

GISELLE'S MAD SCENE: A DEMONSTRATION AND COMPARISON
OF 21st CENTURY DANISH AND 19th CENTURY
PARIS OPÉRA STAGINGS

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: *Giselle's Mad Scene: A Demonstration and Comparison of 21st Century Danish and 19th Century Paris Opéra Stagings*

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This project entailed restaging Act 1's Mad Scene from the ballet *Giselle* to compare, contrast and analyze the character of Giselle within Henri Justamant's 1860's choreographic notation for the Paris Opéra Ballet and Sorella Englund's version at the Royal Danish Ballet Summer 2010 workshop. Using my journal from the workshop with Ms. Englund, I coached the cast using similar prompts and exercises she had given. To restage the Justamant ballet, we utilized his newly discovered choreographic notebook in conjunction with Joan Lawson's *Mime*. Preparations for the rehearsals, including translations, obtaining recordings of the original score, and the developments and revelations that emerged from the cast's exploration of the characters, are addressed and assessed. This research provides insight into the original nature of this Romantic ballet and reflects upon oral coaching versus restaging from a script, use and disuse of music, and interpretations and archetypes discussed in the review of literature.

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For my family and family of friends: you've taught me that it's all in the doing and the follow-through.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Dance and dancing roles are taught through verbal and physical languages. Ours is mainly an oral tradition of transmitting knowledge, both in the technique class as well as the rehearsal studio. Advances in technology have aided how we pass along information, whether through archival sources such as video of past performances or published manuals of notations and the like, but for both contemporary works and character roles in story ballets such as *Giselle* (1841) it isn't uncommon for dancers to be coached by an older artist who has previously performed the role themselves, or who has performed in the capacity of choreographer, assistant, or regisseur. Working closely with this coach for any number of rehearsals, the dancer may gain access to not only the logistics of stage blocking – where one has to be on stage by *this* musical phrase, etc. – but also to the character's emotional center, the *why* behind the movement and gestures.

Another aspect present in these coaching sessions is the societal and cultural mores of the time, though often this may not be explicitly acknowledged or stated. As value systems change, so do the artists of the time and their interpretations of a role. The challenges and boundaries that a particular generation was accustomed to performing may be pushed into new directions with subsequent generations. To use an example, the 1841 *Giselle* originally contained 54 minutes of mime to 60 minutes of dance (Smith 2000, 296). Essentially, the accomplished dancers of the time also had to be skilled pantomime artists, capable of sustaining an audience's suspension of disbelief in the theater. But over the years as the dancers technical ranges expanded, so might have the audience's desire to see more virtuosity on stage and less pantomime. In addition, dancers and dance makers may also have become more interested in defining dance as its own art form, singular from ballet-pantomimes. To make a broad generalization, what had previously existed as a gestured conversation or soliloquy might easily turn into a dance phrase from one staging to the next. With the rise of the athleticism, technique and training of the Russian Imperial ballet in the late 1800's and as their cult of virtuosity grew, many of the mime passages in story ballets were abbreviated or completely cut from both the movement and musical scores, to be replaced by dances for any or all of the onstage characters. As some of these older story ballets such as *Giselle* were altered, how much of the actual characterization changed with it? This question constituted the nature of my research in this project: I desired to determine how the title

character of this ballet has undergone a personality change from the Paris Opéra 1860's version to the productions we may currently view on any number of worldwide stages.

The focus of this project was to restage the Act I Mad Scene from the ballet *Giselle* using two distinctly different sources. The first version was based upon a summer 2010 workshop study with Sorella Englund, a character dancer and former principal with the Royal Danish Ballet, who orally taught and coached the Mad Scene to a group of thirteen students, myself included. Using my notes from the six days we spent with her as a guide, I taught – in much the same oral fashion – this scene to a selected group of dancers. The second method used the recently discovered choreographic notebook of Henri Justamant, the maître de ballet at the Paris Opéra during the 1868-1869 season. The notebook was discovered in Regensburg, Germany in 2002 (Justamant 2008, xxv) and the Deutsche Tanzarchiv Köln has made it available to the public as a published facsimile. It is full of detailed drawings and notations describing the dances, conversations and stage movements of *Giselle's* characters. After translating Justamant's text, I directed a group of dancers as we interpreted and restaged the 1860's version of the Mad Scene using his notation in conjunction with Joan Lawson's book *Mime* as a manual for the pantomimed gestures.

To support the work, I prepared by researching a number of sources discussed in Chapter II's Review of Literature. I discuss these findings by category: The Romantic Ballet's Emphasis on Drama delves into the 19th century ballet's blend of danced and pantomimed action, audience expectations, and what little we know of pantomime gestures and vocabulary from that era. *Giselle* Synopsis contains the plot of the ballet; The Mad Scene examines the historically used plot device of madness in contemporaneous productions, as well as its place within the Romantic Era's ideals and the dramatic challenge this scene presents to dancers.

The next section of the Review of Literature include Staging Sources, Sorella Englund's Coaching at The Royal Danish Ballet, and *Giselle, ou Les Wilis*: The choreographic notebook of Henri Justamant. In these subchapters I specifically look at the staging sources used to present this project, and discuss their historical importance. The Music of *Giselle* addresses Adolphe Adam's score, noting his use of leitmotifs and the rapid composition of the score. Commentary on Adam's Score provides scholarly research into the details of orchestral voices and effectiveness of the leitmotifs. The last subchapter, Interpretations and Archetypes, addresses gender and societal roles, and also analyzes the character of Giselle as a representation of Other.

As the culminating movement component for this project, I scheduled an informal evening showing in April 2011, where observers watched the two versions, one immediately after the other, noting differences and similarities in the two stagings. I also recorded and created a

video document that will enable present and future researchers to view the two performances simultaneously. By doing so, and continuing my research into the various incarnations this ballet has undergone, I hope to illuminate how Giselle's physical actions during the Mad Scene vary between two versions, and analyze how this female character appears different in temperament from the Justamant version to the workshop version I learned last year.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to restage, compare, and investigate how the female ballet character of Giselle varies between Henri Justamant's 1868-69 choreographic notation and a version based upon Sorella Englund's 2010 student workshop method of oral transmission. It illuminates a Romantic ballet as it was created in the Romantic era, and analyzes the importance of pantomime in Romantic ballet vocabulary and the emphasis on the dancer's ability to dramatize their character. This study also discusses the differences between oral transmission versus using a scripted source as means of teaching character roles in ballet.

Delimitation

In order to narrow the focus of this study, I chose to make the following delimitation: to confine the performance and video documentation of the Mad Scene to Henri Justamant's choreographic notebook from the Paris Opéra's last known 19th century production of *Giselle*, and an interpretation based upon Sorella Englund's July 2010 oral coaching at Bartholin International Ballet Seminar, Denmark.

Limitations

The following limitations shaped the study:

1. The rehearsal and coaching time allotted in order to complete this project by early April 2011: eight weeks of twice and thrice-weekly rehearsals; four hours per week.
2. The seven female dancers selected to restage and perform the two versions.
3. The interpretation of my notes taken during Ms. Englund's workshop classes, July 2010.
4. My translations into English of Henri Justamant's 1860's *Giselle ou Les Wilis* choreographic notebook.

5. The availability of stage lighting and space in which to best view and record the two versions as performed by the aforementioned dancers.
6. The ability to use iMovie and/or Final Cut in order to create a video document enabling viewers to watch the two versions simultaneously.
7. The amount of accessible material and resources available to me as I further researched various restagings of *Giselle* throughout its 170-year life span.

Methods

In order to reproduce these two versions of the Mad Scene, I crafted a list of items to complete in order to begin this process. First to secure the cast, which comprised seven undergraduate and graduate dance majors at the University of Oregon, as the characters involved in the Mad Scene. All seven were female, which in regards to the Justamant version was actually more in keeping with the casting policies of the Paris Opéra in the 1860's, as the rise of the female ballerina in the Romantic Era led to male dancers being edged from the stage, their male roles danced by women (Garafola 1985-86, 35). The dancers I chose were dramatically and technically strong examples of contemporary movers, and only two of them are of the idealized ballet body type. I made a conscious choice in this casting: rather than focus on a body type or style of mover for the movement portion of this project, I chose dancers who have exhibited a dramatic range in studio classes and onstage performances. Intelligent and mature dancers were of more interest and use for the purposes of this project, as I hoped to garner their feedback for the purpose of focusing on the pantomime and character play.

I obtained a recording of Michael Tilson Thomas conducting the London Symphony Orchestra's performance of *Giselle*. After listening to many CDs, this version is closest to the tempo and musical shadings we heard during the summer workshop with Ms. Englund. I also obtained a recording of Richard Bonyngne conducting the Orchestra of The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in their production of *Giselle*. This recording is said to be most consistent with Adolphe Adam's original score (Poesio 1994, 697; Smith 2000, 296) as it restores the sections that are more commonly excised in current performances, and I correctly assumed it would be a better fit and companion to the sheer amount of pantomime dialogue in the Justamant notation.

I purchased a copy of Henri Justamant's *Giselle ou Le Wilis: Ballet Fantastique in deux actes* from www.amazon.de. From the US version of amazon.com, I purchased a copy of Joan Lawson's *Mime: The Theory and Practice of Expressive Gesture*. I then spent many weeks translating the French dialogue text of the Justamant book both with Professor Marian Smith of

the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance and later by myself, then pinpointed the appropriate pantomime gestures in the Lawson book that I felt best served the dialogue of *Giselle*'s characters. I notated these gestures into the Justamant text, next to the blocks of translated dialogue for each character.

The proposed rehearsal process was an estimate of eight weeks. A minimum of two hours of rehearsal each week was planned with the entire cast, with smaller group rehearsals of one-hour durations interspersed throughout the week. As this project was not a technically or physically challenging piece to perform, the risk of injury from complicated dance steps was minimal. The initial challenge lay in the transmission of the mimed dialogue. In the case of the 21st c. version, I coached and walked the dancers through the movements, using my journal from the Bartholin summer workshop with similar prompts and exercises. But for the Henri Justamant 19th c Paris Opéra version, I felt it best to actually give them their own copies of the translated Mad Scene. In essence, each dancer would have a script to work from.

Last fall, Marian Smith generously and graciously assisted with translating Justamant's text of the Mad Scene, beginning with Hilarion's entrance to break up Giselle and Loys after the Galop has ended. I had photocopied the relevant pages of Justamant's text – stick figures, dialogue, and all – and simply hand wrote the English translations of every block of text directly above the original French. This initially led to a rather messy document to read through, but it enabled us to see the direction of travel for each of the characters as their actions and dialogue furthered the plot. I photocopied seven copies of this Justamant section, one for each dancer in the cast, and brought them to our first rehearsals.

I presented the dancers with the logistics and details of this project at our first full cast rehearsal. This included our ideal performance date(s), a rehearsal schedule, a discussion of oral transmission versus working from a script, and the plan for learning each version: to coach one version inspired by the coaching I had received in Denmark, and to learn the Justamant by using his notebook as our script and Joan Lawson's book *Mime* as our codified mime vocabulary dictionary. I briefly went over the plot of the ballet, and discussed the use and disuse of both pantomime and music in current productions. I then began teaching them the 21st c version that same day, with the Justamant version scheduled for the second full cast rehearsal the following week.

Inspired by my Bartholin workshop experience, and in order to help the dancers really dig into these character roles, I guided them through similar psychological motivation exercises Ms. Englund had used during the summer study. First, I asked the dancers to walk from one end of the room to the other with one specific emotional state as the impetus: happy. The second pass

was beyond happy; the next pass was to be traversed as if they were giddy with newfound love. These three seemed easy for them; they walked as if their feet had a difficult time staying attached to the floor, and their faces were alight and eyes were shiny.

