucci**

The first variation is notated as performed by Vera Trefilova. It differs from modern productions in its repetition of combinations and in the final sequence, where the sequence of relevé arabesques is broken up with a passage of bourrées.

Variation 2 **Angelica Generosa**

The second variation is notated as performed by Varvara Rhyklyakova but is known in Russia as the “Vaganova variation” because it was later danced with success by Agrippina Vaganova. Of the four variations in this scene, this one has changed the least over time. (Photo: Varvara Rhyklyakova as a Shade.)



Variation 3 **Carli Samuelson**

The third variation is notated as performed by Anna Pavlova. Over time, the tempo of this variation has slowed greatly. We have restored both the choreography and tempo to what they were in 1900 using the choreographic notation with metronome markings from a manuscript piano score in the Harvard collection. (Photo: Anna Pavlova as a Shade.)



Variation 4 (Nikia) **Liora Neuville**

The first half of Nikia's variation is performed today as a pas de deux with Solor. The dancers are connected by each holding the end of a long tulle scarf. Originally, Nikia danced the variation alone, holding a scarf whose other end was attached to a mechanism which would fly it upward halfway through the variation. This is explained in writings by the first Nikia, Ekaterina Vazem, and also by Tamara Karsavina and Fedor Lopukhov. Solor was added to the dance sometime after 1941. Although not notated, we have revived this variation based on written descriptions, a 1940s film of Natalia Dudinskaya, and the modern version of the dance.

Coda (excerpts) **Ensemble**

The coda begins with the trio of solo Shades and corps de ballet. We will begin with the entrance of Nikia and Solor and continue to the end. That *La Bayadère* is in great part a Romantic ballet is no more clear than in this first passage, in which Solor chases the shade of Nikia, catching her in a lift only to lose her again. We have reconstructed Solor's coda based on the detailed written description by Lopukhov, which confirms that Solor's choreography is based on Nikia's steps danced just before him and to the same music. Nikia's final entrance in the coda is completely different from what is performed today. Likewise, the corps de ballet steps are totally different from modern versions, which retain the groundplan and spacing of the 1900 production but not the choreography.

Act IV: Pas d'action (excerpts: entrée, coda), **Finale & Apotheosis**

Nikia	Liora Neuville
Gamzatti	Lesley Rausch
Solor	Seth Orza
Cavalier	Kyle Davis
Bayadères	Leta Biasucci, Amanda Clark, Angelica Generosa, Carli Samuelson

Petipa worked on *La Bayadère* for six months. In the end, however, time was short and he needed to finish the choreography. He repeatedly clashed with the Ekaterina Vazem, the ballerina creating the role of Nikia, as she writes in her memoirs:

“...[M]y next new part was that of the bayadère Nikia in *La Bayadère*, produced by Petipa for my benefit performance at the beginning of 1877. Of all the ballets which I had the occasion to create, this was my favorite. I liked its beautiful, very theatrical scenario, its interesting, very lively dances in the most varied genres, and finally Minkus' music, which the composer managed especially well as regards melody and its coordination with the character of the scenes and dances.

I associate with *La Bayadère* the recollection of a clash with Petipa at rehearsal... We came to rehearsals for the last act. In it, Solor is celebrating his wedding to the Princess Gamzatti, but their union is disrupted by the shade of the bayadère, murdered at the bride's wish so that she could not prevent them from marrying. Nikia's intervention is expressed in the context of a *grand pas d'action* with Solor, Gamzatti, and soloists, among whom the bayadère's shade suddenly appears, though visible only to her bridegroom. I danced the 'shade,' and for my

