Tchaikovsky Perm
Ballet & Orchestra
Swan Lake
A Ballet in Three Acts

Music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Production conceived and directed by Natalia Makarova

George Isaakyan, Artistic Director of the Theatre
Natalia Akhmarova, Artistic Director of the Ballet
Valery Platonov, Principal Conductor
Robert Cole, Principal Guest Conductor

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CAL PERFORMANCES 6

**Odette/Odile**

Elena Kulagina (April 8)
Natalia Moiseeva (April 6, 7, 9)

**Prince Siegfried**

Sergei Mershin (April 6, 7, 9)
Alexey Tyukov (April 8)

**Benno**

Sergei Mershin (April 8)
Alexey Tyukov (April 6, 7, 9)

**Rothbart**

Igor Soloviev

**The Queen Mother**

Galina Dubrovina

**Master of Ceremonies**

Vitaly Dubrovin

**Pas de Trois**

Yara Araptanova, Natalia Makina, Alexey Tyukov (April 6, 7, 9)
Ekaterina Guschina, Irina Rybkina, Sergei Mershin (April 8)

**Four Cygnets**

Victoria Ananyan, Elena Leviina, Irina Rybkina, Ekaterina Tarasova

**Three Big Swans**

Yara Araptanova, Ekaterina Guschina, Yulia Manjeles

**Spanish Dance**

Tatiana Kolchanova, Elena Kalichkova, Artem Pozdeev, Arthur Shesterikov

**Hungarian Dance**

Maria Gorbunova, Elena Khazmiana, Anastasia Kosyuk, Alexei Lysenko, Ekaterina Mosienko, Konstantin Olyunin, Anna Poiostogova, Ilya Shirov, Roman Tarkhanov, Maksim Temnikov

**Neapolitan Dance**

Victoria Ananyan, Ivan Poroshin, Albina Rangukova, Daria Sosnina, Roman Tarkhanov, Nadezhda Vasilkev, Svetlana Zhakhlebina

**Mazurka**

Elena Leviina, Lyudmila Manjeles, Irina Markova, Elena Morozova, Andrei Popov, Evgeny Rogov, Igor Starovatov, Mikhail Timashev

**Brides**

Yara Araptanova, Ekaterina Guschina, Natalia Makina, Yulia Manjeles, Irina Rybkina, Ekaterina Tarasova

**Knights**

Evgeny Konobeev, Vitaly Poleschuk, Igor Starovatov, Alexandr Volkov

**Saratanda**

Ksenia Barbashova, Konstantin Bolshukhin, Tatiana Bolshukhina, Vladimir Dorofeev, Yulia Gogoleva, Elena Khazmiana, Elena Kobeleva, Evgeny Konobeev, Sergei Kreker, Daria Levenkova, Nikolai Mityashin, Ekaterina Panchenko, Oleg Posokhin

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**SYNOPSIS**

**Act 1**

It is the eve of Prince Siegfried’s coming-of-age party. His companions, led by Benno, are preparing their own celebration for him. The Prince arrives and is soon enjoying himself with his friends. The festivities are unexpectedly interrupted by the arrival of the Queen Mother. She takes her son aside, insisting that the time has now come when he must assume the responsibilities of the kingdom. She presents him with the emblem that is the symbol of his kingship. As King, one of the first matters he must consider is that of his marriage. Siegfried pleads with her, but the Queen reminds him that he is obligated to choose a fiancée at the ball. His mother’s words weigh heavily on his soul. He is saddened that he will lose his freedom and that he has not yet met someone who would touch his heart.

As twilight sets in, the Prince remains preoccupied with his thoughts. Benno sees a flight of swans and urges Siegfried to go hunting in hope that the diversion will dispel his melancholic mood. Siegfried goes off into the woods and Benno follows, but their paths diverge.

