

THE
NATIONAL
Ballet
OF CANADA

Karen Kain
Artistic Director

Ballet Notes

Giselle

May 27 – 31, 2009

Chan Hon Goh as Giselle.
Photo by David Cooper.



THE
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Artistic Director

2008/09 Souvenir Book

On Sale Now in the Lobby

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by Canadian photographer
Sian Richards



First Soloist Stephanie Hutchison.
Photo by Sian Richards.

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THE
NATIONAL
Ballet
OF CANADA

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Artistic Director

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Robert Stephen, Brett van Sickle, Nan Wang, Joseph Welbes,
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YOU dance

Gillian Lewis
Assistant Stage Manager

*Guest Artist-in-Residence
*On maternity leave

Orchestra

Violins

• Fujiko Imajishi,
Concertmaster
Lynn Kuo,
Acting Concertmaster
Dominique Laplante,
Principal Second Violin
James Aylesworth,
Acting Assistant
Concertmaster
Jennie Baccante
Sheldon Grabke
Xiao Grabke
Nancy Kershaw
Sonia Klimasko-Leheniuk
• Csaba Koczó
Yakov Lerner
Jayne Maddison
Ron Mah
Aya Miyagawa
Wendy Rogers
Filip Tomov
Joanna Zabrowarna
Paul Zevenhuizen

Violas

Angela Rudden, Principal
Theresa Rudolph Koczó,
Assistant Principal
Valerie Kuinka
Johann Lotter
Beverley Spotton
Larry Toman

Cellos

Maurizio Baccante,
Principal
Olga Lakhtonova
Andrew McIntosh
Marianne Pack
Elaine Thompson
Paul Widner

Basses

Hans J.F. Preuss, Principal
• Paul Langley
Robert Speer
Cary Takagaki

Flutes

Leslie J. Allt, Principal
Maria Pelletier
Shelley Brown, Piccolo

Oboes

Mark Rogers, Principal
Karen Rotenberg
Lesley Young,
English Horn

Clarinets

• Max Christie, Principal
Emily Marlow,
Acting Principal
Gary Kidd, Bass Clarinet

Bassoons

Stephen Mosher, Principal
Jerry Robinson
Elizabeth Gowen,
Contra Bassoon

Horns

Gary Pattison, Principal
Vincent Barbee
Derek Conrod
• Scott Wevers

Trumpets

Richard Sandals, Principal
Mark Dharmaratnam
Raymond Tizzard

Trombones

David Archer, Principal
Robert Ferguson
David Pell,
Bass Trombone

Tuba

Sasha Johnson

Harp

Lucie Parent, Principal

Timpany

Michael Perry, Principal

Percussion

Robert Comber, Principal
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Lucie Parent

Extra Players

Anne Armstrong, *Violin*
Sonia Vizante, *Violin*
Thomas Hazliit, *Bass*
Colleen Cook, *Clarinet*
Jessie Brooks, *Horn*

• On Leave of Absence



The 2008/09 season is presented by:  **THE GLOBE AND MAIL** 

Wednesday May 27 at 7:30 pm

Thursday May 28 at 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm

Friday May 29 at 7:30 pm

Saturday May 30 at 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm

Sunday May 31 at 2:00 pm

Giselle

Choreography and Production: **Peter Wright** after the choreography of Jean Coralli, Jules Perrot and Marius Petipa (Based on the book by Vernoy de Saint-Georges, Gautier and Coralli)

Music: **Adolphe Adam**, revised by Joseph Horowitz

Set and Costume Design: **Desmond Heeley**

Lighting Design: **Gil Wechsler**

Conductors: **David Briskin**, Music Director and Principal Conductor

(May 27, 28 eve, 29, 30 mat, 31)

Judith Yan, Assistant Conductor (May 28 mat, 30 eve)

Giselle was produced as a memorial to the late William P. Walker and was made possible through the courtesy of many generous friends of the National Ballet.

In order of appearance.