From there we slowly moved into darker territory, which took many of them to a scary place. We went from one side of the room to the other tapping in to what it feels like when you move from happiness to slight anger, to more anger, to the desire to do damage because you're so angry, to the beginnings -- and ultimately the pit -- of despair and hopelessness. Many of them were teary, if not outright crying as we passed through this territory, and I wanted to bring them safely and securely back to a peaceful frame of mind. And so I guided them from abject despair to a small ray of hope, and from there to recognizing that that ray of hope is from a loved one, someone they were (or are) so thankful to know and love. The change and response in them all was transforming -- they walked with a sense of security and acceptance, and dare I say love? They walked calmly and confidently forward, as if they were walking into the arms of someone who meant the world to them. What these exercises accomplished in a very short period of time enabled the dancers to tap into the various emotional states needed in both versions of the Mad Scene. Many of the characters besides Giselle must convincingly evince grief, anger, sorrow and melancholy in the course of the Mad Scene, and without establishing a simple and naturalistic way for them to delve into and perform these feelings, the cast's portrayals may not have been nearly as effective.

Instead of attempting the entire 21st century Mad Scene in one day, I opted to break it into manageable chunks that corresponded to the aural landmarks Ms. Englund had pointed out to us. (These landmarks are further discussed in Chapter II's Review of Literature.) For our first day, we concentrated on blocking the onstage action from landmark #1 through landmark #3, relying upon the notes from my summer 2010 journal, from which the following is an example of how we traversed the emotional and physical road from landmark #1 to #2:

For the first landmark [Ms. Englund] asked us [as Giselle] to begin to feel a little sick; a little head, ear, and eye ache when Hilarion blows the hunting horn that calls the royal hunting party back to the village. Hilarion has already produced the very fine sword that no peasant would truthfully own, thus beginning the revelation that Loys is not who he claims to be, and the uncertainty of the sword's ownership has caused Giselle to begin to question Loys' sincerity. As a physical manifestation of Giselle's gradual comprehension, the orchestra instrument that produces the sound of the hunting horn hurts her ears, and her eyes become just a bit more sensitive to light; she covers her ears to protect them from the noise. Bathilde and the rest of the hunting party appear, and through mimed gestures Bathilde asks, "Albrecht -- why are you dressed this way?" "I... it is nothing," [Loys/Albrecht] replies, also in mime. "Well, take my hand then; as you're supposed to," she says; he takes her hand and they walk downstage together in a stately fashion. As the music holds its breath for a fateful

second, Albrecht slowly bows to kiss Bathilde's hand, sealing his fate and shattering Giselle's very being.

This is the second landmark – where the music comes crashing back in with its melodramatic fanfare when Albrecht/Loys' action of complete betrayal occurs. Giselle rushes to push Albrecht/Loys and Bathilde apart; she is furious and shocked out of herself enough to physically shove away a noblewoman and confront her:

“**NO!** He's **MY** man; **MINE!** We are engaged!” Giselle screams via mimed gestures.

“Oh nononononono – he's my man. **WE** are engaged,” mimes Bathilde, in an I-will-brook-no-more-of-this-Little-Peasant-Girl tone.

Using these notes as a means of instructing the dancers in the intentions behind the mimed movements, I also utilized them to further solidify the musical cues from Thomas's recording with the onstage action. In this example, the sound of the hunting horn causes Giselle (who is standing downstage right) to cover her ears and shield her eyes momentarily, and from there she watches in bewilderment as the hunting party reenters the stage. The dancer portraying Bathilde enters from stage right and upon recognizing Albrecht (who is upstage of center, stage left), pauses in her step just shy of center, then amusedly gestures to ask why he is dressed in peasant clothing. She does this by indicating to Albrecht with one arm, then draws both her arms gently up from mid-thigh to hip before opening both arms to her sides, palms up in a questioning motion. Albrecht answers by first indicating himself, then opens his arms in much the same fashion accompanied by a half-hearted and self-conscious shrug of the shoulders and slight shaking of the head as if saying “No.” Bathilde imperiously lifts her chin and stretches out her left arm to him, palm down, with a commanding look that causes him to step forward, take her hand and reluctantly walk downstage with her. The orchestra pauses (as if it is taking a tremulous breath) as Albrecht/Loys bends to kiss her hand just as the crashing fanfare of landmark #2 comes in. This causes Giselle to run up behind and between the two to push them apart, and after allowing for just the briefest pause to look at Loys she clutches at her chest, shoulders hunching protectively, as her body screams “No!” Giselle gestures imploringly at Loys, then looks back to Bathilde as she once again clutches her hands to her chest, claiming Loys as her own before stretching one arm forward as the other hand points at her ring finger. This indicates she thinks she is his betrothed, but Bathilde's imperious and deadly serious shake of her head, and haughty indication of *her* ring finger, reveals the truth to Giselle: Loys is not who he claims to be; he truly is a nobleman in disguise who is engaged to another.

From the moment of Bathilde's entrance to Giselle's realization of Loys' true identity is a little over thirty seconds of music. In order for the gestures to be convincingly delivered in the same amount of time it might take to actually speak these lines and perform these stage actions,

the dancers needed to know when and where they were to walk, stop, declaim, and move onto the next gesture in keeping with the score. My use of these stage blocking notes in conjunction with the orchestral score allowed the dancers to hit their cues consistently once they'd memorized their gestured lines and stage movement.

My process for coaching them from Justamant's 19th c. script was markedly different. To begin, we sat in a circle, everyone with the photocopied script in hand. We read aloud the English translations – each dancer as her assigned character – in order to become more familiar with not only the soon-to-be-learned mime dialogue, but also the stage directions and blocking Justamant provided. We then stood up, scripts still in hand, and with the same Thomas recording playing in the background attempted to walk through these stage blockings – essentially, walking from point to point on stage according to Justamant's dotted lines and detailed directions for each character – while saying the lines the dancers would later mime. This process continued for a few rehearsals, progressing further into the scene as more of the mimed dialogue was learned and substituted for the words they'd previously spoken. For the pantomime in this 19th c. version, I used Joan Lawson's book *Mime* as the guide, and from it developed a pantomime vocabulary for the notated conversations, rehearsing the dancers over and over in order to help them deliver their dialogue passages seamlessly and smoothly, unless directed otherwise.

Even though we were armed with these two sources for the 19th century version and my journal for the 21st century staging, there were countless examples of when my (or the dancers) interpretations of the described movements had to be accounted for. The Justamant text told us that Hilarion retrieved the sword from where he'd hidden it offstage left and then reappeared to present it to the assembled cast, stopping around the center downstage mark. What the manual didn't tell me was at what point in the music he should stop, nor specifically how he would travel from stage left to center. Would he run or walk quickly? Would he stride low to the ground, covering territory as his upper body twisted right and left to show the objects he carried? These were decisions that had to be made as the dancers became more familiar with the music and their movements, and a large factor of how the dancer cast as Hilarion moved in this scene was based upon her interpretation of the character: angry, bitter, spurned by Giselle and jealous of Loys. We discussed Hilarion's occupation as the village gamekeeper, and that the nature of his work consisted of thinking and reacting quickly when faced with a threatening situation. Therefore, when Hilarion saw his opportunity to unmask Loys he had to seize it, and the dancer cast as Hilarion used this information to inform her entrance. She covered ground quickly and deliberately, intent upon her prey, with a final emphatic shoving shrug of her upper body as she indicated to the entire cast that the sword belonged to Loys.

As for setting the pantomime gestures to the Justamant dialogue, this was another area where my interpretations of the text had to be negotiated. First, I had the initial translation of Justamant's Mad Scene, in which his French dialogue and directions were translated into English with the help of Marian Smith. Next, I had to apply what I felt were the appropriate mime gestures to each line of dialogue and actions. This involved searching through Lawson's *Mime*, Chapter 6: The Vocabulary of Gesture, which is essentially a mime dictionary for the classical dancer, for the appropriate gesture. While many of Justamant's conversations could be translated somewhat seamlessly into mime-speak, other phrases and words were not as easy to discern. As an example, Lawson does not document a mimetic gesture for the word "Deceive." When I was confronted with Giselle's statement of "No, no – you deceived me" to Loys, I had to decide what gesture would best convey the pathos and despair Giselle feels at that moment. After searching in vain through Lawson's entire chapter for an obvious synonym such as "Lie" or "Betray," I settled upon "Neglect," and thus we set the mimed phrase as "No, no – you me neglect." This is just one example of the various ways, based on my knowledge of the characters and contextual settings, I had to artistically negotiate my interpretation of the Justamant text in relation to Lawson's *Mime*.

From our second rehearsal on forward, I made sure we covered territory in both versions in order not to let too much time and forgetfulness happen in between meetings. With the smaller group rehearsals interspersed throughout the week, I was able to focus on specific sections within each version to help the dancers clarify their characters and pantomimed dialogue. This kept our learning pace fairly quick and happily on track, and enabled the dancers to feel comfortable delivering the mimed dialogue in our once-weekly full cast rehearsals. It also gave them time to analyze and pose questions, such as relating a backstory to their character's development and motivations, to how long should they wait before reacting to another character, to the specificity of which arm to use, and how large or small the movement ought to be in terms of particular emphasis or dramatic intent.

As our rehearsals progressed, and thanks in part to their suggestions, I typed out a cleaner version of the Justamant script which is attached to this document as Appendix A. The method of doing so involved another layer of personal interpretation as I attempted to retranslate the text, clarifying the previously unknown or guessed-at words by looking for similar spellings or combinations of letters elsewhere in the document. Justamant had rendered a number of French terms phonetically, and while I had originally gleaned what the misspelled word might mean thanks to the context, I wanted to be more confident that the dialogue, directions, and stage actions were less confounding for the cast. With this new script I included the character's name,

the stage blocking they were to complete, the dialogue they performed, and the mime-speak for that dialogue. For example:

Hilarion, yanking **Giselle's** left wrist and pulling her a couple steps downstage right
“Why?? Because he’s a lord in disguise!”
Why?!? He Lord!
Loys says to himself
“Great God!”
Surprise
Giselle, laughing
“Him? Impossible!”
Him, No (smiling)
Loys
“He is crazy.”
He Think Not
Hilarion
“Ahhh, I’m crazy? Well – you’ll see!
Think Not? You See!
Hilarion runs/exits stage left to grab *Loys*’ sword and necklace he’d stolen and hidden.

As we used this new and infinitely more legible script, the model for learning and rehearsing each new section of the Justamant text progressed as follows: the dancers first read aloud from their scripts while blocking (similar to the blocking detailed above in regards to the modern version), next they read and blocked with music. Then I taught the new mimed actions for the dialogue, and finally we ran the pantomime with the music, multiple times.

In addition to the Thomas recording of *Giselle*, I also obtained the version recorded by Richard Bonyngé that is purported to be from the autograph copy of Adolphe Adam’s score (Poesio 1994, 697; Smith 2000, 296). It includes many of the sections Adam composed that subsequent directors later cut as they restaged the ballet over these past 140+ years, and it is this score that best fit Justamant’s text. This became obvious almost immediately as I read aloud the entire Justamant scene to Thomas’ recording – there simply was not enough music to say and pantomime all that was meant to be said. With the Bonyngé however, there was plenty of room in the music to effectively deliver all of the mime.

It occurred to me to schedule a *Giselle* viewing to watch a full-length production to familiarize them with the plot and storyline. I quickly arranged and hosted an evening for the majority of the cast to watch the Royal Ballet’s 2006 DVD of *Giselle*. During the first act, they avidly watched and asked questions, and made discoveries for themselves pertaining to their characters’ development. The dancer assigned to play Loys felt that after viewing this and other productions she had a better idea of Loys’ character in the modern performance tradition. She felt that perhaps he was not as caddish as she originally thought, and that he genuinely loved Giselle but was trapped by circumstance and societal expectations.

Our rehearsals began mid- to late January; by mid-February both versions were complete. More time was spent on the clarification of the pantomime, such as clearly indicating that “You... and you” meant two distinct gestures specifically directed at two different people as opposed to just generally waving an arm or two in their directions. We also spent time developing their character’s relationships and how they would react to Giselle and each other’s actions on stage in both versions. I returned to translating as much of Justamant’s *Giselle ou Le Wilis* as possible to supplement the Mad Scene. Doing so led to many illuminations of character development through analysis of the script, which further informed the dancers’ interpretations of their roles. For example, in Justamant’s text Bathilde (the princess who is actually betrothed to Loys) is not at all the same haughty creature of Ms. Englund’s coaching. Instead Bathilde is sweet and friendly, and takes genuine interest in Giselle’s life and hopes of marriage to a nice boy. She invites her to her own upcoming royal wedding, for she is also getting married to a nice boy. Of course, they are both speaking of the same man. The upshot of this revelation was that the dancer playing Bathilde felt that Bathilde would be genuinely concerned for Giselle’s welfare, and deeply hurt by Loys/Albrecht’s betrayal as well.

