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**Alexei
Ratmansky
on ABT's
Harlequinade**

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NYCB: Joseph Gordon in
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Harlequinade. (Photo: Rosalie O'Connor, ABT)

Staging Petipa's *Harlequinade* at ABT

Alexei Ratmansky

This article originated as a talk, via Skype, to the Petipa International Scientific Conference in Moscow, "Marius Petipa. The Ballet Empire: From Rise to Decline," held in June 2018 at the Bakhrushin State Central Theater Museum.

Ratmansky's Petipa reconstructions are *Le Corsaire* (Bolshoi Ballet, with Yuri Burlaka, 2006), *Paquita* (Bavarian State Opera Ballet, with Doug Fullington, 2014), *The Sleeping Beauty* (American Ballet Theatre, 2015), *Swan Lake* (Zurich Ballet, 2016), *Harlequinade* (ABT, premiere June 5, 2018), and *La Bayadère* (Berlin State Ballet, fall 2018). — Marina Harss

Our Main Source: The Stepanov Notation

The choreographic text of this new/old *Harlequinade* is a set of notations written out in the Stepanov system by Nikolai Sergeyev, the régisseur of the Mariinsky Theater, and his assistants. The notation mentions the performers in the main roles: Pavel Gerdt, Georgy Kyaksht, Olga Preobrajenska, Lyubov Egorova, Sergei Lukyanov, and others. This was the cast for the performance on October 17, 1904.

It is likely that it was during the rehearsals for this performance that most of the choreography and *mise-en-scène* was recorded. At the time Petipa was still listed as the first choreographer of the theater and periodically visited rehearsals (he was eighty-six years old). There had been only ten performances since the premiere of the ballet in February 1900 on the stage of the Hermitage Theater in St. Petersburg, so there is no reason to believe that the choreography had changed significantly.

The notations are currently stored in the Harvard Theatre Collection. Some are misfiled. My wife Tatiana (and assistant in my

Translated and revised by Alexei Ratmansky, with additional editing by Marina Harss.

historically informed stagings of Petipa ballets) and I found some dances in boxes with other ballets. More generally, *Harlequinade* is not among the very well-recorded works. Nevertheless, about one hundred pages of notations give us information on almost every number (except for the "Temps passé, temps présent" dance for Marie Petipa and Sergei Legat, which was cut after the premiere).

Half of the numbers are recorded twice, in varying degrees of detail. This is explained by the fact that different tasks were put before the different notators: one person concentrated on the corps de ballet, another on the soloists, another on the children. Sometimes it was necessary to notate different versions of the same dance.

There are a few prized examples of notation – for instance, the solo for Columbine (Preobrajenska) from act 2, initialed by A.K. According to Sergei Konayev, this was Alexandra Konstantinova. I have tender feelings for this Alexandra. Unlike her colleagues, she recorded all the positions of the arms and body in each movement of this variation.

In fact, the absence of notations for the arms should not concern us. At the time of Petipa, ports de bras was less codified, the arms moved freely and were often simply allowed to hang down (this was called *bras au repos* or *bras bas*). You can see this in surviving films of Zambelli, Baldina, Pavlova, Spessivtseva, the Danes in Bournonville dances, or the Italians in *Excelsior*. Also, according to many dancers, Balanchine, who took a lot from Petipa, often did not specify the movements of the arms when he was in the studio choreographing, leaving this part to the dancers.

In Russia today you will not find two ballerinas dancing the same variation with the same arms. Usually, in the process of preparing for a performance, the port de bras varies, and, together with her coach (who says, "Try these arms. Try another set."), the ballerina finds a suitable option for herself. Every movement or pose has a certain number of allowable arm positions based on classical coordination.

Where the positions are unusual or a certain pattern is important, they are marked in the *Harlequinade* notations. For example, arms behind the back in the jeté en tournant in Harlequin's first act variation, or hands "on the hips" in Pierrette's first entrance.

So it is with the endings of the variations. Often in the records we see just the fifth position of the legs, with the arms down. It is difficult to imagine solo variations ending in this way. Most likely it was an indication that there were several options, depending on the preferences of the performer. For example, it is known that Preobrajenska preferred to end variations in arabesque on pointe. Apparently, she easily got on her axis and loved to show her balance. Quite often one finds a pose in fourth position plié with a lifted heel for the back leg – a position that has disappeared today. This pose appears in the notations for *Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, *Paquita*, and, also, in *Harlequinade*, for both the men and the women.

