

Ballet: The Fairy Doll

Choreography: Joseph Hassreiter

Composer: Josef Bayer

The Story

"The Fairy Doll" or "Die Puppenfee" is an enchanting ballet with a delightful storyline, first premiered in Austria. The story unfolds in a toy shop, where the shopkeeper brings all the toys to life after closing hours. The most captivating of these toys is the Fairy Doll, who is revered as the queen by the others. She possesses a magic wand that gives her the power to bring happiness and joy.

As the story progresses, a group of three thieves enters the shop with the intention of stealing valuables. They are mesmerized by the Fairy Doll and decide to steal her, not knowing about her magical powers. The thieves try to outdo each other in an attempt to win the Fairy Doll's favor, leading to a series of comical and captivating dances.

Just as one of the thieves is about to escape with the Fairy Doll, she uses her magic wand. The Fairy Doll transforms the thief into a toy, saving herself and the other toys in the shop. The other thieves, witnessing this, flee the shop in terror, leaving the Fairy Doll and the other toys in peace.

The ballet ends on a joyful note with the Fairy Doll performing a celebration dance with the other toys, who are relieved and thankful for their queen's powers. As dawn approaches, the toys return to their places, and the shopkeeper returns, completely oblivious to the magical adventure that took place in his shop overnight. The Fairy Doll once again becomes a beautiful, inanimate doll, waiting for the next night of enchantment.

The History

"The Fairy Doll" ballet's origin dates back to the late 19th century, specifically to Vienna, Austria, where it first premiered in 1888. The ballet was choreographed by the celebrated Austrian choreographer Joseph Hassreiter. The music was composed by Josef Bayer, the then-director of ballet music for the Vienna Court Opera. The original title of the ballet was "Die Puppenfee," German for "The Fairy Doll."

Despite the initial success in Vienna, the ballet did not gain international recognition until the turn of the 20th century. Russian impresario Sergei Diaghilev, known for championing ballet in Europe, added the ballet to the repertoire of the famous Ballets Russes. Under Diaghilev's guidance, the ballet was performed with great success in Paris, and from there, its fame spread to other parts of Europe and beyond.

The Ballets Russes' performances were widely acclaimed, bringing "Die Puppenfee" to the forefront of popular ballets of the era. Despite its Austrian origin, the ballet was particularly popular in Russia,

where it was regularly performed at the Imperial Theatres. The ballet's compelling storyline, enchanting characters, and captivating choreography made it a theatrical masterpiece, beloved by audiences worldwide.

Throughout its history, "The Fairy Doll" has undergone several adaptations and revisions, each contributing to its enduring appeal. In the current era, the ballet is still performed globally by numerous ballet companies, testifying to its timeless charm and universal appeal. It remains a significant piece in the history of ballet, a testament to Bayer's music and Hassreiter's innovative choreography.