

LES
GRANDS
BALLETS

NATIONAL CENTRE
FOR DANCE THERAPY

Le Lac

Educational Guide

RELAXED PERFORMANCE



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SCHEDULE OF THE DAY

1:30 P.M.

- Audience arrival and seating - Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier

2:05 P.M.

- Welcome and introduction to the relaxed performance

2:15 P.M.

- Relaxed performance - *Le Lac* - Act 1

3:30 P.M.

- End of the relaxed performance and audience exit



ABOUT LES GRANDS BALLETS

Les Grands Ballets is...

- A creation and production company founded in 1957 by Ludmilla Chiriaeff that became the first professional ballet company in Quebec
- Nearly fifty Canadian and international dancers
- An orchestra of variable size made up of 30 to 60 musicians
- Administrative offices, dance studios, and a costume workshop located in the heart of Montreal's Quartier des spectacles, at Édifice Wilder
- A growing choreographic repertoire showcasing on stage the great ballet classics as well as new dance styles created by renowned choreographers and emerging artists
- Six productions presented each year at Place des Arts, along with numerous regional and international tours



BEING MINDFUL OF OUR REACTIONS

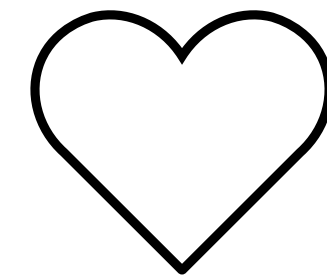
OPEN YOUR EYES



OPEN YOUR EARS

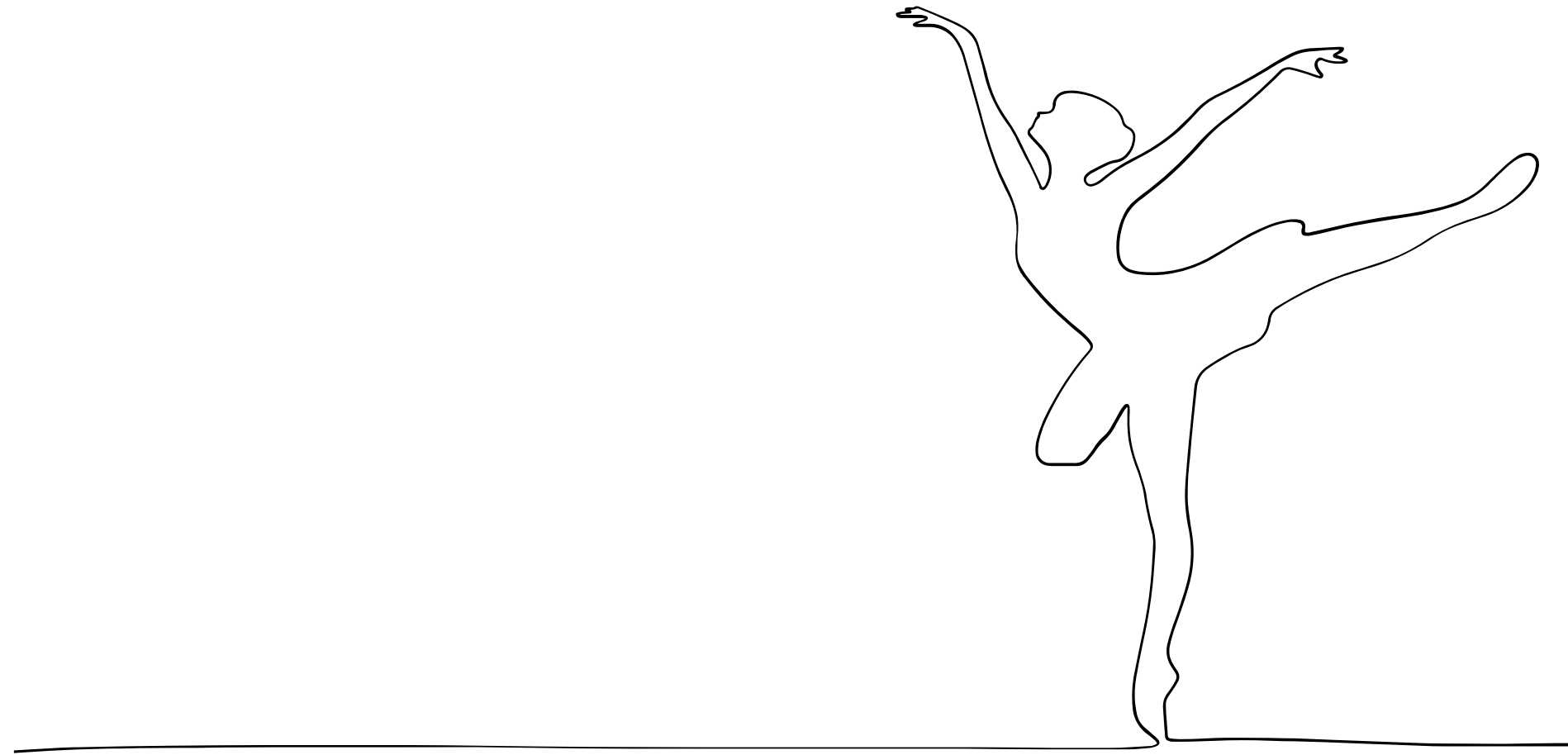


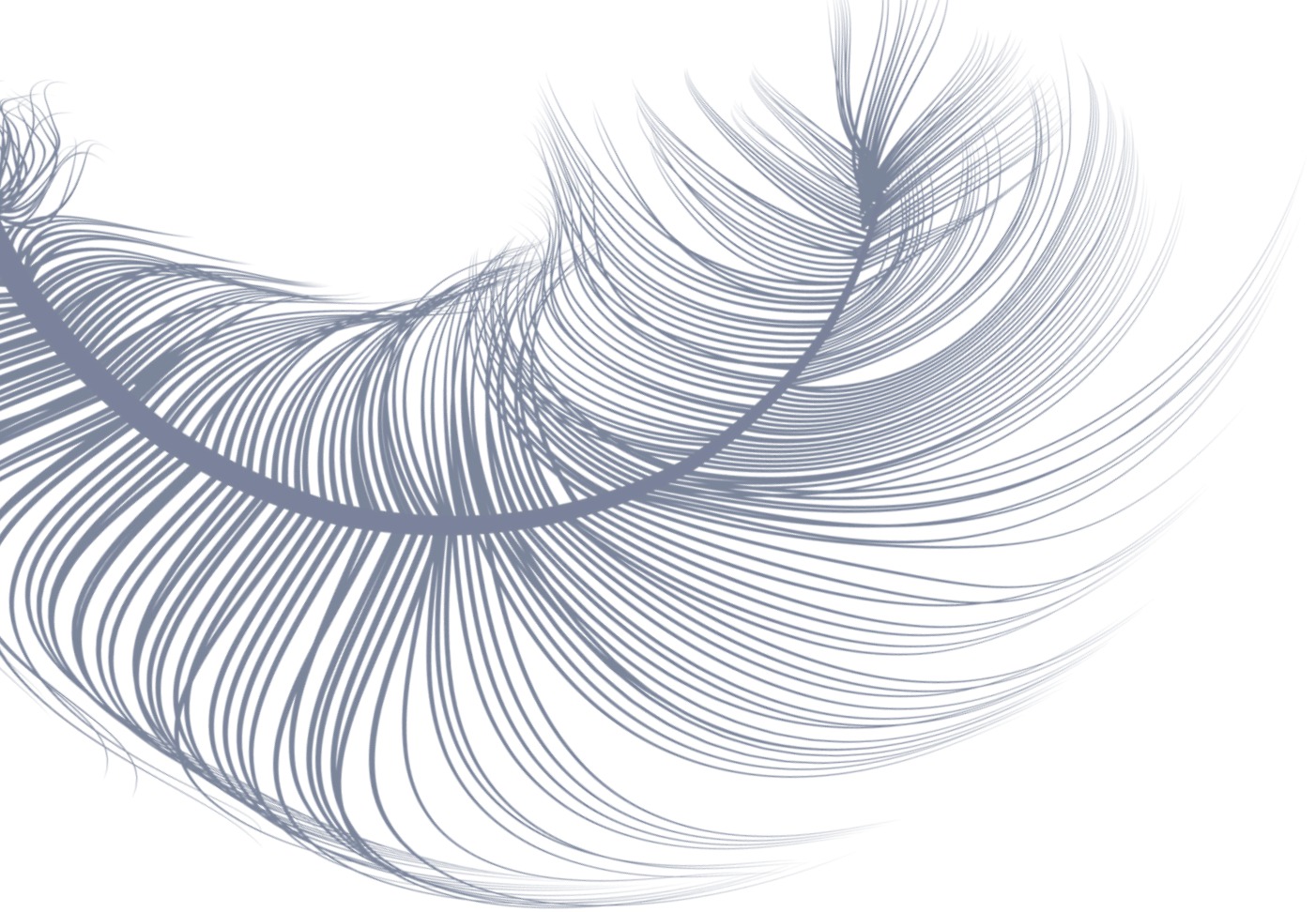
OPEN YOUR HEART



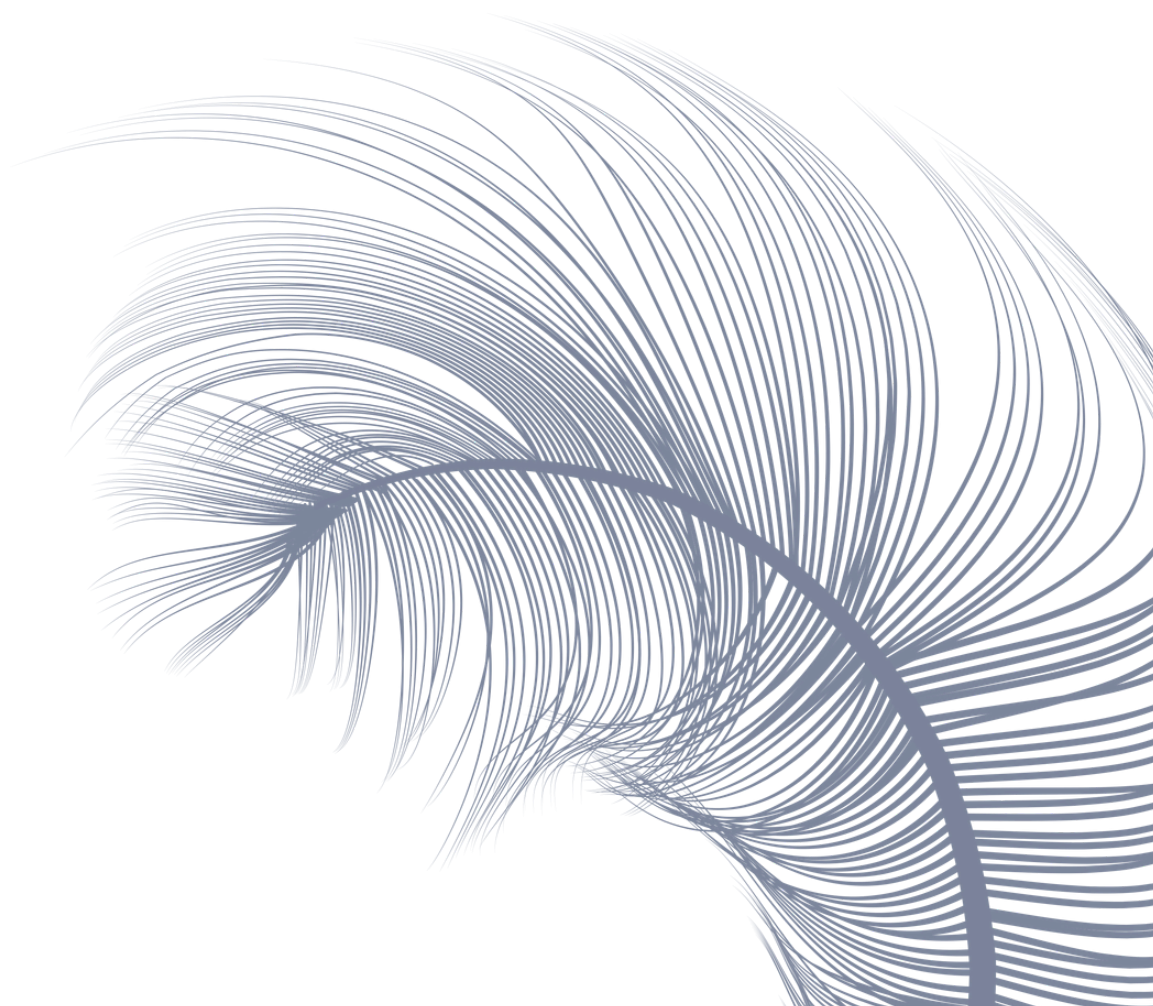
PART ONE

RELAXED PERFORMANCE





THE BALLET



THE BALLET OF IVAN CAVALLARI



ACTE 1

