

MICHAEL PINK'S

Dracula

OCTOBER 26-29 | MARCUS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

AUDIENCE GUIDE

This audience guide invites you in to Michael Pink's *Dracula*, which premiered in 1996. This production's style of "dance drama" is Pink's signature way to tell stories through ballet while remaining true to the intents of the classical art form.

As co-creator of this ballet, Pink based this work on the novel by Bram Stoker written in 1897. Though many choreographers have jumped onto this gothic bandwagon, no version is quite like Pink's in scope and size. He and his creative team, comprised of film director Ken Russell, composer Philip Feeney, costume and scenic designer Lez Brotherston and co-creator Christopher Gable, are deep believers in the magic of good stories and the integrity of remaining true to the original storytellers.

There are moments in the ballet that make it feel like the words Stoker wrote are leaping off the page and onto the bodies of the dancers. For instance, take a moment and visualize this passage from Jonathan Harker's journal about the first time he arrived at the Count's castle:

"He made no motion of stepping to meet me, but stood like a statue as though his gesture of welcome had fixed him to stone. The instant, however, that I stepped over the threshold, he moved impulsively forward, and holding out his hand grasped mine with a strength which made me wince, an effect which was not lessened by the fact that it seemed cold as ice. More like the hand of a dead than a living man."

It's as though the icy encounter is unfolding before your very eyes. The creative team took special care to use not only the choreography, but all of the design elements to create a cinematic experience. For example, their vision of Act I is of a black and white movie, devoid of color until Dracula's blood red cape appears. Getting goosebumps yet?



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Dracula

THE CHARACTERS



DRACULA

Based on the historical figure Vlad the Impaler, a tyrannical leader who inspired fear the world over with his bloodthirsty ways of killing his enemies (impalement and mass burning to name a few). In the story he is a vampire, an immortal creature who has traveled to England in the soil of his homeland. He can shape shift into a bat, a wolf, or a vapor.



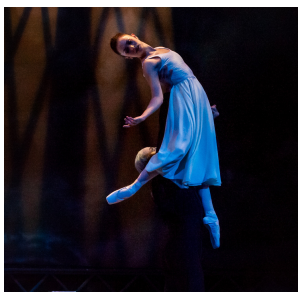
VAN HELSING

A man of God and one of the most advanced scientists of his day - an expert of the mysterious and supernatural. He runs the sanatorium where Renfield is a patient. Dr. Van Helsing is summoned once Lucy has fallen ill. It is believed that the heroic Van Helsing was created as an alter-ego of sorts for the often sickly Stoker.



JONATHAN HARKER

A businessman whose firm sends him to Transylvania to conclude a real estate transaction with Count Dracula. Young and naïve, Harker finds himself a prisoner in the castle and barely escapes with his life. He is forever haunted by visions of that night, which he dare not share with his fiancée Mina, or his friends.



MINA

Jonathan Harker's fiancée and Lucy's best friend. Mina represents the new Victorian working woman. She is an assistant teacher, can read, type and write shorthand. The men rely on Mina's intelligence in their hunt for Dracula.



LUCY

Mina's best friend. An attractive, vivacious young woman engaged to Arthur Holmwood. The demise of Lucy's health united her friends and family to save her.



ARTHUR

Lucy's fiancé and a friend of her other suitor, Quincy. Arthur is the son of Lord Godalming and inherits the title upon his father's death. Lord Arthur Godalming's name comes from King Arthur who saved his own country, just like Arthur is trying to do.



QUINCY

A plainspoken American and another of Lucy's suitors. Though Quincy doesn't win Lucy's hand, he remains a steadfast friend. Quincy Morris represents the new world (America) coming to save the old world (Europe).



RENFIELD

A patient at the mental asylum with a habit of consuming living creatures - flies, spiders, and birds - which he believes provide him with strength, vitality and life force. He is obsessed with Dracula and exhibits this strange behavior to show his "master" that he is an obedient and devoted servant.

† *Dracula* was published on May 26, 1897. Author Bram Stoker died in 1912, and just ten years later, the first motion picture based on the novel, *Nosferatu*, was released in Germany.