Finally, in order to record and document both stagings we set up two video cameras for both dress rehearsal and performance nights. The post-showing question and answer session was recorded as well. The DVD is housed in the University of Oregon’s Department of Dance for future researchers to observe.

Significance of Study

In demonstrating and comparing a workshop version based upon Sorella Englund’s 2010 oral coaching of *Giselle*’s Act 1 Mad Scene with Henri Justamant’s 1860’s staging, we had an opportunity to view and document a 21st century version of a character role in comparison with a 19th century version much closer to the 1841 premiere of the ballet. This was the first time that any part of the Justamant text had been restaged in the United States, possibly the world, and a comparison between the two helped illuminate choreographic choices the directors of each time frame felt most compelled to show in their depictions of Giselle. In addition, I drew attention to each version’s use of the musical score within this scene. In these restagings and evaluations I analyze how different interpretations offer different representations of her figure as a woman in the spirit of Romanticism.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Romantic Ballet's Emphasis on Drama

The theatergoers of 19th c. Paris during the Romantic Era of ballet (1830 to roughly 1850) were accustomed to a dramatic mix of spectacle, fantasy, music, plot and action combined onstage to further along the story. In the case of opera, this included vocal aria and recitatives; in ballet, the actions were danced and pantomimed instead of sung. The use of pantomime as a means of furthering the storyline via the characters' dialogue was an integral part of ballets such as *Giselle* and *La Sylphide* (1832). The plots also usually involved "political or social contrasts, and... affairs of the heart" (Smith 2000, 22), in which pantomime was a necessary component of the onstage action and of a dancer's ability to portray a character with believable sincerity and dramatic intent. During Act 1 of *Giselle*, many opportunities for miming a character's emotions, conversations, and soliloquies abound, such as Berthe's detailed description of the Wilis to the assembled peasants, Hilarion's anger towards Loys and love for Giselle, and Giselle's entrance from her cottage after hearing someone knock upon her door. In modern stagings we sometimes still see these examples, but in the 19th century the audience actually witnessed much more. By Marian Smith's estimate, *Giselle* originally included contained 54 minutes of mime to 60 minutes of dance (Smith 2000, 296).

What this means is that there was much more emphasis on the dramatic storytelling in the Romantic ballets than we have today. The evolution of dance since that time has included more works of abstract, or plotless ballets with no story to be told, where movement exists only for the sake of movement, with or without the support of the music. That is not to say that abstract or plotless ballet is less valid, but it does serve as a comparator as far as modern audience expectations are concerned. Currently, we rely on program notes or press releases to inform us of the plot details or the choreographer's inspiration. Audiences of the Romantic era were in some instances much more informed. For example, after a theater announced its upcoming production the libretto was sent out in its original form, or as a novelization, to local printshops and newspapers for publication; it would also be available for sale as souvenir pamphlets, or in the lobby of the performance venue (Smith 2000, 22). On some occasions, readers would gather in salons or coffeehouses to discuss the story prior to the actual performance. When the curtain rose

they already knew the plot of the ballet; they sat back and watched the dancing and pantomime flesh out the story they were already familiar with (Smith 2000, 199-200).

As to what the pantomimic gestures of 19th century actually looked like, we simply don't know. Numerous 19th century pedagogues from Jean Georges Noverre to Carlo Blasis had written about the art of pantomime (Poesio 1993,176), and included many engravings, drawings, and bookplates in their treatises to illustrate the moments of mimed gesture they described. However, it was not yet a codified language of gesture the way ballet vocabulary was at that time (Poesio 1993, 285). Due to the fact that no visual recording devices were available to capture 19th century productions, we have no way of knowing how large or small the gestures were, or how much of what we know from Lawson's *Mime* resembled what was seen on those stages at that time. As stated previously in Chapter I, I thus made certain artistic decisions regarding the mime gestures and their dramatic intent, based upon my knowledge of the context of the scene and the characters in this ballet.

Giselle Synopsis

For the purposes of this study, the synopsis of the ballet is taken from the original 1841 libretto of Théophile Gautier and Jules Henri Vernoy, Marquis de St. Georges (Balanchine 1977, 264-270; Smith 2000, 227-238):

Giselle is a young peasant who lives with her mother Berthe in an unnamed Rhineland village some time ago. She falls head over heels in love with a young and handsome man named Loys, who is actually a local duke named Albrecht in disguise. She is also courted by another peasant named Hilarion, the village's gamekeeper, but pays him no mind as her heart belongs to Loys/Albrecht. While other villagers work in the vineyards tending and harvesting grapes, Giselle does needlework, either spinning or sewing or both, and in the evenings spends time dancing with her friends and Loys. Unfortunately, she suffers from a heart condition, which her mother frequently references in order to dissuade Giselle from overexerting herself by dancing too much. Berthe unnerves everyone as she tells the story of the local ghosts, the Wilis, who are the vengeful spirits of unmarried girls who died before their wedding day. The Wilis are rumored to rise and gather at night, where they seek revenge upon men by waylaying any lost traveler and dancing him to death. This will be Giselle's fate, Berthe says, if she doesn't take care of herself and dies before she is married.

Hilarion discovers Loys' true identity, and shortly after a royal hunting party has stopped for refreshment at Berthe and Giselle's cottage, he exposes Albrecht/Loys' ruse to the entire

village. As the royal hunting party reappears and discovers Albrecht in his peasant disguise, an even worse truth is exposed: Albrecht the duke is in fact already engaged to someone else, the Princess Bathilde. When Giselle learns of his deceit she loses all sense of reality and reason, goes mad, and after several flashbacks to happier moments with Loys and a dangerous encounter with his sword, she dies.

True to her mother's word, Giselle is summoned from her grave by the Queen of the Wilis to be initiated into their sisterhood. With lurching steps, Giselle is a reanimated corpse, a zombie who is commanded (or released) by the Queen to dance again. When Albrecht comes to her grave to mourn, he is discovered by the Wilis and almost danced to death. Giselle, harboring a love for him so strong it has transcended even her own death, protects him as best she can until dawn. With the sun's rising, the Wilis must return to earth, herself included, and Albrecht is left alone and bereft. (Balanchine 1977, 264-270; Smith 2000, 227-238).

The Mad Scene

Giselle is considered one of the greatest ballets of our classical canon (Lawson 1964, 62), and has been in repertory the world over since its premiere in 1841. The challenge and appeal of the lead role demands a great deal of artistry in both technical abilities and dramatic intent from the dancer. She has to convince the audience that Giselle truly is a young flesh and blood girl in Act 1 whose selfless love for Albrecht, even beyond death, will save him from the wrath of the Wilis in Act 2. The means of the transformation from life to death comes via the Mad Scene, where the shock of discovering Albrecht's true identity and marital state sends Giselle spinning into a break from reality and ultimately leads to her death.

In the context of Romanticism and Romantic onstage ideals, the Mad Scene of *Giselle* was not without precedent. As a dramatic device, it had been in place in early 19th c. operas such as Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835), which also sees the leading lady descend into insanity before an assembled cast (Smith 2000, 168) as well as the ballets *Le Déserteur* (1789) and *Nina, ou la folle par amour* (1813) (Poesio 1994, 455). As a tool of Romanticism, by depicting the repercussions of transgressing the social order, the heroine of *Giselle* loses her mind and her life yet reemerges as a Wili, satisfying Théophile Gautier's dual plot devices of yearning for the unattainable and displaying the "immortal death" (Poesio 1994, 455), as well as the subsuming of rational thought in favor of human emotions and passions (Poesio 1994, 460).

As to going mad onstage or in real life, in tandem with the Romantic Era's writers, artists, and composers' reaction against the perceived rigidity of rational thought, formalism and

classicism, I think it could be construed as a Romantic reaction against forces over which the players have no control. In a case of forbidden love such as in *Giselle*, the main character's reaction to her supposed intended's betrayal takes the form of shock, denial, grief, and ultimately madness. That one might go crazy over the pursuit of a love was a Romantic display of passion overtaking reason. To have that love rejected and renounced due to societal constraints sent fictitious figures (like Giselle) spinning into madness. In essence, madness could be seen as another way in which heartbreak may destroy a life, and another form of the ultimate yearning for the unattainable. Onstage depictions of madness may also have been a way for artists to define or reveal the strong and terrifying human emotions that often underlie passionate love.

Within *Giselle*, the Mad Scene offers dancers an opportunity to explore their dramatic capabilities and interpretations. What does it mean to 'go mad,' and how does one go about portraying that? My attraction to this scene and this project has its roots firmly lodged here: few contemporary roles offer the dancer a chance to run through the gamut of emotions we see the main character explore in *Giselle*. Each dancer's ability to tap into those emotional states and bring them to onstage life will differ according to the coaching they've received and life experiences they bring to their interpretation. It's in the watching that we as an audience see the mental and emotional toll Loys' betrayal has upon Giselle; it's in the performance that we as dancers express that sometimes heartbreak will indeed destroy. I do not know if a dancer needs to have survived an emotional breakup in order to effectively portray Giselle, but the ability to reveal that sense of loss, imagined or otherwise, is crucial.

Staging Sources

The two main sources used in this project are primary in nature. The first source consisted of my own notations and interpretations of Sorella Englund's oral coaching during July 2010 at the Bartholin International Ballet Seminar, held at the Royal Theater of Copenhagen, Denmark. This summer intensive is run through the Royal Danish Ballet, a company known for its preservation of the Romantic Era ballets of August Bournonville in addition to a vast repertoire of contemporary and 20th century choreography. All of our classes were taught by instructors affiliated, or currently dancing, with the Royal Danish Ballet, one of them being Sorella Englund. Ms. Englund was born in Finland in 1945 and began dancing for the Royal Danish Ballet in 1966, the first non-Danish dancer accepted into the company. During her career as principal dancer, she was known for her extremely expressive dramatic qualities in both the 19th century classics as well as contemporary repertory. This past July, in post-class conversation

with myself and another dancer, Ms. Englund explained how during her own training she would come up with a story for every classroom exercise, from pliés to grand allegro, in order to dance them with feeling and intent in addition to developing her technical mastery.

Her career as principal dancer was abruptly sidelined due to health issues at age 33 (Newman 2003, 333). In the years since, she has continued to perform character roles such as Madge the Witch in *La Sylphide* in addition to coaching and teaching at the National Ballet of Canada, Boston Ballet, as well as the Royal Danish Ballet. And now in collaboration with RDB's new artistic director, Nikolaj Hübbe, she has begun coaching and restaging 19th century ballets such as *Giselle* for the company.

The second primary source utilized for this project was Henri Justamant's *Giselle* choreographic notebook, which not only includes mimetic prompts but also specific choreographic notation – a true treasure trove in that it is much closer to the 1841 premiere of *Giselle* (Daly 2009, 97) than the oral coaching tradition that current dance companies rely upon when restaging this ballet. This notebook will be discussed further in this chapter.

Sorella Englund's Coaching at the Bartholin Ballet Seminar

In Copenhagen during July 2010, thirteen students including myself were admitted to Sorella Englund's Stage Drama class during the Bartholin International Ballet Seminar. The first two afternoons with Ms. Englund were spent learning and processing various methods of character development through movement. For example, we were asked to explore how we might show that we were in love, angry beyond belief, haughty and arrogant, sad, hopeless, or happy, etc., from simple walking exercises to fully danced phrases of choreography. On the third day, Ms. Englund commenced coaching us through key scenes of Act 1 of *Giselle*. She stated that in order for us to fully inhabit and enact this version of *Giselle's* Mad Scene, we first had to understand Giselle herself as her fateful day began. Thus, as she and Mr. Hübbe have restaged it, and as she taught it to us, Giselle is the first character the audience sees onstage during the last measures of the overture. Her performance of the ballotté phrase and the feelings behind the movement - young, hopeful, in love with the world and so trustingly innocent - sets the dramatic stage for her complete and total breakdown upon learning of Albrecht's betrayal at the end of Act 1. When she is courted by Albrecht as Loys, her negation of his sworn vow of love corresponds to her naïvety and the total trust she places in a flower's ability to predict his fidelity to her ("he loves her *not*") lends itself to the foreshadowing of events to come; she is truly crushed and saddened that a daisy petal stated that he did not, in fact, love her.