In this reinterpretation of *Swan Lake* by Ivan Cavallari, Artistic Director of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, the story leaves behind the familiar enchanted kingdom and shifts into the world of **a film set**, where an **advertising campaign** is being shot for the **two perfumes *Vertige Noir* and *Cygne Blanc***.

Behind the glow of the spotlights, auditions, staged scenes, and photo shoots unfold. Everything becomes image, where appearances are carefully constructed.

CLARINS présente

Le Lac

CHOREOGRAPHER : **IVAN CAVALLERI**

MUSIC : **PIOTR ILITCH TCHAIKOVSKI**

SCENOGRAPHY : **EDOARDO SANCHI**

COSTUMES : **MARIA PORRO**

LIGHT DESIGN : **MARC PARENT**



STORY AND CHARACTERS

To help you better understand this new story, we have used **costume sketches and the scenography images**, to guide you through the characters journey on stage.



Odile, muse and principal dancer, is the face of the perfume *Vertige Noir*. She appears alongside her lover Siegfried in a new advertising campaign.



Curtain rises and opening scene



Scene 2 – The Commercial Shoot

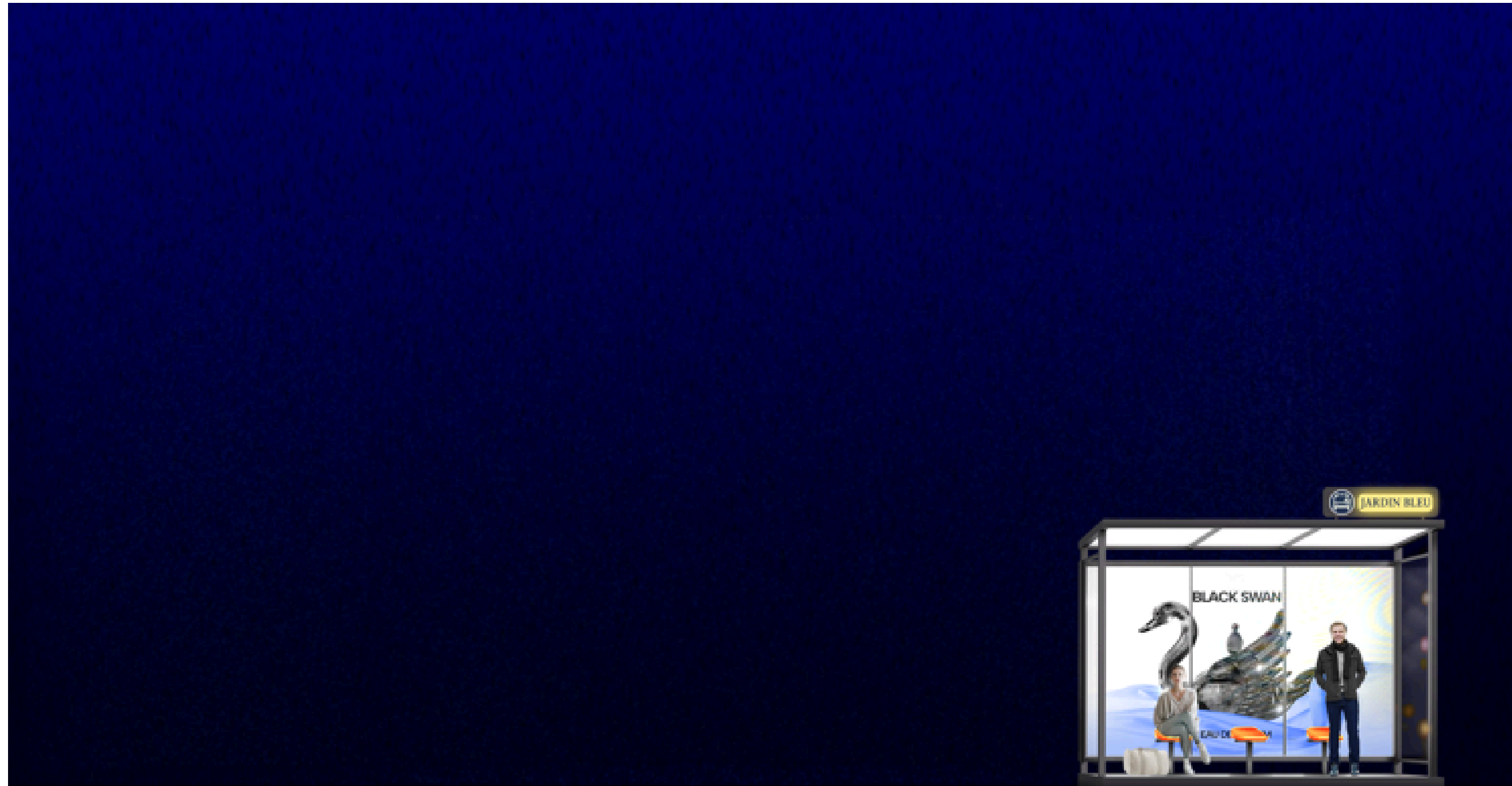
N° 1
CYGNE NOIR
EAU DE PARFUM



The *Vertige Noir* perfume



The next scene takes us into Odette's ballet class, where she is a gifted student at the *Imperial School*. On stage, you will see around twenty real students from a ballet school (École supérieure de ballet du Québec) !



In this scene, Odette, a young dancer, catches Siegfried's attention at a bus stop after passing her end-of-year exam.



Odette carries within her the teachings of her mentors Tchaikovsky, Petipa, and Ivanov.

