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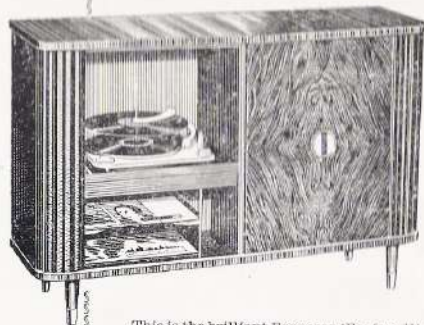
SYLVIA

THURSDAY, 27th FEBRUARY, 1958

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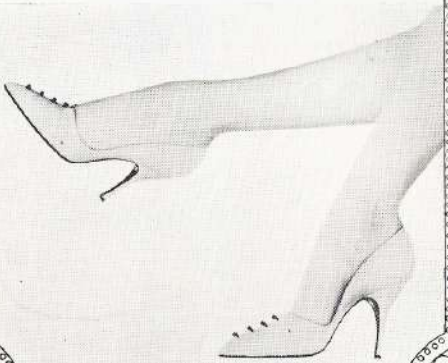
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Thursday, 27th February, 1958

The 64th performance at the Royal Opera House by
the Royal Ballet of

SYLVIA

BALLET IN THREE ACTS

based on *Tasso's Aminta*

Music by Leo Delibes

Choreography by Frederick Ashton

Scenery and costumes by Robin and Christopher Ironside

Lighting by John Sullivan

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

A SACRED WOOD

Nymphs and Sylvans are dancing in the moonlight. At the approach of the shepherd Aminta, they disperse. The intruder is left to muse in solitude over his illicit passion for the leader of Diana's huntresses, the chaste Sylvia to whom, though he has seen her only once, his heart is irretrievably lost. The sound of a horn is heard in the distance. Aminta recognizes the music of Diana's hunt and hides behind the shrine of Eros. Sylvia and her attendant nymphs appear. They dance in honour of the chase. In the arrogance of her virginity, Sylvia taunts the image of Eros.

Meanwhile, Orion, the robber Khan, whose depredations are the scourge of a terrorized peasantry, has secretly been observing the scene. The beauty of Sylvia enflames his senses and he determines to possess her. The discovery of Aminta's cloak, inadvertently discarded on the approach of Sylvia, betrays the presence of her lover. Incensed by the notion that a man should have presumed to spy upon her, Sylvia commands her attendants to bring forth the culprit. Perceiving the tender motive of his conduct, she blames the machinations of Eros and seeking to avenge the affront, turns with drawn bow towards the statue of the god. Aghast at the intended sacrilege, Aminta shields the statue with his body. Sylvia's arrow strikes him through the heart. Unmoved by this act of devotion, Sylvia anathematizes the love god. As she does so, an arrow loosed by the god himself pierces her to the heart. Though trembling from the wound, she effects a disdainful indifference and gathering her companions vanishes into the wood.

Dawn breaks. Peasants, on their way to the fields, pause to make obeisance before the shrine. One of their number, a young shepherd, lingers behind. On the approach of Orion, he takes cover. The Khan advances towards the prostrate Aminta and gloats over the fate of his rival. Suspecting that Sylvia will return, he awaits her in hiding. Sylvia, transformed by the miraculous effects of the love god's arrow, re-appears in

compassionate quest of the lover to whose mortal plight she had lately been indifferent. Emerging from his hiding place, Orion seizes the unsuspecting nymph and carries her off to his grotto palace in the remote depths of the forest.

The young shepherd summons his friends. They leave their furrows to weep with him over the body of Aminta. An old sorcerer appears mysteriously in their midst. They explain to him the cause of their grief; in reply, he plucks a rose from a nearby bush and presses its petals to the lips of the inanimate Aminta. Gradually the lover revives. His first thoughts are of Sylvia. Her torn mantle is found and the sorcerer tells of her abduction. Aminta turns in prayer towards the shrine. Casting off his cloak the sorcerer reveals himself as the god and charges Aminta to set forth in search of Sylvia.

INTERVAL

Warning bells will be sounded five minutes and two minutes before the rise of the curtain

ACT II

ORION'S GROTTO

Orion's concubines entice Sylvia with luxurious raiment and precious jewels. He declares his love but Sylvia repulses him. He summons slaves to dance for her pleasure, and tempts her to refresh herself with rare wines and exotic foods.

She performs a Bacchic dance, ostensibly for the delectation of her captor, but in reality as a ruse to postpone the odium of more intimate endearments. While dancing she plies him with repeated drafts of wine. He vainly pursues her in the dance and at last falls to the ground in a drunken stupor. His slaves, who have been following the bibulous example of the r master, sink into insensibility from the same cause.