The Mad Scene itself was approachable by pinpointing and coordinating the five landmarks: aural landmarks in the music that are meant to coincide with physical and emotional landmarks for various positions we had to find on stage. For the first landmark she asked us to begin to feel a little sick; a head, ear, and eye ache in response to her first inkling that something is horribly amiss as Hilarion blows the hunting horn that calls the royal hunting party back to the village. The second landmark occurs when the music comes crashing in with its melodramatic heightening of the onstage action of complete betrayal: the moment Albrecht bends to kiss the hand of his real fiancée Bathilde, shocking Giselle out of her previous state of nausea and creeping realization and headlong into anger and desperation.

The third landmark takes place just before one of Giselle's leitmotifs is about to begin. She makes her way to standing just right of center and slightly more upstage than previously located, hunched over and holding the skin covering her head – it feels like her brain is going to explode if she doesn't hold tightly – and she stands there for the first recitation of the petal plucking melody, completely still and unmoving, trying to prevent her head from exploding as her reason and sanity ebb away.

The next landmark is the skittering music coming low from the violins, and the dangerous shiny object on the ground she fixates upon in her madness. It's a very shiny sword that she stoops down to grab, swing, and drag along the ground, visually and physically matching the sounds coming from the orchestra. The final landmark occurs on the loud fanfare as Giselle has a moment of total lucidity: the reality of Albrecht's betrayal comes crashing down as she runs to Berthe, and after a moment she turns and runs to Loys/Albrecht; leaping up to him she instead immediately falls to the ground, dead.

What was most effective for me during this entire process in the workshop was watching and listening to Ms. Englund as she changed characters, emotional states, and social statuses within a matter of minutes as she described and enacted each of the main players in this scene. Her Bathilde was a haughty regal woman who wouldn't deign to speak to peasants and who swept up her imaginary dress's skirts and train so that it wouldn't be splashed with imaginary dirt. Every detail imaginable was visible and present when Ms Englund was Bathilde: the fire in her eyes, the controlled tightness of her mouth, her ramrod stiff spine, and her shock at the dancer playing Giselle's audacity to actually touch her. This led me to think about and practice how I would walk, look at and interact with the other dancers involved. Without trying to perfectly imitate Ms. Englund's portrayals, we were encouraged to find our own method of becoming these characters, down to the smallest details such as the cast of the eyes. She seemed quite pleased as each of us concluded a run-through of the various scenes throughout the week, and gave us

positive feedback on the effectiveness of our interpretations and choices. She also queried if we could dig even deeper into the characters, hinting that building a backstory can be most helpful to character development.

Giselle ou Les Willis: The Choreographic Notebook of Henri Justamant

[A] notebook owned by the choreographer and ballet master Henri Justamant, which Deutsches Tanzarchiv in Cologne purchased at an auction in 2002. It is a treasure that records the last production of *Giselle* to be performed at Paris Opéra during the 19th century. Justamant was engaged as the maître de ballet for the company's 1868/9 season and, luckily, meticulously recorded the ballets on which he worked in his choreographic notebooks. The action of *Giselle* is shown with stick figures and floor pattern notations, accompanied by descriptive text, giving an invaluable record of the ballet less than three decades after its premiere in Paris [in 1841]. (Daly 2009, 97)

Available from www.amazon.de and www.olms.de, the German publisher of Justamant's notebook, this book is a facsimile edition, and one that Professor Marian Smith of the School of Music and Dance at the University of Oregon reviewed for the journal *Dance Chronicle* in 2010. Justamant's handwriting fluctuates between red or black ink, in direct correlation to the small stick figures immediately above each block of text. A legend at the beginning of his book lets us know that red ink is used for Giselle and other female characters, black for Albrecht/Loys and the male characters. Written in French (some of the words are phonetic renderings rather than actual spellings), the text describes not only the mimed passages that were a large part of the original production, but also many of the actual ballet steps to be performed by the main characters and the corps de ballet. Accompanying the stick figures are dotted lines indicating direction of travel and the path the dancers are to take; essentially, Justamant was providing stage blocking for the directors of subsequent productions. At this time, it is not known whether this notebook constitutes Justamant's own choreography or his restaging of Jules Perrot and Jean Coralli's (Smith 2010, 460). Further research into contemporaneous sources is required to determine, if possible, how much the original 1841 had been altered or completely lost by the time Justamant charted his notations. What is known is that after his tenure at the Paris Opéra, *Giselle* was not performed on that stage again until 1924 (Poesio 1994, 693).

Henri Justamant was ballet master at the Paris Opéra during the 1868-69 season, and had previously worked in provincial French theaters and enjoyed an international career in London, Berlin and Brussels before and after his Opéra tenure (Justamant 2008, xxiii). His time at the Opéra coincided with the last French performances of *Giselle* that century; the ballet was picked up by Milanese (Sowell 1995, 297) and Russian companies, with Marius Petipa of the Russian

Imperial Ballet providing new choreography and musical revisions in 1884 and 1887 (Poesio 1994, 7). It was from the Petipa version that Paris first saw *Giselle* again (Beaumont 1996, 130), as neither Justamant's nor any previous French notation systems were yet known to exist.

Marian Smith generously and graciously assisted with translating Justamant's text of the Mad Scene, including the staged actions just prior to it, in late fall of 2010. Upon reading this I was able to immediately see differences from the choreography customarily found in the modern performance tradition of this ballet. The movement details in this older document ranged from Giselle's fidgeting, her startled movements, her direct looks at Albrecht while she points at him and walks backwards, the concern she displays over her crying mother, the pathways she takes about the stage in her delusional state, and her final embrace of Loys/Albrecht. With actual blocking, and a side-by-side comparison to a modern version of the same scene, I found many other differences between the two including stark contrasts in character study.

The Music of *Giselle*: Adolphe Adam's Score

Music propels the story of *Giselle*, and the story itself is centered on the act of dancing. Giselle loves to dance, and as we know from the synopsis, Act 2's Wilis are vengeful maidens who will systematically dance a man to death, once caught.

Adolphe Adam (1803-1856) was one of the most successful Parisian composers of the Romantic Era (Smith 2000, 276), with the ability to produce work for both operas and ballets during that time. He trained at the Conservatoire (where his father was a professor) and upon his return from a tour of western Europe he began working with Eugène Scribe, composing music for a comic opera which Scribe had just completed writing (Beaumont 1996, 54). This led to a large number of theatrical compositions over the course of the rest of his life, including forty operas and fourteen ballets, all in addition to masses and songs (Beaumont 1996, 54). What he is best known for today is the score for *Giselle*, which he wrote in as little as one week to two months' time. The time disputes vary according to the primary sources -- Gautier suggests that Adam finished the score in less than a week (Beaumont 1996, 55), while Adam contradicts himself within his own unpublished memoirs, claiming in one instance eight days worth of work and in another, three weeks (Beaumont 1996, 56). Recent scholarship by Marian Smith states that Adam in fact signed and dated each section of the ballet as he completed it; it is by these date markers that one may see that he had signed off on three sections by 11 April 1841, and completed the last on 3 June 1841 (Smith 2000, 173).

What is most striking about the music of *Giselle* are the leitmotifs Adam employed, the musical phrases or themes repeated several times throughout the course of the ballet that not only help further the plot, but also provide color to the ballet's main characters by defining their traits and personalities. In Joan Lawson's 1964 text *A History of Ballet and its Makers*, she discusses five of these leitmotifs (three for Giselle, one for the Wilis, one for the hunting call presaging male action onstage) and their associated danced or mimed movements (Lawson 1964, 64). Most productions of *Giselle* keep to these conventions, allowing the astute audience member to not only make the connections of specific musical theme to a specific character or characters, but also to denote the changes occurring in the character due to the plot of the ballet. One example is Giselle's dance motif:

This consists of two *ballonnés* and a *pas de basque*... The *enchaînement* is used to describe Giselle's love of dance and opens her first solo, establishing, as it were, this particular facet of her character. She dances it later when arm in arm with Albrecht; when Albrecht's fiancée asks her what she enjoys most; uses it in a sadly distorted form in the Mad Scene; and in a more elevated version in her dance as a Wili shortly before Albrecht falls exhausted. (Lawson 1964, 64)

One of the many ways a dancer fleshes out the character of Giselle is the repetition of these steps. Depending upon where this step is called for in the action, the dancer may emphasize the large sweeping scale of the steps, or focus more on the *port de bras*, or even deliver the phrase in a jerky and disjointed fashion so that the audience may see the emotional state of the character as she soars from the heights of love to the depths of madness.

Adam's score is also closely related to operatic conventions of the time, including the use of what one may call "conversational" music for the pantomime sections of *Giselle* which correspond to opera's recitatives, and can be clearly heard when two or more characters are miming dialogue. One example would be the argument between Albrecht and his squire Wilfrid in the beginning of Act 1. We hear two orchestral instruments exchanging a back-and-forth dialogue that mirrors the onstage mime as Wilfrid entreats Albrecht to take off his peasant disguise and stop courting Giselle, and Albrecht responds with growing impatience, finally pulling rank by dismissing his squire (Smith 2000, 178). In recently recorded stagings such as the 1977 American Ballet Theater production with Mikhail Baryshnikov and Natalia Makarova, this orchestral conversation is ignored. The instrumental phrasing and voice that is Wilfrid's is actually used by Baryshnikov's Albrecht, and vice-versa, as they gesture to one another in inquiry and response. Watching this scene after learning that their mimed dialogue is meant to correspond exactly with Adam's music is disconcerting, to say the least. It's akin to viewing a foreign film that's not only been poorly dubbed but also exhibits a two-second delay, as Albrecht's gestures

occur anywhere from right on cue to the very end of his music and running over into Wilfrid's, and all variations in between.

When once the pantomimed dialogue was specifically correlated to the music it is now not seen as vitally important, demonstrating an evolution in ballet and its relationship to characterization and dramatization. The Justamant text gives us a taste of what the Romantic ballet looked like as it was performed in the 19th century. In contrast, while today's audiences may glean the storyline from the program notes, the effectiveness of the narrative's delivery has become watered down through this disuse of the score in correspondence with the mimed dialogue. We get the gist of the story, but perhaps we miss details both small and large.

Commentary on Adam's Score for *Giselle*

Marian Smith has written a number of scholarly articles and texts concerning *Giselle* and its place within the context of the Romantic Era of the 18th century. In her book *Ballet and Opera in the Age of Giselle*, she has pointed that not only is Adam's score closely related to operatic conventions of the time, but that there are even instances where dancer's "voices" are heard: a prime example being the high tremulous violin "laughter" that Giselle erupts into in the beginning of the Mad Scene (Smith 2000, 183). As Ms. Englund taught us, that violin skitter was a sound that made Giselle look up from where she was huddled on the ground but caused her to quickly shut and cover her eyes again, as if the light of day was much too bright and painful – there was no mention of laughter at all. After recording myself performing both Ms. Englund's and Justamant's versions and using a split-screen technique to view both recordings simultaneously, I was able to clearly observe the different use of the violin tremolo: as learned from Ms. Englund, at that moment Giselle quickly recoils and covers her eyes while huddling on the floor, while in Justamant's version Giselle is standing and looking at her mother, laughing foolishly ("...ri bêtément") as she does so (Justamant 2008, 113). These two different uses of the body in response to the music are examples of how the interpretation of the character's descent into madness may vary; Ms. Englund's version is akin to an individual psychotic break amidst physical stimuli, whereas the Justamant script focuses more on the characters interactions with each other to show Giselle's sudden disconnect from them, and therefore from reality, due to the nature of Loys/Albrecht's betrayal.

