A VIBRANT DISPLAY OF ATHLETICISM AND BALLETIC GRACE,
THE VIRSKY UKRAINIAN NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY
HAS ITS BAY AREA DEBUT AT CAL PERFORMANCES
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 AT 3:00 P.M. IN ZELLERBACH HALL

BERKELEY, August 6, 2004 — The Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company brings the spirit of the Ukraine to Berkeley, presenting a dynamic program of folk dance and music Sunday, September 19 at 3:00 p.m. at Zellerbach Hall. Named for famed Russian ballet master Pavlo Virsky, the ensemble is world-renowned for its athletic choreography, elaborate costuming, and creative stagings of Eastern European folk dance traditions. “To watch the fabulous virtuosity of this company’s young men and women in their vibrantly colored costumes [is] to appreciate great dancing by any definition,” wrote Anna Kisselgoff of The New York Times. Combining ballet techniques with the folk dancing choreography of the region—gravity-defying split-leaps and spins, mazurka steps, loose-hipped kicks and squatting Cossack dances, among others—the 85-member troupe of dancers and musicians captures the beauty of Ukrainian cultural history with passion, skill, and a sense of humor. The September 19 program features works by the late Pavlo Virsky (Vyshyvalntysi; Zaporozchi; Moriaky; Oi, Pid Vishneiu; and Hopak), and current Artistic Director Myroslav Vantukh (Ukraino, My Ukraino!; Povzunets; Tsygansky; The Volynsk Patterns; Ukrainian Dance with Tambourines; Carpathians Choreographic Suite; The Years of Youth; Bereznianka; and Kozachok).

VIRSKY UKRAINIAN NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY

The Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company was founded in Kiev in 1937 when Pavlo Virsky and Mykola Bolotov, two well-known Ukrainian ballet masters, brought together a group of dancers to explore folkloric traditions, which Virsky believed portrayed a people’s culture and soul. Virsky’s ballet sensibilities imbued the company’s aesthetic from the beginning to the present day, “hence the larger-than-life plasticity of the men, whose deep plies, flips and spins in the air and loose-hipped kicks are executed with a lightness that makes their bravura all the more astonishing,” wrote Kisselgoff in The New York Times. “Effort is concealed; power is redefined.” Virsky helmed the company from 1955 to 1975, and it was
under his guidance that the ensemble matured into a highly professional dance company whose
talent became known by dance lovers around the world. Virsky choreographed such classic
compositions as Moriaky (“Sailors”) and Oi, Pid Vishneiu (“Oh, Under a Cherry Tree”), both of
which will be included on the September 19 program. During World War II, Virsky’s troupe
performed for soldiers at the Russian front, and the ensemble was accorded further recognition in
connection with the Decade of Ukrainian Art and Literature in Moscow in 1951, and the
choreographer was awarded a number of honors prior to his death in 1975. The ensemble has
toured countries far away from its native Ukraine, including Austria, England, Argentina, Brazil,
Belgium, Greece, Ecuador, Italy, India, Spain, Canada, Columbia, China, Cuba, Korea, Mexico,
Mongolia, Germany, Peru, Poland, Portugal, France, Czech Republic, Chile, Switzerland, and
many others.

MYROSLAV VANTUKH

Myroslav Vantukh, Pavlo Virsky’s disciple and leading expert in folk traditions and
ethnography, has been Artistic Director of the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company since
1980. His primary objective and continuing creative quest is the careful preservation and
development of the choreographic art of the Ukraine. Dynamic choreography, a bright palette of
costume colors, and a vast range of musical accompaniment are characteristic features of
Vantukh’s work; The Carpathians Choreographic Suite, The Tambourine Dance, The Years of
Youth, In Peace and Harmony, and The Russian Suite are all a permanent part of the ensemble’s
repertoire.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company on Sunday, September 19
at 3:00 p.m. in Zellerbach Hall are priced at $24.00, $36.00 and $48.00. Tickets are available
through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by
phone at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for
purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students
receive a $2 discount. For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988 or visit
the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

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The San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco magazine, and Classical 102.1 KDFC are season sponsors of Cal Performances’ 2004/05 performing arts season.

Cal Performances’ programs are supported in part by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Wallace Foundation, and the Zellerbach Family Foundation.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, September 19 at 3:00 p.m.   Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph, Berkeley

World Stage
Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company

Program:
Ukraino, My Ukraino!; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh
Povzunets (Cossack comic dance); choreography by Myroslav Vantukh
Tsygansky (Gypsy dance); choreography by Myroslav Vantukh
The Volynsk Patterns; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh
Ukrainian Dance with Tambourines; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh
Vyshyvalntysi (“Embroideresses”); choreography by Pavlo Virsky
Zaporozchi (National Ukrainian Dance of Cossacks); choreography by Pavlo Virsky
Carpathians Choreographic Suite; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh
The Years of Youth; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh
Bereznianka; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh
Moriaky (“Sailors”); choreography by Pavlo Virsky
Kozachok; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh
Oi, Pid Vishneiu (“Oh, Under a Cherry Tree”); choreography by Pavlo Virsky
Hopak (Ukrainian folk dance); choreography by Pavlo Virsky

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