

ATLANTA BALLET

GENNADI NEDVIGIN · ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

DON QUIXOTE

PROGRAM NOTES

Choreography by Yuri Possokhov
after the original choreography by Marius Petipa and Alexander Gorsky

Music by Ludwig Minkus

The story of *Don Quixote* written by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra has long inspired choreographers. On December 14, 1869, Marius Petipa staged the story ballet in Moscow, the first of many successful collaborations with Ludwig Minkus, the house composer for the Bolshoi Theatre. Petipa later revived *Don Quixote* on November 9, 1871, in St. Petersburg. The new, grander version added scenes and numerous classical ensembles, notably "Don Quixote's Dream." On December 19, 1900, Alexander Gorsky restaged the ballet in an attempt to return realism and dramatic liveliness to the storytelling. The subsequent merging of the Petipa structure with the dramatic Gorsky storytelling has become the foundation of all modern versions. In the version presented by Atlanta Ballet as part of the 2022|2023 Season, choreographer Yuri Possokhov elaborates upon the technical formality of the Petipa original with streamlined storytelling from the perspective of Don Quixote.

The humorous yet dramatic plot of the ballet opens with Don Quixote receiving a shave from the young village barber, Basilio, before retreating to his beloved books and drifting off into a fantasy world. He is awakened by the mischievous peasant, Sancho Panza, who has stolen a ham. The Don protects him and in exchange convinces Sancho Panza to be his squire. The two men along with a horse head off in search of adventure and romance.

In the village square, the men meet the innkeeper, Lorenzo, who wishes to wed his daughter, Quiteria "Kitri," to the rich fop, Gamache. However, Kitri only has eyes for Basilio and hopes to escape her arranged marriage. The deluded Don Quixote mistakes Kitri for Dulcinea, the woman of his dreams. Meanwhile, the toreador Espada dances with the other bullfighters and his girlfriend, Mercedes. Sancho Panza is badly teased by the townspeople, and, amid the chaos, Kitri and Basilio flee the village. Later, in the fields of La Mancha, the Don spots windmills, mistaking them for monsters and dragons. In his attempt to slay them, he is wounded. Later at home in his bed, he suffers from more delusions and imagines he is being led into a world of dryads (tree nymphs) and has a vision of Kitri as Dulcinea. Together, the nymphs and Kitri perform a beautiful, classical ensemble. Healed by this dream, the Don heads back into village society and unwittingly helps Basilio and Kitri override her father's plans. Finally, the wedding takes place, complete with a grand pas de deux performed by Kitri and Basilio.

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