Ludwig Minkus

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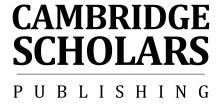
Don Quichotte

Ballet en cinq actes
avec prologue et épilogue
et onze tableaux
par
Marius Petipa
après Miguel de Cervantes

Piano Score

Introduced and edited by

Robert Ignatius Letellier



Ludwig Minkus: Don Quichotte Ballet en cinq actes avec prologue et épilogue et onze tableaux par Marius Peitpa après Miguel de Cervantes Piano Score,
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Ludwig Minkus (photograph Russia, c. 1875)

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INTRODUCTION

The popularity of the story of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* as the inspiration for a ballet scenario increased in the 19th Century. The first Russian version was by Charles Didelot (two acts, St Petersburg, 1808), followed by an English version by James Harvey D'Egville (1809), a German version by Paul Taglioni (brother of ballerina Marie Taglioni) (Berlin, 1839), and an Italian version by his uncle Salvatore Taglioni (Teatro Regio, Turin in the 1843-4 season). All these early ballet versions of the story were based on the first episodes of Cervantes's story, although varying in style and in the material they chose to include.

The first successful use of the more comic episodes, revolving around Quiteria (Kitri), Basilio and Camacho (Gamache), was in the Paris Opéra (1801) with choreography by Louis Milon. Entitled *Les Noces de Gamache*, the role of Basilio was danced by August Vestris. The scenario of this production became popular and was taken to Denmark by August Bournonville for his 3 act *Don Quixote at Camacho's Wedding* (Copenhagen, 1837). The score was arranged by Otto Zinck from a miscellany of music by Gioacchino Rossini, Étienne Mehul, Gaspare Spontini, and Jean Schneitzhoeffer. Milon's libretto was also used by Bernardo Vestris for his 1844-5 production at La Scala, and thence became the inspiration for Marius Petipa's (1819-1910) version for Moscow.

Petipa's version of *Don Quixote*, with the music of the Austrian composer Ludwig Minkus (1826-1917), was to become the standard ballet version of the story, and presented as its emotional highpoint a virtuoso pas de deux that assumed a life of its own, ever since popular as a concert piece in countless performances all over the world.

As chief ballet master of the Russian Imperial Ballet, Marius Petipa had been instructed by the director of Imperial Theatres in 1868 to produce a major new work for Moscow. The plot of *Don Quixote*, based on the adventures of Quiteria (known as Kitri in the ballet) and Basilio, which Petipa had developed from the second part of Cervantes's novel, following the example of the Milon scenario. Petipa adapted his ballet to suit the unsophisticated taste of Moscow's audiences by including several entertaining theatrical devices: a group of dancers, arrayed as grotesque cacti, pursued Don Quixote during his nightmare; a rising moon, which Don Quixote mistook for his beloved Dulcinea, cried and laughed with big tears rolling down its cheeks; and a comic dance for Harlequin, armed with a bird cage, who attempted to catch larks. Reference to the exotic Iberian setting was indicated by inclusion of a variety of Spanish dances—a zingara, jota, morena for the soloists and a lola for the *corps de ballet*, with a processional march for the men dressed as bullfighters. This *Don Quixote* (or *Don Khikot*), a ballet in four acts and eight scenes, was first performed on 14/26 December 1869 at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.

Petipa had also been appointed head of the St Petersburg ballet in 1869, and so had the responsibility of moulding it into the company he needed to realize his numerous projects. Now he had to produce something that would appeal to a very different, affluent and aristocratic audience. So when *Don Quixote* was transferred to the Imperial capital, the situation required a new approach. The ballet was given at the Bolshoi Theatre in St Petersburg on 9/21 November 1871 as *Don Quichotte*—this time in five acts with eleven episodes, including a prologue and an epilogue. The same music and designs were used, but there were major revisions to the scenario and the choreography. These took into account the preference, in this more sophisticated milieu, for a more classical interpretation of the ballet. Petipa refined the Spanish flavour and removed some of the more popular-comical elements—like the scene with the cacti, the lark hunting episode and the crying moon. Some

of the character dances from the Moscow version were also removed. The dances that were retained lost much of their national character, and were transformed by classical steps and style, in a process that saw the gradual evolution of academic character dancing—a special feature of Petipa's choreography that would become a treasured element of the Russian classical heritage.