For Harlequin here, we went with a different ending. According to Preobrajenska, as described by Pedro Consuegra (conveyed by Katya Anapolskaya), at the end of his first-act variation, after the pirouettes, he struck the stage on the final chord, with the golden bat given him by the Fairy. Here we preferred the memories of someone who danced in the premiere to the notation score as written.

Completing the Puzzle: Additional Sources

Much more problematic for us was the absence in some places of any indication about the movements – nothing but arrows denoting the formations of the dance and certain key poses. Both of the large classical ensembles – "Le Rendez-vous" in the act 1 and "La Chasse aux Alouettes" in act 2 – are recorded in this way. It is possible that somewhere more detailed records exist, but we have yet to find them. The variations for the soloists in both acts are beautifully recorded, but in the adagio, as well as in the codas for the Larks and the main characters, there is almost nothing – just floor plans.

In such cases, we carefully watched all the existing productions (especially the versions of Balanchine, Gusev, and Karsavina), and if something in them coincided with the records in the notations, we took it to mean that we most likely were seeing fragments of the old staging, and used them. Some clues were also found in other sources, such as photographs from the imperial theaters, old reviews, and eyewitness accounts; an animated film called *The Harlequin Joke* that Alexander Shiryayev (Petipa's assistant) made in 1909; the director's notes in the piano and violin score; the drawings of Gerdt, Goncharov, and brothers Legat; and even Fokine's *Carnival* of 1910, in which there are quotations from the old Petipa production.

By the way, it is a curious fact that Fokine, such a passionate ideological opponent of conventional mime and eclecticism, not only almost literally quoted images from Petipa's *Harlequinade* in his ballet *Carnival*, but also, at the request of Kschessinska, in 1916 composed for her and Vladimiroff an insertable number for *Harlequinade* to the music of Rondo Capriccioso by Saint-Saens. Fokine – so sensitive to distortions in his own ballets and an advocate for authorial rights throughout his life – at the request of a ballerina, quietly made an insertion into someone else's ballet. In any case, he, like Balanchine, appreciated *Harlequinade* and singled it out from other works by Petipa in his memoirs.

This "detective" work – finding steps where there were none in the notations – was the trickiest aspect of our work. It is necessary to find simple and logical combinations that will not look foreign in the context of 1900 choreographic style and that don't contradict the patterns indicated in the notations. The hardest thing for me was recreating this elegant simplicity, which has disappeared from modern choreography. In this regard, our work is not finished. As more performances take place, we will continue to refine the details.

In general, the work is similar to putting together a puzzle or, rather, restoring an old fresco with missing fragments. True, accord-



Isabella Boylston and James Whiteside. (Photo: Rosalie O'Connor, ABT)

ing to today's scientific standards, the lost fragments of frescoes are left empty. Restorers no longer attach hands and heads to ancient statues, as before. But in the theater this is impossible; the audience expects to see continuous action.

In those cases when the notators had enough time and patience for detailed recording, like my idol Konstantinova, the notations accurately convey all the mechanics of the choreography and leave almost no room for doubt.

Here I must refute the popular view that the notations are not accurate and can be interpreted however you like. This is not true. The peculiarity of the Stepanov system consists of the precise transmission of dance movement. French terms are not used. Instead each step is decomposed into its component parts. In notations, we see the height and direction of the legs, whether they are bent or stretched, the angle of the bend in the knee and hip, whether the step is executed in demi-

pointe or on pointe, on the floor or in the air, how the weight is transferred from one foot to the other, the number and direction of the turns. This is all mechanics. In this way, the coordination and technique of classical dance in the time of Petipa comes alive miraculously.

What the Notations Reveal about Ballet Technique

Reconstructions based on notations are not about stylization or the introduction of certain "mannerisms" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. That style, in any case, is inaccessible to us. The process of reconstruction entails the staging of the texts of Petipa's ballets, as they were written by Sergeev and his colleagues.

I must say that in the process of studying the notations, we discovered very interesting things – for example, that saut de basque was performed with two bent legs, and not with one, as it is now. I was happy to find confir-



Stella Abrera as Pierrette. (Photo: Erin Baiano, ABT)

mation of this recently in Karsavina's 1962 book, *Classical Dance: The Flow of Movement*. She describes saut de basque in this way: throwing the leg, folding one leg, folding the other leg, landing. In Cecchetti, this movement is called jeté en tournant en avant.

