

Ballet don quixote

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Marius Petipa was born in Marseille, France in 1818 moved to St. Petersburg in 1847 from Italy and died in Gurzuf Ukraine in 1910. He worked for nearly 60 years at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg and had a profound influence on modern classical Russian ballet. He directed many of the greatest artists in Russian ballet and developed ballets that retain an important position in Russian dance repertoire.

After Marius Petipa's debut in Nantes, France, in 1838, he danced in Belgium, France, and the United States before accepting an engagement in Spain, where he gathered material for ballets later produced in Russia. He established a reputation as a talented pantomime artist and one of the outstanding dancers of his day. Petipa made his initial appearance at the St. Petersburg Mariinsky Theatre in 1847 in Paquita. For his wife, the ballerina Mariya Surovshchikova, he created *Le Marche des Paris* (1859; "Parisian Market"; staged as *Le Marche des innocents*, 1861).

His first outstanding success was *La fille du pharaon* (1862; "The Pharaoh's Daughter"). Later, after becoming choreographer in 1862 and chief choreographer in 1869, Petipa produced more than 60 ballets, working from carefully detailed plans that became the basis of modern classical ballet in Russia. He collaborated with Tchaikovsky on *The Nutcracker* (*Casse Noisette*, choreographed by his assistant Lev Ivanov) and *The Sleeping Beauty* and presented versions of *Swan Lake*, *Raymonda*, and *Giselle* that have been revived frequently.

Among other major ballets are his *Don Quixote* (1869), *La Bayadere* (1877), and *Le Corsaire* (1899). The composer who collaborated with Petipa in creating *Don Quixote* ballet was Aloisius Ludwig Minkus. His biographical <https://assignbuster.com/ballet-don-quixote/>

information is very diverse but the most commonly data on his origin states that he was born in Vienna in 1826. There are opinions that he was of Polish or Czech origin. His first compositions were light music for dancing. His first public presentation of ballet music was an en'acte included into a Moscow performance of Adam's Orfa.

In 1861 Minkus worked in the Bolshoi Theater, first as violin soloist, later he became a composer of the theatre and in 1864 he was became a ballet composer at the Bolshoi. His career in Bolshoi was interrupted by the trip to France and on returning to Russia the composer started creating ballet music for Petipa's works. In 1868 Petipa made Don Quixote ballet for the Bolshoi Theater, with music composed by Minkus in the same year. The ballet was a well-deserved success being first performed in 1869 in Bolshoi Theater in Moscow. It was fame for both Minkus and Petipa.

This was beginning of fruitful activity by Minkus, and in 1877 appeared one of his most successful compositions La Bayadere, Roxana or The Beauty from Montenegro in 1878 and many others. Though the ballet by Petipa on music by Minkus was not the first attempt to put the well known novel into music and dances Petipa's version of Don Quixote, is considered as the standard ballet version of Cervantes' story with the popular virtuoso pas de deux. The great deal of ballet success depends on the style of this ballet which is mostly determined by Minkus' music.

Minkus ballet music is filled with rhythm, vigour and energetic melody. Don Quixote music is often regarded as ordinary music which does not exceed the bounds of traditional accompaniment to the dance. In fact, Don Quixote score is devoid of rich colors typical of later ballet music, it does not explore

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moving lyricism like Swan's Lake by Tchaikovsky. We also cannot feel any symphonic depth or other features which are distinctive for the best ballet scores. However, this music is extraordinary dancing, with deep rich rhythm and thus it helps the dance to adopt the necessary emotionality and vividness.

Don Quixote music is dynamic and it is very important for the comedy performance, it explores hot temper, melody and cheerful passion the features so typical for Spanish melodies. Minkus' music is both the accompaniment and impulse to dance. Don Quixote is described as a “bol'shoi balet” in the Soviet catalogue of Petipa's works (Slonimsky 1971, 377-388). A translation of the French ballet a grand spectacle, the term is used to describe ballets that resemble nineteenth-century grand operas in their length, the complexity of their narratives, and tendency toward visual spectacle.

(Scholl 1994, 4-5) Because these works dominated the Petersburg stage from the 1860s through the 1890s, and because Russian ballet had no serious competitors in Europe by the 1870s, the Petipa “ grand ballet” has come to represent the ballet style of the late nineteenth century. Petipa, the founder of romantic dance in Russia, developed two versions of the ballet – one was created specially for Bolshoi Theater and the second one was created for Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg.

This second version contained such elements like “ white act” with its strict symmetry and the famous final virtuoso pas de deux. As Scholl observes, before the work was staged in St Petersburg, Peterburgskaya gazeta, the newspaper best representing local balletomane opinion, reported on the <https://assignbuster.com/ballet-don-quixote/>

Moscow production: Don Quixote was staged in Moscow in the decadent manner. As an example, several dances were staged so that on one side of the stage they danced one way, and on the other side, to the same music, other dances were performed. (1 September 1901), (57)

Petipa's main objections center around the primacy of dance in Don Quixote in which, scenery, and costumes were of secondary importance and respectively the music had to act only as accompaniment and incentive. Don Quixote is a successful combination of perfect and vivid dancing with emotional music. While being brisk and full of vigor the Minkus' music in no way dominates the dance itself. The dancers appear before the spectators in their full advantage. As it was already stated the music was best suited for the plot related to events with hot Spanish characters.

This music is distinguished by its gift to set any listener to feel like dancing. And that was, probably, why exactly Minkus' music was chosen for this ballet. Minkus adored waltz and his passion for that style determined the presence of gypsies, rajahs, Spanish bullfighters, Indian temple maidens dancing to a waltz rhythm in Don Quixote ballet. Though the ballet does not have clear development of the plot it attracts the spectators by its effervescent, masterly dances parade so prolific in the ballet.

The dance here serves as the natural expression of the action taking place on the stage. Don Quixote heroes are not simple performers of numerous dance issues; they live in their dance and express through it their thoughts and feelings. The spectator gladly forgives the bit parts prepared for Don Quixote and his faithful Sancho Panza and readily accepts cheerful Kitri and

her friend Basilio. These two young heroes are definitely more appropriate for such vivid and passionate music than old knight in heavy armour.

Petipa displays a remarkable command of mass on the stage and the form taken by his dancing shows considerable imagination. The choreography and staging Petipa devised for the ballet were similarly ostentatious. The ballet's ballabile featured 36 dancers with baskets of flowers on their heads containing children who suddenly appeared in the dance's final pose. Scholl sums up Petipa's choreography as "the culmination of the evolution of a particular type of theatrical dancing, designed to exploit the scenic potential of the proscenium stage.

The ballet's emphasis of the human body's maximal legibility evolved as the Renaissance perspective stage was developed". (8) As consequence, the perfect combination of Petipa's choreographic approach and Minkus' music developed into a sunny comedy with farcical elements. Petipa-Minkus ballet Don Quixote convinces the spectator that ballet is great art. Ballet can express thoughts, create harmony and an integral map of the world as any other artistic form of expression. Reference list: Koegler, Horst. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Ballet, 2nd ed.

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