**The Red Shoes – Act 2 – 23rd November 2019**

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome back to Act 2 of Matthew Bourne’s “The Red Shoes”. My name is Gwen and I will be audio describing Act 2.

**Synopsis**

The Act begins at the French seaside resort of Villefranche-sur-Mer, where the company are enjoying an end-of-season party. The first scene sees the dancers from ‘The Red Shoes’ relaxing on the beach, 3 months after the first show. This is where Vicky and Julian begin to fall in love. Lermontov watches disapprovingly as their relationship develops. Finally Vicky chooses between the two men and leaves with Julian.

Later, as the company rehearses for its performance of “Concerto Macabre”, Julian tries to show his latest composition to Lermontov, which he dismisses. Vicky tries to plead Julian’s case. Lermontov tries to lure her back to the company, but she rejects his offer, and she and Julian leave.

6 months later, in East London, Vicky is still dancing, while Julian is still composing, whilst earning a living working at a Music Hall. After a show, Lermontov appears in the shadows and Vicky thinks she is hallucinating so she tells Julian and starts to get paranoid and scared.

Back in their cheap hotel, Vicky gets out her red shoes from the suitcase, and decides to put them on one last time. She starts to dance and realises how she has missed it. She finally decides to return to Lermontov, who offers her the chance to dance in “The Red Shoes” once more.

**Set and characters**

As Act 2 starts, at Villefranche sur Mer, the dance company are at an open air café on a terrace overlooking the sea. It is night, and a full moon hangs over the sea. To the right, coloured lights surround an illuminated “Café” sign. Below the sign is a white balustrade, alongside which are two tall decorative gas lamps. On the terrace are several tables and chairs. The ladies wear floral summer dresses, the men, including Julian, are in light flannel trousers and white shirts. Lermontov wears his black tail coat and trousers, with white wing-collared shirt and white waistcoat. Vicky wears white bell-bottomed trousers and a white top with blue horizontal stripes.

For the rehearsal of “Concerto Macabre” at Monte Carlo, the backdrop is a boarded panel shaded horizontally from blue to orange to white and grey. It has an inverted V shaped opening formed from the opposing profiles of two Egyptian gods. The principal male dancer is wearing a short gold Egyptian style skirt, his bare chest dusted with gold, and a winged helmet on his head. Two male and female dancers wear cream coloured draped strips of cloth, the other four wear similar outfits in black to represent good and evil respectively.

The location then changes to an East End Music Hall stage. Through the open curtain at the footlights are seen the first rows of the audience. Hidden from this audience, behind the curtain, there is a set of metal stairs, on top of which is a large black theatre light. To the left is a brown upright piano which Julian plays for the musical accompaniment. The first vaudeville act is Wilson and Keppel performing the Egyptian Sand Dance. They wear comedic tea towel style headdresses, short white tunics, under which we glimpse red underpants and brown ankle length boots. Next on the stage are two dancing girls with glittering sequinned bodices, tiaras topped with tall white ostrich feathers. The next performers are two acrobats with Vicky as their assistant. The men wear pale blue tights and vests and plum coloured shorts and Vicky wears a matching pale blue fitted jewelled costume. A stage hand wearing dark trousers, a knitted waistcoat and a flat cap, joins Julian in the wings.

Back in Monte Carlo, with half the velvet stage curtain open, we are in Lermontov’s office. A crystal chandelier lights the room which contains a chaise longue and a small side table, a gilt screen and a classical style pedestal topped with a bronze sculpture of a dancer’s foot wearing a ballet shoe. Lermontov wears a deep red long velvet gown, with a gold brocade border vertically from his left shoulder.

The same curtain then swings round halfway, concealing Lermontov’s office and revealing a simple bedroom filled only with a double bed, a standard lamp and an upright piano with a stool off to the left. Vicky is wearing pale blue pyjamas, Julian wears a white vest top over beige pyjama trousers. The curtain swings again taking us back to Lermontov’s office. He has taken off his dressing gown and tail coat and reclines on the chaise longue. His servant dressed in black, helps Lermontov into his jacket. Vicky arrives in his office wearing a brown, knee length coat flared from the waist and carrying a small suitcase.