In chaînés and series of piqués on the diagonal, the spot was kept to the front, into the audience, and not toward the corner, as now. In the book *Vaganova: Articles, Memories, Materials*, there is a letter by Vaganova's student and assistant Galina Berezova (Tatiana studied with her in Kiev in the late 1970s) written at the end of the 1930s in which Berezova asks, "Dear A. Ya., where should the dancer spot in a diagonal of rotations – to the corner or to the front?" We do not know Vaganova's reply, but most likely she answered – toward the corner, as it was in the Soviet method. Balanchine preserved the earlier style of keeping the spot

forward toward the audience. In the notations this older method is clear.

In tour jeté, instead of a battement forward followed by a fouetté, they used to do the battement immediately into arabesque to the back, with the feet changing in the air behind the back. Also, arabesque is recorded with a slightly bent leg or, more accurately, a free – not overstretched – leg. In contrast, in pas de chat the first leg was stretched, as one often sees in Balanchine.

In pirouettes, the working foot is recorded at different heights: at the ankle, in the middle of the calf, or at the knee, which gives the pirouette three different possible colors. The same is true of chaînés: sometimes they are done on pointe, sometimes on demi-pointe.

In *The Sleeping Beauty* Aurora starts doing chaînés on pointe only in the variation of the last act; before that, she executes them on demi-pointe. All these details, in my opinion, give the choreography of Petipa many shadings. It becomes more three-dimensional, livelier, more musical.

When we tried to reproduce these subtleties onstage, first in *Paquita*, and then, even more carefully, in *Beauty* – we realized how difficult these steps actually are. Our current idea that ballet has greatly moved forward in terms of technique vanished. Stretching, amplitude, the number of rotations – these all have certainly increased. But this change has caused a sharp and, I'm afraid, already irrevocable slowing of tempo. In terms of small technique, we have regressed. And this, despite the fact that jumps on pointe, pirouettes, and balances used to be done in much softer and narrower toe shoes.



James Whiteside as Harlequin. (Photo: Marty Sohl, ABT)

Regarding the diversity of dance coordination, a lot has been lost in pursuit of greater effects. Take a simple step – glissade (as a preparation for a jump or pose), which ought to go from fifth position to fifth position – at least in principle, as taught in school. Today, going through precise positions of the feet causes major problems for the dancers. That is true in New York, Milan, or Zurich. In Russia, where I have not yet tried to do a stylistically precise reconstruction, I do not know what would happen. If you do everything as written, and with brilliance, you get a conversation in a completely different language. And as a choreographer, I find this language interesting and exciting.

Different Approaches

The divergences one can see between different interpretations of the same notations lies

in the approach to their use. There are several fundamental questions that each stager – there are not many of us! – must answer, each in his or her own way: Does one need to follow the notations to the letter? Or should one adapt them for the convenience of today's dancers? Is it right to take the notations as just a point of departure and call the resulting choreography a "reconstruction"? Should we, like the Soviet editors of the classics, follow the immortal dictum "save the best, remove the outdated"?

Then, I would ask, what is the point of looking to the notations at all? In my view, they offer an important window into the original choreography. Why not use them as fully as possible? After all, what

seems obsolete today may turn out to be interesting again tomorrow. Why should we judge Petipa from the standpoint of today's fashion?

In our work we proceeded from the idea that the records reflect the choreography of Petipa as it was seen during his lifetime, as he rehearsed it. The notations obviously demonstrate a deep knowledge of the laws of the stage and an accurate understanding of ballet coordination. This, of course, speaks to the professionalism of Nikolai Sergeev and his team, but first of all, reveals the skill, experience, and talent of Petipa himself.

More than once we have had the opportunity to see the importance of every minute detail of the notations. We don't accept the notion that the choreography was distorted during the act of notating it. After all, the main task of the notators was to record as accu-

rately as possible what they saw before them in the rehearsal studio or on the stage. Besides, the notations were not hidden in a private archive, but were used as working materials to revive old ballets and teach the dances to new casts. All graduates of the imperial theater school were able to read them.

Of course, mistakes occur. These are draft manuscripts, not carefully prepared for printing, as in Gorsky's book on Stepanov notation, published in 1899. But our experience shows that what appears at first glance to be an error, with more careful study, as a rule, reveals a key to deciphering the misunderstood movement or pattern. As I said, the gaps in the notation that need to be filled are the main difficulty.

