

The Wild Swans

A world premiere full length story ballet by Rodolphe Cassand

Story: Hans Christian Andersen

Music: Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Jean-Michel Jarre, Philippe Reverdy

Libretto: Hao Lueckhoff

Choreography: Rodolphe Cassand

<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/489725>

Synopsis

Act I

Once upon a time, there was a widowed king who had twelve daughters. The princesses were all beautiful and sweet, but Elise was the kindest and her father's most beloved.



One day, the king took a new wife who was actually a wicked witch. The queen was jealous of the king's affection for the princesses and made plans to estrange them.



First, the mean queen transformed all the princesses into wild swans. All, except Elise whose heart was so pure that the spell could not harm.



Second, the queen prepared a magical bath for Elise and ordered the toads to jump on the princess to turn her dumb, ugly, and mean.



Much to the queen's surprise, as soon as the toads touched Elise, they turned into beautiful red roses.



Frustrated that her plan failed, the queen tore Elise's dress, tangled her hair and dragged her in front of the king who, subjugated by the charm of his new love, chased his favorite daughter away.



Act II

Elise ran far away into the deep forest



where she met a lady carrying a basket of fruits. Asked if she had seen eleven princesses go by, the lady said all she saw was eleven wild swans with a crown on their head. She led Elise to a seashore where she found feathers lying around. Elise sat down and waited.



Just before sunset, a flock of swans landed on the shore.
As night fell, the swans transformed into princesses, Elise and her sisters rejoice the reunion.



So that they can carry Elise along with them, the princesses gathered grass and made a net.

At dawn, they changed into swans again, seized the net that held Elise and flew across the sea. Arriving to an island, they made a bed for her to sleep.



In her dream, fairy Morgana appeared to Elise, and instructed how to save her sisters from the spell: Elise had to gather nettles, thread them, then knit into eleven tunics, all the while staying silent.



~~The next day, Elise sat spinning the nettles and knitting the tunics. Suddenly she was surrounded by dogs, followed shortly by their master, the Prince.~~



Though Elise could not speak, the Prince fell in love with her and brought her to his palace.

Intermission:

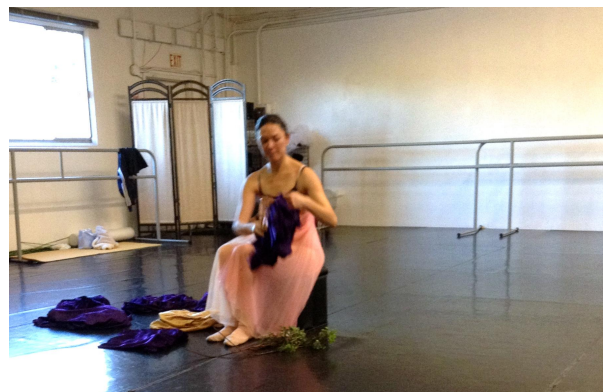


Act III

The Prince introduced Elise to his court. Everyone loved Elise, except the Minister.



Every night, Elise worked dutifully on the tunics. But as she began the seventh, there was no nettles left. The nettles she needed could only be found in the graveyard near the church. Fearfully, she stole away and walked through dark streets.

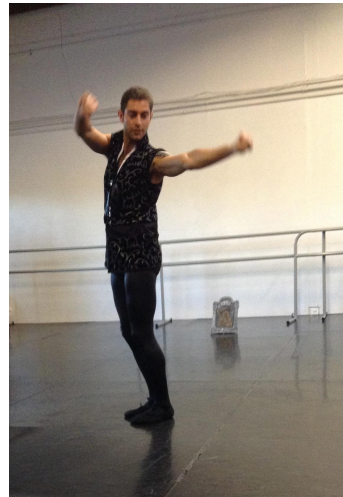


Intermission

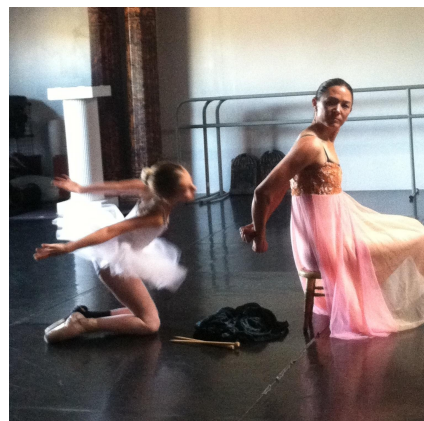
The minister had been following Elise to the graveyard at night full of zombies, but Elise focused on gathering the nettles.



The Minister thought Elise was a witch for not talking and for going at night to the graveyard and being surrounded by zombies. He had to tell the prince right away. The Prince was now convinced that Elise was a witch, and condemn her.



Elise was tied up in a dark cell with her tunics and nettles. Then she heard a flap of wings: the little swan had found her.



Elise rejoiced and worked harder on the tunics. The mice ran across the floor, gathering nettles to help her.



Blue birds sang to give her courage and helped her finish the last tunic.



By then, littlest swan had gathered her sisters around Elise, who threw the tunics over them.



Suddenly, eleven princesses appeared in their places.