

OREGON BALLET THEATRE
CHRISTOPHER STOWELL / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

CHRISTOPHER STOWELL'S
SWAN LAKE



Yuka Iino and Ruben Martin in
Christopher Stowell's *Swan Lake*.
Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert.

out REACH

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Oregon Ballet Theatre's production of Christopher Stowell's *Swan Lake*.
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 **REACH**

SWAN LAKE SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Prince Siegfried's courtiers and subjects gather for an impromptu party celebrating his 21st birthday. The queen arrives to remind Siegfried that he will one day be king and must prepare to accept adult responsibilities. The next evening at the ball commemorating his coming of age, he is to choose a fiancée. However, Siegfried has yet to meet someone that touches his heart and is saddened that he will lose his freedom. At the party's close he departs with his mother's birthday gift—a crossbow—to hunt in the solitude of the forest.

ACT II

Deep in the forest Siegfried discovers a swan gliding across a moonlit lake. As he draws his crossbow, the bird is transformed into a beautiful woman. She is Odette, the Queen of the Swans. She and her maidens have been doomed by the evil sorcerer Von Rothbart to be swans by day and are allowed their humanity only from midnight to dawn. With gentle patience Siegfried softens the terror of the Swan Queen and her flock. She tells the Prince that only the love of a man who swears eternal fidelity can break Von Rothbart's spell. Siegfried now understands perfect love and vows to marry Odette. As dawn approaches, Von Rothbart rises out of the shadows. His magic draws Odette from Siegfried's arms and summons the maidens back to Swan Lake.

ACT III

Guests arrive at the palace for Prince Siegfried's birthday ball. The queen has invited six beautiful princesses as prospective brides. Siegfried dances courteously but indifferently with each of them—his heart is pledged to Odette. As his mother insists that he choose among the princesses, two uninvited guests appear dressed in black. They are Von Rothbart, transformed into a stately count, and his daughter Odile, who has been magically disguised as Siegfried's beloved white swan, Odette.

After dancers from Spain, Italy, Russia, and Hungary entertain the court, Odile exerts all her wiles to beguile the prince and trick him into believing that she is Odette. A vision of the true Swan Queen appears at the palace window to warn of the deception, but the Prince is mesmerized by Odile and joyously declares that she will be his bride. Triumphant, Von Rothbart reveals the treachery. Leaving the court in an upheaval, Siegfried flees in search of his true love.

ACT IV

Deep sadness descends upon Swan Lake. In a frightening storm created by the evil sorcerer, Siegfried finds Odette and begs her forgiveness. She forgives him, but nothing can be changed. He has broken his vows and Odette is doomed to remain a swan forever.