Act I

Albrecht, Count of Silesia, disguised as Loys, a Villager

Zdenek Konvalina (May 27, 31)

Aleksandar Antonijevic (May 28 mat, 30 eve)

Guillaume Côté (May 28 eve, 30 mat)

Ruben Martin⁺ (May 29)

Wilfred, his squire

Jonathan Renna (May 27, 30 mat, 31)

Avinoam Silverman (May 28 mat, 30 eve)

James Leja (May 28 eve, 29)

Berthe, Giselle's mother

Victoria Bertram (May 27, 28 mat, 30 eve, 31)

Lorna Geddes (May 28 eve, 29, 30 mat)

Hilarion, a forester

Piotr Stanczyk (May 27, 31)

Etienne Lavigne* (May 28 mat, 30 eve)

Jonathan Renna* (May 28 eve)

Kevin D. Bowles (May 29, 30 mat)

Giselle, a peasant girl

Chan Hon Goh (May 27, 31 mat)

Bridgett Zehr (May 28 mat, 30 eve)

Xiao Nan Yu (May 28 eve, 30 mat)

Sonia Rodriguez (May 29)

Giselle's friends

Jillian Vanstone, Stacey Shiori Minagawa, Keiichi Hirano, Etienne Lavigne (May 27, 31)
Marissa Parzei, Tina Pereira, Richard Landry, Christopher Stalzer (May 28 mat)
Elena Lobsanova, Chelsy Meiss, Naoya Ebe, Patrick Lavoie (May 28 eve)
Jenna Savella, Tina Pereira, Richard Landry, Brett van Sickle (May 29)
Elena Lobsanova, Alexandra Golden, Naoya Ebe, Brett van Sickle (May 30 mat)
Jenna Savella, Chelsy Meiss, James Shee, Patrick Lavoie (May 30 eve)

Bathilde, Albrecht's fiancée

Alejandra Perez-Gomez (May 27, 29, 30 mat)
Sarah Wolff (May 28 mat, 30 eve)
Stephanie Hutchison (May 28 eve, 31)

Albrecht's father, Duke of Silesia

Tomas Schramek (May 27, 28 eve, 30 mat, 31)
Hazaros Surmeyan (May 28 mat, 29, 30 eve)

A Nobleman

Aarik Wells (May 27, 28 eve, 31)
Noah Long (May 28 mat, 30 eve)
Joseph Welbes (May 29, 30 mat)

Villagers, Pages and Courtiers

Artists of the Ballet

Intermission

Act II

Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis

Heather Ogden (May 27, 28 eve, 29)
Stephanie Hutchison (May 28 mat, 30 eve)
Juri Hiraoka (May 30 mat)
Xiao Nan Yu (May 31)

Her Attendants, Moyna and Zulme

Stacey Shiori Minagawa, Jillian Vanstone (May 27, 29, 31)
Elena Lobsanova, Alejandra Perez-Gomez (May 28 mat, 30 eve)
Tina Pereira, Jenna Savella (May 28 eve, 30 mat)

Wilis

Artists of the Ballet

+ The appearance of Guest Artist Ruben Martin was made possible by a generous donation from the Frank Gerstein Charitable Foundation.

* Debut

All casting is subject to change.

Giselles



Chan Hon Goh



Bridgett Zehr



Xiao Nan Yu



Sonia Rodriguez

Albrechts



Zdenek Konvalina



Aleksandar Antonijevic



Guillaume Côté



Ruben Martin +

+ Guest Artist

Photos by David Allen, Sian Richards
and Bruce Zinger.

A note on the ballet

Giselle was originally created during the great Romantic era of ballet and premiered at the Paris Opera on June 28, 1841. The original scenario was conceived by Vernoy de Saint-Georges, a prolific librettist of the period, and Théophile Gautier, a noted critic and poet. The choreography was attributed to Jean Coralli, though dances for the lead role of Giselle have since been accredited to Jules Perrot.

The National Ballet of Canada has had *Giselle* in its repertoire since the company was founded in 1951. During the 1969/70 National Ballet season, Sir Peter Wright was invited by Celia Franca to mount a new version of *Giselle* for the company. It premiered on April 16, 1970 at Toronto's O'Keefe Centre (now the Sony Centre). This highly praised production has remained in the company's active repertoire and has been performed across Canada and around the world. In 1975, *Giselle* was filmed by director Norman Campbell for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The programme featured Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn in the roles of Giselle and Albrecht.

Synopsis

Act I

The first act is set in a Rhineland valley surrounded by vine-clad hills in medieval Germany. A majestic castle looms in the distance over the valley. It is autumn and the peasants are enjoying a rich harvest. Among the many happy festivities is the crowning of the Queen of the Vintage.

