

ATLANTA BALLET

PAST AND PRESENT



Atlanta Ballet performs Marius Petipa & Lev Ivanov's *Swan Lake*. Photo by Gene Schiavone.

Atlanta Ballet was founded over nine decades ago by dance visionary Dorothy Moses Alexander (1904-1986). Miss Dorothy had a dream of bringing quality ballet to the Atlanta community. The result was the Dorothy Alexander Dance Concert Group – the first step in the regional ballet movement that swept the nation. In 1946, the Company, now named Atlanta Civic Ballet, became the first dance company in the nation to help fund a symphony. The season's annual proceeds were donated to the Atlanta Youth Symphony, which would later become Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

In 1958, Miss Dorothy invited Robert Barnett, a soloist with the acclaimed New York City Ballet and a protégé of George Balanchine, to join the Company as a principal dancer. Upon her retirement in 1963, Barnett was named artistic director and introduced many Balanchine masterworks into the repertoire, including *The Nutcracker*. For more than 30 years, Mr. Barnett expanded Miss Dorothy's dream of excellence.



La Sylphide. Atlanta Ballet dancer Emily Carrico. Photo by Rachel Neville.

John McFall became Atlanta Ballet's third artistic director in 1994. Mr. McFall's imagination and innovative vision have brought contemporary modern dance premieres, numerous new full-length ballets, and several world premiere productions to Atlanta. His pioneering spirit inspired collaborations with Big Boi of OutKast, Indigo Girls, The Red Clay Ramblers, the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church Choir, and the Michael O'Neal Singers.

Upon John McFall's retirement in 2016, Gennadi Nedvigin was named Atlanta Ballet's fourth artistic director in the Company's 90-year history. Mr. Nedvigin joined Atlanta Ballet after an illustrious dance career that included his training at the famed Bolshoi Ballet Academy and 19 seasons as a principal dancer with San Francisco Ballet. As artistic director, he presents a varied repertoire that reintroduces some of the finest classical and neoclassical works in existence, while also bringing in new works from the most sensational and sought-after choreographers in the world. He uses his vast experience to nurture the Company, helping the dancers achieve the highest level of artistry, and elevate the national and international profile of Atlanta Ballet.

Atlanta Ballet is the oldest ballet company in America, the largest self-supported arts organization in Georgia, and the official Ballet of Georgia.

Atlanta Ballet's eclectic repertoire spans the history of ballet, highlighted by the most beloved classics and the most inventive originals. Although a renowned leader in the promotion and education of dance, Atlanta Ballet's roots have been firmly grounded in the community and playing a vital role in the city's cultural growth and revitalization.

ATLANTA BALLET 2



Photo by Kim Kenney.

Atlanta Ballet 2 represents the highest level of the Atlanta Ballet Centre for Dance Education and aligns with Artistic Director Gennadi Nedvigin's vision for Atlanta Ballet. The mission of Atlanta Ballet 2 is to provide top-tier students with opportunities to develop technically with intense training and artistically through extensive performance experience. By serving the Atlanta community with balanced, quality performances and nurturing the next generation of young dancers, Atlanta Ballet 2 will support the growth of Atlanta Ballet's professional company and the overall organization.

MEET THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR GENNADI NEDVIGIN

Gennadi Nedvigin was born in Rostov, Russia and began his training at age 5. At 10, Nedvigin was accepted into Bolshoi Ballet Academy, one of the most prestigious schools in the ballet world. Upon graduating, he joined his first professional company, Moscow Renaissance Ballet, as a soloist before he was invited to dance with Le Jeune Ballet de France in Paris. In 1997, while on tour in the United States, San Francisco Ballet Artistic Director Helgi Tomasson offered Gennadi a soloist contract. Later that year, Nedvigin joined San Francisco Ballet. After three years with the company, he was promoted to principal dancer. During his career in San Francisco, Nedvigin was a winner of the International Competition's Erik Bruhn Prize (1999) and has received three Isadora Duncan Dance awards (2001, 2010, and 2017).

Over the years, he has shared his knowledge and training with other dancers by teaching master classes at numerous ballet schools in the United States. Nedvigin has been a guest artist with several internationally-acclaimed companies and has appeared in many gala performances, tours, and festivals worldwide. While at San Francisco Ballet, he served as ballet master for several works by Yuri Possokhov, including *Classical Symphony* and *Swimmer*, as well as excerpts from *Bells*, *Diving Into the Lilacs*, and *Carmen*. In February 2016, Nedvigin became the fourth artistic director in Atlanta Ballet's 90-year history.



Photo by Charlie McCullers.