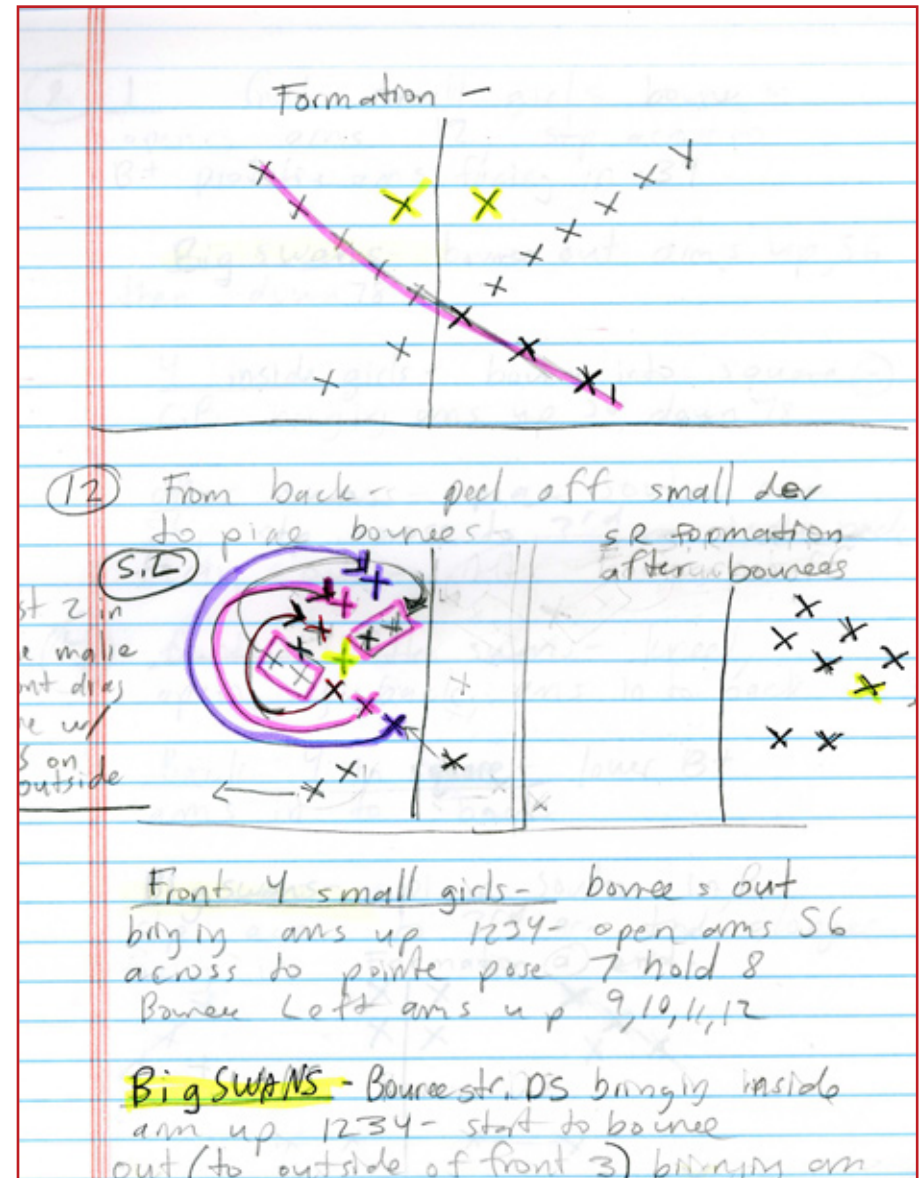


Statuette of Sirena de Canosa, a half-bird, half-woman from Greek mythology



Painting depicting Lohengrin

Drawings from the late 1800s depicting an early version of the *Swan Lake* story



Choreography notations for *Swan Lake* by Oregon Ballet Theatre's Ballet Master, Lisa Kipp



Photo from Petipa and Ivanov's 1895 production of *Swan Lake*.



Jacqueline Martin Schumacher and Lew Christensen in San Francisco Ballet's production of *Swan Lake*.



Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* score



Image depicting a floor pattern from an earlier Sadler Wells production of *Swan Lake*.



Anna Pavlova demonstrating an arabesque in a 1909 production of *Swan Lake*.



Natalia Makarova performing a bourée



Alison Roper and Artur Sultanov perform a pas de deux in Christopher Stowell's *Swan Lake*. Photo by Blaine Truitt Covert.

VOCABULARY

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Arabesque – To stand on one leg with the other leg extended to the back in a 90° angle from the hip. This can be done with a straight or bent standing leg or *sur les pointes*.

Attitude – Standing on one leg, such as in arabesque, with the lifted leg bent at a 90° angle and well turned out. The leg may be lifted to the front or back.

Bourée – Whether done *sur les demi-pointes* or *sur les pointes*, it is a traveling step done with legs crossed and ankles close together.

Corps de ballet – The company artists who perform as an ensemble. The choreography in *Swan Lake* is very challenging for the swans of the *corps de ballet* because the women must dance in unison, striving to mirror one another's every move. They must also stand on stage, perfectly still, in specific poses for long periods of time and then at just the right moment in the music dance with great energy again.

Floor pattern – The spatial design made by the actions of the dancers. In *Swan Lake* the *corps de ballet* creates many symmetrical and asymmetrical designs on the stage.

Pas de deux – A dance for two people. At the SPS we will see Odette and Prince Siegfried dance a *pas de deux* while the *corps de ballet* frames them on the stage.

Pas de trois – A dance for three people. At the SPS we will see a *Pas de Trois* from Act I of *Swan Lake*.

Sur les demi-pointes – To dance on the balls of the feet with the heels lifted as high as possible from the floor.

Sur les pointes – To dance on the tips of the toes. Women wear special shoes called pointe shoes. **DON'T TRY THIS WITHOUT POINTE SHOES AND TRAINING.**