In 1994 Giannandrea Poesio of London Metropolitan University wrote a three-part series for the London-based periodical *Dancing Times*, stating that *Giselle* is remarkable for being one of the first ballets to utilize a new score rather than a pastiche of popular music and arias as was

common at that time. Smith added her assent to that statement in her own book mentioned above. Poesio points out that the audience can hear the Wilis theme during Giselle's Mad Scene, and that she herself hears it as if her name is being called, from one side of the stage and then to the other (Poesio 1994, 565). As she hears it, she runs to stage left, then stage right, to heed the call; in some productions Albrecht reaches for her but just misses as she eludes his grasp, which is itself danced leitmotif that recurs during Act 2.

According to Ross Alley, a ballet accompanist and another contributor to *Dancing Times*, Adam's leitmotifs are used most effectively in the Mad Scene of Act 1 (Alley 1997, 17). The phrases from Giselle's happier moments such as her pas de deux with Loys and the "he loves me, he loves me not" music as she plucks the flower petals return, albeit disjointedly and distractedly, starting and stopping again, much the way Giselle's deranged mind flits from memory to memory after Loys/Albrecht's betrayal. She repeats the same physical movements originally presented in those happier moments, but in an equally distracted manner as the musical phrases themselves (Alley 1997, 17; Poesio 1994, 689).

Interpretations and Archetypes

Sally Banes and Noël Carroll discuss the concept of Otherness in their interpretation and analysis of *La Sylphide* (1832), the Romantic Ballet that ushered in the era of the rise of the female ballerina, literally to the tips of her toes and figuratively as she supplanted the virtuosity of the male dancer. In their discussion of sylphs, undines, peris, wilis, and nixies as Otherworldly creatures who may be seen as tempting men from hearth and home, they also lightly tackle the subject of *Giselle* as cautionary tale of what happens when one tries to marry outside of one's social class: despair and death await (Banes & Carroll 1997, 94). Using this concept of Otherness as a jumping-off point, I look at Giselle herself as an Other, already removed from village life and work of the Folk who surround her, even *before* her transformation as an initiate into the Wilis in Act 2.

When Act 1 begins in many versions of the ballet, including Justamant's, the audience sees clumps and groups of dancers dressed as peasant grape-pickers and vine-gatherers heading upstage to exit. Program notes and the libretto tell us that we are seeing an early morning on the last day of the grape harvest in an unnamed Rhineland or Thuringian village (Gautier 1986, 95). It is after they have exited that we are introduced to both Loys (as a duke in disguise), and Giselle who does not join the rest of the village in the grape harvest. Due to her heart condition she works

in hearthside activities such as sewing instead of the hard labor tasks required of the rest of the village. Yet it is she who is crowned Queen of the Vintage later in the day.

Banes and Carroll discuss the hearth in their analysis of *La Sylphide*. Using their analysis of the hearth as a liminal space and applying that to *Giselle*, the hearth is seen as a symbol of home and home-based survival skills such as providing protection from elements and cooking of food. Yet it is also a place of transition, where the supernatural elements and otherworldly creatures may enter and exit to interact with human Folk (Banes & Carroll 1997, 99). While the entirety of *Giselle*'s Act 1 takes place out of doors on the last day of the grape harvest, Giselle indicates to Bathilde that she actually spends her days sewing – an indoor activity of connecting pieces together. Already she is an Other, separate from the rest of the peasants by virtue of her physical condition – her weakened heart – which directly impacts her contribution to the survival of the village Folk. But this underlying subtext of the hearth as a liminal place, transitory in nature, is another method we might apply to assist the audience in understanding her transition from flesh-and-blood young girl to ghostly specter. Giselle's task-related physical identity is bound to the hearth, which immediately separates her from the rest of her peer group, but also illuminates her connection to the supernatural world, figuratively as an Other in Act 1, and as a ghostly Wili in Act 2.

Perhaps there is something to Giselle's Otherness that is highly attractive to Albrecht/Loys. Violette Verdy speculate that Giselle herself is half-noble (Verdy 1977, 61) as her absentee father is never seen nor mentioned – in fact, Berthe may have had her own dalliance with a local duke nine months prior to Giselle's birth. Verdy also hints that Giselle's mysterious parentage and her potential half-noble bloodline draws Loys to her (Verdy 1977, 61); I wonder then if this mysterious father's genetics are also responsible for her congenital heart condition, as well as her flight into madness?

In his book *The Ballet Called Giselle*, Cyril Beaumont asks the big question: to what extent has *Giselle* changed between 1841 and the present (Beaumont 1996, 26)? If one reads the synopses and various versions of the libretto, we can see obvious changes and cuts made when compared to video footage and live performances of the 20th and 21st centuries. The mime scenes originally staged in Act 1 give way to the danced mimed scenes of Act 2 in order to further the plot via dance and music (Beaumont 1996, 26), but we need to keep in mind Smith's statement that *Giselle* originally contained 54 minutes of mime to 60 minutes of dance (Smith 2000, 296). Taking into account the changing technical virtuosity of trained dancers over the decades, and directors or choreographers such as Marius Petipa desiring to make what they felt were appropriate changes, it's no small wonder that what we currently see onstage vastly differs from

the original. While many of ballet's steps have increased in size and height over time, the petit allegro of 1841 would be a challenge for most of today's dancers. But again – just how much has *Giselle* and Giselle herself changed? This discussion is addressed in Chapter III's comparisons of the two versions.

Beaumont's discussion of notable dancers who have performed the role of Giselle ranges from critical sources to actual viewed performances in his own time. What seems to repeatedly draw his attention are the performers who deliver the title character's traits, emotions, and mimed passages with absolute sincerity; their various approaches to the Mad Scene; and their transitions to the character's embodiment of pure love in Act 2. Further research is needed to observe a number of these ballerinas, Olga Spessivtseva first and foremost, as she was widely lauded in the 1920's and 30's for her performances as Giselle. She took it upon herself to observe inmates at a mental hospital in preparation for the Mad Scene, and whether this study provided a naturalistic interpretation or a melodramatic rendering is up to the viewer to decide (Wishy and Dolin, 1982). Regardless, her research reflects an interest in the dramatic intent of the character that supplemented her widely regarded technical strengths as a dancer (Wishy and Dolin, 1982).

What is intriguing to both Professor Smith and me is how *very* different Justamant's 1860's Giselle is compared to the versions recorded and performed by Natalia Makarova (1977) and Diana Vishneva (2004). In viewing their Mad Scenes via videotape, DVD and YouTube, their 20th and 21st century Giselles are broken-hearted young girls who really don't raise too much of a fuss before their reality breaks and subsequent deaths. In contrast, Justamant's heroine has no problem calling Albrecht out for his deceit, taking him to task for promising to marry her when he's engaged to someone else, and finally cursing him just before the Mad Scene begins in earnest with the same crossed-arm gesture Myrtha uses in Act 2 to condemn Hilarion and Albrecht to their deaths. This Giselle is no pushover, and she evinces that early on in the ballet. Beginning with her first entrance, moments after Loys/Albrecht has knocked on her door and hidden himself, she rushes onstage expecting to find him. When he's not there, she essentially stomps her feet and vows to make him pay for tricking her so (Justamant 2008, 14). In the 19th c. Justamant version she was a spirited and feisty young girl; currently, the soft and wilting personality often portrayed in current productions is a radical behavioral shift from what graced the stage 140-plus years ago.

Also of note is an interesting gender role reversal between modern day stagings and the Justamant book. Currently, we see a Giselle at the beginning of the Mad Scene (at the loud fanfare when Albrecht kisses Bathilde's hand) who pleads with Loys to speak to her, to tell her that it's not true he's engaged already, that he's not a duke. As I learned it last summer, and as we

often see onstage in this day and age, Albrecht can't or won't look at Giselle, and in fact does no more than a half-hearted attempt to come near her during the Mad Scene until it's too late. Yet in Justamant's, it's Albrecht who pleads with Giselle, who watches and follows her movements avidly, and at several points rushes to her side to speak or interact with her. He and her mother flank Giselle when after a final mimed conversation asking him to pray for her soul, she dies. Just before the curtain falls on the final tableau of this scene, Albrecht collapses in a faint in the arms of his squire, as if the emotional trauma of Giselle's death has rendered him unconscious, unable to cope. This is a similar reaction modern audiences see today from the female character of Giselle after Loys' betrayal has sunk in: she collapses to the floor in a faint or a quivering huddle, unable or unwilling to move for a time as the Mad Scene begins.

The evolution of dance from the Romantic Era of 1830-1850 to the present day has passed through decades of change. As the Russian Imperial ballet tradition arose in the mid- to late 1800's under Marius Petipa, the hallmarks of what we call the Classical Era of ballet included a greater emphasis on virtuosic technique and training and more onstage opportunities to display these skills (Anderson 1992, 108). Divertissements, grand pas de deux, and a highly skilled and regimented corps de ballet served the dual purposes of showcasing the dancers' athleticism and artistry as well as loosely furthering the plot of the ballet (Anderson 1992, 108). An Act 1 solo for Giselle was most likely introduced during Petipa's revisions; one that while showcasing the lead dancer's technical skills only marginally propelled the plot by highlighting and displaying Giselle's love for dancing. According to Ronald Edgecombe's 1999 article, *Notes on Giselle and Paquita: The Probable Authorship of the E-Major Variation in Act I of Giselle and Problems Arising from the Grand Pas from Paquita*, this Act 1 solo included feats such as hopping on one foot while on pointe, controlled landings of pirouettes in attitude derriere position and other feats, and was included to showcase the principal dancer of the role, Ekaterina Vazem. Music was also inserted; in this case Ludwig Minkus is thought to have fleshed out the score with this variation (Edgecombe 1999, 449; Poesio, 1994, 690).

Most audiences of the past 100+ years have grown accustomed to more technical virtuosity from the performers. Less emphasis is placed on the furthering of plot development through dramatic intent and/or pantomimed dialogue. In the case of *Giselle*, cuts were made to the musical score that omitted entire passages of mimed conversations, music was inserted for virtuosic solos and pas, and our current modern performance tradition of this ballet is the idea of a Romantic ballet as filtered through the lens of Classicism. The focus is more upon the dancing and less upon the dramatic action of the characters, and the restaging of these two versions of the Mad Scenes show that evolution quite clearly.

CHAPTER III

EVALUATIONS

The evaluation process of this project consists of reflections from two sources. First is the journal I kept which documents my rehearsal preparations and processes, the outcomes from rehearsal periods and meetings with committee members, and observations of and conversations with various cast members during and after our rehearsals. The second method of review and reflection comes from the video sources which captured the dress rehearsal as well as the Q&A and showing on April 2. The journal and the video help demonstrate just how different Giselle is portrayed in some examples of 21st c. versions compared to the Justamant text.

Preparations

What daunted me first and foremost was the realization I'd never led a rehearsal larger than five dancers before. Combined with the inability to predict how the cast would take my presentation of information, I had no idea how the entire project would work out, or what it would be in the end. I felt I had nothing to go on besides last summer's journal, the Justamant script and Lawson's *Mime*. The realization that *my* interpretation of these scripts would affect not only the dancers but also the very nature of this project was enough to frighten me out of my wits. I found it best to organize the rehearsals well ahead of time with plans for manageable daily goals. Essentially, we learned small chunks of each version each day rather than attempting to hammer through both versions. By establishing a rhythm to the scripted Justamant rehearsals of read-through, read-through with stage blocking, add mime, then add music, we established a set and comfortable pattern for everyone involved, and it was one that worked well as far as the cast's abilities to remember their lines, stage blocking, and gestures.

Retranslating and typing up an easier-to-read version of the Justamant text also helped immensely. It was tremendously helpful for everyone to stay literally on the same page as they walked and talked their lines, and as I had included the page numbers from the Justamant text, the dancers were able to compare the new script to the former if they needed clarification on walking paths, stage facings, and points in space they ought to be occupying.

Justamant had misspelled many words in his notebook, but the time spent backtracking and reading ahead in order to decipher if a certain alphabet character was an **S** or a **P** was time well spent. By gleaning the context of past and future conversations amongst the characters, I was

able to tease out lines of dialogue that scanned better than my previous attempts, as well as discover that a word I initially thought was “cow” actually translated as “coward.”

