

In Collaboration with Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Dance Appreciation Series

Introduction to Don Quixote

By Singapore Ballet

Choreography: After Marius Petipa

Music: Ludwig Minkus

Staging & Additional Choreography: Cynthia Harvey

Costume & Set Design: Bruce McKinven

The story

Don Quixote follows the adventure of Don Quixote, an old knight, and Sancho Panza, his devoted squire. During their journey, they meet the beautiful Kitri and the charming Basilio who are on a quest to get married.

Meet the characters

Don Quixote

After a lifetime of reading far too many novels, Don Quixote can no longer tell real life from fiction. He sets off on a quest to find Dulcinea, an imaginary maiden whom he thinks is his true love.

Kitri

Proud, feisty and beautiful, Kitri is in love with Basilio.

Basilio

The handsome young barber who is in love with Kitri.

Gamache

He is a pretentious, rich and pompous nobleman. He has fallen in love with Kitri because of her beauty and wants to marry her.

Lorenzo

Lorenzo the innkeeper is Kitri's father. He is more than happy to know that Gamache wants to marry Kitri. With one eye on his pocketbook, Lorenzo is keen to welcome Gamache to his family.

Espada

A legendary bullfighter, Espada is magnanimous in heart and strength. He whirls his cape and wields his dagger, dancing with the entourage of *toreadors*, or bullfighters.

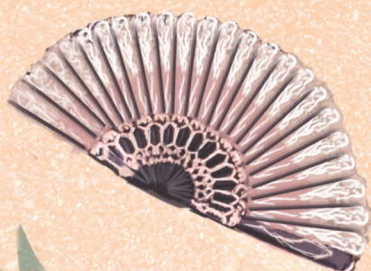
Mercedes

Espada's partner, Mercedes is fiery and energetic. Her dance with Espada captures the townfolk's attention.

Props and costumes

Props and costumes can help set the scene. The story of *Don Quixote* takes place in Spain. Can you spot some of these typically Spanish accessories and props?

Flamenco dance fan



Ruffled flamenco skirt



A bullfighter's cape



Photo credit: Bernie Ng

Excerpts

Act 1: Marketplace scene

Don Quixote is on a quest to look for his true love, Dulcinea. His quest brings him to a crowded Spanish marketplace.

Among the people at the marketplace are Kitri and Basilio. Kitri and Basilio are in love and want to run away because Lorenzo, Kitri's father, wants her to marry Gamache. Don Quixote spots Kitri in the marketplace and mistakes her for Dulcinea. Kitri and Basilio make their escape. Don Quixote follows to help the couple.

Act 2: Dryads scene

Tired from running after the couple, Don Quixote rests in the forest. He falls asleep and dreams of being surrounded by beautiful dryads who are tree nymphs. In his dream, Dulcinea who looks just like Kitri, appears.

Act 3: Kitri and Basilio's Pas de deux & Finale

Kitri and Basilio marry with Lorenzo's permission. All the guests celebrate with a lot of dancing and merrymaking.

Craft time!

Hand props are objects that a character, be it a dancer or actor, can use to give you clues about their character or add to the scene to help the story come to life. Here are two props you might have noticed in *Don Quixote*.

FLAMENCO DANCE FAN

Make a paper fan for yourself and move around like the dancers you saw!

Materials:

- 2 sheets of black and 1 sheet of red construction paper. You can also choose any two contrasting colours.
- Scissors
- Glue
- Stapler
- Ribbons
- Optional: Decorative hole punch

How did the dancers use the flamenco fans in *Don Quixote*?

Steps

- 1 Glue two sheets of black paper together to make one long piece. This is the base of your fan.
- 2 Cut the red piece of paper in half, creating two strips.
- 3 Cut scallops along the top and bottom edges of the red construction paper.
- 4 Use the hole punch to decorate the paper strips (optional).
- 5 Glue the red strips onto the black construction paper.
- 6 Fold your paper like an accordion.
- 7 Pinch the bottom and staple it. Then, tie a ribbon around the stapled section.

TAMBOURINES

Shake, rattle and dance with this simple do-it-yourself paper plate tambourine.

Materials:

- Paper plate
- A small handful of dry beans or pasta
- Stapler
- Markers or crayons
- Optional: Stickers, glitter or any other decorative items

Steps

- 1 Colour the outside of the paper plate in a colour of your choice.
- 2 Fold the paper plate in half. Make a semi-circle.
- 3 Open it up slightly so that you can pour in some pasta or beans. Make sure to leave some room and not fill it to the brim.
- 4 Fold the paper plate tight and align the edges.
- 5 Staple all around the edges of the paper plate and make sure that the pasta or beans do not fall out.
- 6 Decorate the paper plate with markers, stickers or anything else that will personalise the tambourine.

Now that your props are made, re-enact your favourite scene from *Don Quixote* or create your own dance using the props.

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