



## Black Swan

If you were enthralled by the psychological thriller *Black Swan*, see it come to life on stage in the most anticipated classical dance event of the year. **Tiffany Parks** reports.

**T**he **Black Swan Grand Gala**, presented at the Auditorium Conciliazione on 2 and 3 April, stars some of the most celebrated dancers on the international ballet scene, including Ashley Boudier, Joaquin de Luz, and Giuseppe Picone (pictured above), as well as rising stars like Alessio Rezza and Flavia Stocchi.

The Gala is a tribute to the music of Tchaikovsky, the choreography of Marius Petipa, and the ballet that has captivated the world for over a century. In 2010, Darren Aronofsky's film *Black Swan* mesmerized audiences, sparking controversy about the dark world of professional ballet. At the same time, it testified to the eternal fascination that *Swan Lake* – with its themes of tormented romance, seduction, betrayal, and transformation – continues to exert on the world's imagination. The underlying theme of the gala is contrast: between light and shadow, purity and seduction, good and evil,

practice and performance, the Old World and the New World.

Boudier and De Luz interpret the Black Swan's *pas de deux*, for which the gala is named, and Picone partners Boudier in the White Swan's *pas de deux*, as well as performing the male solo from *Swan Lake*. In addition to these and other excerpts from Tchaikovsky's ballet, a number of lesser-known pieces are also on the program. Just as the film *Black Swan* recounted the lives, loves, sacrifices, neuroses, and passions of professional dancers, Rachmaninoff's *Three Preludes*, choreographed by Ben Stevenson and featuring Picone and Stocchi, shows us their daily routine, exercises at the barre, and constant work to perfect their technique. Boudier interprets *The Dying Swan* by Michel Fokine with music by Saint-Saëns, and De Luz performs *Five Variations on a Theme*, choreographed by David Fernandez and set to music by Bach (p53).

## Prima Ballerina

Ashley Boudier, principal dancer of the New York City Ballet, is the undisputed star of the gala. Fast, passionate, and full of energy, she is at the peak of her career and one of the most acclaimed ballerinas dancing today. She has performed around the world, including at the closing ceremony of this winter's Olympic Games in Sochi.