Giselle is a young peasant girl who lives with her mother, Berthe. Their cottage is opposite one that has recently been occupied by the handsome but mysterious Loys, a peasant farmer. Loys is really Count Albrecht of Silesia, who has disguised himself as a peasant in order to win Giselle's affections. Giselle has fallen in love with Loys, but the local forester Hilarion loves Giselle and has always planned to marry her. Hilarion is

suspicious of Loys and thinks he is hiding some secret.

Challenging Loys to a fight, Hilarion notices that Loys immediately clasps his right hand to his left hip, as if he were about to draw a sword. The astute Hilarion notes that such an action would be the instinctive reaction of a nobleman. Hilarion tries to warn Giselle that there is something suspicious about Loys but she refuses to believe him.

Soon a royal hunting party appears in the village, led by Albrecht's father, the Duke of Silesia, and Countess Bathilde, who is engaged to Albrecht. The village welcomes the noble visitors and Giselle presents flowers to the beautiful Bathilde. When it is revealed that Giselle is engaged to be married, Bathilde

gives Giselle a necklace as a gift. While Bathilde and the Duke go to rest in Giselle's cottage, Hilarion breaks into Loys' cottage and discovers his sword, which bears the family crest of the Duke of Silesia. He now has proof of Loys' true identity.

During the festivities that follow, when Giselle is crowned Queen of the Vintage, Hilarion challenges Loys and, summoning the royal party, reveals Loys' true identity. Everyone is shocked and confused as they realize that Loys is really Count Albrecht. Bathilde is shocked to see her fiancé dressed as a peasant. She then tells everyone that she is herself engaged to be married to the duplicitous Albrecht.

When Giselle realizes that Albrecht has deceived her, she is overcome by grief and quickly loses her reason. Giselle recalls her moments of innocent happiness with Albrecht, but then, in a frenzy of madness, she thrusts Albrecht's sword toward her heart and dies in her mother's arms. Albrecht runs off, filled with guilt and despair for what he has done. Hilarion and the village grieve for Giselle.

Act II

The scene opens in a moonlit forest glade near the grave where Giselle has been buried. Since she took her own life, Giselle has been laid to rest in unhallowed ground, unprotected from evil spirits. It is midnight and Hilarion is keeping vigil, but when the forest becomes haunted by Wilis (pronounced will-eez) he flees in terror. The Wilis are the spirits of betrothed young women who have died from grief after being betrayed by faithless lovers. Malicious in nature, these ghostly, nocturnal creatures are ruled by their queen, Myrtha, and seek revenge by forcing any man who crosses their path between midnight and

dawn to dance to his death. The Wilis are gathering this night to prepare for the initiation of Giselle into their ranks.

The Wilis momentarily leave the scene, and the melancholic Albrecht arrives at Giselle's grave to plead for forgiveness. To his amazement, the ghost of the dead Giselle appears before him and he follows her into the forest. Hilarion returns to Giselle's grave, this time to be entrapped by the Wilis, who show him no mercy. After forcing him to dance until he is exhausted, Myrtha commands the Wilis to fling Hilarion into the nearby lake. When Albrecht returns, the Wilis surround him and try to doom him to the same fate as Hilarion. Giselle attempts to save Albrecht, warning him that he will be able to withstand the Wilis if he takes shelter by the cross on her grave, which he does.

To have her revenge, the Queen of the Wilis forces Albrecht and Giselle to dance on and on into the night, until they are extremely exhausted. Albrecht collapses. Knowing that the power of the Wilis is destroyed by daylight, Giselle manages to sustain Albrecht until the chimes of a distant church bell announce the arrival of dawn.

The Wilis vanish and Giselle must return to her grave. But as her love has transcended death, her spirit has now been freed from the power of the Wilis. As the curtain falls, Albrecht, forlorn and reflective, is left alone in his sorrow.

The Roles of Giselle and Albrecht

The longevity of *Giselle* is credited not only to its historical value but also to the universality of its tale — a story of love, class distinction, betrayal, remorse and forgiveness. Like *Romeo and Juliet*, *Giselle* is a story of lovers separated by the artificial barriers of society. For both dancers and audience members, the roles of Giselle and Albrecht prove a fascinating challenge, as they allow for multi-faceted psychological character development.