Though she is momentarily free to depart, Sylvia's efforts to find a way out of the grotto are fruitless. In desperation, she invokes Eros. The god appears; at his bidding, the grotto vanishes and he beckons Sylvia forth into the freedom of the woods.

INTERVAL

Warning bells will be sounded five minutes and two minutes before the rise of the curtain

ACT III

A SEA COAST NEAR THE TEMPLE OF DIANA

A festival of Bacchus is due to take place. The revels are exalted by the participation of Ceres, Apollo, the Muses and other Divinities. They dance, with groups of peasants impersonating Spring and Summer, before the statue of the wine god. The disconsolate Aminta, still in quest of Sylvia, intrudes upon the festivities. Suddenly a ship is sighted. On the

prows stands Eros; Sylvia, veiled, and surrounded by her attendant nymphs, accompanies him. Aminta is irresistibly impelled towards the veiled stranger. Eros lifts the veil and the shepherd, in an ecstasy of relief, greets his beloved.

A divertissement ensues in which Apollo, the Muses and other deities celebrate the rescue of Sylvia. The sacrificial goats destined for the altar of Bacchus join in the celebration. The entertainment is arrested by the arrival of the enraged Orion. He menaces the lovers. Aminta engages him in combat, while Sylvia takes refuge in Diana's temple. The appearance of the goddess herself, surrounded by armed attendants and followed by the distracted Sylvia, interrupts the fight. Orion in a last attempt to re-capture his prey, is struck by an arrow from Diana's bow and reels back mortally wounded. Her wrath is now deflected upon the lovers. She refuses to pardon the profanity of their attachment. Eros, angered by her severity, causes the clouds to part revealing a vision of the infatuated goddess leaning over the prone Endymion on Mt. Latmos. Diana, mortified by this reminder of her own passion for a simple shepherd, is driven to relent. She pronounces her forgiveness and, in the midst of ceremonious rejoicing, accepts with Eros the grateful homage of the lovers.

CAST

ACT I

Sylvia	..	..	..	MARGOT FONTEYN
Aminta	..	..	..	MICHAEL SOMES
Orion	..	..	..	JOHN HART
Eros	..	..	..	ALEXANDER GRANT
Sylvans	..			RAY POWELL, DOUGLAS STEUART, JOHN SALE, KEITH MILLAND, GRAHAM USHER, WILLIAM WILSON
Naiads	..	MERLE PARK,	ANTOINETTE SIBLEY,	DOROTHEA ZAYMES
Dryads	..	MAVIS OSBORN,	JUDITH SINCLAIR,	DOREEN WELLS
Attendant Nymphs	..	..	ANNETTE PAGE,	BRENDA TAYLOR, VALERIE TAYLOR, SHIRLEY GRAHAME, DEIRDRE DIXON, CATHERINE BOULTON, MARGARET HILL, CHRISTINE BECKLEY
Cortege Rustique		MARGARET WING,	ANN HOWARD,	HYLDA ZINKIN, DOREEN EASTLAKE, STELLA FARRANCE, PATRICIA THOROGOOD, AUDREY HENDERSON, JACQUELINE WATCHAM, DAVID SHIELDS, RICHARD FARLEY, DAVID DREW, RONALD PLAISTED, CHRISTOPHER NEWTON, DAVID BOSWELL, DEREK RENCHER, KEITH ROSSON

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Orchestra Manager	MORRIS SMITH
Librarian	R. TEMPLE SAVAGE
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Stage Manager	WILLIAM BUNDY
Assistant Stage Manager	DENNIS MAUNDER

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Notice. In response to general request the doors will be closed at the beginning of each performance. Late-comers will not be permitted to go to their seats until the interval.

Refreshments are served before the performance and during the intervals in the main Crash Bar on the Grand Tier level, Pit Lobby, Amphitheatre, and in the Gallery Bar.

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The Management reserve the right to refuse admission, also make any alteration in the cast which may be rendered necessary by illness or other unavoidable causes.

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OPERA

The February issue of this well-known magazine, is devoted to the important subject of training for opera, and includes contributions from Thomas Armstrong, Sir Ernest Bullock, Edric Cundell, Joan Cross, Norman Tucker and David Webster. There is also an appreciation of the late Beniamino Gigli by Philip Hope-Wallace.

The March issue contains articles on Leoneavallo, the Scala School, and *William Tell*; as well as reports and pictures of *The Carmelites* at Covent Garden, and *The Merry Widow* at Sadler's Wells.

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