

La Vivandière

Key Facts

- The original one-act ballet La Vivandière, popular in London in 1844.
- It was reworked by Arthur Saint-Léon into a two-act form for the Paris Opera in 1848.
- The Pas de Six is all that survives today of this charming ballet

About

Saint-Léon recorded his choreography in detail in his own system of notation. Revival from his notation provides the most authentic reconstruction of any choreography from the Romantic period because it is based on a contemporary record and has not been corrupted by being handed down through memory. The ballet highlights the difficult dance steps of the period, in particular Saint-Léon's own solo, which is a revelation of his virtuosity and surprising in an age when male dancers were eclipsed by the ballerinas.

This particular revival was first produced by Ann Hutchinson Guest for the Joffrey Ballet in 1977 and has since been mounted for the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet in 1987, the Zurich Ballet and the St. Petersburg State Academic Ballet in 1992, the Verona Ballet in 1996 and the Rome Opera Ballet in 2001.



Further Reading

Language of Dance® Series No.6 La Vivandière Pas de Six, Text and Labanotation by Ann Hutchinson Guest 1994

The Pas de Six from La Vivandière is the only ballet preserved intact from the glorious period of the Romantic Ballet. Because it was recorded in detail by the choreographer Arthur Saint-Léon in his own dance notation system, it could be revived faithfully for audiences to enjoy and students and scholars to study. The historical background of the piece - the period, the choreography, the style - has been provided by world renowned ballet historian Ivor Guest. The study and performance notes, which provide a guide to understanding and reviving the ballet, are the result of productions of the work for professional companies. Publication of the ballet in Labanotation, makes the choreography accessible internationally to researchers, students, teachers and dancers. While the steps are technically challenging, the ballet is an excellent piece for students to dance, thereby gaining insight into the true Romantic Ballet style.