Gennadi Nedvigin

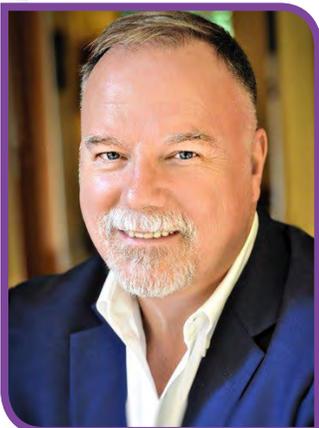
Gennadi Nedvigin
attended the Bolshoi Ballet Academy, one of the most prestigious schools in the ballet world.

MEET THE CHOREOGRAPHER BRUCE WELLS

Bruce Wells is an internationally-acclaimed choreographer who began his career with George Balanchine's New York City Ballet. Following this, he was the resident choreographer for Connecticut Ballet, Boston Ballet, and Pittsburgh Ballet Theater. In addition, Mr. Wells' ballets appear in the repertoires of The Australian Ballet, Dance Theater of Harlem, Atlanta Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Ballet Chicago, Milwaukee Ballet, Nashville Ballet, Nevada Dance Theater, and, most recently, Kansas City Ballet. Mr.

Wells has taught for the schools of

Boston Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theater, City Ballet School of San Francisco, The Vancouver Ballet Society in British Columbia, Jacob's Pillow, Kansas City Ballet, and Pacific Northwest Ballet.



Bruce Wells



Naomi-Jane Clark and Atlanta Ballet in *Swan Lake*. Photo by Charlie McCullers.

The Swan Princess

SYNOPSIS



Swan Lake: Photo by Charlie McCullers

Act One

Long ago, in a far off land by a beautiful lake, there lived an evil magician named Count Von Rothbart. As night fell each evening he put a spell on the young princesses who wandered by the lake, turning them into swans.

Also living by the lake there was a young prince named Siegfried. It is his 21st birthday. As his friends celebrate, his mother, the Queen arrives with six princesses. The Queen suggests he pick one of the princesses to marry. Soon he finds himself attracted to the princess, Odette. As the party ends, all depart except Prince Siegfried and Princess Odette who share a moment before Prince Siegfried is summoned to go hunting with his court men.

Now, alone by the lake, Princess Odette reflects upon her meeting with Siegfried. Her presence is observed by the evil Von Rothbart who captures her and turns her into a swan.

Not long after, Prince Siegfried returns with his hunting party. Princess Odette, in swan form, arrives and begs him not to shoot. Enchanted, the prince is captivated by the Swan Princess.

Next, the evil Von Rothbart appears and makes clear the rules of the curse. "Only a marriage contract made in the face of death can break the spell," he declared.

Act Two

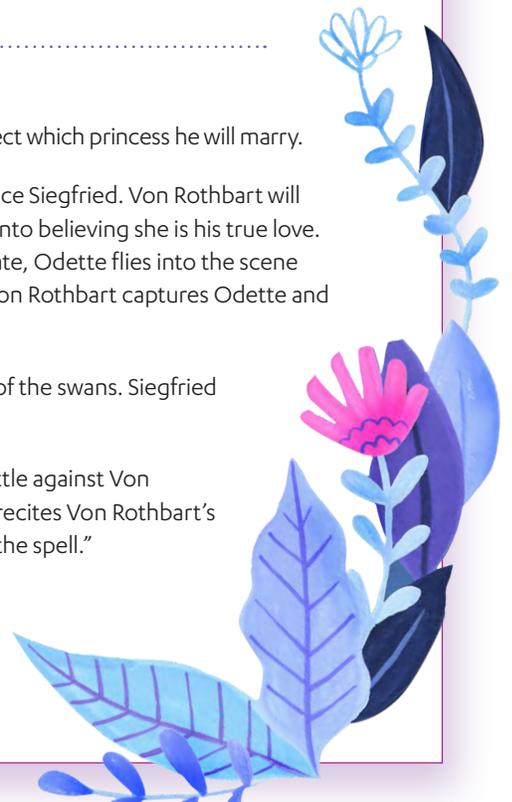
Now, it is the evening of Prince Siegfried's 21st birthday, and time for him to select which princess he will marry.

Trumpets announce the arrival of Von Rothbart, whose plan is to deceive Prince Siegfried. Von Rothbart will present Odette's evil twin sister, Odile, as the Princess Odette, and trick him into believing she is his true love. Unknowingly, Siegfried pledges his love for Odile. Immediately, but still too late, Odette flies into the scene revealing Odile's true identity and confirming Siegfried has been deceived. Von Rothbart captures Odette and flees the scene leaving Siegfried devastated.

Odette, heartbroken at Siegfried's apparent desertion, rushes into the arms of the swans. Siegfried pursues her and begs for her forgiveness.

Next, all of Prince Siegfried's court men arrive and unite with the swans to battle against Von Rothbart. At the end of the battle as Von Rothbart weakens, Prince Siegfried recites Von Rothbart's curse back to him, "only a marriage vow made in the face of death can break the spell."

