

IN CURRENT REPERTORY

TIMING: 52:00

THE DREAM

Ballet in One Act

Adapted from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare

Choreography by Frederick Ashton

Staging by Susan Jones

Music by Felix Mendelssohn

Sets and costumes by David Walker

Lighting by John B. Read

The King and Queen of Fairyland, Oberon and Titania, are quarreling over the changeling boy. Oberon sends his sprite Puck through the forest to fetch a strange flower, the juice of which when dropped in the eyes during sleep brings love for the first living thing seen on waking. Oberon plans to use this to spite Titania. Into the forest have strayed a happy pair of lovers, Lysander and Hermia, and their two unhappy friends Helena and Demetrius. Helena's love for Demetrius is, at present, unrequited, for he mistakenly desires Hermia. Oberon has watched these mortals and when Puck returns with the magic flower sends him with some to charm Demetrius into love with Helena.

Oberon, meanwhile, drops some of the charm into his queen's eyes and causes her to be awakened by a rustic called Bottom on whom the returning Puck, to heighten his master's revenge, has fixed an ass's head. On waking, Titania falls in love, but Puck, for all his cleverness, has complicated the affairs of the mortal lovers by charming the wrong man, Lysander, into love with Helena. Oberon commands Puck to create a fog, under cover of which all is put right. Titania, released from her spell, is reconciled to her master, and the mortal lovers are happily paired off. Bottom, restored to human form, but with dream-like memories of what lately happened, goes on his puzzled way.

“I will get Peter Quince to write a ballet of this dream. It shall be called Bottom's Dream.”

(more)

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The Dream received its World Premiere by The Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London on April 2, 1964, danced by Antoinette Sibley (Titania), Anthony Dowell (Oberon), Keith Martin (Puck), Alexander Grant (Bottom), Carole Needham (Helena), Vergie Derman (Hermia), David Drew (Demetrius), Derek Rencher (Lysander), and Alan Bauch (Changeling Indian Boy).

The Dream received its United States premiere by The Royal Ballet at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York on April 30, 1965, danced by the same cast, except for Rennie Dilena (Changeling Indian Boy).

The Dream was given its American Ballet Theatre Company Premiere at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York on May 24, 2002, danced by Alessandra Ferri (Titania), Ethan Stiefel (Oberon), and Herman Cornejo (Puck).

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