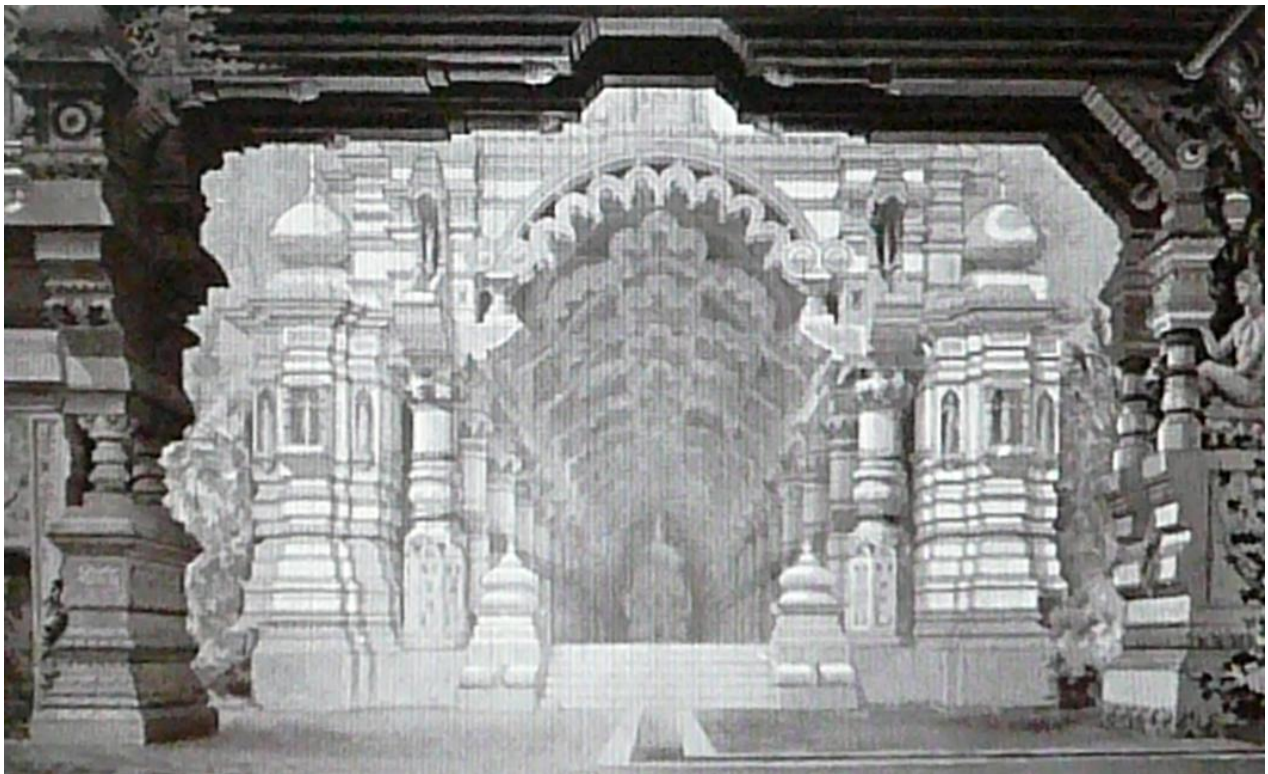
entrance Petipa ... produced something absurd, made up of delicate, busy little *pas*. Without a second thought, I rejected the choreography, which was 'not with the music,' nor did it match the general concept of the dance. For the entrance of the shade who is appearing amidst a wedding celebration, something more imposing was required than the minimally effective trifles which Petipa had thought up. Petipa was exasperated. In general, the last act was not going well for him, and he wanted to finish the production of *La Bayadère* that day no matter what. He produced something else for me in haste, still less successful. Again I calmly told him that I would not dance it. At this he lost his head completely in a fit of temper: 'I don' unnerstan what you need to danse? Yew can't danse one, yew can' danse other! What kin' of *talent* are yew if yew can' danse noseeng?' Without saying a word, I took my things and left rehearsal, which had to be cut short as a result.

"The next day, as if nothing had happened, I again took up with Petipa the matter of my entrance in the last act. It was clear that his creative imagination had quite run dry. Hurrying with the completion of the production, he announced to me: 'If yew can' danse sometheelg else, then do wha' Madame Gorshenkova does.' Gorshenkova, who danced the princess, was distinguished by her extraordinary lightness, and her entrée consisted of a series of high jumps—*jeté*—from the back of the stage to the footlights. By proposing that I dance her *pas*, the ballet master wanted to 'needle' me: I was an 'earthly' ballerina, a specialist in complex, virtuoso dances, and in general did not possess the ability to 'fly.' But I did not back down. 'Fine,' I answered, 'but for sake of variety, I will do the same *pas* not from the last, but from the first wing.' The latter was much more difficult because it was impossible to take advantage of the incline of the stage to increase the effect of the jumps. 'As yew weesh, as yew weesh,' Petipa answered, and began the rehearsal. I must add that at preparatory rehearsals I never danced, limiting myself to approximations of my *pas*, even without being dressed in ballet slippers. Such was now the case. During the *pas d'action*, I simply walked about the stage among the dancers.