Mime

In *Harlequinade*, all the mime, or as it was then called, "mimika" ("facial expression"), is recorded in great detail, not in Stepanov notation, but in words. Each note is allotted a certain number of measures in the notations, so it's not difficult to break down conversations or monologues rhythmically. Each line is recorded in the form of a sequence of stage gestures, for example, "You kiss me not." There are some difficult phrases, like "one Harlequin," "go cook porridge," "I love her madly," or "steal the key." In these cases, I was helped by my experiences in Denmark, not only at the Royal Theatre, where the pantomime ballets of Bournonville are performed, but also at the Pantomime Theatre in Tivoli, where I worked as a Harlequin one summer. (The company there preserves thirty-five nineteenth-century pantomimes in its repertory.)

Another great gift to us is a 1965 English film in which Karsavina rehearses the Serenade of the Harlequin, staged by her for a small troupe led by a student of Nikolai Legat, John Gregory. I like to think of this film as a personal gift from Tamara Platonovna, "Queen of Columbines," as she was known, intended especially for our use. The fact is that Harlequin's Serenade in act 1 is sparingly notated, with only two phrases explaining the action. Therefore, following the example of Balan-

chine and Gusev, I composed a simple dance for four couples and Harlequin. We worked on this scene for a long time, but weren't satisfied.

Imagine my delight when, after returning home from a rehearsal, I came across a mention on Facebook of a movie that I had never heard of, in which Karsavina seemed to be rehearsing *Harlequinade*. In the comments people wrote that it could not be *Harlequinade*, and was most likely *Carnival*. But it turned out to be *Harlequinade* after all. After searching and negotiating, we obtained a complete recording of the production, thanks to Hazel Moor, former assistant to John Gregory, and everything immediately fell into place. The Serenade is a mime scene, not a dance. In Petipa, the ballerina usually first appears dancing, but the hero is most often introduced with mime. Think of the first entrances of Basil, Solor, Siegfried, Désiré, Conrad, Lucien, and Albert – all pantomime.

In this "speech," on the last chords, Harlequin tells the audience about his "crazy" love for Columbine. He is surprised that she does not come out of her house and, after some thought, asks his musician friends to play louder in order to wake her. Columbine, appearing on the balcony, explains that she has been locked up by her father, and that the key is hidden under Pierrot's pillow. When Harlequin suggests that she steal the key, she responds with a refusal, but at this moment a triumphant Pierrette appears on the balcony with a key in her hand. We have no doubt that this scene is authentic. Thanks to the amazing skill of Karsavina, we discovered some important details – for example, how "to listen" differs from "to hear," and that "pretty" is different from "beautiful."

In general, pantomime, which has been largely eliminated in the twentieth century, was the most important part of Petipa's aesthetic. He was himself an unsurpassed mime and master of *mise-en-scène*, which he composed with the precision of a jeweler. In each of his ballets there are bright pantomime roles, principal and secondary, male and fe-



(Photo: Erin Baiano, ABT)

male, completely different in character, designed for great artists.

I was brought up on the textbooks of the Soviet era, which copiously quote Fokine, who had an aversion to traditional pantomime. However, my negative attitude changed when I worked in Denmark. I saw firsthand how a well-performed mime scene could be no less exciting than a virtuoso solo. It can bring tears or delight the viewer. Everything depends on the skill of the performer.

In Bournonville's ballets, no one would ever think of replacing the mime scenes with dancing. Everyone understands that without the pantomime they would not be Bournonville. But with Petipa, for a long time – without his consent – this was not the case.

Petipa's mime was cut out of his ballets for a long time, and many people still consider it optional and obsolete, but that loss impoverishes and distorts his ballets. It violates the balance of dance and acting scenes, to which

Petipa always paid close attention. This is a matter of scenic time, of the ability to alternate theatrical stunts with costume parades, pantomime scenes with dances – dramatic or divertissement, children's groups with virtuosic solo dancing. And the notations demonstrate this all with particular clarity.

Other Versions of *Harlequinade*

I would like to briefly touch on other versions of the ballet. First of all, we considered two dissimilar extant productions, George Balanchine's and Peter Gusev's. The timeline here is interesting. In 1965 Balanchine created his recension for New York City Ballet. Gusev staged his at the Leningrad Chamber Ballet in 1967. (According to Gusev, the dancers were taught by Boris Shavrov, the last Harlequin performer of the old production.)