Changes were also made to the story, with a new fifth act in three scenes (set in the court of a Duke and Duchess), for which Minkus wrote additional music. Don Quixote now no longer regards Kitri simply as his protégée. He now actually mistakes her for Dulcinea, and she appears as such in the Dream Scene. Provision was made for one ballerina to perform both Kitri and Dulcinea, which meant that the double role could be provided with more varied material. The big classical scene for Don Quixote's Dream was rewritten. Greater emphasis was now placed on this scene, where Kitri/Dulcinea was surrounded by a large corps de ballet and seventy-two children dressed as cupids. (This legendary scene was captured in the engraved frontispiece of the Stellowsky piano score.) The cupids reappeared in the new fifth act at the Court of the Duke and Duchess, the characters new to the scenario. The Grand Pas de Deux, accompanied by soloists and the corps de ballet, was danced by Alexandra Vergina, who was partnered not by Basilio (Lev Ivanov), but by Pavel Gerdt, who was brought in just for the sake of partnering. The cast also included Timofei Stukolkine (Don Quixote), Nicholas Goltz (Gamache), and Alexei Bogdanov (Lorenzo).

Don Quichotte, as a result of all this revision, was not quite as popular as the earlier Moscow version. A contemporary review of the first performance singled out Stukolkine's excellent realization of Don Quixote, and aspects of Vergina's dancing. A compromise Don Quixote nonetheless became established in the repertory, and its continued life on the Russian stage bears testimony to the appeal of its exuberance, "the life-asserting and life-loving nature of its dances" (Natalia Roslavleva). Generations of Russian ballet-masters and dancers have preserved these in essence, even if in the process much has been changed.

The ballet is still part of the Russian repertory, and is given today in three acts and seven or eight scenes. This derives particularly from the work of Alexander Gorsky, who staged his version of *Don Quixote* in 1900, using Petipa's scenario, some of his choreography, and reducing the work to four acts. Two years later, in 1902, the director of the Imperial Theatres, Vladimir Teliakovsky, invited Gorsky to restage an updated version of *Don Quixote* at the Maryinsky Theatre in St Petersburg. The ballet became a staple of the Moscow Bolshoi Ballet's and Leningrad Kirov Ballet's repertoires throughout the 20th century, and was regularly modified with each restaging.

Publication of the music was an indicator of the popularity of the work. The piano score was published as *Don Quichotte* (St Petersburg: Theodore Stellowsky, c. 1882), the version reproduced here, the Moscow Gutheil edition following a decade later. The epilogue presumably rehearsed the C major *Allegro moderato* music of No. 4 of Act 1, the theme of Don Quixote's quest. The most famous addition to the score, here as an appendix, was Kitri's celebrated Variation with the Fan in the *Grand Pas de Deux*, introduced by Mathilde Kchessinka, and derived from the 'Variation de la Reine du jour', with its harp solo, from Minkus's score for *Nuit et Jour*, prepared by Petipa in 1883 for the coronation of Tsar Alexander III.

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The St Petersburg Scenario (1871)

Prologue. The Study

Scene 1

Don Quixote, the would-be knight, reads about the past, is caught up in nightmares and sees visions of great deeds. His retainers Sampson Carrasco and Antonina stand by him. The comic rascal Sancho Panza is enlisted into Don Quixote's dream of knight-errantry, and the two set out on their adventures.

Act 1 The Town Square

Scene 2

Don Quixote enters and we meet the innkeeper Lorenzo and his wife, as well as their attractive daughter Kitri. The old man sees in her his ideal beloved Ducinea. She dances a tender serenade with her preferred suitor Basilio, and reluctantly with the man preferred by her father, the foppish noble Gamache. The crowd scene features a simulated bullfight.

Act 2.