The role of Giselle is unique, from its costuming to the complexity of its character makeup. At the time of its creation in 1841, *Giselle* was one of the first ballets to introduce the female dancer in pointe shoes, a device that allowed her wider possibilities of movement. The result was that she seemed

light, ethereal and otherworldly on stage. The introduction of calf-length, lightweight tulle dresses with tight bodices also allowed for greater freedom in leg movements and the appearance of softer, “romantic” arms.

The contrasting thematic concerns of *Giselle* also lent themselves to the Romantic fervour of the period. While many ballets dealt either with an idealized peasant life or the fantastic, *Giselle* incorporated both. The ballet is set in two locales, which are set off in sharp contrast. Act I takes place in the peasant village, which is contrasted with the moonlit forest glade of Act II. As well, the realism of Act I is contrasted with the fantasy elements of Act II. The first act incorporates bright and lively mime and musical leitmotifs that develop the drama. Before the end of Act I, Giselle’s



Lorna Geddes as Berthe and Sonia Rodriguez as Giselle with Artists of the Ballet.

mad scene begins the transition to Act II, in which the demonic world of the Wilis is represented as dark, sombre and melancholic.

The character of Giselle also goes through a transformation, from light-hearted peasant girl to crazed woman and, finally, to a ghostly vision. Giselle is a challenge for ballerinas who must combine dramatic ability and technical brilliance to bring about a convincing performance in a role that is both physically and mentally exhausting.

One of the most powerful scenes in the ballet is Giselle's death. Does she die of madness or of a broken heart? Or does she commit suicide when she thrusts Albrecht's sword toward her heart? Since early documentation proves inconclusive on the subject, the scene has been dealt with in various ways. The only clear fact is that Giselle is not buried in a graveyard but in the depths of a forest in unhallowed ground. Only a suicide would warrant such a burial. Choreographer Sir Peter Wright has said he believes Giselle kills herself, but in his own productions dancers have changed the scene to suit their own interpretations. In the late 1800s in Russia, during Marius Petipa's tenure as Ballet Master of the Imperial Theatre, suicide was not accepted on the stage, so Giselle invariably was shown as dying from madness.

The role of Albrecht provides male dancers with one of ballet's most interesting and complex characters. Far removed from the porteurs of most classical works, who simply carry the ballerina, Albrecht is a fully rounded character capable of standing on his own and holding centre stage.

There is no right or wrong way to portray Albrecht. Because Albrecht is a nobleman in disguise, it might be assumed that he wishes to be freed from his elevated social position. It

is also possible that he has grown alienated from his wealth and is seeking a more spiritual, simple and authentic existence. Or maybe he is a restless dreamer who seeks a quaint diversion among the peasants.

In falling in love with Giselle is Albrecht a cad? Is he a thoughtless nobleman and idle flirt? Or is he truly in love with Giselle but simply naive about the social implications of their liaison? Whether or not he is concerned with the consequences of his actions, he is soon confronted with them.

Already engaged to be married, Albrecht is prevented by his duty to his aristocratic family from fulfilling his love for Giselle. Giselle's madness and subsequent death not only awaken Albrecht's moral sense, but also bring to the fore his emotions, primarily love and guilt. Through Giselle's love and forgiveness in Act II, Albrecht gains new awareness, humility, and a sense of responsibility. He is also made aware of the gulf between reality and his ideals, and his inability to merge the two. He must fight for his life in this act, at the mercy of the powerful Wilis, who attempt with their supernatural powers to compel him to dance to his death.

At the end of the ballet, Albrecht is left on stage, a solitary figure. Dancers' interpretations vary in these final moments, sometimes walking into the distance, away from the audience or toward it; sometimes carrying a flower, the only tangible link with Giselle, at other times, allowing the flower to fall to the ground; others end the ballet reaching out for the elusive dream or kneeling in remorse. In the original production, this scene was taken one step further, with Bathilde, Albrecht's betrothed, returning to his side. The audience would have concluded that although he had savoured his ideal (Giselle), he was reconciled to return to reality.

Leitmotifs in Giselle

A leitmotif is a theme used recurrently to denote a specific person, object or feeling, either through music or movement. *Giselle* composer Adolphe Adam ingeniously used musical leitmotifs in his score. Adam's leitmotifs were complemented by dance movement leitmotifs created by choreographers Jules Perrot and Jean Coralli, and are still incorporated in the ballet today, more than 150 years after its premiere.



Chan Hon Goh as Giselle.