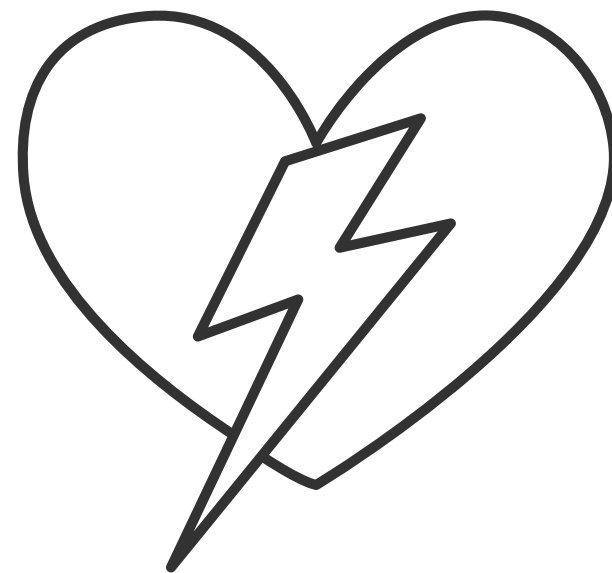
Unbeknownst to her, behind these three artists she admires lies von Rothbart, an evil genius.



Little by little, Odette is drawn into a world where dreams, ambition, and reality blur together, a world whose codes and pitfalls she has yet to understand.



In the following scenes, four dancers audition for the role in the new *Cygne Blanc* fragrance campaign.



Odile's anger erupts when she discovers Odette in Siegfried's arms during her audition.



Her presence makes Odile jealous. She sees the role she believed to be hers slip away before her eyes.



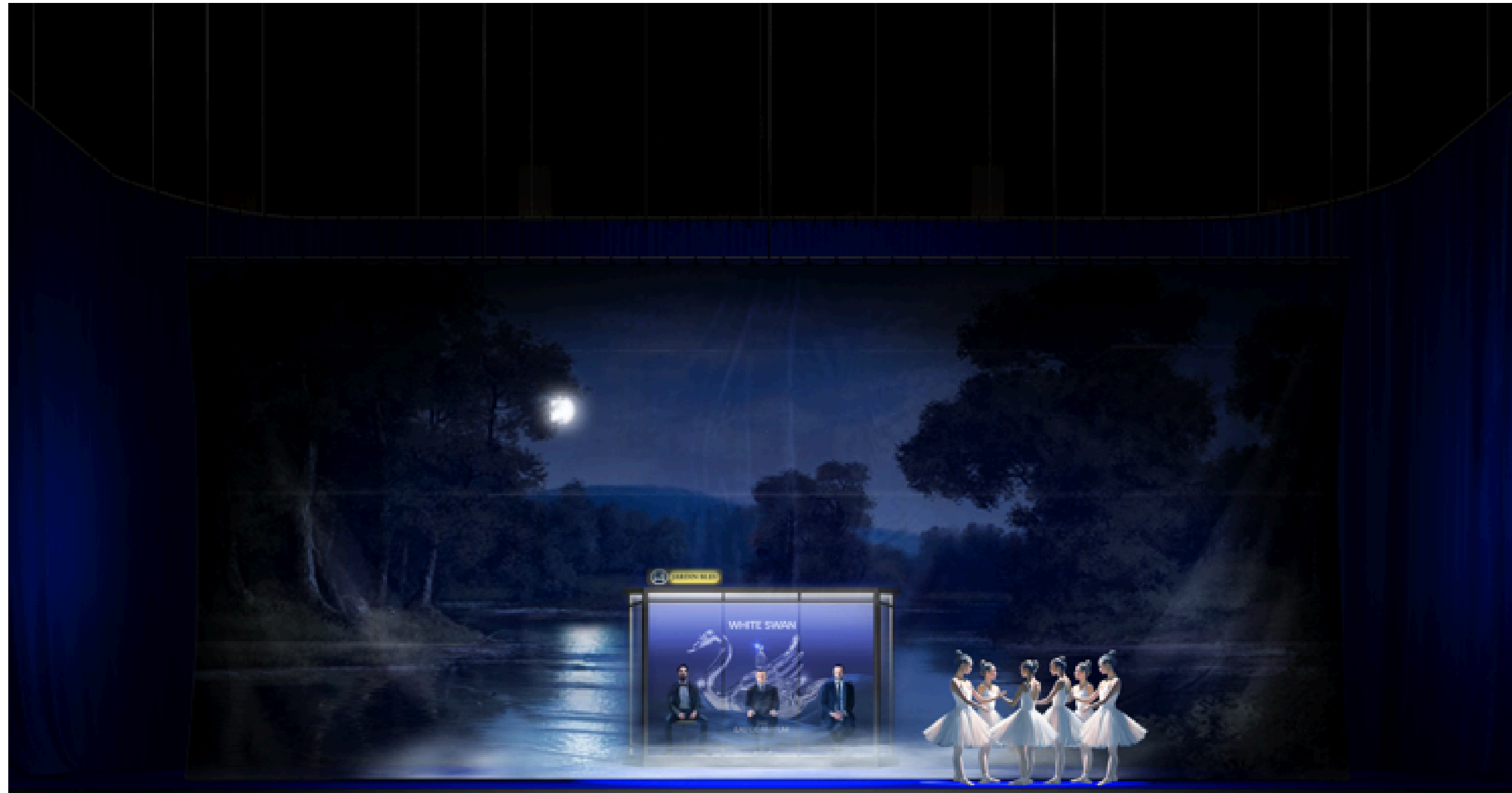
In this scene – Odette's audition with Siegfried, sparking Odile's jealousy.



Upon discovering a cloud of the fragrance *Vertige Noir* in Odile's bag, Odette becomes enchanted and surrenders to ambitious dreams.



What you will see on stage during Odette's moment of reflection.



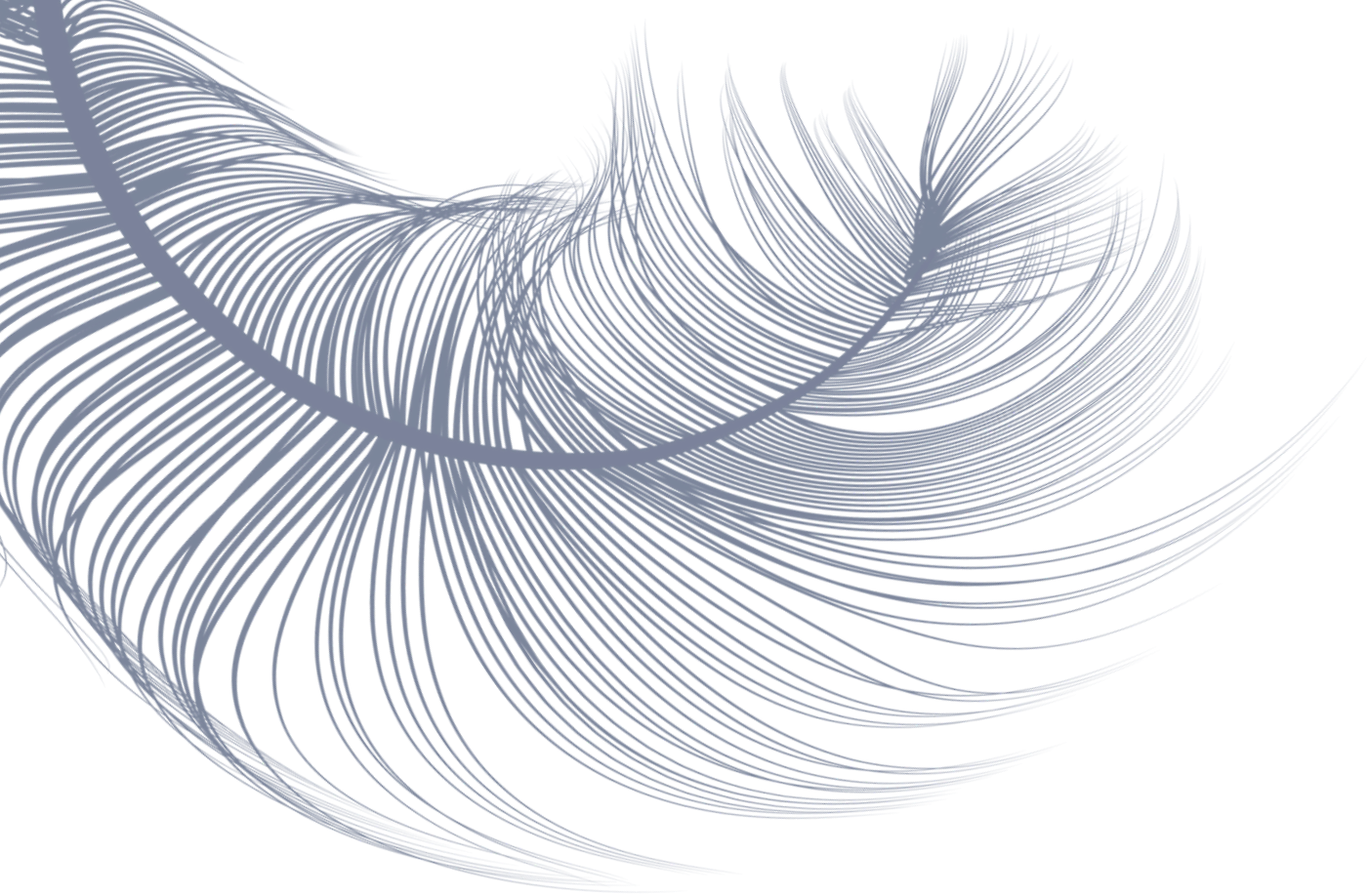
The transformation - around her, the three advertising agency designers in turn take on the appearance of Rothbart as they watch her slow transformation into a white swan. Seduced by the promise of an exceptional career, she signs without hesitation the contract that will make her the new face of the *Cygne Blanc* perfume.



