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Mother Goose



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Music

Ma Mère L'Oye Suite (1908, orchestrated 1912) music and scenario by Maurice Ravel



Choreography

Jerome Robbins

Premiere

May 22, 1975, New York City Ballet , Ravel Festival, New York State Theater

Original Cast

Muriel Aasen, Delia Peters, Tracy Bennett, Deborah Koolish, Richard Hoskinson, Matthew Giordano, Colleen Neary, Jay Jolley, Daniel Duell

Ma Mère L'Oye was originally written in 1908 as a suite of five pieces for four-hand piano. It was later orchestrated and adapted into ballet form by adding a prelude, an opening scene, and four interludes connecting the numbers. Ravel's idea of "conjuring up the poetry of childhood" succeeded in producing the simple tenderness and wistful quality inherent in the haunting loveliness of the music. Exotic instrumentation and shifting modalities are impressionistic in character and a major element in creating the magical dream world of the ballet. The scenario of the action of the ballet, which Robbins uses, was written by Ravel himself. Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) was born in the French Basque town of Ciboure. His family moved to Paris and encouraged him to take piano lessons. At fourteen he was admitted to the Paris Conservatory, where he studied with Gabriel Fauré, who became his principal teacher of composition. His ballet scores include Pavane pour une Infante Défunte, Jeux D'eau, Boléro, Daphnis and Chloé, Ma Mère L'Oye, and L'enfant Et Les Sortilèges, a ballet-opera.

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— George Balanchine

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