In 1973 Balanchine made a new version, and in 1975 Gusev made another one at the Maly

[Leningrad State Academic Maly Opera Theater (MALEGOT)]. Maybe it is just a coincidence. Maybe there were rumors from across the ocean, and they thought, "They staged it, let's do it too." I don't know. There are practically no similarities in the choreography of the two productions.

In Dobrovolskaya's book about Lopukhov, his 1933 version is described. In that staging, Harlequin and Leander sang aloud, Columbine and Pierrette jumped from the balcony, replaced after the premiere by circus performers. And instead of the Fairy there was a clown dressed as a rich American uncle, and so on. Her book says that the pas de deux in the Lopukhov choreography was still being performed in concerts. Probably, she means the dance filmed by Leningrad TV, with Ninel Kurgapkina and Nikolai Kovmir.

In England at one time, there was a popular pas de deux set by Alexander Volinin, a star of the Bolshoi in the 1910s. This is a charming and very effective number, although half of the music is from *The Fairy Doll*. Perhaps there was something left in it from Gorsky, who staged his version on the Bolshoi in 1907. The scenery and costumes for Moscow were borrowed from the Mariinsky.

In the RGALI [Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts] there is an epic correspondence between the Petersburg and Moscow offices of the Imperial Theaters, about unwashed socks and torn-off buttons, including reports written by Moscow dressers and laundresses. According to them, everything came from St. Petersburg in poor condition, and the Moscow staff was not to blame.

In 1950, Balanchine set a pas de deux to the music of Drigo for Maria Tallchief and André Eglevsky. And there are three other concert pas de deux from *Harlequinade*, each with different choreography. We studied all them in order to search for points of overlap with the notation. We did not find any.

In Balanchine's 1973 *Harlequinade*, we see an exact replica of Petipa's scenario. Almost the entire plan is used, with minor cuts, but the choreography is Balanchine's, although there

are several points of overlap with the notations. One example is the grand pirouette à la seconde at the end of Harlequin's act 2 variation, and, in part, in the children's dances. Balanchine wrote that he considered *Harlequinade* an important monument in the history of dance, a kind of benchmark of comedic ballet. He was enthusiastic about "its genius in telling a story with clarity and grace."

The Gusev *Harlequinade* of 1975 was almost canonical in the Soviet Union, but stylistically and structurally it turned out to be much farther from the original Petipa than Balanchine's. To begin with, it is in one act, not two. The main characters have one variation instead of two, and there is only one adagio, not two.

In addition, in the pas d'ensemble of act 1, Petipa had two pairs of soloists dancing side by side (the Harlequin with Columbine and Pierrette with a cavalier, plus four couples), which is very unusual in structure for an adagio. Gusev had one solo couple and six couples in the ensemble. This dramatic change seems to have happened back in 1917, when Pierrette is not mentioned in this scene. Also a singer was added to Harlequin's Serenade.

For the first scene of the ballet, Gusev uses the introductory music to present the main characters. In the original Petipa, the music was played with the curtain closed. Here Gusev unwittingly gives himself away, because in Petipa the main characters never appear right away. At the same time, Gusev eliminated the very heart of the ballet, the big act 2 "La Chasse aux Alouettes," a beautiful metaphor of love, where the Harlequin/hunter pursues the Columbine/lark and wounds her.

Petipa had a history of staging "lark hunts"; the first was for a piece made for the Theater School in St. Petersburg, and later in the original 1869 *Don Quixote* for the Bolshoi, in a scene with comedians. After the Harlequin/hunter shoots the Columbine/lark, a big adagio begins with a dozen corps dancers portraying larks, accompanied by Drigo's beautiful melody. Over the course of a difficult four-minute



(Photo: Erin Baiano, ABT)

variation, accompanied by a lullaby, Columbine can no longer hide her love for Harlequin.

Gusev did not include this, nor did he include the children's Harlequinade, a seven-minute dance for thirty-two children dressed as little Harlequins, Pierrots, Polichinelles, and Scaramouches. I shall not dwell on other differences in the Gusev production, as there are many, but only state the obvious – that he set himself a completely different task and not a re-creation of Petipa's original at all. Instead Gusev's version was made in the spirit of "save the best, remove the outdated." The ruthless hand of the editor is visible both in the Ballabile for the Masks and in Harlequin's Serenade, as well as in other dances, although, to be sure, Gusev preserved many of Petipa's original steps.

