**IN CURRENT REPERTORY** **TIMING:** 27:00

## BIRTHDAY OFFERING

**Choreography by** Frederick Ashton

**Music by** Alexander Glazunov
(*Concert Waltz #1, Op. 7* and *The Seasons*)

**Arranged by** Robert Irving

**Costumes by** André Levasseur

**Lighting by** Steven Shelley

**Staged by** Helen Crawford

Sir Frederick Ashton created *Birthday Offering* to celebrate the 25th anniversary of The Royal Ballet and as a tribute to its founder, Dame Ninette de Valois. The ballet is also Frederick Ashton's acknowledgement of the classical style of Marius Petipa which had so influenced his work and which is the basis of The Royal Ballet's own classical schooling.

The work was created around the seven ballerinas of the company led, at that time, by Margot Fonteyn. Ashton devised seven solos for them which were tailored to the individual qualities of each dancer. For their seven male partners, he created a mazurka that demands considerable technical virtuosity.

The ballet was first performed by The Royal Ballet, then called The Sadler's Wells Ballet, on May 5, 1956, danced by Margot Fonteyn, Beryl Grey, Violetta Elvin, Nadia Nerina, Svetlana Beriosova, Rowena Jackson, Elaine Fifield, Michael Somes, Alexander Grant, Brian Shaw, Philip Chatfield, David Blair, Desmond Doyle, and Bryan Ashbridge in the principal roles. It demonstrated the tremendous technical strength that the company had built up in its first 25 years. Today, Ashton's solo variations still remain as a fierce technical challenge to all the dancers, while revealing the choreographer's mastery of the classical style in his own inventive manner.

(more)

*Birthday Offering* was given its American Ballet Theatre Company Premiere on October 25, 1989, at the Jesse H. Jones Hall in Houston, Texas, danced by Susan Jaffe, Cheryl Yeager, Amanda McKerrow, Julie Kent, Leslie Browne, Alessandra Ferri, Christine Dunham, Ross Stretton, John Gardner, Guillaume Graffin, Ethan Brown, Loren Schmalle, Wes Chapman, and Jeremy Collins.

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2026/2027