Using Lawson’s book on mime as the language dictionary of the Justamant version, I prepared for each upcoming rehearsal by looking up every word of Justamant’s dialogue to see if there was a corresponding mime gesture. Articles such as *the*, *a*, or *an* were not expressed by gesture, but what was available to me was a rich language of the gamut of human emotions in addition to the nouns, pronouns, and verbs I expected to find. I learned that Giselle’s declaration of “I curse you!” to Loys could be performed identical to the crossed-arm gesture Myrtha uses in Act 2 to condemn the men to their deaths. In mime-speak, according to Lawson, *curse* is not just swear words or idle threats – it actually corresponds to *imprison*, or *accursed to die*. (Lawson 1957, 97) Either way, when the dancer first performed it in the Justamant Mad Scene I chose to see it as a foreshadowing of Myrtha’s gesture in Act 2. Perhaps it is the betrayed girl’s anger that turns her into a Wili, not just a broken heart from Loys’ betrayal.

Developments

The dialogue in the modern version had initially been difficult for the cast to remember. A reason for that may lie in the level of dependence upon each individual’s interpretation of the movements and gestures. The pantomime dialogue of the Danish restaging was based more upon how the dancers used their own psychological motivations to deliver their gestures, rather than scripted dialogue as per the Justamant. Perhaps this is akin to a dancer’s ability to improvise movement on the spot versus learning set choreography. Set choreography is something more imposed upon the dancers as opposed to improvising characterization, and may include movement landmarks a dancer might use to anchor the phrase as they learn and perform it. In contrast, improvisatory movement is sometimes more dependant upon the dancer’s immediate reaction to espoused or unespoused cues from the music, choreographer, or instructor. The fleeting and ephemeral nature of improvisatory movement sometimes leads to greater articulation of a movement phrase if repeated in another run-through, but in some cases it may simply be material executed once and immediately forgotten.

Another reason for the cast’s initial difficulty with remembering the dialogue is based on the fact that the plot of both versions of *Giselle* is the same, and most of the dancers played the same characters in these two versions. The differences in stage movements and mimed conversations were subtle, and it was easy to confuse one version’s dialogue with the other.

While some of our initial rehearsals of the modern version made great strides in character development, the difficulty lay in remembering how to bring back that character and their dialogue without specific anchoring points for the dancers, especially once we'd also begun working so specifically on the Justamant scripted version. In some instances there were musical cues that coincided with Ms. Englund's landmarks, in others we had to find our own anchoring points within the score. As an example, in the modern version when Hilarion presents Loys' royal sword to Giselle and Loys, insisting that Loys is in fact Albrecht (the duke in disguise), there were three sharp and deliberate staccato notes in the music that meshed up with the timing of that onstage action. We then isolated one of those notes, the last one, as the moment when Hilarion really emphasized the importance of the sword as an object proving Loys' identity by holding it in both outstretched arms, with a final and insistent forward shrug of the entire upper body at Loys.

Much like dance technique, the delivery of pantomime gesture is individual and unique to every performer. The mime language is akin to pidgin English, or Yoda-speak from the Star Wars movies. Sentences such as "I love you" are often delivered as "I you love." Just as no two dancers will execute the exact same tendu, nor would a single dancer be able to perfectly replicate their own tendus, the cast members fleshed out their own personal interpretations of articulating the pantomime that changed daily in both the Danish and the Justamant restagings. Even though the mime-scripted dialogue was a fixed constant in the Justamant version, the way their bodies articulated the gestures would vary slightly depending upon their heightened characterizations or due to simply realizing they were late to a particular musical cue. This is simply the nature of our art: it is a temporal, transitory and ephemeral method of disseminating information and experiences, and no two replications of a movement will ever be identical.

In conversation with a cast member, she told me she felt connected to the historical importance of the Justamant version by simply having the photocopied scripts I'd originally given them. To her, seeing his drawn representations of all the characters with their dialogue underneath in his own handwriting helped her anchor that period of dance history to something tangible.

Revelations

What was immediately apparent was how I could stand in my apartment with the Justamant script in hand and the accompanying music on the stereo in an attempt to connect the mimed dialogue to where I might *think* it best fit the score, but it wasn't until I was in rehearsal with the dancers that I was able to really see and hear where it might better coincide. I could

prepare as much as possible ahead of time and think I would have musical cues or highlights to direct the dancers towards, but then find out that when seven bodies are onstage and performing the same sequence they might accentuate completely different places in the music than I had. For example, when Hilarion blows the hunting horn to call back the royal hunting party, neither Justamant's notation nor Bonyngé's recording has any indication of an answering call by a far away horn. The moment when Loys and Wilfrid back away from Hilarion and walk to stage left couldn't be delayed as long as we would in Ms. Englund's. The Prince's entrance shortly thereafter, which I originally thought would be on a certain cue in the music, actually worked more effectively when he entered slightly earlier, so that the audience fully registered his presence on that same cue of music.

Moments like those were constantly happening during the initial learning phases of the Justamant script. It was akin to walking into a ballet class as the instructor, looking around in assessment of the students, and realizing I could either open myself to the possibility of radically change my class plan in order to facilitate a productive learning environment, or I could insist on enforcing things my way and having a studio full of frustrated and demoralized dancers. By opening myself to the possibilities of the dancers interpretations of musical and physical cues, their instincts or miscues often proved to be much more interesting within my interpretation of the music. Oral transmission of a dance role will usually include both steps and cues via imagery and what the older dancer remembers, but it also opens up new possibilities for both learner and teacher to discover new ways of disseminating the information. New imagery may arrive, a step may be altered to favor a dancer's stronger leg, and much like the temporal nature of dance itself, the role will alter to fit the new model.

The Michael Tilson Thomas recording of *Giselle* simply did not have enough music for the Justamant mime dialogue. One of the more obvious examples of the cuts made to music and mime from modern productions is the moment in Justamant where Giselle pulls Loys aside and asks him if what Hilarion says is true, that Loys is actually a duke in disguise. In Richard Bonyngé's recording there is a chunk of music here that is the same music later heard when Giselle mimes her last lucid conversations with her mother and Loys before dying, and it was perfectly timed to coincide with the troubled conversation between Giselle and Loys. When we first blocked this section during the second full cast rehearsal, I very quickly realized we would need to utilize the Bonyngé recording of the score, as it includes what I first simply called "more music." But then I realized it is Giselle's music. What has been silenced for many years' worth of current productions is Giselle's voice: questioning, seeking answers, and finally bidding farewell. How many other sections of the score have gone missing throughout the entire ballet? It would

require a complete run-through of the Justamant manual in tandem with the Bonyng recording to attempt to determine what has gone missing. Again, as we still don't know if Justamant's notebook is the original Perrot/Coralli choreography, much is still open to debate until further research clarifies the authorship of the choreography.

After eight weeks of observing, directing, clarifying, and cleaning both versions of the Mad Scene, the anticipated differences between the two stagings were markedly apparent. In a nutshell, the version based upon last year's workshop study was much more focused on Giselle's actions and reactions to Loys' betrayal; the crowd of dancers became observers to her descent into madness. Justamant's staging involves the whole cast in her despair: Bathilde is also hurt and betrayed, Berthe evinces wave after wave of grief and worry over her daughter, the Prince goes to Hilarion for answers when none are forthcoming from Loys, Wilfrid is bound and determined to protect Loys at all costs, and Loys himself is constantly pulled to Giselle's side. He even faints at the end of Act 1 instead of running away, as if the trauma of her reaction (madness and death) is too much for his own psyche to process. Hilarion's very real grief at the end of the Mad Scene is akin to Loys' fainting: both men end up on the floor in postures of submission or supplication instead of power. More emphasis appeared to be placed upon the dramatic play in Justamant's version, in keeping with the spirit and tradition of Romantic Era ballet.

My expectations for the performance were simple yet myriad: I knew that obvious differences between the two versions such as the amount of pantomime and actions, character interactions and conversations, and musical phrasings would be readily apparent. Yet I hoped that the more subtle variations would be noticed as well; details such as more intricate dialogues, changes in the characters as the scene progressed, and variations in the mime delivery. Most importantly, I hoped that the audience would understand the dramatic intent of this scene through the dancers expressivity and performance quality.

I watched from the wings the night of the performance. Though my physical position put me much closer to the action, unable to see the whole picture with a wide-angle lens, I could feel a tremendous amount of energy from the cast as the production began. The dancers who were already present onstage as the curtain opened and the music began – Loys and Giselle – were alive and electric, and as the showing progressed, I saw how the action of the 21st century Mad Scene flowed with a level of performance quality that met my expectations. In later conversation with several audience members, I learned that the first showing moved several of them to tears. The dancer cast as that Giselle tapped into every bit of despair, pathos, and what she thought a psychotic break might truly feel like as she performed that night, and the result was a performance that I believed in and thus was satisfied. The other dancers in this first Mad Scene

were equally as compelling from where I stood, reaffirming my decision to cast them all based upon their level of maturity and their ability to bring dramatic psychological intent to their movements, regardless of the amount of classical ballet training they may or may not have had.

The 19th century version was next, and after I'd given the mid-concert speech I once again took my place backstage in the wings. This was the Justamant version, requiring mimed conversations between multiple characters and groupings and the ability to coincide the particularly emphatic gestures with the music. Once again, the performance energy of the cast was alive and electric, even more so than in the previous version. The mimed conversations and accusations flowed with the same level of intensity we might see in a spoken version, and the connection of the cast members to each other was palpable. The dancer playing Hilarion appeared truly angry and buzzing with pent-up energy in her initial moments with Giselle and Loys. The two would-be lovers at first laughingly shrugged off Hilarion's declamations of Loys' deceit, but as the scene progressed I could see and feel the doubt creep into their minds and bodies. Loys' mimed dialogue became more urgent and desperate; Giselle's initial laughing denials of Hilarion's claims morphed into doubt and disbelief, and her realization that Loys had lied about his identity was shown as a slow-motion descent into the hell of despair. As the Mad Scene began in earnest, I saw Loys' frantic reassurances ultimately meet with heartbreak, and the dancer who played Loys had me believing in the character's genuine love for Giselle. The dancer cast as Giselle not only has previous classical training but also a wealth of scholarly knowledge about *Giselle*, and she used both to tap into the characterization and historical import of this performance. Her delivery of pantomime was expertly timed and her whole body was engaged in each conversation. The large crescendo that cues Giselle to physically shove Bathilde and Loys apart and take him to task for his deceit was mesmerizing and compelling to watch, and her final lucid "I You Curse!" to Loys was frightening in its anger and despair.

What was apparent to myself and various audience members with whom I later spoke was that while in this 19th century version there was a large measure of dramatic psychological intentions behind the pantomime, it was the dancers' commitment to the mimed gestures and dialogues that propelled the scene. Viewers who were not familiar with ballet pantomime still later described their ability to follow the story; to understand that Loys' betrayal sent Giselle into madness, albeit madness of a different kind than the 21st century version. Giselle still interacts with the other characters in the depths of her insanity; the 21st century Giselle lives in her own and insular mad world.

During the post-showing Q&A, a discussion ensued about pantomime dialogue and audience education – an audience member asked if these gestures were a known language to

theater-goers of the time, or was it as baffling to them in the 1800's as it was to her in 2011? As previously mentioned in Chapter II and per my answers to her question, audiences of the Romantic eras were actually quite well informed about the storylines of ballets, operas, and theatrical productions due to the availability of advance copies of the librettos. The pantomime gestures were part of a theatrical tradition that began in ancient Greece, continued throughout the Dark and Middle Ages, and made their way to national stages in *ballets d'action* and *cours*, opera, ballet-pantomimes, and ballets. Much of the gestures found in Joan Lawson's *Mime* are intended for deciphering what is used today mainly in ballet, but these were gestures that an 1800's theater-going public were quite familiar with, due to multiple exposure in all varieties of staged performances as a method to flesh out the dialogue of unspoken text.

