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Mozartiana



Photo © Paul Kolnik

Music Suite No. 4, Mozartiana, Op. 61 (1887) by Peter Ilyitch Tschaikovsky



Choreography George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust

Premiere June 4, 1981, New York City Ballet, Tschaikovsky Festival, New York State Theater

Original Cast Suzanne Farrell, Ib Andersen, Christopher d'Amboise

Average Length 27 min.

Mozartiana, which opened the 1981 Tschaikovsky Festival, was Balanchine's third ballet set to the composer's homage to Mozart and is one of the last ballets the choreographer created before his death in April 1983. Its classical choreography opens with a "Preghiera" (Prayer), followed by a "Gigue," "Minuet," "Theme and Variations," and a "Finale". In the opening movement, the ballerina is accompanied by four young girls. They are followed by the male soloist, who dances a sprightly "Gigue." Four women from the corps enter and dance a stately "Minuet." The ballerina returns accompanied by the male principal for a classical pas de deux to a set of variations. They are joined by the entire cast for the finale. The ballet's formal black costumes by Rouben Ter-Arutunian combine with the music and choreography to form a sense of joyful reverence and spiritual wonder. 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 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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— George Balanchine

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