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**Tschaikovsky Pas de Deux**



Photo © Paul Kolnik

**Music** Excerpt from Swan Lake, Op. 20, Act III, (1877) by Peter Ilyitch Tschaikovsky  
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**Choreography** George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust

**Premiere** March 29, 1960, New York City Ballet, City Center of Music and Drama

**Original Cast** Violette Verdy, Conrad Ludlow

**Average Length** 9 min.

An eight-minute display of ballet bravura and technique, Tschaikovsky Pas de Deux uses music that the composer belatedly created for Act III of Swan Lake. It was hurriedly composed for Anna Sobeshchanskaya, a Bolshoi prima ballerina who was scheduled to make her debut in the title role at the fourth performance of the 1877 Moscow production, and sought to enrich the part of Odile. Because the music was not in the original score, it was not published with the rest of Swan Lake, and disappeared for more than half a century. When it was discovered in the Bolshoi Theater archives in 1953, Balanchine sought — and was granted — permission to use it for his own choreography. Peter Ilyitch Tschaikovsky (1840-1893) studied at the Conservatory in St. Petersburg, where Balanchine later studied piano in addition to his studies in dance. Tschaikovsky is one of the most popular and influential of all romantic composers. His work is expressive, melodic, grand in scale, with rich orchestrations. His output was prodigious and included chamber works, symphonies, concerti for various

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instruments, operas and works for the piano. His creations for the ballet, composed in close partnership with Marius Petipa, include Swan Lake, The Nutcracker and The Sleeping Beauty.

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