As an illustration of current audience expectations and education, another audience member later expressed her disappointment in the lack of dancing in the two versions of the Mad Scenes. She's danced ballet almost her entire life but has never seen a full length *Giselle*. Her expectation that our showing would have more danced steps instead of the pantomime dialogue can be seen as a validation of the evolution of ballet and the expectations of the ballet-goer of today. The uninformed might well assume that since the word 'ballet' is used, there will be nothing but dance onstage. Whereas in the 19th century, audience members would have expected a great deal of mimed gesture as another means of furthering the plot of the ballet; dance alone would not have sufficed.

Conclusions

After restaging these two versions it is possible to see that there is greater emphasis of pantomime and dramatic play involving *all* the characters in the Justamant restaging than in the contemporary performance tradition of the Danish-inspired version. *Giselle*'s intentions, interactions and conversations with the supporting characters are markedly different in these two versions. The level of dramatic dialogue for Justamant's characters is full of rich detail and subtlety. The pantomime within the 21st c. version was less emphasized, but allowed more room for interpretation from the performers. The emphasis of dramatic storytelling in Justamant's version is reflective of the Romantic period in ballet, with its concerted attention to furthering the plot via detailed pantomime in conjunction with the danced actions, and the restagings of this scene gave the viewer a visual sampling of both traditions.

If I have the opportunity to further investigate this topic, I would enjoy delving into the ballet archives of St. Petersburg and Paris, Copenhagen and Cologne, and numerous others to

compare the different staging resources regarding *Giselle*. I would also look into the possible societal and cultural connections that may have influenced the various transmutations of Giselle's character over the years, and align my findings and suppositions with the different stagings. Of course, the project at the top of my list would be to happily take on the task of restaging *Giselle* using the Justamant text in its entirety. The research and translations, the transcriptions of the 19th century dances and variations, the pantomimed sections... to bring this all to life onstage once more, along with educating modern audiences of what they might expect to see onstage would be a formidable but highly enjoyable future project.

APPENDIX A

SCRIPT TRANSLATION OF HENRI JUSTAMANT'S *GISELLE*

Pages 101-126 of Justamant. Mime-speak underneath each quoted block of dialogue. Scene names and page numbers listed on right-hand side.

Après La Danse p101

Hilarion at the end of the galop (**Giselle** and **Loys** are lightly embracing downstage center) comes downstage (via center) and violently pushes **Giselle** and **Loys** apart

Loys and Giselle are shocked by **Hilarion's** audacity; the other peasants/dancers surround them.

Hilarion says ironically to **Giselle**

“This man loves you?”

He Love You?

Giselle

“Yes!”

Nodding head Yes

Hilarion says angrily

“You pushed me away for him. Yet I love you too.”

You Me Push. I You Love

Giselle

“But I do not love you.”

You Me Love Not, shaking head no

Hilarion says to them both

“And you intend to marry?”

You, (and) You, Marry?

Loys et Giselle

“Yes!”

Nodding heads Yes

Hilarion

“Well, I tell you that this union will not be.”

I You (and) You Not

p102

Loys and Giselle

“And why not?”

Why? (energetically?)

Hilarion, yanking **Giselle's** left wrist and pulling her a couple steps downstage right

“Why?!? Because he's a lord in disguise!”

Why?!? He Lord!

Loys says to himself
“Great God!”
Surprise

Giselle, laughing
“Him? Impossible!”
Him, No (smiling)

Loys
“He is crazy.”
He Think Not

Hilarion
“Ahhh, I’m crazy? Well – you’ll see!
Think Not? You See!

Hilarion runs/exits stage left to grab **Loys’** sword and necklace he’d stolen and hidden. p103

At the same time, **Loys** goes downstage to **Giselle** and says
“I hope you don’t believe this man.”
(Reassuring gestures, maybe some handholding)

Hilarion heads towards **Loys**, showing everyone what he carries. Around center stage, he says
“These are **Loys’!**”
gesture towards **Loys** or shake the sword, Him

Loys, seeing the weapon, is thunderstruck

Giselle is stupefied, shocked. (the peasants/dancers are also surprised.)

Loys says with great feeling
“I swear these aren’t mine!”
I Swear Not!

Hilarion
“And I swear I found them in his house!”
I Swear! gestures to **Loys** house!

Hilarion says to **Giselle**
“This man is a Lord.”
He Lord

p104

Loys angrily advances on Hilarion and says
“You shut up.”
(Fists clenched perhaps?)

Giselle is troubled. She takes **Loys’** right hand and pulls him slightly stage right, saying
“Tell me – is what he says true?”
He Speak True? (additional music here in Bonyng; same musical phrase used in her final moments with **Loys** before dying.)

Loys

“What he said is **not** true. I swear it.”

He Speak True Not. Swear.

Giselle, anxiously

“But the weapon was found in your house.”

gesture to sword, You, gesture to **Loys**’ house

Hilarion walks over to them

“Do not listen. He is a Lord in disguise.”

Listen Not. He Lord.

Loys, at the height of fury, reaches for his dagger while stalking **Hilarion** (in a stage left half circle), ready to strike...

p105

Hilarion recoils backwards in that half circle, still defiant...

Giselle doesn’t know who to believe and starts crying

Loys suddenly grasps the handle of the sword **Hilarion** holds and draws it, prepares to strike

Hilarion backs up to the door of **Giselle**’s house...

...just as **Wilfrid** exits **Giselle**’s house to stop **Loys**...

...**Hilarion** sees the horn on **Giselle**’s house, seizes it, and blows (timed to coincide w/orchestra)

p106

Giselle listens, and wonders what this may bring

Wilfrid takes the sword from **Loys**

Hilarion backs away to center stage.

Giselle is surprised to see **Wilfrid**

Surprise

Loys walk downstage left, and calls **Wilfrid** to join him

Beckon

Wilfrid drops the sword and follows **Loys**, and upon reaching downstage left says

“I must tell you: the **Prince** is here!”

Beg, Prince (gesture to **Giselle**’s house)!

Loys, surprised

“Great God!”

Surprise

p107

Giselle tries to hear what they’re saying and begins to see the truth. She despairs.

(goes from Cry to Despair)

Hilarion calls everyone around.

Beckons.

Wilfrid says to **Loys**

“You must go!”

Go!

Loys, seeing **Giselle’s** despair, runs to her instead. Says to her,

“Listen to me!”

Listen!

Giselle goes slightly downstage right and says

“No, no; you deceived me.”

No No, You Me Neglect.

Hilarion see more peasants arrive and tells them to keep an eye on **Loys**. He goes back to Giselle’s house.

The entire hunting party enters from upstage left.

p108

Loys, lost, goes down on one knee and says

“I beseech you – listen to me!”

Beg Listen Me!

Wilfrid runs stage right towards **Loys**

“He comes; flee!”

Prince Comes; Go!

He pulls and leads **Loys** slightly upstage left

Loys, despairing, follows his squire...

The **Prince** leaves Giselle’s house, sees **Loys/Albrecht**, and goes towards him

...and **Loys/Albrecht** stops. All the lords of the hunting party recognize him and salute him;

Loys doesn’t know what to do.

p109

The **Prince** looks at **Loys/Albrecht** and beckons him to come downstage.

Come. (with an air of command)

At the same time, **Giselle** sees the **Prince** with **Loys** and approaches to listen to them

Listening

The **Prince** says to **Loys/Albrecht**

“Explain to me this disguise.”

Why? (up and down gesture at Loys)

Loys/Albrecht sotto voce

“Silence, I pray you.”

Silence (the shhhhh gesture)

Giselle says with sadness

“Great God, he **is** a great Lord. Oh! but I am unfortunate!

Surprise, Lord. Ohhhhh Unfortunate!

The Prince

“But I want to know why you’re here.”

But Why You Here

Loys/Albrecht

“I can’t explain it now.”

I (why? speak?) Not

Hilarion, looking for the **Prince**, seems happy about what has happened (rubbing hands/fingers together, all Dr. Evil–like)

Bathilde and **Berthe** leave the house and head towards Giselle

p110

The **Prince** leaves **Loys/Albrecht** and walks upstage. He beckons to **Hilarion**. They begin a conversation at the same time that **Berthe**, **Giselle**, and **Mathilde** are speaking/miming.*

Loys/Albrecht leans on Wilfrid

Berthe, seeing **Giselle** cry, asks

“Why do you cry? Speak!”

Why Cry? Speak?

Giselle says to **Berthe**

“Ah, the man I love and thought I would marry is a Lord!”

Man I Love Marry Lord

Bathilde, with amazement

“A Lord? Where is he?”

Lord? Why/Where?

Giselle, indicating **Loys/Albrecht**

“There.”

Gesture to **Loys**

Bathilde turns her head to the left and takes a couple steps towards **Loys/Albrecht**

“Great God, but that’s **my** fiancé!”

Surprise. He Marry I!

*The **Prince** says to **Hilarion**

“You. Tell me what you know.”

You. Speak.

p111

Hilarion says

“He lived in **this** house, and was making love to this young lady to seduce her!”

He (indicate **Loys**), then gesture to **Loys’** house, Kiss, Her.

Giselle, in response to **Bathilde’s** statement cries out

“Oh Mama!”

Berthe tries to console her daughter

Bathilde goes to **Loys/Albrecht**, takes his arm and says
“Be so good as to tell me what is going on here.”
You What (indicating Giselle) Here?

Loys/Albrecht sotto voce
“Mercy, mercy – I’ll tell you later.”
Beg Speak But (softly)

Giselle, seeing them together, and not hearing anything except her own indignation,
throws/rushes herself towards them like a crazy woman.

She brusquely separates **Loys/Albrecht** and **Bathilde**, and says to him
“You swear you love me, and yet you are going to marry her!”
You Me Swear Love. But You Her Marry!

p112

Loys/Albrecht doesn’t know what to say, nor what will happen.

The **Prince** comes downstage to lead **Bathilde** slightly upstage left as he tries to console her.

Giselle says to **Loys/Albrecht** with despair, and pulling back towards her mother (stage right)
“You betrayed me. You are a coward; a jerk!”
You Me Neglect. Contempt!

Loys/Albrecht follows her stage right, begging her to believe in his love, goes down on one knee
Beg, Plead

Giselle
“I curse you.”
I You Curse (crossed arm gesture, just like Myrtha does in Act 2)
close to her mother now, she falls into **Berthe’s** arms...

Scene de Folie p113

...her head leaning on her mother’s breast, gets up slowly, her eyes wandering. She then fixates
on her mother, and foolishly laughs (timed with the violin skitter in the orchestra).

Loys/Albrecht leans toward **Giselle** (still kneeling) and turns her to look into her eyes.

Giselle stares at **Loys/Albrecht**, then starts laughing and pointing at him

Loys/Albrecht gets up and advances one step, saying
“It’s me!”
Me!

Giselle turns suddenly somber, pulls back and says
“No.”

Loys/Albrecht takes another step towards her

Giselle recoils as if afraid.
She stops, drops her arms, and her face turns cold. She walks nonchalantly in a large half circle
heading stage left, staring blankly at first, then once past **Loys’** house begins looking about as if
searching for something.

p114

All of a sudden she recognizes **Loys**, and turning towards him says
“Come, come to me.”
Come Come.

Loys goes quickly upstage to her and says
“Here I am! Speak to me!”
Here! Speak!

Giselle says
“You know I love you, and you broke my heart.”
You I Love, You Me (gesture to heart) Not (really forceful?)

Loys
“Oh, don’t believe it! Listen to me!”
No No – Listen Beg!

Giselle doesn’t hear him; her eyes go to **Berthe**. She points to her and then goes downstage right towards **Berthe**, saying p115
“She cries.”
Cry

Loys is shattered, seeing that there is no more hope. He goes downstage left towards **Wilfrid**

Giselle turns **Berthe** towards her and takes **Berthe’s** hands down from her eyes

Berthe feeling a ray of hope says to **Giselle**
“You recognize me, don’t you?”
You Me Know?

Giselle pulls back and coldly shakes her head twice:
“No...No.” She lowers her head to the left

Berthe
“This makes me cry anew”
Cry

Loys watches all this.

Giselle seems to see the flower again, the one she picked to see if **Loys** loved her. She gets down (one knee or two, it doesn’t say), picks the imaginary flower, and begins plucking the petals (until just before the ominous sword music) p116

Entire cast gathers closer to her, and they all feel sad.

