



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

THE ROYAL BALLET

Director

KEVIN O'HARE CBE

Founder

DAME NINETTE DE VALOIS OM CH DBE

Founder Choreographer

SIR FREDERICK ASHTON OM CH CBE

Founder Music Director

CONSTANT LAMBERT

Prima Ballerina Assoluta

DAME MARGOT FONTEYN DBE

APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

ACT I 40 minutes

INTERVAL 25 minutes

ACT II 45 minutes

INTERVAL 25 minutes

ACT II 30 minutes

GUIDANCE

Suitable for ages 14+

This production contains scenes of an adult nature, including sexual violence. There is a gunshot approximately 42 minutes into Act II.

CAST

Manon **LAUREN CUTHBERTSON**

Des Grieux **MATTHEW BALL**

Lescaut **LUCA ACRI**

Monsieur G.M. **GARY AVIS**

Lescaut's Mistress **ITZIAR MENDIZABAL**

Madame **CHRISTINA ARETIS**

The Gaoler **THOMAS WHITEHEAD**

Beggar Chief **DAICHI IKARASHI**

Courtesans **ANNETTE BUVOLI, OLIVIA COWLEY, NADIA MULLOVA-BARLEY, LARA TURK**

Gentlemen **DAVID DONNELLY, TÉO DUBREUIL, TAISUKE NAKAO**

Clients **LUKAS B. BRÆNDSRØD, LIAM BOSWELL, JAMES HAY, JOSHUA JUNKER, AIDEN O'BRIEN**

Old Gentleman **KEVIN EMERTON**

Harlots, Innkeeper, Skivvies, Actresses, Beggars, Townspeople, Ratcatcher, Servants, Guards and Footmen

ARTISTS OF THE ROYAL BALLET

Students of The Royal Ballet School appear by kind permission of the Artistic Director **CHRISTOPHER POWNEY**

MANON

BALLET IN THREE ACTS

Choreography **KENNETH MACMILLAN**

Music **JULES MASSENET**

Orchestrated by **MARTIN YATES**

originally compiled by Leighton Lucas with the collaboration of Hilda Gaunt

Designer **NICHOLAS GEORGIADIS**

Lighting Designer **JACOPO PANTANI**

Staging and Artistic Supervisor for the MacMillan Estate **LAURA MORERA**

Rehearsal Director **CHRISTOPHER SAUNDERS**

Répétiteurs **DEIRDRE CHAPMAN, HELEN CRAWFORD**

Principal coaching **LEANNE BENJAMIN, ALESSANDRA FERRI, EDWARD**

WATSON, ZENAIDA YANOWSKY

Benesh Choreologists **DANIEL KRAUS, GREGORY MISLIN**

Conductor **KOEN KESSELS**

ORCHESTRA OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

Concert Master **SERGEY LEVITIN**

Exceptional philanthropic support from

Royal Opera House Principals **JULIA AND HANS RAUSING**

Season Principal **ALINE FORIEL-DESTEZET**

Generous philanthropic support from **AUD JEBSEN, SIR LLOYD AND**

LADY DORFMAN OBE, KENNETH AND SUSAN GREEN, THE PAUL FERGUSON MEMORIAL FUND, MELINDA AND DONALD QUINTIN, THE PATRONS OF COVENT GARDEN AND THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF COVENT GARDEN

Original Production (1974) made possible by **THE LINBURY TRUST**

The role of Manon is generously supported by **SARAH AND ANTHONY GUTMAN**

The 2023/24 Royal Ballet Season generously supported by **AUD JEBSEN**

GENERAL REHEARSAL

WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 12.30PM



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

LOTTERY FUNDED

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Actresses, gentlemen and the demi-monde from Paris gather at the courtyard of an inn near Paris. Among them are Des Grieux (a young student), the wealthy Monsieur G.M. and Lescaut, who is there to meet his sister Manon on her way to enter a convent. During the hustle and bustle of arrivals and introductions, a beggar steals a watch from Monsieur G.M. and celebrates gleefully before its loss is discovered and Lescaut has to intervene to save him from punishment. Soon afterwards, Manon arrives with an Old Gentleman who is obviously attracted to her. Lescaut notices the Old Gentleman's interest and takes him into the inn to come to an arrangement over Manon. Manon remains outside and meets Des Grieux. He is entranced by her. They fall in love and decide to escape to Paris with the help of the money that she has stolen from the Old Gentleman. Lescaut and the Old Gentleman come out of the inn, having made a bargain, and to their dismay see that Manon has disappeared. Monsieur G.M. tells Lescaut that he too is interested in Manon and, because of G.M.'s wealth, Lescaut promises to find Manon and persuade her to accept him.

Des Grieux and Manon are at his lodgings in Paris. He is writing a letter to his father. Manon interrupts by declaring her love for him. Des Grieux goes to post the letter and in his absence Lescaut arrives with Monsieur G.M.. Manon quickly yields to G.M.'s advances. When Des Grieux returns, Lescaut persuades him that there will be great wealth for all of them if he will sanction the liaison between G.M. and Manon.

ACT II

Manon arrives at the party given by Monsieur G.M. at Madame's hôtel particulier. She is clearly torn between the wealth of her companion and her love for Des Grieux, who is there with Lescaut. Des Grieux tries to persuade Manon to leave with him but she tells him that the time is not right and will be only when he takes more of Monsieur G.M.'s money at cards. Des Grieux is caught cheating and he and Manon rush away.

Back in Des Grieux's lodgings, he and Manon once again declare their love. Monsieur G.M. arrives with the police and Manon is arrested as a prostitute. In the ensuing struggle, Lescaut is killed.

ACT III

The Gaoler of the penal colony awaits the arrival of the convicts from France at the port.

Manon has been deported to America as a prostitute and Des Grieux has followed her there by pretending to be her husband. The Gaoler sees them together and turns his interest towards Manon.

The Gaoler has arrested Manon but takes her to his room and offers her rewards in the hope that she will desert Des Grieux and live with him. Des Grieux breaks in and kills the Gaoler.

Manon has escaped with Des Grieux into the swamp of Louisiana to elude their pursuers. All her former ambitions of wealth and splendour have been renounced for her love of Des Grieux. Manon collapses and dies in Des Grieux's arms.

THE ROYAL BALLET

Director **KEVIN O'HARE** CBE

Music Director **KOEN KESSELS**

Resident Choreographer **WAYNE MCGREGOR** CBE

Artistic Associate **CHRISTOPHER WHEELDON** OBE

Administrative Director **HEATHER BAXTER**

Rehearsal Director **CHRISTOPHER SAUNDERS**

Clinical Director Ballet Healthcare **SHANE KELLY**

GUIDELINES

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Larger bags and backpacks need to be checked into our complimentary cloakrooms. Unattended bags may be removed. Please do not place any personal belongings on the ledges in front of you.

Only bottled water and ice cream purchased from the premises can be taken into the auditorium. If you arrive late to the auditorium or leave during a performance, you will not be allowed back to your seat until the interval or a suitable break.

Smoking and vaping are not permitted anywhere on the premises.

The safety of our visitors, staff and artists is still our priority. To help us provide a comfortable experience for everyone, please be mindful of others and their personal space.

Our staff are committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect and we ask that you show them and your fellow audience members respect too. We adopt a zero-tolerance approach in response to anyone who interacts with our staff or with fellow audience members in an intimidating, aggressive or threatening manner.

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