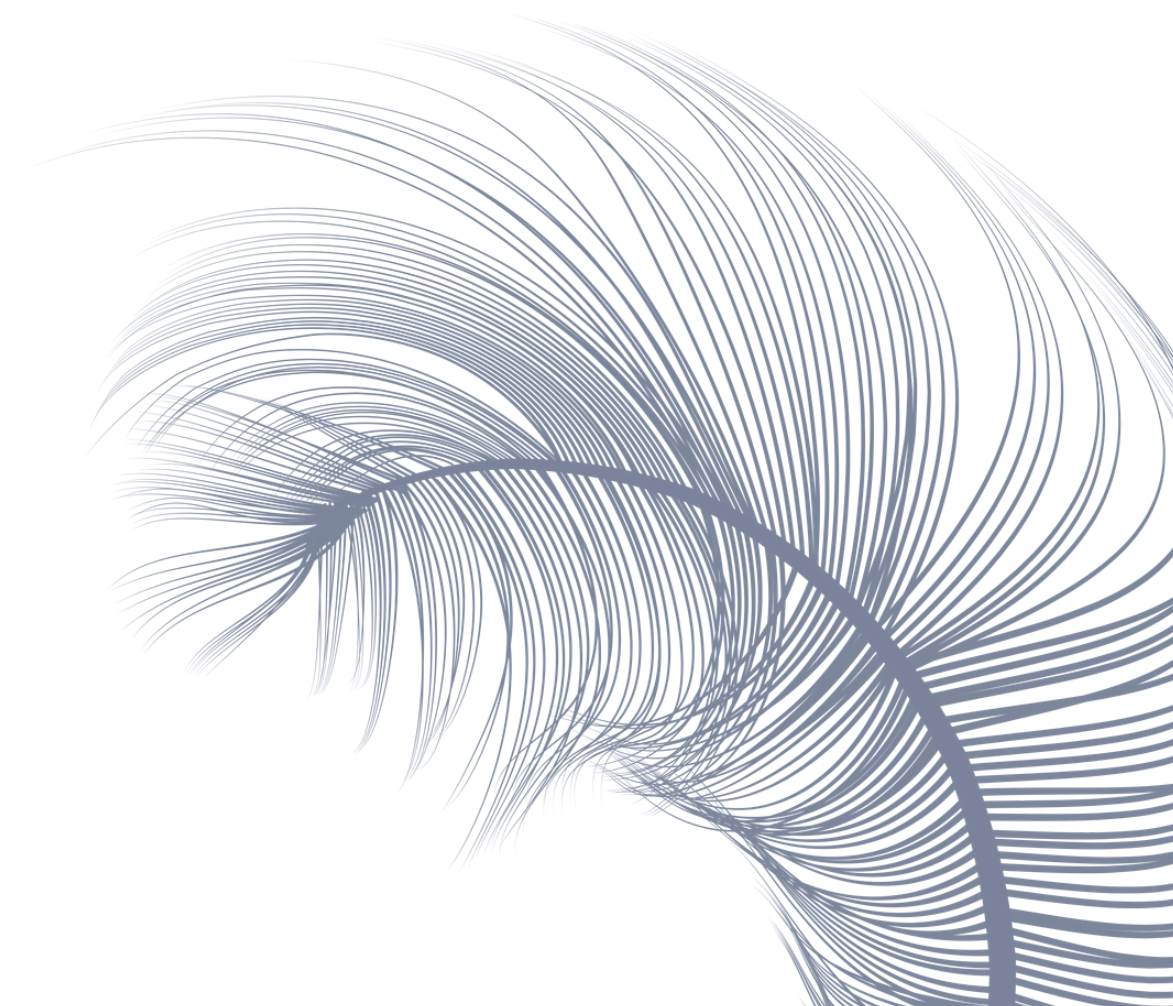
The visual of *Cygne Blanc* perfume



The final scene before the curtain falls



SCENOGRAPHY



THE DECOR AND THE STAGE DESIGN

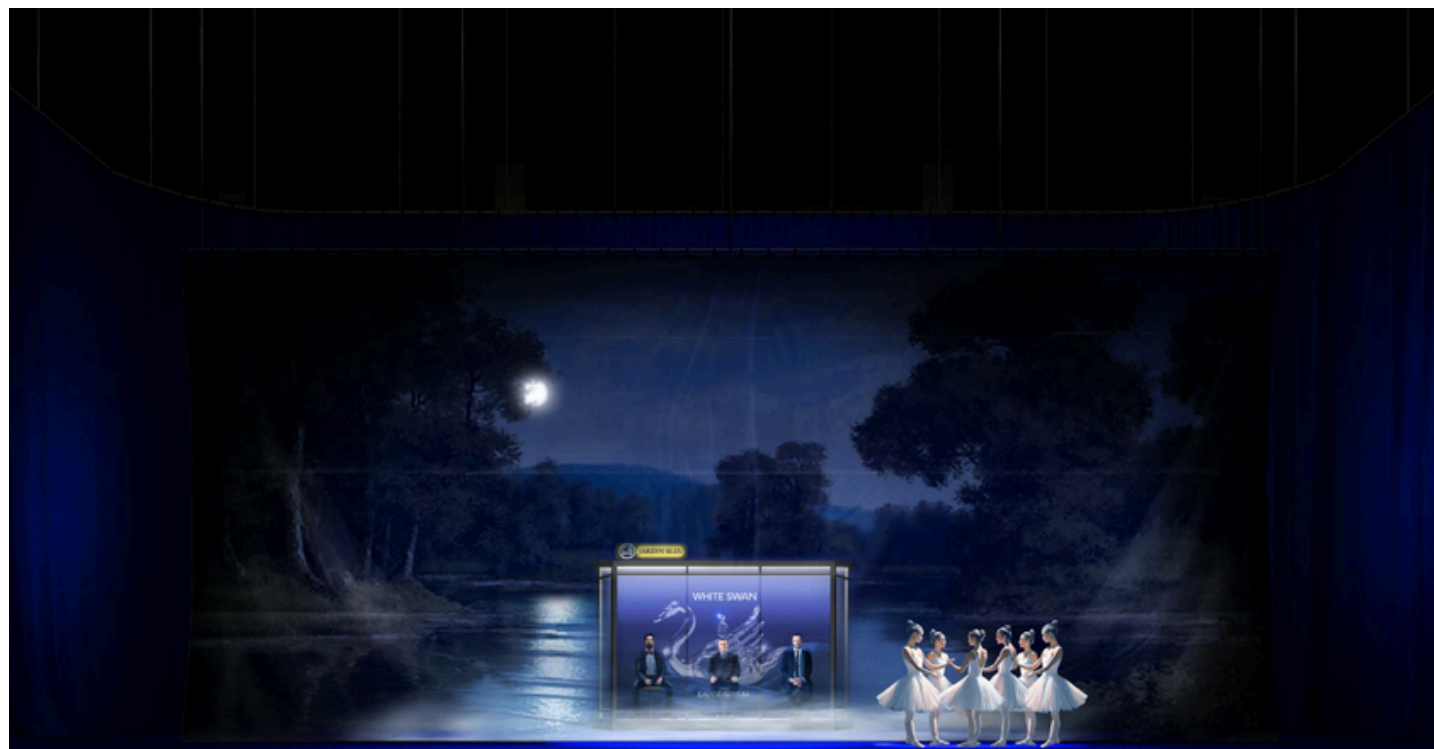


The scenography is based on a meeting between the romantic world of classical ballet and a contemporary aesthetic.

The lake remains at the heart of the imagination, carried by an omnipresent blue cyclorama and visual references in the costumes, evoking a dreamlike and poetic world. However, this universe is constantly brought into tension with a darker reality inspired by the modern world.

