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THE ROYAL BALLET
(formerly the Sadler's Wells Ballet)

THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, COVENT GARDEN LIMITED, WORKS IN FULL
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THE ROYAL BALLET
(formerly the Sadler's Wells Ballet)

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The 6th performance at the Royal Opera House by the Royal Ballet of

**SYLVIA**

**BALLET IN THREE ACTS**

based on Tschaikowsky's *Sylvia*

Music by Leo Delibes

Choreography by Frederick Ashton

Scenery and costumes by Robin and Christopher Jordu

Lighting by John Sullivan

**SYNOPSIS**

**ACT I**

A SACRED WOOD

Nymphs and Silvans are dancing in the moonlight. As the approach of the shepherd Aminta, they disperse. The intruder is left to muse in solitude. Over his idled passion for the leader of Diana’s hunters, the chase, Sylvia to whom, though he has seen her only once, his heart is irretrievably lost. The sound of a horn is heard in the distance. Aminta recognizes the music of Diana’s hunt and hides behind the shrine of Eros. Sylvia and her attendant nymphs appear. They dance in honour of the chase. In the arrogance of her virginity, Sylviacamels the image of Eros.

Meanwhile, Orion, the robber Khan, whose depredations are the scourge of a terrorized peasantry, has secretly been observing the scene. The beauty of Sylvia enflames his sensuous and he determines to possess her. The discovery of Aminta’s cloak, inadvertently discarded on the approach of Sylvia, betrays the jealousy of her lover. Incensed by the notion that a man should have presumed to spy upon her, Sylvia commands her attendants to bring forth the culprit. Presuming the tender nature of his conduct, she blames the machinations of Eros and seeking to avenge the affront, turns with drawn bow towards the statue of the god. Agamemnon at the Toronto sacrifice, Aminta shields the statue with his body. Sylvia’s arrow strikes him through the heart. Unmoved by this act of devotion, Sylvia admires the love god. As she does so, an arrow loosed by the god himself pierces her to the heart. Though trembling from the wound, she effects a disdainful indifference and gathering her companions vanishes into the wood.

Dawn breaks. Peasants, on their way to the fields, pause to make obeisances before the shrine. One of their number, a young shepherd, lingers behind. On the approach of Orion, he takes cover. The Khan advances towards the posterior Aminta and ghasts over the fate of his rival. Suspecting that Sylvia will return, he awaits her in hiding. Sylvia, transformed by the miraculous effects of the love god’s arrow, re-appears in
circumstances, guest of the lover to whose mortal plight she had lately been indifferent. Emerging from his hiding place, Orion seizes the unsuspecting nymph and carries her off to his grotto palace in the remote depths of the woods.

The young shepherd summoned his friends. They leave their flocks to weep with him over the body of Arissa. An old sorcerer appears mysteriously in their midst. They explain to him the cause of their grief. In reply, he points a axe a fork a northern fork and presents its petals to the lips of the inanimate Arissa. Gradually the lover recovers. His first thoughts are of Sylvia. Her torn mantle is found and the sorcerer tells of her abduction. Arissa turns in prayer towards the shrine. Castoff from his chariot the sorcerer reveals himself as the god and charges Arissa to set forth in search of Sylvia.

INTERVAL
Warning bells will be sounded five minutes and two minutes before the rise of the curtain

ACT II
Orion’s Grotto

Orion’s enchanting rapture Sylvia with luxurious, rampant and precious jewels. He cloaks his love but Sylvia repays him. He summons slaves to dance for her pleasure, and tempts her to refresh herself with rare wines and exotic foods.

She performs a Baccal faith, ostensibly for the delectation of her captive, but in reality as a ruse to postpone the arrival of more intimate envoys. While dancing she plans him with repeated drafts of wine. He soon forgets her in the dance and at last falls to the ground in a drunken stupor. His slaves, who have been following the libation example of the master, sink into inebriation from the same cause.

Though she is momentarily free to depart, Sylvia’s efforts to find a way out of the grotto are frustrated. In desperation, she invokes Eros. The god appears; at his bidding, the grotto vanishes and he becom Sylvia forth into the freedom of the woods.

INTERVAL
Warning bells will be sounded five minutes and two minutes before the rise of the curtain

ACT III
A Sea Coast near the Temple of Diana

A festival of Bacchus is due to take place. The revels are excalated by the participation of Eros. Apollo, the Muses and other Divinities. They dance, with groups of peacocks impersonating Sylvia and Sylvia, before the statue of the wise god. The disembodied Arissa, still in quest of Sylvia, appears upon the festivities. Suddenly a ship is sighted. On the prow stands Eros; Sylvia, veiled, and surrounded by her attendant nymphs, accompanies him. Arissa is irresistibly impelled towards the veiled stranger. Eros lifts the veil and the shepherd, in an ecstasy of relief, greets his beloved.

A divertissement ensues in which Apollo, the Muses and other deities celebrate the re-annexed Sylvia. The sacrificial goats destined for the altar of Bacchus join in the celebration. The serpent’s love is arrested by the arrival of the enrobed Sylvia. He beasses the loves. Arissa engages him in combat, while Sylvia takes refuge in Diana’s temple. The appearance of the goddess herself, surrounded by armed attendants and followed by her distinguished Sylvia, interrupts the fight. Orion in a last attempt to recapture his prey is struck by an arrow from Diana’s bow and falls back mortally wounded. Her wrath is now directed upon the loves. She returns to punish the impudence of their attachment. Eros, urged by her severity, causes the clouds to part revealing a vision of the enthroned goddess leaning over the prone Endymion on Mt. Lycia. Diana, mortified by this reminder of her own passion for a mere shepherd, is driven to relent. She pronounces her forgiveness and, in the midst of ceremonious rejoicing, accepts with Eros the grateful homage of the lovers.

CAST

ACT I

Sylvia ... Margaret Fonteyn
Arissa ... Michael Jokes
Orion ... John Hart
Eros ... Alexander Grant
Sylvans ... Ray Powell, Douglas Stewart, John Sale, Keith Molland, Graham Usher, William Wilson
Naiads ... Merle Park, Antoinette Shree, Dorothy Zayn
Doves ... Mavis Osborn, Judith Sinclair, Dorothy Wells
Attendant Nymphs ... Annette Page, Brenda Taylor, Valerie Taylor, Shirley Graham, Deborah Dixon, Catherine Boulton, Margaret Hill, Christine Beikley
Cymesthesia Rednic ... Margaret Wing, Ann Howard, Helen Zirkle, Derek Eastlake, Stella Farrance, Frederick Thorogood, Aubrey Henderson, Jacqueline Watcham, David Sheldon, Richard Farnley, David Drew, Ronald Planting, Christopher Newton, David Bonsell, Derek Reinche, Keith Ross

ACT II

Sylvia ... Margaret Fonteyn
Arissa ... Michael Jokes
Orion ... John Hart
Eros ... Alexander Grant
Sylvans ... Ray Powell, Douglas Stewart, John Sale, Keith Molland, Graham Usher, William Wilson
Naiads ... Merle Park, Antoinette Shree, Dorothy Zayn
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The March issue contains articles on Leoncavallo, the Scala, London, and Verdi’s “Terra” as well as reports and pictures of The Carmelites at Covent Garden, and The Merry Widow at Sadler’s Wells.

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