MIAMI CITY BALLET

THE STORY OF

ALEXEI RATMANSKY'S

SWAN LAKE

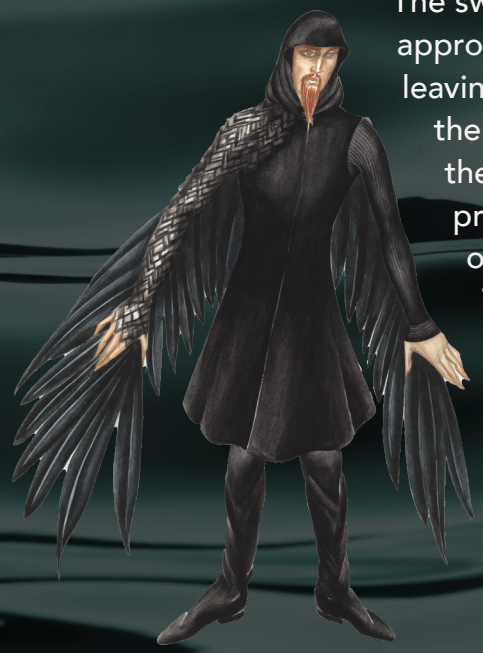
There is a reason *Swan Lake* has remained the world's most beloved classical ballet for more than a century. It is an epic fairytale told through unparalleled virtuosic choreography and Tchaikovsky's indelible score that has long surpassed the test of time. It tells the story of young Prince Siegfried who falls in love with Princess Odette. Odette is cast under evil sorcerer Baron von Rothbart's spell that transforms her and her companions into swans. Together, they spend their days swimming in a lake only to return to their human form at night. Only true love can break the spell, which Rothbart will do anything in his power to stop.

ACT I:

SCENE I: IN THE CASTLE GROUNDS

Prince Siegfried enters his coming-of-age celebration with his tutor Wolfgang. His best friend Benno, along with other guests, greets the young man, entertaining him with lively dances. Unfortunately, the Queen (Siegfried's mother) is none-to-happy with the merriment, reminding Siegfried that he must choose his future wife the next day. Naturally, the young Prince isn't so keen on the idea of his life as a bachelor ending, wanting rather to frivolously enjoy the festivities. Tipsy, he and his friends amble into the woods to hunt, with Benno pointing the way to the lake.

SCENE II: ON THE BANKS OF THE LAKE, UNDER A FULL MOON



The swans swim silently under the full moon. The men approach the lake seeking a hiding place to hunt the swans, leaving Siegfried alone. Odette suddenly appears before the prince in her human beauty, revealing that she and the others are the victims of an evil spell. Only the true love of a man who has never promised his heart to another can break the spell, adding that it is only after midnight that they're able to take on their human form. The prince promises to break the spell as the sorcerer, who has taken the form of an owl, spies on the blossoming lovers. Benno and the hunters return. They start to advance upon the maidens, but Siegfried stops them just in time. The maidens dance before Siegfried and the others before turning back into swans at dawn. Odette sternly warns Siegfried that Rothbart is a powerful sorcerer who will stop at nothing to keep them apart. Siegfried has fallen utterly in love, but Odette is distrustful of the young prince.

Costume sketch of Baron von Rothbart, the evil sorcerer, by Jérôme Kaplan for Alexei Ratmansky's *Swan Lake*. Choreography by Alexei Ratmansky. © Jérôme Kaplan
Costume sketch of Odile (Rothbart's daughter) by Jérôme Kaplan for Alexei Ratmansky's *Swan Lake*. Choreography by Alexei Ratmansky. © Jérôme Kaplan

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ACT II

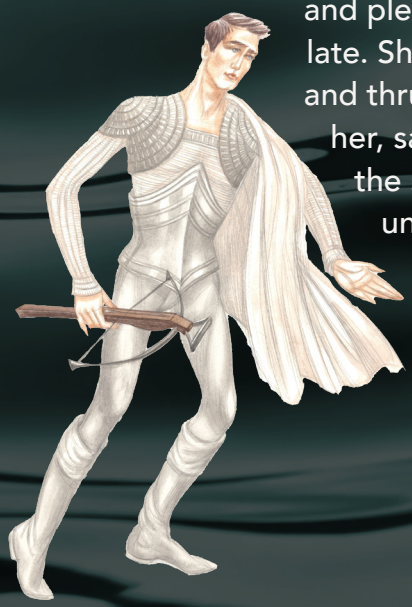
SCENE III: AT THE CASTLE, IN THE BALLROOM

Guests arrive from every country. Six gorgeous women vie for Siegfried's hand in marriage. Von Rothbart arrives with his beguiling daughter Odile, a mirror image of Odette. Guests perform festive dances from different countries: a Spanish dance, a Neapolitan tarantella, a Hungarian czardas, and a Polish mazurka. Siegfried only has eyes for Odile who seduces him with her enchanting beauty and dance. So enchanted by her beauty he asks Odile to marry him on the spot. Just then, Odette appears but it is too late, Siegfried has given his word to another.

ACT III

Scene IV: On the banks of the lake

It is midnight and the maidens are waiting for the queen to return. Jilted, Odette tells them that Siegfried has broken his promise to be faithful. The prince enters, wrought with heartache; he searches for his true love. He finds her and explains that the evil sorcerer tricked him and pleads for forgiveness. But it is too late. She is fated to remain a swan forever and thrusts herself into the lake. He follows her, sacrificing his life. His sacrifice breaks the spell, and the doomed lovers are united for eternity in death.



THE END

Costume sketch of Prince Siegfried, Act II by Jérôme Kaplan for Alexei Ratmansky's *Swan Lake*. Choreography by Alexei Ratmansky. © Jérôme Kaplan.
Costume sketch of Pas Espanol by Jérôme Kaplan for Alexei Ratmansky's *Swan Lake.* Choreography by Alexei Ratmansky. © Jérôme Kaplan
Costume sketch of Odile (Rothbart's daughter) by Jérôme Kaplan for Alexei Ratmansky's *Swan Lake*. Choreography by Alexei Ratmansky. © Jérôme Kaplan