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**La Sylphide, 1992**

Ballet in 2 Acts

Composer:	Jean Schneitzhoeffter
Libretto:	Adolphe Nourrit, Filippo Taglioni
Production	Pierre Lacotte
Troupe:	Tokyo Ballet
Performers:	Yukari Saito Takagishi
Running time:	01:50:30

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La Sylphide is one of the world's oldest surviving romantic ballets.

On March 12, 1832, the first version of La Sylphide premiered at the Salle Le Peletier of the Paris Opéra with choreography by Filippo Taglioni and music by Jean Schneitzhoeffter. Taglioni designed the work as a showcase for his daughter Marie. The ballet's libretto was written by tenor Adolphe Nourrit. Nourrit's scenario was loosely based on a story by Charles Nodier, *Trilby, ou Le lutin d'Argail*, but swapped the genders of the protagonists — a goblin and a fisherman's wife in Nodier; a sprite and a farmer in the ballet.

In 1836, La Sylphide was choreographed anew by the Danish balletmaster August Bournonville with music by Herman Severin Løvenskiold. Bournonville had intended to present a revival of Taglioni's original version in Copenhagen with the Royal Danish Ballet, but the Paris Opera demanded too high a price for Schneitzhoeffter's score. In the end, Bournonville mounted his own production based on the original libretto. The premiere took place on November 28, 1836. The Bournonville version has been danced in its original form by the Royal Danish Ballet ever since its creation and remains one of Bournonville's most celebrated works. Modern interpreters of Bournonville's version include Eva Evdokimova and Lis Jeppesen, whose performance is recorded on DVD.

In 1892, Marius Petipa mounted a revival of Taglioni's original La Sylphide for the Imperial Ballet, with additional music by Riccardo Drigo. A variation Drigo composed for the ballerina Varvara Nikitina in Petipa's version is today the traditional solo danced by the lead ballerina of the famous Paquita Grand Pas Classique, interpolated by Anna Pavlova in 1904.

In 1972, a revival of the Taglioni version was staged by Pierre Lacotte for the Paris Opera Ballet. Since Taglioni's choreography has been irretrievably lost, Lacotte's choreography is based on prints, notes, drawings, and archival materials from the era of the ballet's premiere. Lacotte's choreography is in the style of the period but entirely new and has been criticised by some as inauthentic. Interpreters of the role of Lacotte's version at the Opera National de Paris include Ghislaine Thesmar (Lacotte's wife) and Aurelie Dupont.

La Sylphide is often confused with *Les Sylphides*, another ballet involving the mythical sylph, or forest sprite. The latter was choreographed by Michel Fokine for the Ballets Russes as a short performance. Though inspired by La Sylphide, it was meant to be performed as an independent ballet with its own merits.

John Barnett's 1834 opera *The Mountain Sylph* is based on the storyline of La Sylphide; this opera's plot was in turn satirized by W. S. Gilbert in the 1882 Savoy Opera, *Iolanthe*.

The tale of La Sylphide, a mysterious and beautiful air nymph, her love of an earthly boy has killed both of them and it opens the era of "the romantic ballet." The plot of the ballet is based on the fantastic novel by French author Charles Nodier "Trilby" (1822). The premiere of the music of French composer Jean Schneitzhoeffter directed by the Italian artist, teacher and choreographer Filippo Taglioni was held in 1832 at the Grand Opera in Paris.

To emphasize the grace and ease of La Sylphide, Taglioni invented movement, the artist and designer E. Lamy had created the right clothing, which later became an essential feature of the Romantic ballet. It was in La Sylphide that the suit was brought to perfection, and has remained unchanged to this day. To create a lush, yet weightless tunic a multilayer fabric was used, to create an unusual effect of buoyancy. In addition to air, a bell-shaped skirt was attached to the shoulder with a strap bodice with light and transparent wings. This part looked very natural and was a complement to the figure of La Sylphide, able at will to take off or fall to the ground.