



**ROYAL  
OPERA  
HOUSE**

**THE ROYAL BALLET**

Director  
**KEVIN O'HARE** CBE  
Founder  
**DAME NINETTE DE VALOIS** OM CH DBE  
Founder Choreographer  
**SIR FREDERICK ASHTON** OM CH CBE  
Founder Music Director  
**CONSTANT LAMBERT**  
Prima Ballerina Assoluta  
**DAME MARGOT FONTEYN** DBE

# GISELLE

RECORDED 2016

## BALLET IN TWO ACTS

Music

**ADOLPHE ADAM** revised by  
**JOSEPH HOROVITZ**

Choreographer

**MARIUS PETIPA** after **JEAN CORALLI**  
and **JULES PERROT**

Scenario

**THÉOPHILE GAUTIER** after **HEINRICH HEINE**

Production and additional choreography

**PETER WRIGHT**

Designer

**JOHN MACFARLANE**

Original lighting

**JENNIFER TIPTON** re-created by  
**DAVID FINN**

Staging

**CHRISTOPHER CARR**

Ballet mistress

**SAMANTHA RAINE**

Assistant ballet master

**RICARDO CERVERA**

Principal coaching

**ALEXANDER AGADZHANOV,**  
**LESLEY COLLIER, JONATHAN COPE,**  
**OLGA EVREINOFF, MONICA MASON**  
and **PETER WRIGHT**

Conductor **BARRY WORDSWORTH**

**ORCHESTRA OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE**

Concert Master **PETER MANNING**

Directed for the screen by

**ROSS MACGIBBON**

RECORDED LIVE AT THE  
ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL 2016



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

## APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

### ACT I

55 minutes

### ACT II

50 minutes

## CAST

Giselle

**MARIANELA NUÑEZ**

Albrecht

**VADIM MUNTAGIROV**

Hilarion, a forester

**BENNET GARTSIDE**

### ACT I

Wilfred, Albrecht's squire

**JOHANNES STEPANEK**

Berthe, Giselle's mother

**ELIZABETH MCGORIAN**

The Duke of Courland

**GARY AVIS**

Bathilde, his daughter

**CHRISTINA ARESTIS**

Leader of the hunt

**ERIC UNDERWOOD**

Pas de six

**YUHUI CHOE, ALEXANDER CAMPBELL,**  
**FRANCESCA HAYWARD, LUCA ACRI, YASMINE NAGHDI**  
and **MARCELINO SAMBÉ**

Peasants and courtiers

**ARTISTS OF THE ROYAL BALLET**

### ACT II

Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis

**ITZIAR MENDIZABAL**

Moyna, Myrtha's attendant

**OLIVIA COWLEY**

Zulme, Myrtha's attendant

**BEATRIZ STIX-BRUNELL**

Wilis

**ARTISTS OF THE ROYAL BALLET**

## SYNOPSIS

### ACT I

#### A Rhineland Village

Giselle, a peasant girl, has fallen in love with Count Albrecht, who has led her to believe that he is a villager named Loys. Her superstitious mother, Berthe, hoping that Giselle will marry the forester Hilarion, warns her against Loys, to whom she has taken an instinctive dislike. In order to discourage Giselle's love for Loys, Berthe further recounts the legend of the Wilis, ghosts of young girls who have been jilted and die before their wedding day. To avenge themselves, they dance to death any man who crosses their path between midnight and dawn. But Giselle disregards her mother and, with her beloved, joins in the celebrations that mark the end of the grape harvest, when she is crowned Queen of the Vintage.

Wilfred, Albrecht's squire, secretly warns him that a hunting party is approaching, led by the Duke of Courland and the Countess Bathilde (Albrecht's future bride), who are staying at Albrecht's castle for the betrothal ceremony. Albrecht hides, but Hilarion has witnessed this meeting and decides to break into Loys's cottage to discover the secret of his true identity. The hunting party arrives. Giselle dances for the nobles and, when she tells Bathilde that she too is engaged, the Countess gives her a necklace. Bathilde, tired from hunting, asks to rest in Berthe's cottage, but the Duke decides to continue the hunt and orders a hunting horn to be left by the cottage door so that he and the rest of the party can be recalled when Bathilde is ready to rejoin them.

Hilarion now appears from Loys's cottage. He has found Albrecht's sword and when he compares it with the hunting horn, he sees they bear the same crest; this gives him the evidence he has been looking for. Not realizing that the hunt is still nearby, Albrecht returns. Hilarion interrupts the dancing and reveals the truth: that Loys is really Albrecht. He sounds the horn, the hunting party returns and Bathilde, coming out of the cottage, claims Albrecht as her fiancé. The shock is too much for Giselle and she loses her reason. In her madness she relives her love for 'Loys' and, seizing his sword, she kills herself.

### ACT II

#### Giselle's grave in the forest

Hilarion keeps vigil by Giselle's grave, which lies deep in the forest in unconsecrated ground. It is midnight, the time when the Wilis materialize. Hilarion flees in terror when confronted by these apparitions. Myrtha, their queen, now arrives from the marshes and summons her Wilis. She draws Giselle from her grave to be initiated into their rites. The Wilis disperse as Albrecht approaches, searching for Giselle's grave. He lays flowers at the cross and when Giselle's spirit appears to him, he follows it into the forest.

Hilarion, pursued by the Wilis, returns and is forced into an endless dance.

Exhausted, he is driven into the lake, where he drowns.

The Wilis now seek out Albrecht and, when Myrtha commands him to dance, Giselle urges him to the safety of the cross; but he is powerless when Myrtha orders Giselle to entice him away by dancing with him. Giselle tries to sustain him, but as the night wears on he becomes weaker and weaker. Just as he is about to die, dawn breaks. Daylight destroys the Wilis' power and the ghostly dancers fade away. Giselle, whose love has transcended death, returns to her grave, her spirit freed from the power of the Wilis, leaving Albrecht sorrowing and alone.

**PETER WRIGHT**

## THE ROYAL BALLET

Director **KEVIN O'HARE**

Music Director **KOEN KESSELS**

Resident Choreographer **WAYNE MCGREGOR**

Artistic Associate **CHRISTOPHER WHELDON**

Administrative Director **HEATHER BAXTER**

Rehearsal Director **CHRISTOPHER SAUNDERS**

Clinical Director Ballet Healthcare **SHANE KELLY**

## ROYAL OPERA HOUSE RECOVERY CAMPAIGN

Live performance is a shared experience, and our audiences are at the heart of what we do on our stages, backstage, online, in cinemas and in our communities. This year's global pandemic has affected all arts organisations across the world. We have lost £3 in every £5 of our income, and any Government loan will take us only part of the way. We need your help to bring artists back to our stages.

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