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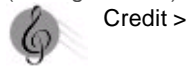
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Vienna Waltzes



Photo © Paul Kolnik

Music

Tales from the Vienna Woods, Op. 325 (1868), Voices of Spring, Op. 410 (1885), Explosions Polka, Op. 43 (1848) by Johann Strauss, Jr.; Gold and Silver Waltz (1905) by Franz Lehar; first sequence of waltzes from Der Rosenkavalier (arranged 1944) by Richard Strauss



Choreography

George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust

Premiere

June 23, 1977, New York City Ballet, New York State Theater

Original Cast

Karin von Aroldingen, Sean Lavery, Patricia McBride, Helgi Tomasson, Sara Leland, Bart Cook, Kay Mazzo, Peter Martins, Suzanne Farrell, Jorge Donn

Average Length

46 min.

The waltz became popular in the late 1700's. It was banned at first by some authorities who thought it immoral for couples to dance so closely, but by the mid-1800's, it was accepted everywhere. The faster Viennese form, characterized by swift, gliding turns, expressed the vivacity and brilliance of the Hapsburg court. The waltz was a dance form Balanchine revisited and explored often over his career, but never on as grand a scale as the 1977 Vienna Waltzes. Vienna Waltzes — Balanchine's homage to the pleasures and delights of an age that epitomized imperial grandeur — transforms from sylvan forest glen to sassy dance hall to glittering society cafe to, at last, a majestic mirrored ballroom through Rouben Ter-Arutunian's evolving scenery. The music selected for each section of the ballet is associated with the transformation of the waltz across society and over the years. The many elaborate costumes designed by Karinska are the

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— George Balanchine

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last she created for New York City Ballet. For most of this century, first in Paris, and after 1938, in New York, Karinska, who left Russia after the October Revolution, designed and created many legendary costumes for Broadway, ballet and opera. As one of Balanchine's long-time collaborators, she was for many years New York City Ballet's principal costume-maker. Johann Strauss Jr. (1825-1899), "The Waltz King," was the best known member of his famous family. The father, Johann Sr. and three brothers, Johann Jr., Joseph and Eduard, wrote music that captured the spirit of Vienna. Johann Jr., who wrote his first 36 bars of waltz music at the age of six, became a musician against his father's wishes. He composed operettas (Die Fledermaus, A Night in Venice) but of his nearly 500 compositions, the most popular are his concert waltzes that show his gift as a writer of melodies and his brilliance as an orchestrator. Franz Lehar (1870-1948) was born in Hungary and died in Austria. He was trained as a violinist and composed serious operas. He won great success with Die Lustig Witwe, or The Merry Widow, which premiered in 1905 and his melodies became popular throughout Vienna. Although Lehar composed the Gold and Silver Waltz in 1902 for the Princess Metternich-Sandor's "Guld-und-Silber" ball, the music is often interpolated into The Merry Widow. Richard Strauss (1864-1949) was a German composer and conductor best known for his tone poems and for operas composed to librettos by Austrian poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal. In Der Rosenkavalier (1911) they tried to recreate the lost aristocratic world of Vienna in the 1700's.