Meaningful spaces

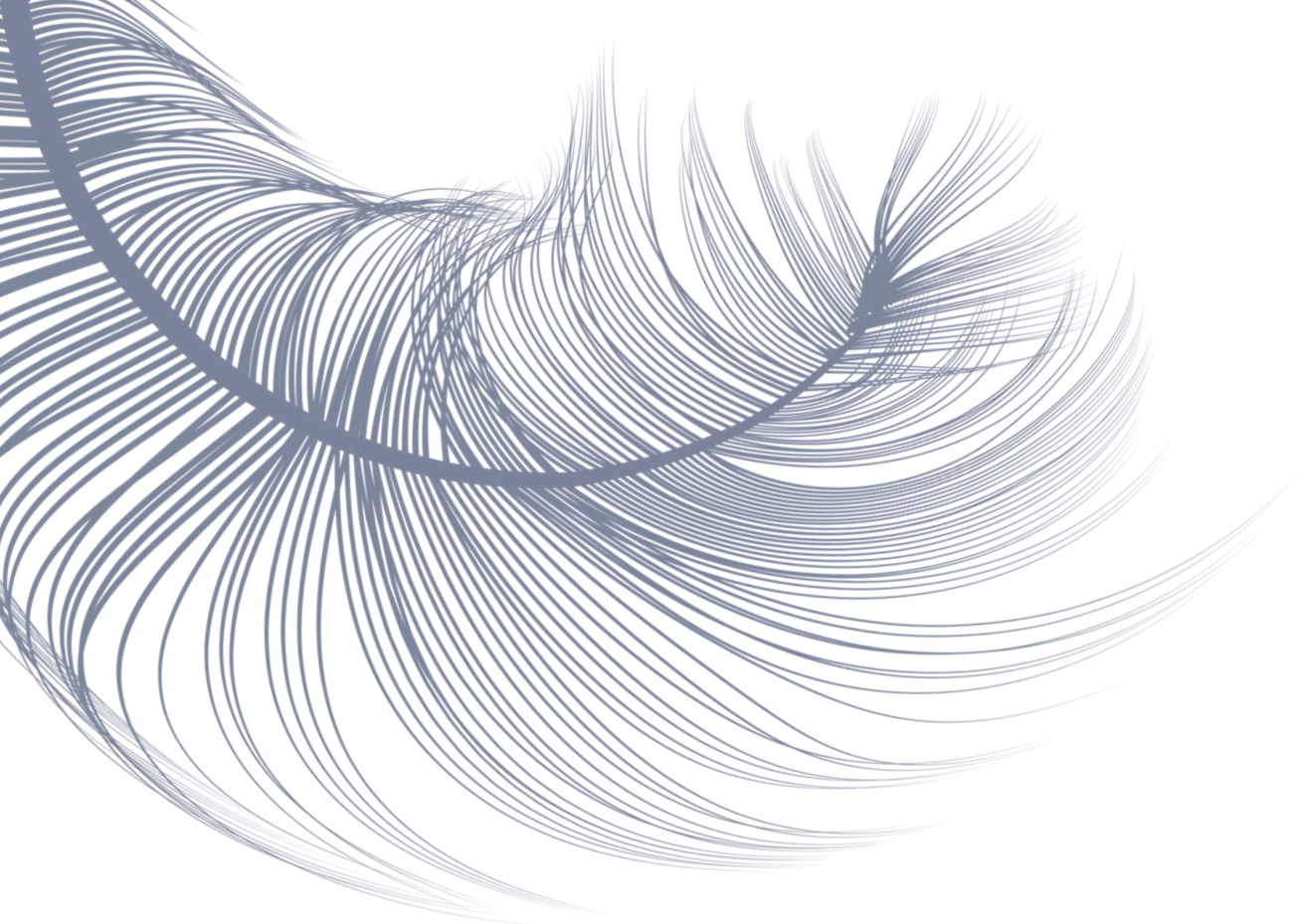
The set incorporates meaningful spaces, including a bus shelter transformed into a meeting place and advertising display. This space becomes a crossing point where identities are constructed and transformed under the influence of images and commercial messages.



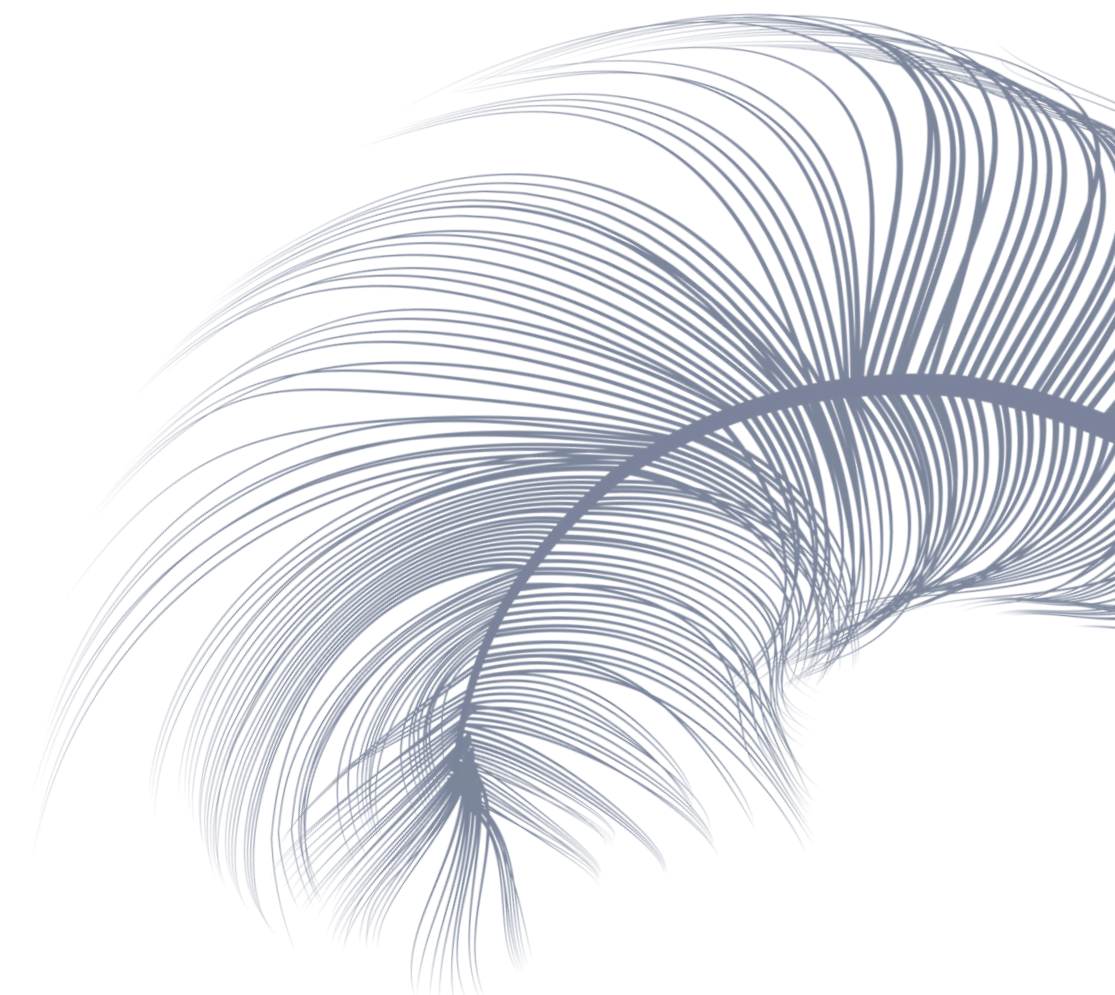
The perfume acts as a guiding thread, connecting the characters and embodying a force of desire, transformation, and relationship to others.

Stage language and aesthetic

The stage design adopts a cinematic approach, supported by moving curtains that reveal and conceal spaces, creating a visual rhythm similar to film editing. The textures and materials of the costumes replace the traditional codes of the tutu in order to encourage greater intimacy between bodies and an unapologetic sense of sensuality.



THE MUSIC



THE MUSICAL ATMOSPHERE

The music is classical, and is composed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

Overture and Swan pieces

Iconic music creating an atmosphere that is both mysterious and intense.

Odile's entrance and the Swan hunt

Fast-paced and energetic music.

First pas de deux

Music in 3/3 time, creating a royal and dynamic atmosphere.

Second pas de deux

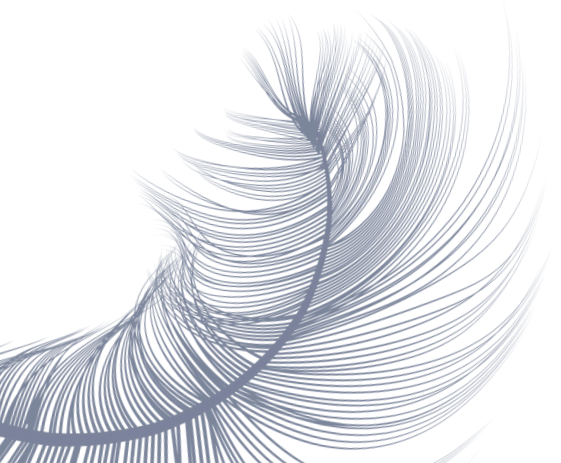
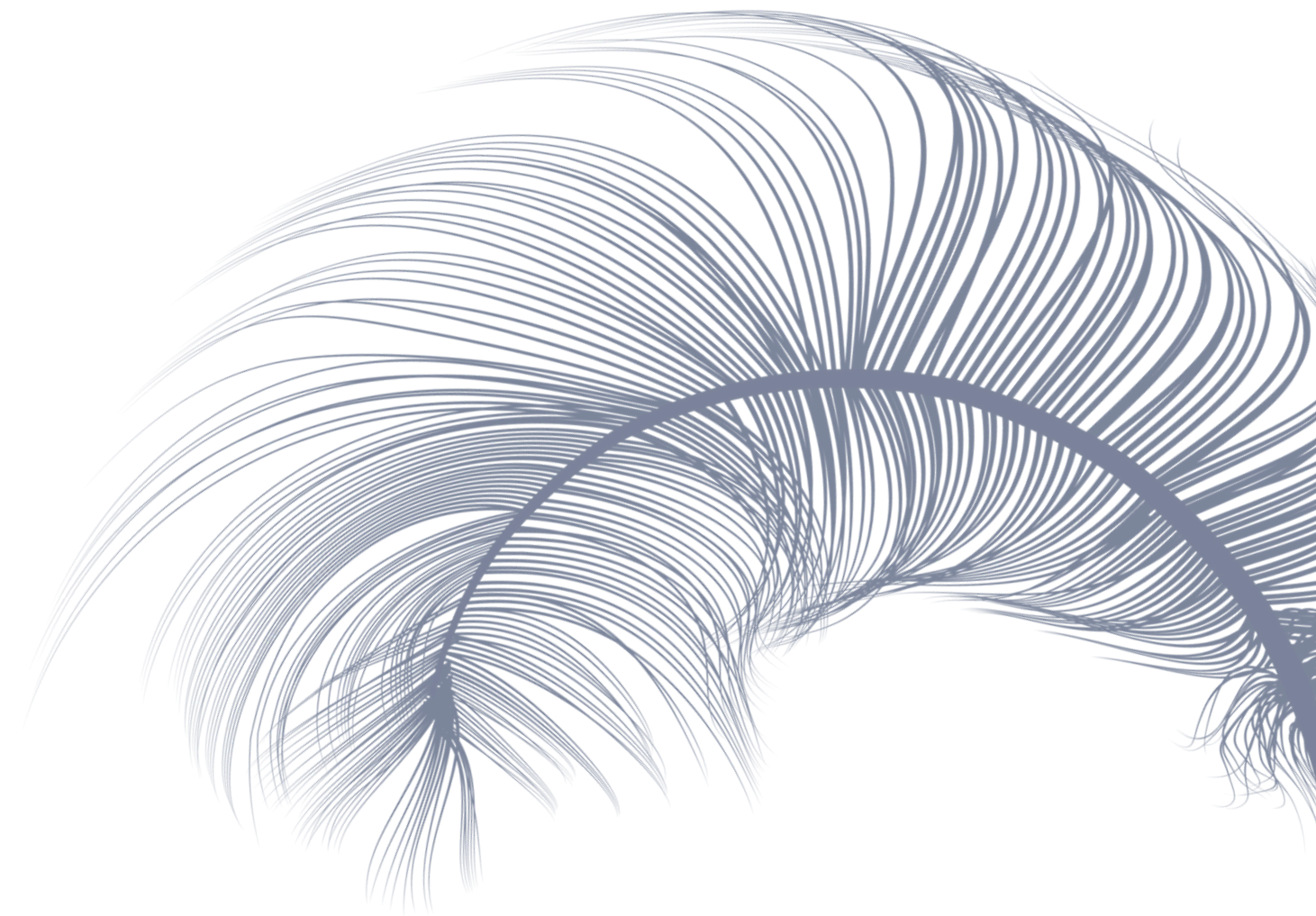
A lyrical score with a prominent violin

