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Guild
HISTORICAL



RICHARD BLAREAU



GEORGE WELDON



ADAM GISELLE

ORCHESTRE DU THÉÂTRE
NATIONAL DE L'OPÉRA PARIS
RICHARD BLAREAU

TCHAIKOVSKY
NUTCRACKER SUITE

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA
GEORGE WELDON

Recorded 1953 & 1960

Adolphe ADAM (1803-1856)

GISELLE – Ballet (ed. HENRI BÜSSER)

Act I

1	Introduction (Allegro con fuoco)	0:22
2	Entrée des joyeux vendangeurs et vendangeuses	0:47
3	Entrée du Prince (Allegro moderato)	0:42
4	Loys seul & Entrée de Giselle	4:32
5	Retour de la vendange	0:50
6	Valse	2:10
7	Pas de deux	1:30
8	La Chasse	1:49
9	Marche des vigneron	1:37
10	Pas seul, Friedrich Burgmüller's interpolation	1:36
11	Galop	1:46
12	Final et scène de folie	5:30

Act II

13	Apparition des feux follets	2:31
14	Apparition de Myrtha	0:55
15	Pas des premières Wilis	3:03
16	Apparition de Giselle	1:33
17	Entrée du Prince	0:52
18	Le spectre de Giselle apparaît au Prince	4:34
19	Entrée d'Hilarion	1:08
20	Scène et fugue des Wilis	0:44
21	Pas de deux. Adagio	4:29

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orchestra, of which he became conductor in 1937. During the German occupation, he was head of orchestra at the Théâtre de l'Étoile, the Gaumont Palace and similar establishments. After the Second World War his reputation increased considerably, he was appointed chief conductor of the Paris Opéra and of the opera houses in Monte Carlo and Nice, and conducted the first performance of Henri Dutilleux' ballet *Le loup*, amongst others. In 1954 he performed at the Royal Festival Hall in London with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Regularly he devoted himself to jazz music and thus directed in 1976 a composition commissioned by Prince Rainier of Monaco, *I love Monte Carlo*. He was a regular radio conductor with various orchestras. He is now only known for his opera and operetta recordings in spite of three times having won the Grand Prix du Disque. One of his pupils was conductor Georges Prêtre.

Another important conductor largely forgotten these days is George Weldon (1908–1963) whose complete HMV recording of Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* has been frequently reissued while his *Nutcracker* Suite, or his Suite from *Swan Lake*, has fallen into oblivion. Weldon was educated at Sherborne School and the Royal College of Music. He studied conducting with Malcolm Sargent and Aylmer Buesst. In 1943 he became conductor of the City of Birmingham Orchestra. He resigned in 1950, following rumours that he was having an affair with composer Ruth Gipps, choirmaster of the Birmingham orchestra's chorus. It was announced that Weldon would be replaced by Rudolf Schwarz; according to Gipps, Weldon resigned before he could be dismissed. He remained a lifelong bachelor. In 1952 Weldon became assistant to Sir John Barbirolli at the Hallé Orchestra and remained in that position until his death. In 1955 and 1956 he also conducted the Sadler's Wells Ballet. He became well known for his love of sports cars. While in Manchester, Weldon took charge of the Hallé summer seasons of promenade concerts, and many industrial concerts around the north of England. He frequently conducted in London and abroad, made broadcasts and many records, including two versions of Elgar's *Sea Pictures* with Gladys Ripley, the *Enigma Variations* & *In the South*.

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| 22 | Pas de deux. Variation de Loys | 0:42 |
| 23 | Ensemble de Willis | 2:25 |
| 24 | Final & Lever de soleil et entrée de la Cour | 2:26 |

ORCHESTRE DU THÉÂTRE NATIONAL DE L'OPÉRA PARIS
 conducted by
 RICHARD BLAREAU
 rec: 1 June, 1953

Peter TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

NUTCRACKER – Suite, Op.71a

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| 25 | I. Ouverture miniature. Allegro giusto | 3:08 |
| 26 | II. Marche. Tempo di marcia viva | 2:31 |
| 27 | III. Danse de la Fée-Dragée. Andante non troppo | 1:33 |
| 28 | IV. Danse russe. Trépak. Tempo di trepak, molto vivace | 1:07 |
| 29 | V. Danse arabe. Allegretto | 3:25 |
| 30 | VI. Danse chinoise. Allegro moderato | 1:06 |
| 31 | VII. Danse des mirlitons. Moderato assai | 2:17 |
| 32 | VIII. Valse des fleurs. Tempo di Valse | 6:06 |

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
 conducted by
 GEORGE WELDON
 rec: 1960 STEREO