Giselle's theme

There is one sequence of steps with accompanying music that Giselle repeats at various key moments in the drama. This series of ballonnes, piqués and pas de basque denotes Giselle's love for dance. They are very simple steps, light and airy, that reflect Giselle's simple peasant background and carefree existence. When Bathilde asks Giselle what her favourite pastime is, Giselle executes this series of steps, telling Bathilde that she loves to dance.

Flower theme

The flower theme in which Giselle plucks the petals of a daisy ("he loves me, he loves me not") is performed twice, once in a happy duet with Albrecht, and again in the mad scene, as Giselle recalls her lover.

Huntsmen's theme

The huntsmen's theme is the sound of horns that always precedes the arrival of the nobles and their hunting party.

Wili theme

The Wili theme is first heard in Act I when Berthe, Giselle's mother, warns her about dancing too much; it acts as a premonition of the tragedy that is to follow. The theme is reintroduced in the second act with the arrival of the Willis, who surround Hilarion on his visit to Giselle's grave.

Hilarion's theme

Hilarion's entrance is heralded by his own distinct musical theme. For this music, Adolphe Adam used an excerpt from the Fate theme of Ludwig van Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*.

Selected Biographies

**Karen Kain,
C.C., LL.D., D.Litt., O.Ont.,
Artistic Director**

Acknowledged as one of the leading classical ballerinas of her time, Karen Kain is also one of Canada's foremost arts advocates, bringing the same passion and dedication she exemplified as a dancer to her roles as a spokesperson for Canadian culture and as the Artistic Director of The National Ballet of Canada. A native of Hamilton, Ontario, Ms. Kain studied at Canada's National Ballet School, graduating in 1969 when she joined The National Ballet of Canada. After quickly rising to the rank of Principal Dancer, she came to the attention of international audiences when she won the Silver Medal at the Moscow International Ballet Competition in 1973. This led to a highly successful career on stages throughout the world. Ms. Kain retired from dance in 1997 and shortly afterwards assumed the position of Artist-in-Residence with the National Ballet. In 1999, her role was expanded to that of Artistic Associate and in June of 2005, she was appointed

Artistic Director of the company. Ms. Kain has received numerous accolades and awards throughout her career. She is a Companion of the Order of Canada, the first Canadian recipient of the Cartier Lifetime Achievement Award and was named an Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters by the government of France. In 2002, she was honoured with a Governor General's Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement and from 2004 to 2008 was Chair of the Canada Council for the Arts. In 2007, she received the Barbara Hamilton Memorial Award for demonstrating excellence and professionalism in the performing arts.

**Sir Peter Wright, CBE
Choreographer**

Sir Peter Wright made his debut as a professional dancer with the Ballets Jooss during World War II and in the 1950s, appeared with several dance companies, including Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. In 1959, he was appointed Ballet Master to Sadler's Wells Opera and Teacher at The Royal Ballet

School. Two years later he went to Stuttgart as Teacher and Ballet Master of the company being formed by John Cranko. There he choreographed several works, including *The Mirror Walkers* and *Quintet*, and mounted his first production of *Giselle*. His other interpretations of the classics include *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker* and *Coppélia*. In 1969, he returned to The Royal Ballet as Kenneth MacMillan's Associate Director. In 1977, he was appointed Director of Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet, taking the company to Birmingham in 1990 when it became Birmingham Royal Ballet. During his career, Sir Peter Wright has won many awards. He was made a Commander of the British Empire in 1985, was knighted in 1993 and gained the title of Director Laureate of Birmingham Royal Ballet in 1995.

**Adolphe Adam
Composer**

Born in Paris in 1803, Adolphe Adam was the son of a music professor at the Paris Conservatoire. He

began his musical studies at boarding school and entered the Paris Conservatoire in 1821, studying organ and harmonium, with the goal of becoming a composer for the theatre. By 1823, at age 20, he was writing songs for Parisian vaudeville houses and by 1830 had completed 28 theatre works including some dance pieces. Mr. Adam's first dramatic composition was a one-act operetta, *Pierre et Catherine*, which premiered to great success at the Opera Comique in 1829. His first

solo ballet composition was *Faust*, in 1833, for choreographer André Deshayes. He is best remembered for *Giselle*, which premiered at the Paris Opera in 1841. After a falling-out with the Director of the Paris Opera, Mr. Adam invested his own money to open the Théâtre National as a showcase for young composers. It was not a success and left Mr. Adam with many debts. He turned to journalism to help pay his bills and was eventually appointed Professor of

Composition at the Paris Conservatoire, a position he held until his death in 1856. When he died, Mr. Adam had written 40 operas, 14 ballets and numerous musicals and vaudevilles.