† Stoker's novel is so historically accurate that researchers and historians have been able to trace Jonathan Harker's journey through Transylvania.

† Present-day Transylvania is 55,146 square kilometers in the middle of Romania surrounded by the Oriental and Apuseni Mountains.

Dracula

SYNOPSIS

PROLOGUE

Jonathan Harker's delirious mind is flooded with images from his recent trip to Transylvania.

ACT I

Charing Cross Station | Transylvania | Dracula's Castle

Harker's fiancé Mina and friend Dr. Van Helsing see him off on his journey to Transylvania. At the station, they encounter Renfield, a raving sanatorium patient. In Transylvania, Harker observes a sacrificial ritual performed by local villagers to protect themselves on All Souls Night. Count Dracula's coachman interrupts the frantic ceremony to bring Harker to Dracula's castle, despite a bereaved woman's warnings. The Count welcomes Harker into his home before disappearing. Harker sinks into a reverie and is visited by three women who fascinate and terrify him. His seduction is interrupted by an enraged Dracula, who distracts them with a live blood offering. Dracula then begins to dominate Harker himself. Three women begin to seduce him, but an enraged Dracula casts them away before beginning to dominate Harker himself. As the climax of their union approaches, Harker then awakes screaming in the sanatorium.

ACT II

Grand Hotel | Van Helsing's Sanatorium

Mina's friend Lucy dances with suitors. Unbeknownst to them, a ship approaches with sinister and dangerous cargo, agitating Harker. A violent storm interrupts the party, and Dracula appears to Lucy on the terrace. She is drawn to him before being found dazed and almost unconscious. Lucy is taken to Van Helsing's clinic. Van Helsing surrounds her with garlic, but it is not enough to prevent Dracula's second visit. Lucy's body is discovered and mourned by the heartbroken men. Her fiancé places a crucifix on her lips, but she attacks him violently before escaping into the night. She has become Nosferatu, one of the undead.

ACT III

Van Helsing's Sanatorium | Carfax Abbey

The men leave to search for Dracula. Only Mina and Van Helsing remain to ponder the danger they are in. Renfield escapes his room and attacks Van Helsing before being recaptured by wardens.

Mina, concerned for Renfield's suffering, tries to comfort him while also worrying for Lucy. The men return unsuccessful. As Mina sleeps, Dracula enters her room. Van Helsing discovers him suckling her with his own lifeblood and is powerless to stop him as he escapes with her unconscious body. Count Dracula summons the Nosferatu to celebrate his union with Mina. Renfield has become the sacrifice, and his blood links the undead as they dance in adoration of their master. As the celebrants prepare for the consummation of the ritual, an explosion blasts through the crypt, flooding the room with daylight. Dracula's adversaries drive a stake through his heart, killing him and leaving his victims to grapple with their experiences.

THE MAN BEHIND THE LEGEND



Vlad Tepes (Tepes means "the Impaler") was born in 1431 from a line of strong warriors and leaders whose heritage goes back to the founding of Wallachia, a state that is still part of present-day Romania. Vlad's father (also named Vlad) was invited to be initiated into a society called the

"Order of the Dragon," where he began to go by the name "Dracul," which in Romanian, means "dragon," and used the insignia of a dragon and a cross. Dracula means "son of the dragon," thus the connection to Vlad III, who was trained in knighthood as a child. Vlad rose to the position of "voivode" (a Slavic word meaning "warlord" or "supreme chief") and was in and out of this position for the next 20 years. Though he did not stay in power for long periods of time, his reputation, power and influence on the country were great and long-lasting. His tactics were ugly, psychological, and brutal. His nickname, Vlad the Impaler, came from his favorite way to kill.

The stories about Vlad Dracula spread like wildfire even when he was still alive. Depending on where one is from, the opinion of Vlad Dracula ranges from patriotic hero to devilish bloodthirsty villain. Part folklore and part spicy history, Vlad is almost always associated with violence and blood. One pamphlet that was circulating in Germany in the 15th century was called "The Frightening and Truly Extraordinary Story of a Wicked Blood-drinking Tyrant Called Prince Dracula."