Celebration

Powerful and energetic score.



THE COSTUMES



THE COSTUMES

Designed by **Maria Porro**, the costumes in *The Lake* accompany the transformation of the bodies and the visual richness of a cast of around **75 dancers**.

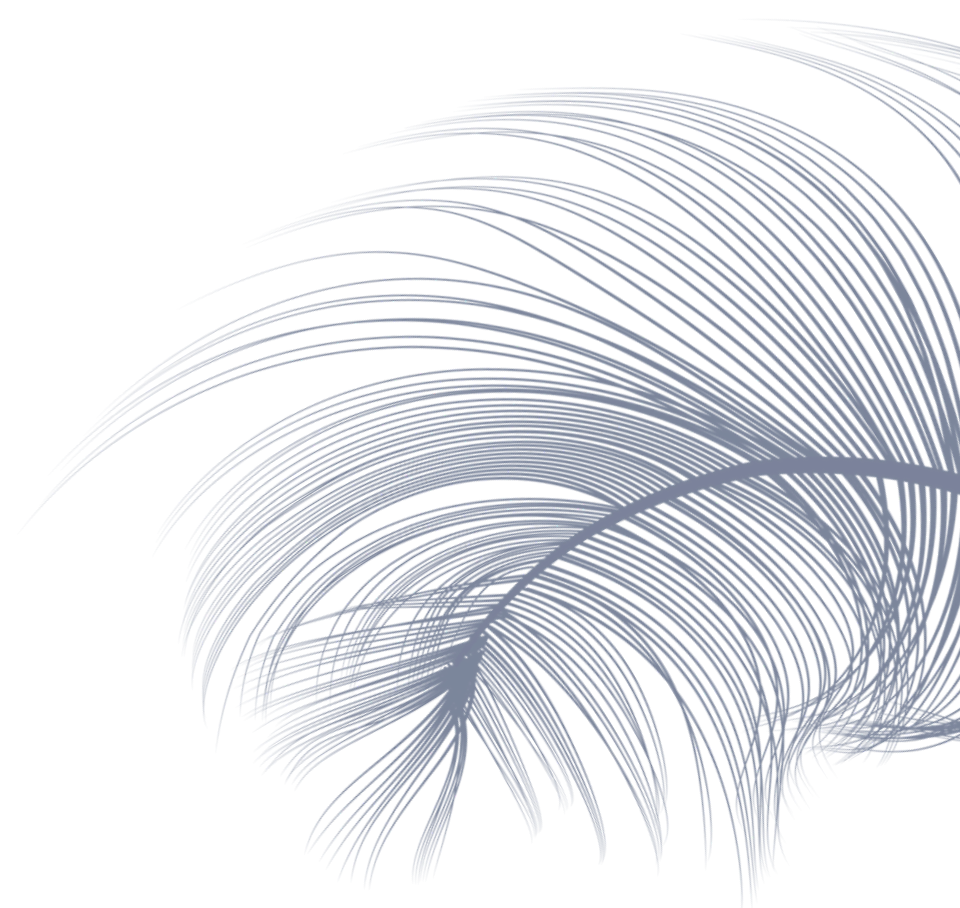
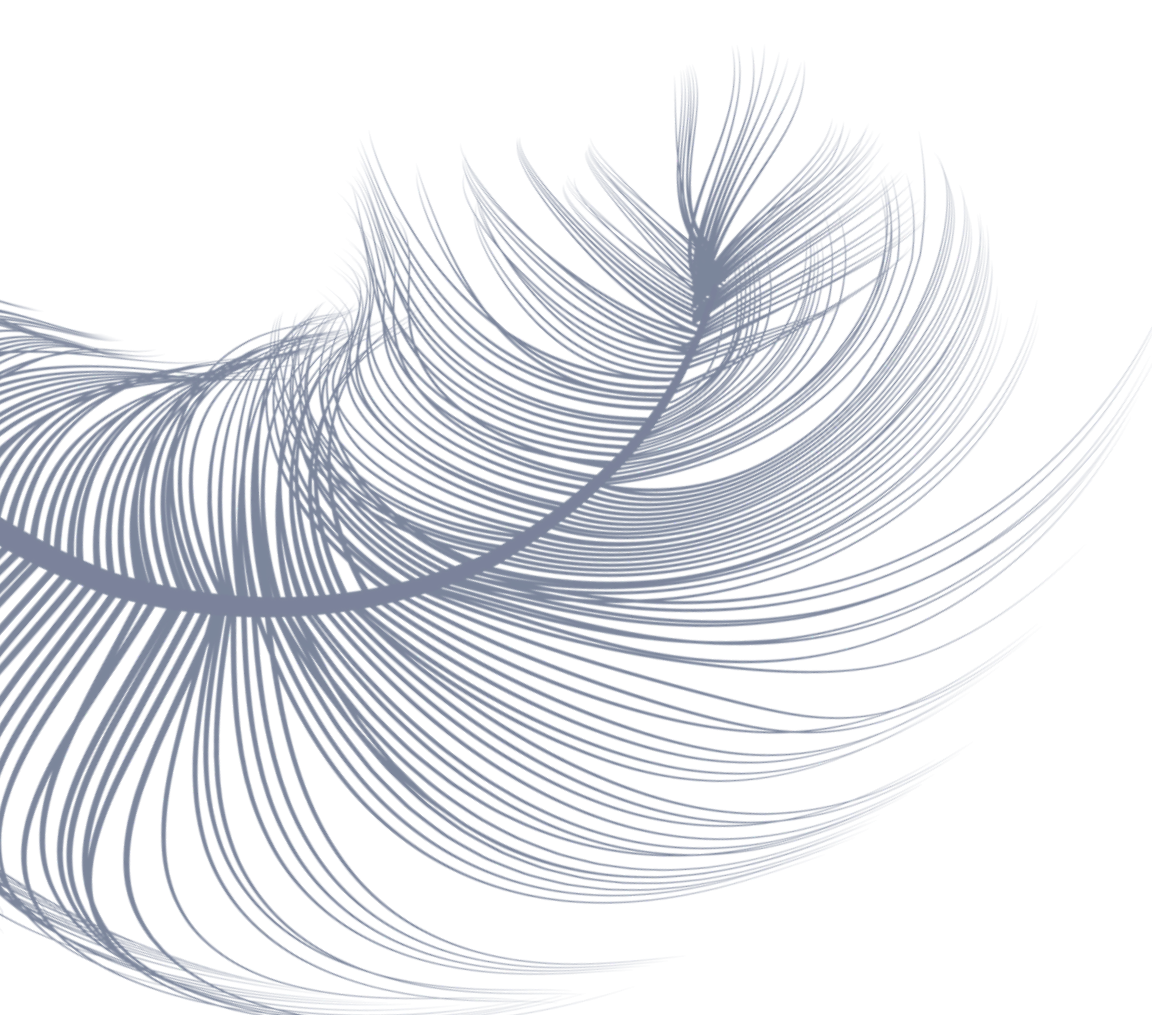
Far from the traditional tutu, they favor contemporary textures and materials that bring the performers closer together, encouraging contact, sensuality, and fluidity of movement.

Feathers play a central role: sometimes light and evoking birds, sometimes majestic when inspired by the peacock, they add both an organic and spectacular dimension.

Shades of blue subtly recall the lake's universe in costumes outside the ballet.

Together, they create a modern, expressive, and cinematic aesthetic in service of movement and the dancers' presence.