Desmond Heeley
Set and Costume
Designer

Desmond Heeley's set and costume designs have been seen on the stages of the world's major opera, ballet and theatre companies during an international career that has spanned more than

Heather Ogden as Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis with Artists of the Ballet.



Aleksandar Antonijevic as Albrecht and Greta Hodgkinson as Giselle with Artists of the Ballet.



50 years. He began his career in 1948 with an apprenticeship at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. In 1952 he embarked on a freelance career in London and came to Canada in 1957 to design *Hamlet* for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, beginning an association that continues to this day. His 1968 designs for Tom Stoppard's Broadway production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* won him two Tony awards. This honour, for both set and

costume design in a single production, is unsurpassed. His creations for the National Ballet include the *Sylvia pas de deux*, *Oiseaux Exotiques*, *Don Quixote*, *The Merry Widow*, Erik Bruhn's *Swan Lake* and Sir Peter Wright's *Giselle*. Mr. Heeley's work is in museums and private collections across Canada, the US and UK. A former Professor of Design at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, he continues to teach and lecture extensively. He has won numerous awards including the prestigious

Irene Sharaff Lifetime Achievement Award in 1994. In 2005, Mr. Heeley received an honorary doctorate from the North Carolina School of the Arts.

Gil Wechsler
Lighting Designer

Gil Wechsler attended Yale University's School of Drama and became the Metropolitan Opera's first full-time Resident Lighting Designer in 1976. Throughout his 20-year tenure he designed the lighting for more than 100 opera productions. His responsibilities also included

the lighting of more than 60 televised opera performances and tours throughout the US and Japan. Preceding his appointment to the Metropolitan Opera, Mr. Wechsler designed more than 30 productions for Lyric Opera of Chicago. He has also designed more than 60 productions for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival including *Equus* in 1997 and *Macbeth* in 2004. Mr. Wechsler's ballet designs are in the repertoires of American Ballet Theatre, The Royal Ballet, The Harkness Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the Berlin Opera Ballet and The National Ballet of Canada. He has also lit productions for the Paris Opera, San Francisco Opera, Teatro Colón and the Sante Fe Opera, as well as multiple works on Broadway.

Ruben Martin

Guest Artist, *Giselle*

Ruben Martin was born in Reus, Spain, and trained at Escuela Municipal de Danza and Estudio de Danza de Maria de Avila. He performed with English National Ballet prior to joining San Francisco Ballet in 2000. Mr. Martin was promoted to Soloist in

2003 and to Principal Dancer in 2006. He has danced major roles in several ballets choreographed by Helgi Tomasson including Prince Siegfried and von Rothbart in *Swan Lake*, Albrecht in *Giselle* and the Nutcracker Prince and Snow King in *The Nutcracker*. He also danced the role of Espada in *Don Quixote* by Helgi Tomasson and Yuri Possokhov. In addition, Mr. Martin has danced principal roles in Tomasson's *Blue Rose*, *The Fifth Season* and *Chi-Lin*; George Balanchine's *Who Cares?*, *The Four Temperaments* and *Diamonds from Jewels*; Jerome Robbins' *Dybbuk*, *Afternoon of a Faun*, *In the Night*, *Fancy Free*, *West Side Story Suite* and *Glass Pieces*; Julia Adam's *imaginal disc*; Christopher Wheeldon's *Rush*, *Polyphonia*, *Continuum*, and *Quaternary*; Stanton Welch's *Naked* and *Tu Tu*; and William Forsythe's *in the middle, somewhat elevated* and *Artifact Suite*. He has also performed Lar Lubovitch's *Othello* and *Elemental Brubeck*; Possokhov's *Magritomania*, *Study in Motion* and *Fusion*; and Mark Morris' *Sylvia*, *Joyride*, *A Garden* and

Sandpaper Ballet. Mr. Martin placed second at Lucienne Lamballe International Ballet Competition in 1995.