Scene 3 Inside the Inn

There is much intrigue to gain the hand of Kitri. Basilio feigns suicide out of despair, and asks to be married to Kitri as he dies. This is refused and Don Quixote challenges Gamache to a duel. Gamache refuses to fight. Lorenzo is persuaded to bless the dying Basilio and Kitri, whereupon the former revives, and he and Kitri escape together, pursued by Lorenzo and Gamache, with Don Quixote and Sancho in their wake.

Act 3

Scenes 4-5 The Gypsy Camp

There is a festival of csardas and tziganes. Don. Quixote attacks the marionette theatre during the performance held in his honour.

Act 4 The Windmills

Scene 6

Don Quixote attacks the windmills which he imagines are evil giants holding Dulcinea captive. He is knocked unconscious.

Scenes 7-8 The Wood

Don Quixote has fantastic dreams, fighting monsters, and then seeing Dulcinea in the midst of a garden filled with beautiful women. As the vision fades, Don Quixote meets a duke and his hunting party. The Duke invites the old knight to be his guest.

Act 5 The Duke's Palace

Scenes 9-10

There is a celebration in honour of Don Quixote. The highpoint is the fête for the marriage of Kitri and Basilio, crowned by the virtuoso *pas de deux* for the young couple.

Epilogue

Scene 11

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza set out again on their quest.

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BALLET EN CINQ ACTES de Marius Petipa musique

de

L. MINKOUS.





Don Quichotte

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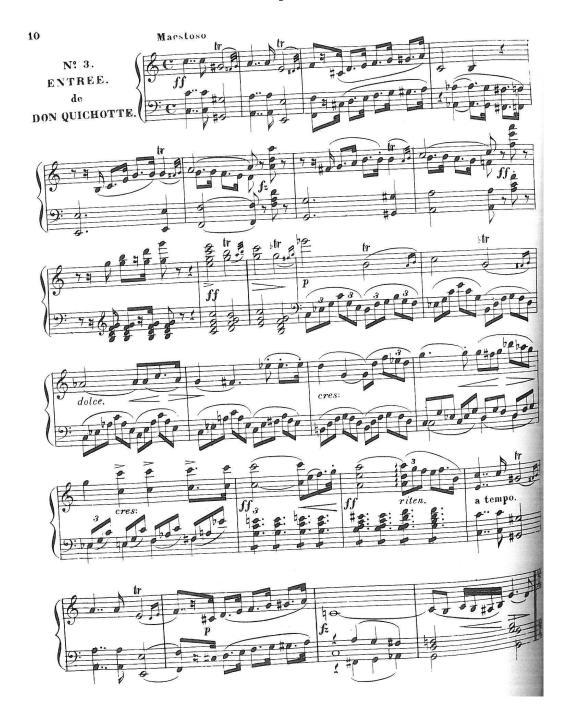












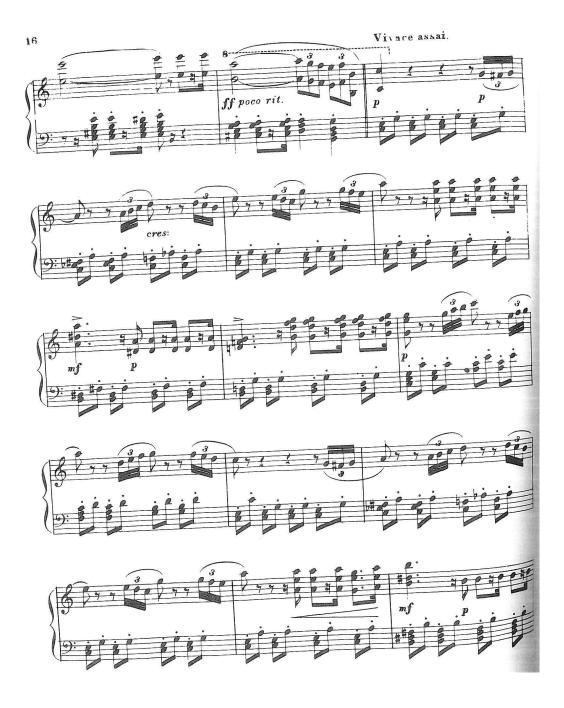












Don Quichotte 17