As Von Rothbart dies, Siegfried pledges his love to Odette and the curse is broken allowing Odette and the swans to transition back into their human form, where they are united with their princes for all eternity.



ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



Artistic Director **Gennadi Nedvigin**

Dean of the Centre for Dance Education: **Sharon Story**

Composer **Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

Conceived & choreographed by **Bruce Wells**

Lighting Design by **Joseph R. Walls**

Costume Design by the **Atlanta Ballet Costume Shop**

Performed by **Atlanta Ballet 2 & Centre for
Dance Education Academy Students**

Centre Faculty: **Serena Chu & Abigail Tan-Gamino**



A BRIEF HISTORY OF BALLET

Ballet as we know it today began during the Renaissance around the year 1500 in Italy. In fact, the terms “ballet” and “ball,” as in a masked ball, come from the Italian “ballare,” “to dance.” When Catherine de Medici of Italy married King Henry II of France, she introduced early dance styles into court life in France.

At first, the dancers wore masks, layers upon layers of brocaded costuming, pantaloons, large headdresses, and ornaments. Such restrictive clothing was sumptuous to look at but difficult to move in. Dance steps were composed of small hops, slides, curtsies, promenades, and gentle turns. Dancing shoes had small heels and resembled formal dress shoes rather than any contemporary ballet shoe we might recognize today.

The official terminology and vocabulary of ballet was gradually codified in French over the next 100 years, and, during the reign of Louis XIV, the king himself performed many of the popular dances of the time. Professional dancers were hired to perform at court functions after King Louis and fellow noblemen had stopped dancing.

A whole family of instruments evolved during this time as well. The court dances grew in size, opulence, and grandeur to the point where performances were presented on elevated platforms so that a greater audience could watch the increasingly pyrotechnic and elaborate spectacles. Jump ahead 200 years and take a look at the proscenium stage at the War Memorial Opera House (San Francisco) – the elevation of the stage and dramatic height of the curtained opening reminds us of this development firsthand.

From Italian roots, ballets in France and Russia developed their own stylistic character. By 1850 Russia had become a leading creative center of the dance world, and as ballet continued to evolve, certain new looks and theatrical illusions caught on and became quite fashionable. Dancing en pointe (on toe) became popular during the early part of the nineteenth century, with women often performing in white, bell-like skirts that ended at the calf (romantic tutus).

Pointe dancing was reserved for women only, and this exclusive taste for female dancers and characters inspired a certain type of recognizable romantic heroine – a sylph-like fairy whose pristine goodness and purity inevitably triumphs over evil or injustice.

In the early twentieth century, the Russian theater producer Serge Diaghilev brought together some of Russia’s most talented dancers, choreographers, composers, singers, and designers to form a group called the Ballet Russes. Ballets Russes toured Europe and America, presenting a wide variety of ballets. Here in America, ballet grew in popularity during the 1930s when several of Diaghilev’s dancers left his company to work and settle in the U.S. Of these, George Balanchine is one of the best-known artists who firmly established ballet in America by founding the New York City Ballet. Another key figure was Adolph Bolm, the first director of San Francisco Ballet School.

For more information, see My Ballet Book by Kate Castle.



George Balanchine’s *Tschaikovsky Pas de Deux*.
Atlanta Ballet Dancers Ivan Tarakanov & Jessica He.
Photo by Kim Kenney.

WHO'S WHO IN THE BALLET

OFF STAGE

Stage Manager:

In charge of all that happens backstage in performances and rehearsals.

Technical Director:

Coordinates the lighting, sets, costumes and all backstage crew members.

Wardrobe Mistress/Master:

Assists with the costumes and tells the performers how to wear them and take care of them.

Wigs & Make-Up Designer:

Designs and supervises all the hairstyles, wigs and make-up.

Artistic Director:

Head of the ballet, makes all the final and creative decisions.

Ballet Master/Mistress:

In charge of all company rehearsals and classes, including staging, setting and coaching the dancers.

Balletomane:

Ballet fan or enthusiast.

Choreographer:

Creates all movement/dance for the ballet.

Composer:

Writes the music score for the ballet.

Costume Designer:

Designs the costumes and supervises their construction.

Crew:

Assists in construction, installation and changes of the set, costumes, lights and props.

Dresser:

Helps dancers put on their costumes correctly.

Lighting Designer:

Plans the design, colors and frequency of light changes on stage.

Properties Manager:

Designs and supervises all objects that are not a part of the set or costumes.

Set Designer:

Designs the set and scenery and supervises set construction.

ON STAGE

Cast:

All performers on stage.

Ballerina:

Female dancer.

Dancers:

Performers who dance or move to tell the story.

Premier Danseur:

Male dancer.

Soloists:

All dancers who perform dances by themselves.



Atlanta Ballet. Photo by Charlie McCullers.



Atlanta Ballet. Photo by Kim Kenney.