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MARCH 2022 ISSUE

**NDA Attends The
English National Ballet:
RAYMONDA**

A New Version
By Tamara Rojo
After Marius Petipa

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NDA NEWS

NDA Attends The English National Ballet: Raymonda

NDA had the pleasure of attending the opening evening of the English National Ballet – Raymonda. Thanks to David Beer (dance teacher at the English National Ballet) The original ballet was by Marius Petipa in 1898.

‘Introducing a heroine in command of her own destiny, and celebrating the courage of nurses and women who fought for emancipation, this beautiful production is guaranteed to thrill, move and inspire’

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The opening night of a ballet is always a wonderful event to attend, especially when it is a new re-staging of a work that rarely gets performed and never has it been shown in the UK.

This was Tamara Rojo’s, English National Ballet companies choreographic and directorial debut. Tamara Rojo has been Artistic Director of English National Ballet since 2012. Within six months of joining English National Ballet, Tamara was promoted to Principal, and went on to dance the full range of the Company’s principal roles.



“As the choreography teacher at English National Ballet School it is always amazing to see where your students careers take them and the opportunity to see so many on stage in this production was wonderful, some as performers for this production, others now on contracts with the company permanently”

–David Beer

The story of Raymonda is about the struggle to balance desire and work. Raymonda comes from an English Victorian family. Coming from this family, the life could mean only one thing, dedication to her husband and her home.

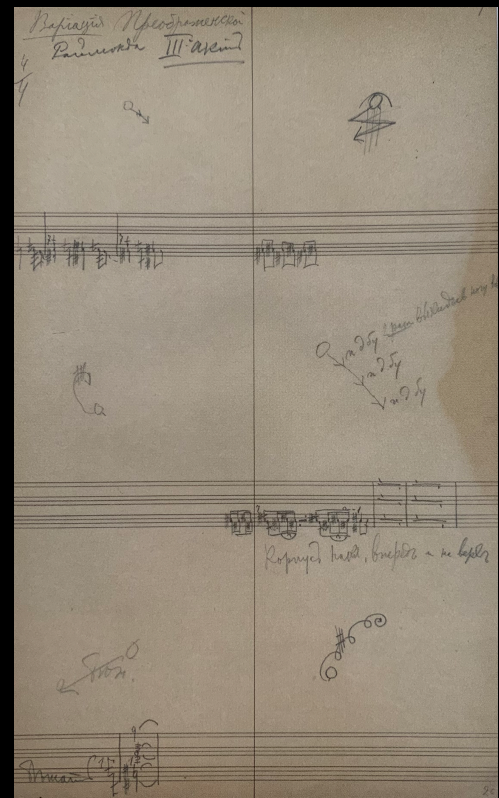
This obsession with home is evident in the show and can be understood in parts, as a reaction against the disruptive effects and this belief of a domestic sanctuary and of the wife as a pure creature with no needs of her own.

The frustration by this expectation pushes her to experience more outside of what is the norm and uses the Crimean war to escape and explore her ambitions.



The inspiration of Raymonda's Character was taken from Florence Nightingale. Nightingale was born into a privileged family with parents who were progressive in the ideas of women's education. However Nightingale was opposed to the idea of marriage and eventually proceeded in entering the world of nursing and she shaped the industry.

The Stepanov notations of Petipa's Raymonda is a choreographic documentation system developed in 1890s by Vladimir Stepanov, a dancer of the Imperial Ballet. His style was further developed by Alexander Gorky and then used to notate a significant part of the Imperial Ballet repertoire (Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker, Giselle).



Most of the surviving notation are in the hand of Nikolai Sergeyev, a régisseur of the Imperial Ballet who left Russia in 1918 and took with him the notations and other documents that now comprise the Sergeyev Collection.

The choreography of Raymonda is complex. Tamara was inspired by the original performance so she carried through some of these moves to her new version.



The notations used are to show how a dancer's body should move, and it also has a floor plan showing where the dancers are on stage. This was a very special and rare time to see Rojo's creation, as she was able to recreate the elements from the original piece.

This fantastic production had over 65 dancers and actors, and the mens choreography had also been updated compared to the original piece. In 1890s, they could not perform the feats of athleticism we are used to enjoying today.



This new version of Raymonda by Tamara Rojo's directing and choreography, was built on her notable career as a dancer and artistic director.



Isaac Hernández as John de Bryan and Shiori Kase as Raymonda

This performance was very well executed and brought together with the orchestra, the English National Ballet Philharmonic.

This modification keeps the best of the original Raymonda, from its renowned rich original work by Alexander Glazunov and the classical choreography of Marius Petipa with the updated new dramatic story, showing a heroine in control of her own destiny was an absolute delight to experience.



Tamara, the director will be moving to step into a role with San Francisco ballet in late 2022, she will be the first female artistic director there. Her husband Isaac Hernandez, currently is principal dancer of ENB, who will be joining her.

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