CHOREOGRAPHER AND MUSIC COMPOSER



IVAN CAVALLARI

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CHOREOGRAPHER

Born in Bolzano, Italy, in 1964, Ivan Cavallari first trained at the La Scala Ballet School in Milan, then at the Bolshoi Ballet School in Moscow, where he was a scholarship student from 1981 to 1983. He began his dancing career at La Scala before joining the Stuttgart Ballet in 1986. He became a principal dancer there in 1991, under the direction of Marcia Haydée and later Reid Anderson. A major interpreter of John Cranko's works, he also contributed to transmitting Cranko's repertoire to major international companies.

He later held artistic director positions at the West Australian Ballet and the Ballet of the Opéra national du Rhin. Since the 2017–2018 season, he has been the director of Les Grands Ballets, where he has developed a program combining major classical ballets with contemporary creations. In 2024, he published his first literary work with PRAXIS.



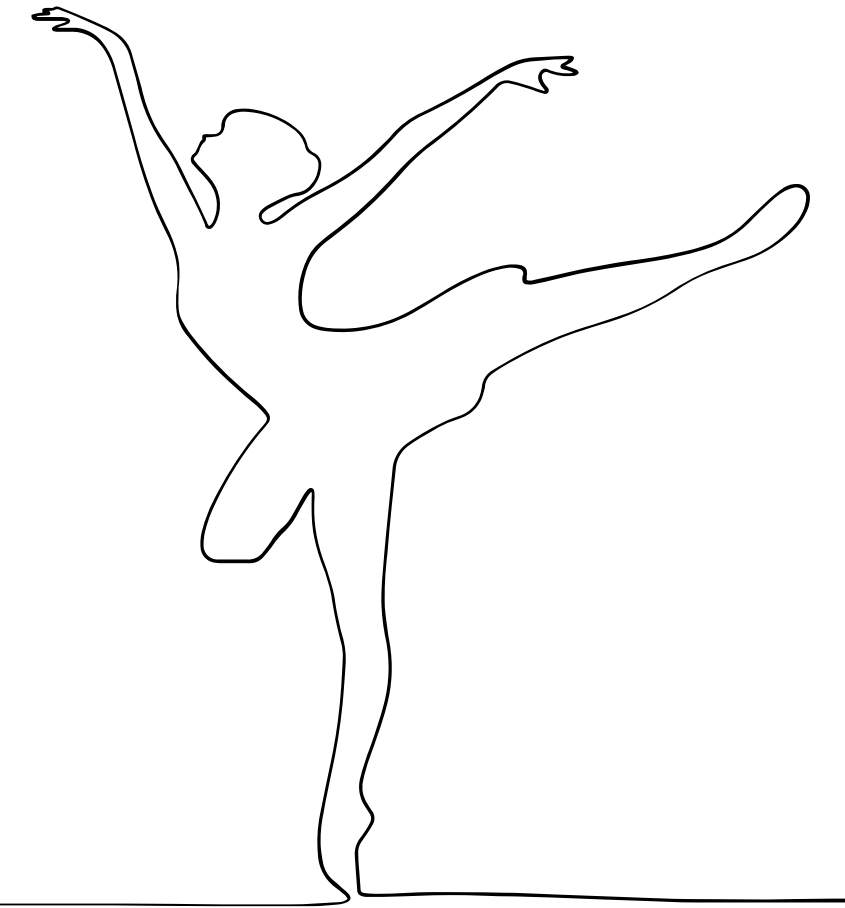
PIOTR ILITCH TCHAIKOVSKI

COMPOSER

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) is one of the greatest composers of Russian Romanticism. Born in Votkinsk, he first received a general education before turning to music. He studied at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, where he developed a style marked by deep lyricism and great orchestral sensitivity.

A major composer of his time, he wrote in many genres, but it is especially in ballet that he left a lasting legacy. He composed notably *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Nutcracker*, which have become essential works of the choreographic repertoire.

His rich and expressive musical language helped transform ballet into an art form in which music plays a central dramaturgical role. Even today, his works are performed on the world's greatest stages and remain cornerstones of the classical repertoire.



PART TWO

THE HISTORY OF BALLET AND A DANCER'S LIFE

WHAT IS BALLET?

Ballet is a theatrical and stylized form of dance. It is a language of the body, made up not of words, but of positions, movements, and sometimes pantomime gestures.

Traditional ballets often tell a story, like Don Quixote or Swan Lake, which recounts the tale of Princess Odette, transformed into a swan and saved by Prince Siegfried's love. However, in 1909, Michel Fokine created Les Sylphides, the first so-called neoclassical ballet without a narrative, showing that ballets can also exist without telling a story.

Sources of inspiration are varied: Jiří Kylián, inspired by Aboriginal dances during a trip to Australia, created Nomaden (1981) and Stepping Stones (1991). James Kudelka transforms the waltzes of Prokofiev and Stravinsky into movement in Desir (1991). George Balanchine emphasizes the purity of lines and harmony with the music in choreographies such as Concerto Barocco (1941) and Agon (1957), avoiding embellishments so as not to distract from the ballet itself.

The person who creates ballets is called a choreographer. From their imagination springs a series of steps and movements that, in rhythm with the music, bring to life a story, emotions, or a vision of the world.

Ballet is also a performing art that has developed over the centuries.



HISTORY OF DANCE



Everyone dances! Dance is a universal language, embracing folklore, social dance, rap, and funky styles. Anyone can dance simply by letting themselves be carried away by the rhythm of the music. But dance goes back a long way: the ancestors of dancers date back 14,000 years, with traces of prehistoric dancers found on paleontological relics all over the world

Long associated with a sacred act, dance evolved to become an art in its own right. In the Middle Ages, dance was free and without precise rules but was now used to entertain an audience. It was only in the 15th century that the first form of dance-theater emerged, laying the foundations for ballet-theater. Ballet developed and gradually became an evocation of social status and royal authority, particularly in the courts of Italy and France.

In the 17th century, Louis XIV popularized the discipline and founded the Royal Academy of Dance, which would establish the foundations of classical dance as they are still used today. Women also made their entrance into the world of dance, which had previously been reserved for men.

It wasn't until the 19th century that Romantic ballet came to fruition: female dancers took center stage and introduced dancing on pointe. Costumes became lighter, and wide skirts made of crepe and muslin made their appearance.

Today, the ballet we know has been greatly influenced by the Russian Ballets of the 20th century, which spread their influence around the world. There are four main forms of ballet

- **Classical ballet**, as popularized by Louis XIV, incorporates the 5 basic positions of ballet and fluid, graceful movements. The tutus are short, stiff, and rigid.
- **Romantic ballet** dates back to the 19th century and includes a narrative, often tragic in nature. The tutus are long and flexible, designed to give lightness to the ballerina's movements.
- **Neoclassical ballet** retains the technique of classical ballet but incorporates more modern and athletic movements. The costumes and sets are simplified to allow the contrasting movements to take center stage.
- **Contemporary ballet** approaches movement in a more abstract way, redefining the vocabulary of ballet while maintaining its technical framework

THE LIFE OF A DANCER

In a ballet company like Les Grands Ballets, a dancer starts their career around the age of 18 as an apprentice or as a member of the corps de ballet after auditioning. Through determination and recognition, they may be promoted by the artistic director to the rank of demi-soloist, then soloist. The most talented will advance to the rank of principal dancer.

Just like athletes, a dancer's professional career ends early, most often before the age of 35-40. Some will remain in the world of dance and become teachers, répétiteurs, or choreographers, while others will return to their studies to completely retrain

Throughout their careers, dancers must work on their technique every day to keep their bodies in perfect condition. On average, at Les Grands Ballets, dancers train at least 38 hours per week by attending ballet classes or rehearsals. This does not include their strength training in the gym, which they most often add during their free time, outside of working hours.

Armed with patience, determination, and an excellent memory, dancers work and rework pieces until they reach perfection. Each ballet can require up to 100 hours of rehearsal, and a professional dancer rehearses about 20 ballets per year, sometimes simultaneously.

The life of a dancer remains thrilling, especially with the honor of working with some of the greatest choreographers and participating in the creation of new works. Touring also gives dancers the opportunity to travel and broaden their horizons.



A DAY AS A GB DANCER

9:00

Arriving at the studios



9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Ballet class for all, to warm up the muscles and maintain physical fitness. The class starts with barre exercises, followed by combinations of exercises in the center. The class is usually taught by the ballet masters



11:30 a.m. to 1:30 a.m.