The variation for Columbine differs from the notated one and is somewhat similar to the version of Karsavina. It must have been performed differently by various soloists. In Sergeev's notations, we have Preobrajen-

ska's version. She danced the role of Columbine at the third performance. Kschessinska was not satisfied with her part. She considered it not very interesting in pure dancing terms, and when she returned to the role in 1910, to make it more exciting, she added tours from fifth to the coda, as well as a manège of turns. We know this from the reviews. None of it is in the notations.

We also managed to see very interesting fragments of a production by Boris Romanov for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in a recording from the 1950s, with Alicia Alonso in the role of Columbine. The Ballet Russe dances are interesting, extremely difficult, designed for Alonso's phenomenal technique.

Before that, in the 1920s, Romanov staged *The Millions of Harlequin* with his troupe Romantic Ballet for his wife Elena Smirnova. Unfortunately, Romanov's choreography has not been preserved. We did not notice any overlap with the notations, but it is more than likely that he knew the original.

I would also like to mention the work of

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF PETIPA'S HARLEQUINADE

ACT 1 1. La clef dérobée (Cassandre, Pierrot, Pierrette): 100 percent Petipa. The scene for Pierrot and Pierrette is notated twice (notation was in the file of another ballet), with minor differences, so we made choices. **2. Ballabile par une compagnie des masques** (Bobèche and his wife, 16 corps couples): 100 percent Petipa, except the number of couples; originally there were twenty-four couples and we only had sixteen. Each of the three front lines at the beginning consisted of eight couples (we had six in each and used two couples, who already had entered, repeat in the last row). **3. La serenade** (Columbine, Harlequin, 4 solo couples): Not notated. We took our version from Karsavina's 1961 staging of Harlequin's Serenade. **4. Le rendez-vous des amoureux, pas d'ensemble** (Columbine, Harlequin, Pierrette, her cavalier, 4 solo couples): The adagio is poorly notated. Only floor plans, pirouettes, a couple of poses, "on pointe" symbol, and some descriptions in words like "lift," "attitude," "arabesque," "holding hands," "carry" "on the knee," "pas de chat," "2 times." We worked on it for five months and I kept changing and changing, because it is so unusual to have two equally important couples, with one slightly subordinate. The last change was made on the day of the opening: we had the four men change costumes from blue to gray, as in the original. The dance for Harlequin's friends and Pierrette is well notated, twice. I would say 90 percent is Petipa (no actual steps are written for the four men, only a floor plan, so we took some steps from Gusev). Columbine's Preobrajenska variation is beautifully notated (it was found in the "miscellaneous" file). Another version, also for Preobrajenska, is slightly different. That is why our principal women were given options. (Skylar Brandt does the most difficult variation; the whole first part is on one leg.) So the Columbine variation is 100 percent Petipa. **5. La batte enchantée** (Fairy, Harlequin, 8 little harlequins, 5 squires, officer, 6 soldiers): All mise-en-scène (except the soldiers, which are my invention) done according to floor plans and word descriptions. Harlequin's variation is 100 percent Petipa. There is another version, very sketchy, with a different final diagonal. The Serenade of Leandre is mine, including the steps for the little harlequins (I looked to Balanchine and Gusev). The final little dance for Harlequin, Columbine, Pierrette, her cavalier, and their four friends' couples, after the balcony descends, is not notated, but since the music repeats the galop from the Mask dance we quoted from it.

