



*The
Ultimate
Ballet Album*

The most beautiful music
from the world's greatest ballets
Swan Lake, Coppélia,
Giselle, The Nutcracker
& Sylvia

CD 1

Swan Lake Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)

1	Scene	2:36
2	Waltz	5:48
3	Dance of the Swans: Allegro	1:29
4	Dance of the Swans: Andante	6:42
5	Dance of the Swans: Tempo de Valse	1:31
6	Couples Dance	3:57
7	Hungarian Dance (Czardas)	3:04
8	Spanish Dance	:10
9	Neopolitan Dance	2:11
10	Finale	5:14

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, Michael Halász (conductor)

Spartacus Amram Khachaturian (1903 – 1978)

11	Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia	8:36
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St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra, Andre Anichanov (conductor)

Coppélia Leo Delibes (1836 – 1891)

12	Prelude	4:26
13	Waltz	2:23
14	Mazurka	4:13
15	Ballad	:40
16	Theme and Variations	7:11
17	Hungarian Dance (Czardas)	3:46

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, Andrew Mogrelia (conductor)

Masquerade Amram Khachaturian (1903 – 1978)

18	Waltz	4:16
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St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra, Andre Anichanov (conductor)

CD 2**The Nutcracker** Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)

1	Overture	3:23
2	March	2:23
3	Dance of the Fairy	1:47
4	Russian Dance	1:11
5	Arabian Dance	2:55
6	Chinese Dance	:13
7	Dance of the Mirlitons	2:23
8	Waltz of the Flowers	6:51

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, Michael Halász (conductor)

Sylvia Leo Delibes (1836 – 1891)

9	Prelude: The Huntress	5:02
10	Intermezzo and Slow Waltz	3:39
11	Pizzicato	1:45
12	Cortège of Bachus	5:57

Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, Ondrej Lenárd (conductor)

13	Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)	10:31
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BRT Philharmonic Orchestra, Alexander Rahbari (conductor)

Giselle Adolphe Adam (1803 – 1856)

14	Marcato	1:45
15	Allegro	1:29
16	Gallop	1:03
17	Waltz	2:06
18	Alla Loure	1:15
19	Andante	1:18
20	Andantino non troppo	1:30
21	Allegro non troppo	1:11
22	Intermezzo	3:00
23	(Transition)	0:17
24	Andante	2:05

CSR Symphony Orchestra, Ondrej Lenárd (conductor)

The Ultimate Ballet Album

The word 'ballet' is French; it was adopted by the English sometime in the seventeenth century. It was during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the genre really started to develop into the art form that we recognise on the stage today.

A fusion of dance, music, drama, sets and lighting, ballet is one of the ultimate arts.

Following are the stories of some of the world's greatest ballets, so the listener may enjoy more fully the collection presented here.

Swan Lake

Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* is based on an old German fairy-story, printed in the collection by Johann Karl August Musaeus at the height of Romantic interest in such tales. Princess Odette has been changed into a white swan by the wicked magician Rotbart. Prince Siegfried meets Odette in human form by the lake and swears to marry her, but Rotbart attempts to frustrate this planned breaking of his spell by substituting his own daughter Odile, in the form of a black swan, for Odette. Rotbart is nearly successful in his malicious design, but is defeated in the end by the power of love: Siegfried and Odette are united (although in some versions of the ballet they united not in life but in death, in a storm conjured up by Rotbart).

The ballet opens with a celebration of Siegfried's coming of age, a time at which he should choose a bride. The appearance of a flight of swans have suggested the idea of a swan-hunt, on which the Prince and his friends set out. In the second act Siegfried, separated from his companions, meets Odette, who explains to him her sad fate, incurring the immediate wrath of Rotbart. Siegfried invites her to a ball at the castle, the scene of the third act. There Siegfried is to choose a bride and is deceived by the appearance of Rotbart and his daughter Odile, in the guise of Odette. He pledges his faith to Odile, a clap of thunder is heard, and Rotbart and Odile disappear in triumph while Siegfried falls senseless to the ground. In the final act, by the lake, Odette reproaches Siegfried and warns him of her coming death, but Siegfried defies Rotbart and the lovers are united.

The present recording includes the famous music for the swans, bewitched by Rotbart, dances from the Ball at the Palace of Siegfried in Act III (with Hungarian, Spanish and Neapolitan diversions), and the final scene.

Spartacus

The ballet *Spartacus*, the score of which was completed by Khachaturian in 1954, deals with the slave rebellion led by the hero Spartacus against Roman domination. The historical Spartacus himself was Thracian by birth, a shepherd who became a robber. He was taken prisoner and sold to a trainer of gladiators in Capua, but in 73 BC he escaped, with other prisoners, and led a rebellion during the course of which he defeated the Roman armies and caused

devastation throughout Italy. He was eventually defeated by Crassus, a general well known for his wealth, and put to death by crucifixion, together with his followers.

The beautiful *Adagio* comes from the end of the Second Act of the ballet, when Spartacus and his wife Phrygia celebrate their escape.