Rehearsal of a ballet or a creation



1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m

Lunch



2:30 p.m to 6:00 p.m

Rehearsals of the different ballets that will be presented in the coming months, with the ballet masters, the artistic director, or guest choreographers. OR Fitting of costumes, preparation of pointe shoes, photo sessions, or massage/physiotherapy sessions

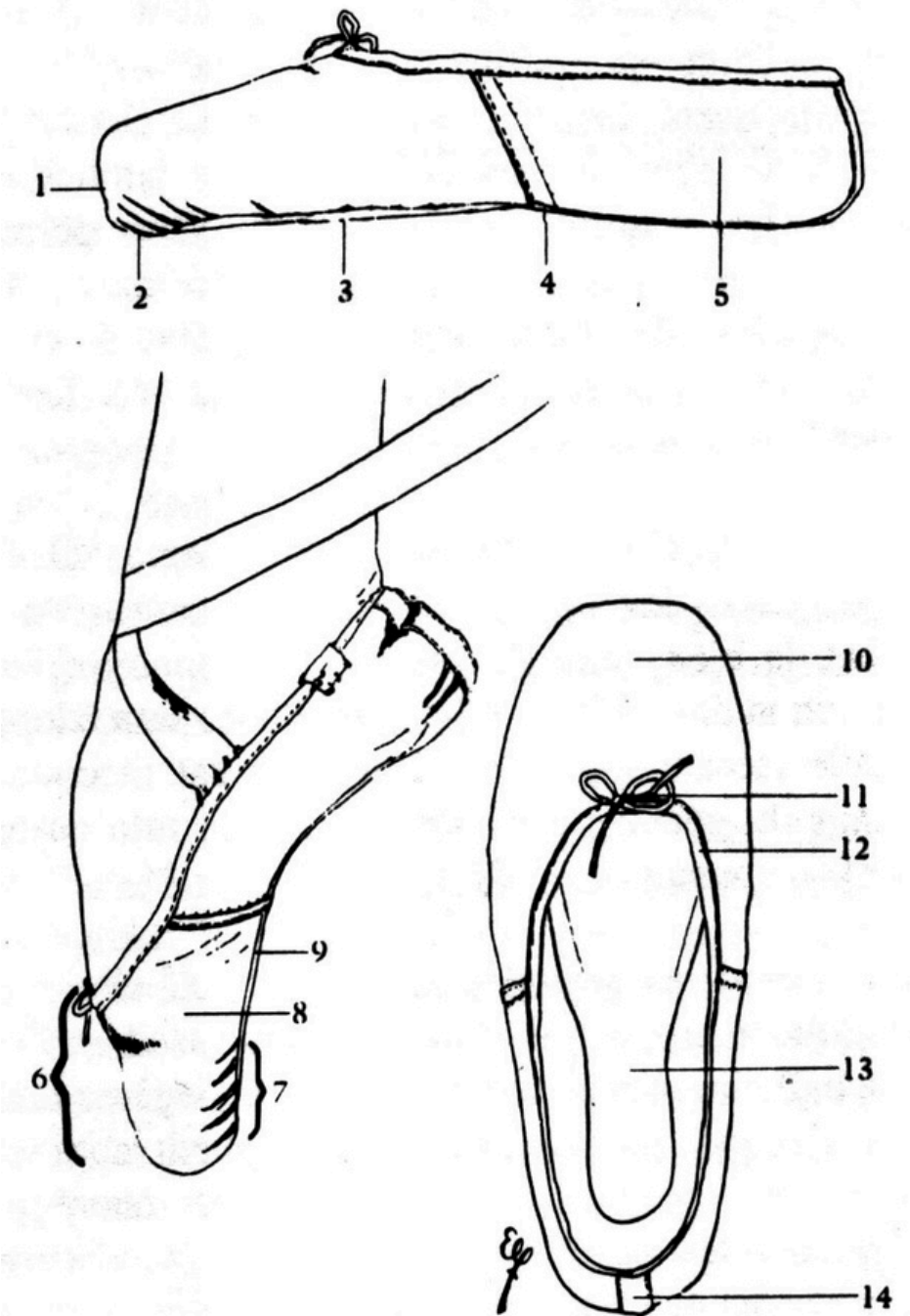


POINTES SHOES

Over time, the tutu and pointe shoes have become symbols of ballet. The ballerina, graceful and ethereal, seeming to float above the stage, inspires dreams. Dancing en pointe enhances a dancer's virtuosity when performing pirouettes or turns, as well as her speed and precision in footwork and jumps.

The earliest pointe shoes were in fact soft slippers, with dancers padding the tips with wool or cotton. Since the mid-19th century, pointe shoes have been made of satin, and their tips consist of several layers of fabric and glue forming a very hard "box." The sole, made of stiff leather, supports the foot and prevents it from bending as the dancer rises and lowers. In addition, to ensure the shoe does not slip off, dancers sew satin ribbons onto them, which are tightly tied around the ankles, and wide elastics often provide additional support.

Each pair is handcrafted, sometimes custom-made, to fit the dancer's feet perfectly like a second skin. A pair of pointe shoes costs about \$150.



1. La plate-forme
2. Les plis
3. Les semelles extérieures
4. La couture au niveau de l'arche
5. Le milieu entre le talon et la couture de l'arche
6. L'empeigne
7. Les plis également appelés les plumes (support de la pointe)
8. Le support des métatarses
9. La colonne de support
10. La boîte
11. La boucle
12. Le cordon
13. La semelle intérieure
14. La couture de renfort

PHOTOS CREDITS

DIAPOSITIVE 1

Photo: Sasha Onyshchenko - Dancer: Rachele Buriassi

DIAPOSITIVE 4

Group photo: Nath Martin

DIAPOSITIVE 9

Photo: Sasha Onyshchenko - Dancer: Rachele Buriassi

DIAPOSITIVES 11, 17, 18, 20 & 22

Sketches: Maria Porro

DIAPOSITIVES 12-16, 19-21, 23-27 & 28

Set design renderings: Edoardo Sanchi

DIAPOSITIVE 33

Photo: Sasha Onyshchenko

DIAPOSITIVE 38

Photo: Sasha Onyshchenko - Dancers: Yui Sugawara and Roddy Doble

DIAPOSITIVE 39

Photo: Toni Sasal Abad - Dancer: Rachele Buriassi

DIAPOSITIVE 40

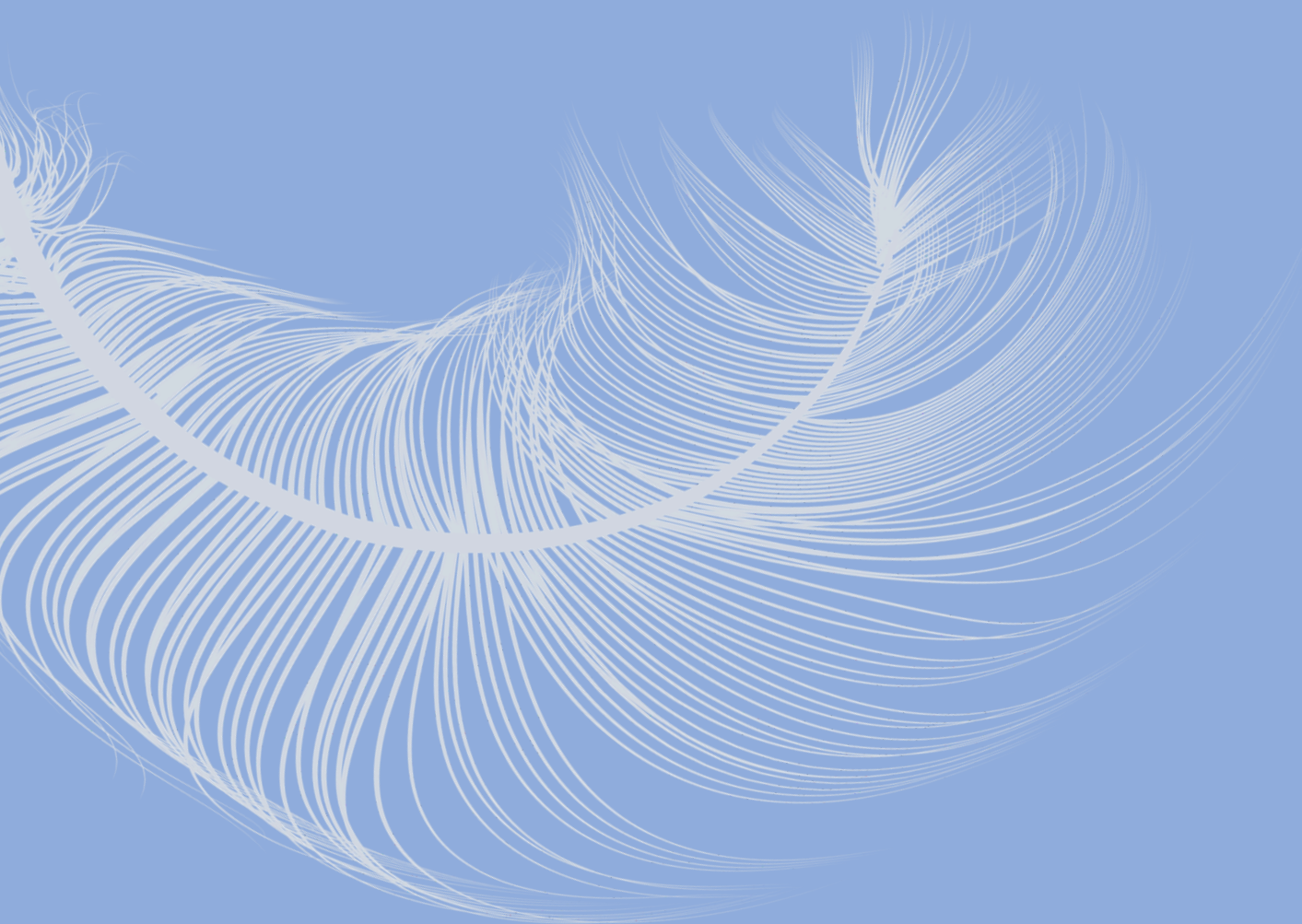
Photo: Sasha Onyshchenko - Dancers: Maude Sabourin and Vanesa G.-R. Montoya

DIAPOSITIVE 41

Photo: Sasha Onyshchenko - Dancer: Thomas Leprohon

LES
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ENJOY THE SHOW !