Giselle abandons the flower, turns her head (cue ominous sword music!), and sees the sword. She takes it by the tip, lifts it slowly, and drags it in a couple of arcs from one side to the other.

Entire Crowd is nervous. (‘seems to fear a misfortune’ sounds like *nervous* to me.)

Giselle turns to her left dragging the sword around in a circle. Suddenly she realizes what she’s holding and puts her left hand to her forehead {which means **crazy, mad, lost her wits.**} p117

Loys approaches her and doesn't take his eyes off her.

Giselle seizes the tip of the sword (looks like it's still got the handle on or near the ground) with both hands and leans forward to plunge it into herself...

...**Loys** like lightning, goes down/falls in front of her and with his right hand pushes the sword out of the way...

...**Giselle** leans to the left and looks at **Loys** with astonishment. (probably a moment of over-correcting off-balance, one of those knee-jerk reactions) p118
She quickly pulls back (small half circle to left again?), laughing and pointing at **Loys** again with both hands.

Loys gets up and walks towards stage left wings while watching her back away from him.

Bathilde goes to **Giselle** to touch her arm...

...**Giselle** quickly pushes her away and takes on a somber air again. (**Bathilde** goes back to **Prince**) She looks on all sides with brusque movements.

Entire Crowd is in dismay.

Giselle seems to hear something or someone, and she says p119
"He comes here...for...?"
He Comes Here?

...but her memory fails. She puts a hand to her forehead (crazy, mad, searching?), looking, says:
"Ah, I know – he's come to dance. I'll give him my arm."
(remembrance of recognition, crook arm to imaginary partner? Or has he not appeared yet and she's just planning what she'll do when he arrives?)

She seems to see something (the village square? **Loys**?). She points and says
"There he is!" while running to mid-downstage right. (I'll bet this syncs up with flute trill #1)
She rises up on demi-pointe, looks around to downstage left, and repeats the pointing run to DSLeft. (flute trill #2)
"There he is!" She seems happy.
She rises again, and (mumbling to herself?) dances a little:
pas marche. du pied droit (right leg behind) en arriere, (left leg) en levant a demi la jambe gauche et jete dessus, 6 fois de suite. (repeat 6 times)

Giselle crooks her left arm for **Loys** and dances with febleness p120
(Begin with left foot) **coupe dessous, ballonné, brise, jeté en avant**. Repeat to other side; and repeat both sides once more (diagram looks like she zigzags downstage in this section, R L R L. Smith's four-unit approach? See her 2010 *Dance Chronicle* "Beyond the Veil: *Giselle* Revealed")

She does three **soubresauts** as if her strength was abandoning her.
She puts her hand to her heart, scarcely able to breathe.

Loys and **Berthe** approach **Giselle** with great anxiety as this is happening...

Giselle wants to do another **soubresaut**, but has no energy. Her eyes are troubled and frightened; it feels as if she is suffocating. She can scarcely go on, and extends her right arm to support herself...

...**Berthe** rushes to her daughter's right side to support her...

p121

...**Loys** despairs, and stands near **Giselle's** left side...

... and the **Entire Cast** comes closer to her as well.

Giselle, realizing it's her mother supporting her, takes her hand and puts it on her heart, saying "It's here that I suffer," then puts her hand on her head and says "Here, also."
And she drops her head onto **Berthe's** chest.

Loys

"**Giselle**, speak to me please!"

Speak, Beg!

Giselle rises as if from a dream, passing her hand over her forehead. She recognizes her mother and throws herself at **Berthe's** neck (read: hug) and effusively embraces her.

Entire Cast believes she's got her reason back.

p122

Giselle sees **Loys**, lets out a cry and throws herself at him in another hug of happiness.

Loys seems happy. They travel slightly downstage left.

Giselle's face becomes pained again, and she says
"You who I love so much – pray to god for me, because I am dying."
You I Love, pray? Die/death. (pulling the shroud over face gesture)

Loys says

"Oh no, no, I don't believe that!"

Giselle pulls back upstage center, saying
"Goodbye! I'll never see you again."

Loys, in despair, follows her back upstage and takes her hand.

Berthe goes towards her daughter and holds her.

Loys gets down on his knees next to her.

p123

Giselle touches his head and tries to embrace him, but her strength is failing and she falls backwards...

...blows him a final kiss with her hand...

...and falls dead back into **Berthe's** arms. (kettledrums are her last heartbeats, per Smith)

Loys hides his face in his hands (still kneeling)

Entire Cast is dismayed.

Hilarion, ashamed of himself, falls to his knees (hiding?) downstage left.

Berthe sinks to her knees, her head leans on Giselle's body.

Loys on his knees, puts his right hand to Giselle's heart, and says

p124

"No, she is dead."

No, No (shaking head)

He gets up, his eyes haggard. He looks all around and sees **Hilarion**, the cause of all this misfortune, and is enraged.

"It's HIM!"

Point to **Hilarion**

Loys runs to **Hilarion** and takes him by the shoulder, pulling him to his feet with some force:

"Come and see what you've done!"

Hilarion, terrified, says

"No, NO!"

Loys, despite **Hilarion's** pleas, shoves him to his knees beside **Giselle**, then throws him stage right where...

...**Hilarion** falls to his knees.

Loys kneels besides Giselle again, seizes her hands and kisses them.

p125

The Prince says (referring to **Loys**),

"Take him away."

Him, Go

Wilfrid waves to some of the peasants to come and help. They raise **Loys** up and lead him back upstage despite his resistance.

(We have no peasants. Let's make it **Wilfrid** who bodily lifts him up and leads him away upstage.)

Loys with effort disengages himself from **Wilfrid** (and peasants) and runs back to **Giselle**.

Bathilde begs **The Prince** to lead them away from this spectacle.

p126

Loys raises **Giselle** somewhat and embraces her; he can't believe she's dead. He's frantic.

Le Prince says

"Either lead him away or drag him away!"

Him, GO! (more forcefully)

Wilfrid (and peasants) grab **Loys** again and lead him away (upstage) despite his resistance.

Loys, exhausted and in pain (anguish?), faints or collapses in the arms of **Wilfrid**, upstage, slightly right of center.

Entire Cast is overwhelmed with grief.

Freeze and hold for the tableau... CURTAIN. Fin.

APPENDIX B

PROGRAM

Special thanks to:

Chris Blum for his mad props and food skills, Nancy Boyett at the Very Little Theatre for fitting and kitting out the dancers, David C. Horton for editing and sharing music, Dance Oregon for the travel grant to Denmark and the wonderful ACDF experience, Susanne Scheibelhofer for transporting the Justamant book across an ocean, and Marian Smith for EVERYTHING Giselle related. Seriously. If it hadn't been for your class I wouldn't be here today.

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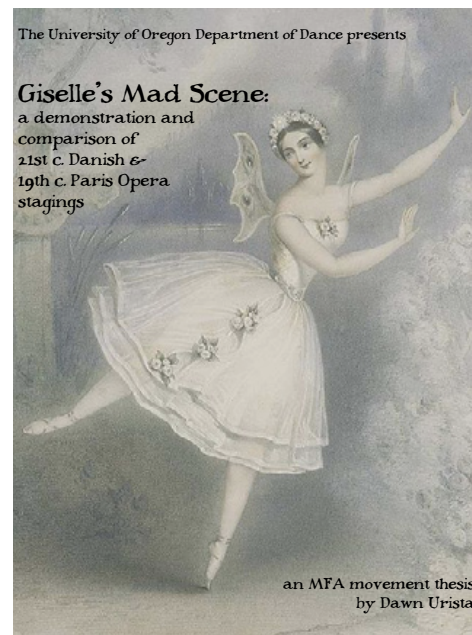
My family, friends, fellow GTFs, and Chris for keeping me sane and fed and hopeful - you all have my undying love and gratitude and I can't thank you enough. Neither can Lola.

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Graduate Teaching Fellows: Laura Black, Liana Conyers, Wenwen Dong, Erinn Ernst, Ayumi Hori, Laura Katzman, Melanie Meenan, Jean Nelson, Devon Ryan Polynone, Dawn Urista, Amy Ward

Upcoming Events

UORDC At Home concert: April 15 & 16 at 8pm, DDT
\$5 Student/Senior, \$10 General Admission
Spring Student Dance Concert: May 12 through 14 at 8pm, DDT
\$5 Student/Senior, \$10 General Admission
Spring Loft: June 3 at 8pm, DDT
\$3 Student/Senior, \$5 General Admission



Saturday April 2 2011, 7pm
Dougherty Dance Theatre, 3rd floor Gerlinger Annex
free admission, Q&A after
wheelchair accessible

Welcome to *Giselle's Mad Scene*, an MFA thesis project comprised of staging two versions of this scene from the Romantic Era ballet *Giselle*. Originally presented at the Paris Opera in 1841, with Carlotta Grisi and Lucien Petipa in the lead roles, it was an instant success and a product of quick collaboration between Adolph Adam the composer, Theophile Gautier and Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges as the librettists, and Jules Perrot and Jean Coralli as the choreographers. The first version tonight is from Sorella Englund and the Royal Danish Ballet's revival in 2007 (which like most present-day versions is based upon Marius Petipa's Russian stagings from the late 1800's). The second is from the newly-discovered choreographic notebook of Henri Justamant, ballet master of the Paris Opéra during their 1868-69 season, and at this point is the loosest thing we have to the original choreography and production.

Through music, dance, and mimed actions, *Giselle* tells the story of a young peasant girl with a weak heart who is wooed by a local duke disguised as the peasant Loys. Hilarion, the village gamekeeper, is also in love with Giselle and after discovering Loys' true identity, Hilarion presents the happy couple with proof of Loys' perfidy - his very fine and royal sword that no mere peasant could ever own. He also summons a royal hunting party that has been about the woods that day, including the Prince of Courland and his daughter Bathilde - who happens to be Loys' betrothed and has been resting in Giselle's cottage during the heat of the day. Upon realizing that the man she loved is promised to another and was in fact betrayed her, Giselle loses her mind. As she faintly remembers happier times when someone swore to love her more than anything, or that she loved dancing, she also loses her life: her weakened heart gives out and she dies, but not before a final moment of lucidity when she recognizes both her mother and Loys.

The differences in how these two stagings present the Mad Scene, and how the character of Giselle herself has changed over time, are the focus of my research here. Without the dancers, we wouldn't be able to see them actualized onstage. Without the support of my family, friends, fellow grad, and Dance Oregon, I couldn't have afforded the summer study with Sorella Englund and the RDB. Without Professor Marian Smith's 9c. Staging class and classmates, I wouldn't have a thesis topic anywhere near as exciting as this. I can't thank you all enough - especially the cast or giving up their early mornings to learn pantomime, my loved ones for everything (and I do mean everything), and my fabulous thesis committee of Professors Shannon Mockli, Marian Smith, Jenifer Craig, and Walter Kennedy.

Enjoy!

the 21st c. Danish *Giselle*

Giselle: Erinn Ernst
 Loys, a Duke in disguise: Amy Ward
 Hilarion, the gamekeeper: Lou Moulder
 Wilfrid, squire to Loys: Shannon Knight
 Berthe, Giselle's mother: Laura Black
 Bathilde, daughter of the Prince and Loys' true fiancée: Jenny Allen
 The Prince of Courland: Anna Waller
 Music: Michael Tilson Thomas and the London Symphony Orchestra

the 19th c. Paris Opera *Giselle*

Giselle: Anna Waller
 Loys: Amy Ward
 Hilarion: Lou Moulder
 Wilfrid: Shannon Knight
 Berthe: Laura Black
 Bathilde: Jenny Allen
 The Prince of Courland: Erinn Ernst
 Music: Richard Bonyng and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, edited by David C. Horton

Production

Lighting Designer: Liana Conyers
 Costumes courtesy of the Very Little Theatre
 Props: Chris Blum
 Stage Manager: Katy Ansbauge
 Lightboard operator: Ayumi Hori
 Soundboard operator: Laura Katzman
 Ushers: Siobhan 'Ruby' McConnell, Emma Sackinger

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