Coppélia

Coppélia, ou La Fille aux yeux d'émail ('Coppélia, or 'The Girl with Enamel Eyes') by Delibes was based on a story by the German Romantic writer and composer E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Der Sandmann* – a tale that also served Offenbach in the first act of *The Tales of Hoffmann*. In the original version Nathanael is subject to brooding melancholy, intensely aware of a sense of evil. As a child he had been terrified of the Sandman, who brings sleep to children and whom he had identified with a late-night visitor to his father's house, the lawyer Coppelius. He finds out that his father and Coppelius conduct chemical experiments, in the course of one of which his father is killed. In later life he is troubled by the barometer-seller Coppola, whom he identifies with Coppelius. From him he buys a telescope and sees the daughter of Professor Spalanzini, the beautiful Olympia, whom he later discovers to be a clockwork puppet. Nathanael has been in love with Clara, to whom he now returns, but in madness tries to kill her, while the voice of Coppelius lures him to his own death. The form of the story used by Charles Nuitter and Arthur Saint-Léon is more frivolous. The hero Franz is no haunted figure, while Coppelius seems a relatively harmless character, in spite of his strange delusion.

Masquerade

Masquerade's hero, Evgeny Arbenin, is bored with the world, despising the decadent society of St Petersburg in which he moves, moody and suspicious. In a plot that follows the story of *Orhello*, Arbenin is jealous of his wife, Nina; she is innocent but he poisons her. The play is bitter in its criticism of contemporary society and was banned for some thirty years. Its appeal to more recent audiences is clear enough. Khachaturian's music for *Masquerade*, like Tchaikovsky's for some of the scenes in his opera based on Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, gives a glittering picture of social life, a contrast to the reality beneath.

The Nutcracker

The story of *The Nutcracker* is drawn from Alexandre Dumas père's version of E.T.A. Hoffmann's tale, *Der Nussknacker und der Mausekönig* ('The Nutcracker and the Mouse King'). Set in the eighteenth century, the ballet opens with a party on Christmas Eve at the Stahlbaums' house. Drosselmeyer, a slightly sinister adult, brings presents: toy soldiers for Franz, and a nutcracker in the shape of a soldier for Clara. Franz promptly seizes Clara's nutcracker and, in trying to find out how tough it is, breaks it.

At night Clara creeps down to see her broken Nutcracker, and is alarmed at the open warfare that breaks out between the Mouse-king, with his army, and the toy soldiers by the Christmas tree. With a well-aimed shoe, Clara routs the enemy, and is invited by the Nutcracker, now transformed into a handsome prince, to visit the Kingdom of Sweets – an opportunity for welcome by the Snow-king and Snow-queen and a series of character dances, including the famous 'Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy', with its then novel use of the celesta, and dances celebrating Spanish chocolate, Arabian coffee, China tea, the Russian trepak, and the old woman who lived in a shoe.

Included on the present recording are the Overture, the March of the children, as they play, and some of the dances of the divertissement from Act II, where we meet the Sugar Plum Fairy, and encounter the entertainment offered to Clara and her Prince by the Snow-king and Snow-queen.

Sylvia

Sylvia was written in 1876 by Léo Delibes. The shepherd Aminta loves Sylvia, a nymph of Diana and therefore vowed to chastity. He is rejected by her, as is the Black Hunter, Orion. Eros intervenes on behalf of Aminta, and Diana is induced to forgive her disloyal votary Sylvia and to bless the wedding of the lovers.

Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun

The famous *Prelude à l'après-midi d'un faune* was completed in 1894. It was later to achieve unwarranted notoriety in the overtly erotic mime of the dancer Nijinsky, when the score was used by Diaghilev for a ballet in 1912. Debussy was unhappy with this treatment of his work. The inspiration for what was essentially revolutionary music came from a poem by Mallarmé, with its subtly sensuous suggestions of a pagan world. In the form of an eclogue, the poem is in the words of a Faun – half-goat, half-man, in the mould of the pagan god Pan. He is stirred by the sight of passing nymphs, as he lies resting from the heat of midday in a wooded glade. The music opens with the sound of the Faun's reed-pipe, represented by the flute. The score makes imaginative use of woodwind, two harps and strings, and the percussion is confined to delicate antique cymbals, used with sparing yet telling effect.

Giselle

Giselle, the seventh of ballet by Adolphe Adam, was first staged at the Paris Opéra in 1841 and is based on a story recounted by Heine. The country-girl Giselle falls in love with Count Albrecht, of whose identity and earlier betrothal to a noblewoman she is unaware. When she learns the truth, she goes mad and dies. In the second act Albrecht comes to worship at the tomb of Giselle, in the forest; but at midnight, Queen Myrtha appears with the Wilis – ghosts of girls who loved dancing but died before their wedding day. Albrecht's companion, Hilarion, is driven to his death, but the Count himself is saved by the ghost of Giselle. She dances with him until dawn breaks, when the Wilis must return to their graves.

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CD 1

- 1 – 10 **Swan Lake** Tchaikovsky
- 11 **Adagio** from **Spartacus** Khachaturian
- 12 – 17 **Coppélia** Delibes
- 18 **Waltz** from **Masquerade** Khachaturian

CD1 playing time **72 minutes**

CD 2

- 1 – 8 **The Nutcracker** Tchaikovsky
- 9 – 12 **Sylvia** Delibes
- 13 **Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun** Debussy
- 14 – 24 **Giselle** Adam

CD2 playing time **66 minutes**

Total playing time 2 hours and 18 minutes



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