David Briskin

Music Director and Principal Conductor

A conductor renowned for the versatility of his repertoire and the depth of his musical interpretations, David Briskin joined The National Ballet of Canada as Music Director and Principal Conductor in 2006. Prior to his appointment with The National Ballet of Canada, Mr. Briskin served as Conductor with American Ballet Theatre for seven years, leading performances at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York's City Center and in major opera houses throughout the world. Mr. Briskin is a regular guest conductor with New York City Ballet and San Francisco Ballet, and appeared with both companies this season. In March, he conducted Stanton Welch's new full-length ballet *Marie* for Houston Ballet in New Orleans. Mr. Briskin has also conducted for The Joffrey Ballet of Chicago and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, among others. For 12 years he served as

Conductor of The Juilliard School's Dance Division. Equally at home on the concert stage and in the opera house, Mr. Briskin has conducted symphony orchestras and opera productions throughout

Europe, Asia and North America and served for six years as the Music Director of the Masterwork Chorus and Orchestra, conducting annual performances of Handel's *Messiah* at Carnegie Hall. In July 2008,

he was appointed Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music and Conductor of the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Judith Yan

Assistant Conductor

A native of Toronto, Judith Yan joined The National Ballet of Canada as Assistant Conductor in 2007. As Staff Conductor of the San Francisco Opera, Ms. Yan served as assistant to Donald Runnicles and as Cover/Rehearsal Conductor on 12 productions. For the company, she conducted three productions, one of which was included in the San Francisco Chronicle's Top Ten Performances of 2005. Prior to her position at the SFO, Ms. Yan was Conductor-in-Residence at the Canadian Opera Company. Appointed by the late Richard Bradshaw, she worked on numerous productions, recordings and concerts. Ms. Yan made her German conducting debut with Mozart's *Idomeneo* in 2005, and her Italian conducting debut with Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* in 2007. She recently returned to Italy to conduct *La Bohème*.



Bridgett Zehr as Giselle.

Ernest Abugov

Stage Manager

Ernest (Ernie) Abugov has served as Stage Manager of The National Ballet of Canada since 1973, working with every Artistic Director in the company's history from Celia Franca to Karen Kain. He has traveled with the company all over the world touring to Israel, Asia, Europe, Mexico and throughout North America. Mr. Abugov has worked with many of the world's most renowned choreographers who have created original works for the National Ballet including John Neumeier, William Forsythe and Glen Tetley. Mr. Abugov was born in Montréal, Québec. Before beginning his long association with the National Ballet, he worked with Les Feux Follets, The Charlottetown Festival, La Poudriere Theatre and The Studio Lab Theatre. He worked at Expo '67 in Montréal, stage managing over 4,000 puppet shows. Mr. Abugov also toured with Harry Belafonte. In what little spare time that he has, Mr. Abugov guest-lectures to theatre students.

Jeff Morris

Stage Manager

Jeff Morris studied technical theatre production and administration at Ryerson Theatre School. He has worked as Production Stage Manager for Toronto Dance Theatre and with the Fringe Festival of Independent Dance Artists, in addition to a broad range of Toronto's independent dance artists. In 1995, Mr. Morris joined The National Ballet of Canada and has since stage-managed a wide range of the company's classical and contemporary repertoire, including world premieres of James Kudelka's *The Four Seasons*, *Cinderella* and *An Italian Straw Hat*. He is also an adjunct faculty member at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, where he teaches Production Elements for Dancers.

The National Ballet of Canada Orchestra

The National Ballet of Canada is privileged to have its own full orchestra with over 60 members. The orchestra has performed in each of the National Ballet's 57 seasons and is led by Music Director and Principal Conductor David Briskin. The company's first Music

Director was George Crum who, along with Founder Celia Franca, was a pioneer of the company. Mr. Crum held the position from the company's inception in 1951 to 1984, when he was appointed Music Director Emeritus. The orchestra was led by Ermanno Florio from 1985 to 1990 and Ormsby Wilkins from 1990 to 2006. The National Ballet Orchestra has toured extensively with the company through Canada, the United States and Europe. Over the years, the orchestra has received much acclaim from audiences and critics alike and has recorded two CDs of Michael Torke's compositions for *The Contract (The Pied Piper)* and *An Italian Straw Hat*.

For more information, visit national.ballet.ca

Photos by David Cooper, Cylla von Tiedemann and Bruce Zinger.

Xiao Nan Yu as Giselle and Guillaume Côté as Albrecht with Artists of the Ballet.