"The day came with the first rehearsal with the orchestra in the theatre. Here, of course, I had to dance. The ballet master, as if wishing to relieve himself of any responsibility for his *pas d'action*, said to the artists over and over again: 'I don' know wha' Madame Vazem will danse, she never danse at rehearsal.'

The rehearsal ran its normal course. We finally came to the last act and the *pas d'action*. I stood in the first wing, waiting for my entrance. I was seething with righteous indignation—a voice within me spurred me on to great deeds. I wanted to teach this conceited Frenchman a lesson and demonstrate clearly, right before his eyes, what a *talent* I was. My entrance came. At the first sounds of the music which accompanies it, I strained every muscle—my nerves tripled my strength—and literally flew out on to the stage, vaulting past the heads of dancers who were kneeling there in groups. Crossing the stage in three jumps, I stopped, as if rooted to the ground. The entire company, on the stage and in the hall, broke out in a storm of applause. Petipa, who was on stage, immediately satisfied himself that his treatment of me was unjust. He came up to me and said, 'Madame, forgive, I—am a fool...'

“That day word circulated about Vazem’s ‘stunt.’ Everyone working in the theatres tried to get into the rehearsal of *La Bayadère* to see my jump. Of the performance itself, nothing needs be said. The reception given me by the public was magnificent. Besides the last act, we were all much applauded for the scene, ‘The Kingdom of the Shades,’ which Petipa in general handled very well. Here the grouping and dances were infused with poetry. The ballet master borrowed drawings of groupings from Gustave Doré’s illustrations of ‘Paradise’ from Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*. I had great success in the variation, accompanied by [Leopold] Auer’s violin solo, with the veil which flies upward at the end. The roster of principals in *La Bayadère* was in all respects successful ... all contributed much to the success of *La Bayadère*, as did the considerable efforts of the artists ... with Roller distinguishing himself as the machinist of the masterful destruction of the temple at the end of the ballet.”



Design for Act IV of *La Bayadère* by Ivan Andreyev, 1900.

In the late 1920s, the fourth act of *La Bayadère* was dropped. Choreography from this act was eventually incorporated into the second act of *La Bayadère* when the Kirov Ballet mounted a new production in 1941.

Our reconstruction includes two dances from Act IV—the entrée and coda of the “Pas d’action” (the adagio and variation for Solor and Gamzatti were not notated). We also include the finale music, which accompanies the earthquake and destruction of the temple--and the apotheosis, with the reuniting of Nikia and Solor.

The *pas d'action* (or “dance with action”) is choreographed for eight dancers: Gamzatti, Solor, Nikia, four bayadères (“from the good soloists,” as explained in the notation), and a cavalier dancing in place of Solor, who performed only the partnering and pantomime in this scene. In essence, there were two Solors and, in fact, they are sometimes on the stage together. In the coda, Solor partners Gamzatti while the nameless cavalier partners Nikia. The dance proceeds as a true *pas d'action*, combining danced passages with action and mime sequences. Interspersed between dances by the four bayadères, Gamzatti and Solor make their entrance as bride and groom. The shade of Nikia appears, visible only to Solor, and separates the couple, while Gamzatti, sensing something is amiss, becomes increasingly apprehensive. She attempts to distract Solor with her dancing and briefly succeeds, but the shade of Nikia persists and eventually Solor (actually, the anonymous cavalier) partners her. He is torn between duty and love.



Pavel Gerdt as Solor and Julia Sedova as Gamzatti, 1900.



Alexandra Baldina as a Bayadère in Act IV, 1900.

During the finale, the wedding proceeds. As the Great Brahmin joins the hands of Solor and Gamzatti, a thunderclap is followed by an earthquake and the temple collapses, covering everyone within. In the Apotheosis, we see through the rain the peaks of the Himalayas. The shade of Nikia glides through the air with her beloved Solor at her feet.



La Bayadère, Act IV, 1877: "Revenge of the Gods"