Until the possibility of the release of ballet performances on video cassette it was common usage to supply the music only on LP, and consultation of the World's Encyclopædia of Recorded Music (published from 1952 to 1957) proves that as early as in the 1950s a considerable number of such recordings were available. Some scores were frequently recorded, such as Léo Delibes' *Sylvia* and *Coppélia*, and of course the three famous Tchaikovsky ballets *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*. Conductors such as Sir Thomas Beecham or Paul Paray also devoted themselves to lesser-known works, such as the ballet music from Delibes' *Le roi s'amuse* or Dukas' *La Péri*. Manuel Rosenthal produced scores from Offenbach (*Offenbachiana* and *La gaité parisienne*), and one (then largely unknown) Charles Mackerras, conductor (and chief conductor from 1970 to 1977) at the Sadler's Wells Opera, produced new original scores derived from Verdi (*The Lady and the Fool*) and Sullivan (*Pineapple Poll*), and recorded extracts from Messager's *Les Deux Pigeons*.

Charles-Adolphe Adam's *Giselle* featured regularly during these times, though never in its original guise – the music was a vehicle for the “real performers”, the dancers who were to display their art, and the conductor (until this very day) not infrequently (even in the most prominent places) has to be content with supplying the “basic substance” to work from by the choreographers. This had not been different at the time of *Giselle's* composition. The original production of 1841 was performed for the last time in Paris in 1868, and modern performances have generally been based on the tradition established in St. Petersburg, especially Petipa's 1884 production. Since its composition, the enormous popularity of *Giselle* had resulted in many alterations being made to suit local needs as required by changes of choreography. Various insertions have found their way into the score, some relating to Russian tradition, such as variations for *Giselle* (including additional music by Minkus); these travelled back to the West, nestling alongside Adam's work, with (for example) Diaghilev's company. There was even an insertion of music by the German composer Friedrich Burgmüller (1806–1874) for the première in 1841 which remained in the ballet, this being the music for the peasant *pas de deux* (sometimes choreographed for a different number of dancers and here named *Pas seul*). Burgmüller had been the composer of the very popular ballet *La Péri* which received its first performance at the Opéra in 1843.

It was often the tradition in the lyric theatre that a work would only exist in piano score and a set of orchestral parts. Copying was an arduous and time- (and money-) consuming process, and it was only in 1924, when a new production of *Giselle* was planned for the Paris Opéra, that it was decided that the time had come for a score to be assembled from the existing orchestral material, ironing out the musical

inconsistencies that had accumulated. This essential work was done by the composer and conductor Henri Büsser (1872–1973), who had been appointed conductor of the Opéra in 1905. Even then, further revisions have been made to try to rediscover Adam's intentions. The advent of the 1924 Paris score did not suddenly cause all other versions to be re-organised, and it has been commonplace for companies to retain orchestrations of different numbers by various hands in their own set of parts. The Büsser version has been used for a considerable period, and was recorded, amongst others, by Richard Blareau and Jean Martinon.

Albert Wolff probably was one of the last conductors to record this version in 1959, before slowly but steadily (not least due to the efforts of Richard Bonyngé), interest in the original score grew. Until this very day it has remained common usage to cut Adam's ballet in staged performance by at least 20 minutes, and only three or so commercial recordings ever have delivered something close to the complete score, which, due to the complicated situation related to the original score which always was a “work in progress”, is very difficult to produce. Even until well into the 1990s it was not uncommon to call heavily cut versions “complete recordings” (such as those made by Herbert von Karajan, Mark Ermler, and Sir Neville Marriner).

The first act of *Giselle* opens showing the harvest of vine in a country village. During the festivities *Giselle* is crowned wine queen. She is gay, carefree, a devotee of singing and dancing (although she has a weak heart); also, she is deeply in love with young Loys who, unknown to her, is really Duke Albrecht in disguise. Then comes Hilarion, a gamekeeper, hopelessly in love with *Giselle* himself, who, desperate not to lose her, exposes Albrecht's true identity, who is engaged to be married to Bathilde, the daughter of the King of Kurland. *Giselle*, seeing herself the victim of deception most dire, goes mad and dies, staggering to death. Act II is set in the woods, near *Giselle's* grave. The “wilis” emerge from the shadows, their queen Myrtha leading ghostly dances. *Giselle* is among them. Into the woods comes Hilarion. The spell is cast: he is compelled to dance until he falls exhausted into the lake. Then the prince is caught up in the revels, full of remorse. The spell works on him too. But *Giselle* is faithful, even in death. She pleads with the queen, who reluctantly allows Loys-Albrecht to live. Dawn breaks; the “wilis” disappear; *Giselle* returns to her grave.

Lille-born Richard Blareau (1910–1979) received several awards as a violinist at an early age and was awarded Premier Prix for fugue, composition and conducting at the age of 20 at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris. He began his rather unusual career as a violinist in a cinema