ACT 2 1. Polonaise (Columbine, Harlequin, Pierrette, cast): 100 percent Petipa, even though the polonaise step itself is not notated, but there is no doubt here. The children's polonaise is very well notated. The trick with the money fountain is described in the Mariinsky production book (all the props are described there in great detail). **2. Harlequinade** (16 children's couples): 90 percent Petipa. Well notated with some small gaps. The last 56 bars I had to invent. I took my inspiration from Balanchine (a big circle that breaks into little circles). **3. La reconciliation de Pierrot et Pierrette** (Pierrot, Pierrette, 4 women from the solo couples): 100 percent Petipa. Very well notated, twice, with minor variations (one notation is from the "miscellaneous" file). Chainés for women are notated on pointe. **4. La chasse aux alouettes** (Columbine, Harlequin, 12 women): Harlequin's entrance is mine. It's not notated (some quotes from Legat's 1909 film "Valse-caprice" with Alexandra Baldina and Fiodor Kozlov). The quality of notations for La Chasse is similar to Le Rendez-vous, sketchy, not precise, with gaps. Luckily everything is notated twice and so there are different details here and there. We followed all the floor plans and all the remarks such as "run," "on the knees," "arms down / up," "carry," "walk," "turns under the arm," "arabesque," "head movements," "arm on the floor," "by the stick," "tour jeté," "ballonné," and so on. Some of poses and movements are given in the Stepanov notes. It was less challenging to interpret than Le Rendez-vous, because the structure is more traditional. I would say the organization is pure Petipa, but two-thirds of the choreography is mine – except for two variations: both Harlequin's and Columbine's are 100 percent Petipa. Columbine's Preobrajenska variation is the best ever, notation initialed A. K. (Alexandra Konstantinova), also from the "miscellaneous" file. The Harlequin and Columbine coda is mine. The chaîné turns for twelve larks when Harlequin shoots Columbine are notated on pointe. **5. Quadrille des merveilleuses** (8 corps couples): 90 percent Petipa. I added little chassés here and there, as in the quadrille. **6. Galop** (entire cast): two-thirds is mine. The children are notated well. The steps for the four women and the larks are also written down. No codas for the principals or the concluding galop. The final stage picture is described in the notations. — A. R.

the choreographers Natalia Voskresenskaya, who reconstructed Shiryayev's choreography from his animation *The Harlequin Joke*, and Yuri Burlaka, who staged Gusev's version, adding the original version of Harlequin's act 2 variation (from the notations) to the act 1 ensemble. There was also an interesting production by Alexander Mishutin, who staged a two-act *Harlequinade* in Tbilisi. This is what we managed to see on YouTube. I applaud my colleagues with respect, but I must say that, judging by what we saw, we all set ourselves completely different tasks.

Designs and Scenic "Tricks"

For the first time in my practice (with the exception of the swan costumes for *Swan Lake* in Zurich), we decided to use the original sets and costumes, of 1900, as the basis for our designs. I had always thought that the choreography of Petipa was the most important element in any reconstruction and that new designs could connect the old ballets with our day. But, I must admit, *Harlequinade* changed my mind. It seems to me that we were right to use the originals.

The American artist Robert Perdziola used production sketches by Ivan Vsevolozhsky and Orest Allegri, kindly provided us by the St. Petersburg State Museum of Theater and Music. The extravagant costumes, with their bold combinations of colors, aroused doubts at first. But, combined with the scenery and the intricate patterns of dancing and the various groupings, they created a balanced whole, and, in the end, seemed the only possible choice. Once again, this convinced us of the wisdom of Petipa and his colleagues. It seems they knew much more about theater than we do now. For me, it is obvious.

Take, for example, what we might call "theatrical tricks." There are several of them in *Harlequinade*, all of which provoked a lively reaction from the audience: 1. throwing Harlequin (a mannequin) from the balcony; 2. tearing apart the mannequin, followed by his resurrection; 3. the appearance of the Fairy from

the fountain; 4. the lowering of the balcony with Columbine and Pierrette on it with the help of Harlequin's magic; 5. the transformation of the notary into the Fairy (an instant costume change); 6. the fountain of gold coins emerging from the table top through Harlequin's magic.

After the golden fountain, which is the last stage trick in the ballet, the dances begin: children, Pierrette's variation, larks, quadrille, and gallop. The dance logic is to warm the audience's attention as soon as it wanes. That same purpose is served by Harlequin's slapstick and an umbrella fitted with mirrors, used during the lark hunt. We might have overlooked these details if not for the production books and lists of props from the collection of the theater museum in St. Petersburg, important sources of information about the ballet.

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I should talk in more detail about the "danzante" quality and artful dramaturgy of Riccardo Drigo's wonderful score, about the construction of Petipa's dance phrases and the harmony of his ensembles, about the way in which all the characters in the ballet are balanced and how each has his or her own special moments. And also about the exact passages in which I was forced to create my own choreography to fill gaps in the text. (See opposite page for a summary of each section of the ballet and its sources.)

Of course I would like it if our work could be evaluated in terms of its faithfulness to the source, but who would do that? Dig into the archives, read the notes, which are now freely available on the Harvard website? I think no one will. Only fellow reconstructors could do it, and professional courtesy will probably inhibit their comments. What I can say is that we made a sincere homage to Marius Petipa and, in accordance with that idea, presented his work, not our own. We were guided, and limited, by the desire to restore it as it was. With each restoration project, we understand more. The opportunity to be Petipa's apprentice is a great privilege. I can't complain.