

BOSTON BALLET

MIKKO NISSINEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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BOSTON BALLET PRESENTS LA SYLPHIDE AUGUST BOURNONVILLE'S ROMANTIC BALLET PAIRED WITH RARELY-PERFORMED BOURNONVILLE DIVERTISSEMENTS

April 25, 2018 (BOSTON, MA) – Boston Ballet's 2017–2018 season concludes with *La Sylphide*, a program showcasing Danish choreographer August Bournonville's romantic and tragic tale of *La Sylphide* and *Bournonville Divertissements*, a series of excerpts from his classic works. This program runs May 24–June 10, 2018, at the Boston Opera House.

"*La Sylphide* is considered by many the epitome of Romantic ballet—with its timeless tale, storytelling through mime, and ethereal dancing. Paired with rarely-performed *Bournonville Divertissements*, this program is an excellent showcase of the Bournonville style of dancing," said Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen.

La Sylphide

La Sylphide is Bournonville's most famous ballet. Set in the Scottish Highlands, *La Sylphide* tells the fantastical tale of James, a man on his wedding day, who falls under the spell of a beautiful and ethereal woodland sylph. Tricked into accepting the help of Madge, an evil sorceress, he tries desperately to possess his newfound desire. This ballet showcases challenging, bravura solos for male dancers and light, buoyant jumps executed by the sylphs. The original production premiered in France in 1832 with choreography by Filippo Taglioni, but it is Bournonville's 1836 revision with music by Herman Løvenskiold that has been performed in perpetuity.

This production includes additional choreography by Sorella Englund, who coached Boston Ballet dancers. Throughout her career as a ballerina with the Royal Danish Ballet in the 1970s, Englund performed major roles in several of Bournonville's ballets—Madge from *La Sylphide* is one of her signature roles. Following her dance career, she has staged Bournonville works for several major companies. According to Alastair Macaulay of *The New York Times*, "Sorella Englund... has become the foremost interpreter of that choreographer's mime roles today."

Boston Ballet premiered Bournonville's *La Sylphide* in 1988. It was performed again in 2005 and 2007 with additional choreography by Englund. Boston Ballet toured this production in Spain during the summer of 2007. Of the 2005 performance, Karen Campbell wrote in *The Boston Globe*, "Boston Ballet's gorgeous...production of *La Sylphide* [is] deliciously sweet...the ballet's only disappointment is that it leaves you wanting more."

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Bournonville Divertissements

La Sylphide is paired with *Bournonville Divertissements*, a series of rarely-performed excerpts from Bournonville's extensive repertoire including the Jockey Dance from his last ballet *From Siberia to Moscow*, the pas de deux from *Flower Festival in Genzano*, and the pas de six and tarantella from *Napoli*.

Bournonville created *Flower Festival in Genzano* in 1858. While the full-length production hasn't been performed since 1929, the pas de deux has survived and demonstrates Bournonville's characteristic fleet-footed choreography.

Napoli was inspired by Bournonville's travels to Italy. While it depicts the romance between a fisherman and a village girl, the ballet is truly Bournonville's love letter to Naples. *Napoli* is the Bournonville style at its truest—the portrayal of everyday life, a happy ending, and virtuosic dancing.

August Bournonville (1805–1879) was a dancer and choreographer who directed the Royal Danish Ballet for nearly 50 years and established the Danish style based on bravura dancing and expressive mime. He choreographed more than 50 ballets during his lifetime, most notably *La Sylphide*, *Napoli*, and *Flower Festival in Genzano*.

Related Events

Fairy Wings Mural on The Greenway: May 6–June 10

Acclaimed street artist Kelsey Montague will create a new mural inspired by Boston Ballet and *La Sylphide* on the Rose Kennedy Greenway across from the Carousel. She will finish the piece on May 6, and it will be displayed through the run of *La Sylphide* performances. Montague's murals invite participation, blending the human experience with the art work. Visitors are encouraged to snap pictures of themselves in front of the fairy wings and share on social media tagging @BostonBallet and using the hashtags #BBSylphide and #WhatLiftsYou.

Build a Fairy House Village on The Greenway: May 12 at 11–3 pm (Rain date: May 19)

Hosted by the Rose Kennedy Greenway and Boston Ballet, individuals are invited to build a village of fairy houses near the Greenway Carousel and place their house on the nearby lawn. Natural materials will be provided.

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All performances of La Sylphide will take place at the Boston Opera House (539 Washington St, Boston, MA 02111):

Thursday, May 24, 2018 at 7:30 pm
Friday, May 25, 2018 at 7:30 pm*
Saturday, May 26, 2018 at 1:30 pm
Friday, Jun 1, 2018 at 7:30 pm
Saturday, Jun 2, 2018 at 7:30 pm

Sunday, Jun 3, 2018 at 1:30 pm
Thursday, Jun 7, 2018 at 7:30 pm
Saturday, Jun 9, 2018 at 7:30 pm
Sunday, Jun 10, 2018 at 1:30 pm

**Indicates post-show talk*

Tickets start at \$35. For more information, visit bostonballet.org or call 617.695.6955.

La Sylphide performance length is approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes including 2 intermissions.

Conducted by Beatrice Jona Affron

Bournonville Divertissements

Choreography: August Bournonville

Lighting Design: John Cuff

Pas de deux from *Flower Festival in Genzano*

Music: Edvard Helsted

Jockey Dance from *From Siberia to Moscow*

Music: C.C. Møller

Pas de six and Tarantella from *Napoli*

Music: Holger Simon Paulli

Original Costume Design: Jens Jacob Worsaae

La Sylphide

Music: Herman Severin Løvenskiold

Choreography: Sorella Englund after August Bournonville

Costume and Scenic Design: Peter Cazelet

Lighting Design: John Cuff

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About Boston Ballet

Since 1963, Boston Ballet's internationally acclaimed performances of classical, neo-classical, and contemporary ballets, combined with a dedication to world-class dance education and community initiative programs, have made the institution a leader in its field, with a 54-year history of promoting excellence and access to dance.

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and Executive Director Meredith Max Hodges, the Company maintains a diverse repertoire, ranging from full-length ballets to new works by some of today's finest choreographers. Boston Ballet's second company, Boston Ballet II, is comprised of dancers who gain experience by performing with the Company and independently, presenting special programs to audiences throughout the Northeast.

Boston Ballet School, the official school of Boston Ballet, has a long-standing dedication to providing exceptional dance education and ballet training to students across three studios in Boston, Newton, and the North Shore. Led by Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and Director Margaret Tracey, the School reaches more than 5,000 students (toddler to adult) each year through its four core programs: Children's Program, Classical Ballet Program, Adult Dance Program, and Pre-Professional Program.

Boston Ballet's Department of Education and Community Initiatives (ECI) provides programming, events, and activities that connect the community to dance. ECI reaches more than 4,000 individuals in Boston, North Shore, and the surrounding communities each year through Citydance, ECI on Location, Adaptive Dance, and other community programs.

For more information, please visit bostonballet.org.

Boston Ballet gratefully acknowledges the following institutional partners:

Boston Cultural Council
The Boston Foundation
Klarman Family Foundation
Massachusetts Cultural Council
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