Wandering alone deep in the forest, Siegfried discovers a mysterious moonlit lake. Unbeknownst to him, this is the domain of the evil Sorcerer who has cast a spell on young maidens, transforming them into swans. Siegfried finds a young maiden and, to his astonishment, when the maiden reaches the shore she is suddenly transformed. Her beauty overwhelms the Prince. She is Odette, Queen of the Swans, who has been enchanted by the evil Sorcerer. Although frightened, Odette tells the Prince the story of her plight. The spell that keeps them swans by day and maidens at night can only be broken if a man who has never loved before swears eternal fidelity to her. From the moment of their meeting, Siegfried knows that he was right to believe in the existence of a perfect love. Never before has he given his heart to anyone, but without hesitation he offers it to Odette. As dawn approaches, the Sorcerer exerts his power, and Odette is forced away from Siegfried’s arms. Siegfried realizes his fate is now entwined with hers.

**Act 2**

The guests are arriving for the formal ball to celebrate Prince Siegfried’s coming of age. The Queen Mother enters and is disturbed to find that Siegfried is not there. Soon, he arrives, but he is preoccupied by his thoughts. Three Knights present the prospective fiancées to the court. Courteously, Siegfried dances with each of them, but he is now pledged to Odette and, despite his mother’s insistence, he refuses to choose.

Suddenly, an unknown Knight appears, the evil Sorcerer in disguise, accompanied by the ravishing and devious Odile. Siegfried is mesmerized by her striking beauty and declares that he has chosen her to be his bride. The Knight intervenes, demanding that Prince Siegfried swear an oath of fidelity to Odile. He willingly does so. Before the Prince’s eyes, a vision of the inconsolable Odette appears. He realizes that he has been deceived. Triumphant, the evil Sorcerer and Odile disappear. Grief-stricken, Siegfried runs to the lakeside.

**Act 3**

Nighttime. A deep sadness has descended on the lake of swans. They are now doomed by the spell to remain swans forever. Rushing through the frightening storm created by the evil Sorcerer, Siegfried searches for Odette to beg her forgiveness. Odette forgives him, but she knows that nothing can be changed. Death is their only salvation. The waves of the lake unite the lovers forever. The power of the evil Sorcerer is destroyed.

In a vision, Odette and Siegfried approach an ideal and eternal love.
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born in May 1840, in the town of Kamsko-Votkinsk in central Russia. After working for a time as a clerk in the Ministry of Justice, he began full-time musical study at the age of 23, when the great pianist Anton Rubenstein established a local conservatory. Two years later, he became a teacher of harmony at a new conservatory in Moscow, a position he held for 13 years.

By 1876, he had attained eminence as the composer of a variety of beautiful music. During this period, despite being psychologically unsuited for it, he married a former conservatory student named Antonina Miliukova, a neurotic girl who is said to have forced Tchaikovsky into the union by threatening suicide if he refused her. So desperate was the young composer to extricate himself from the “rash act” (his brother Modest’s term for the alliance) that, after a few weeks of marriage, he attempted to contract a fatal case of pneumonia by standing for several hours in the frigid Moscow River. Instead, he suffered a nervous breakdown and another brother, Anatol, took him to Switzerland to recover.

Meanwhile, a more welcome influence entered Tchaikovsky’s life. Nadejda von Meck was a middle-aged, wealthy widow with a burning passion for the composer’s music as the unfortunate Antonina had for the man himself. In 1877, the generous, if eccentric Mme. von Meck bestowed 6,000 roubles a year on Tchaikovsky, enabling him to leave the conservatory and devote all of his time to composition.

Tchaikovsky insisted on one condition, however: they must never meet, but communicate by correspondence only. His patroness readily assented, and it was an agreement they kept for 17 years.

Tchaikovsky’s great ballet was first staged at the Bolshoi Theatre in 1877. Those interested in the history of ballet will know that the premiere failed, and that its failure was not very surprising, as the talented composer had left most of the ballet’s traditions of his time far behind. In fact, the great work became worthy of its stage life only after its creator’s death, symbolizing the contradictions in Russian art at that time.

Swan Lake was first staged at the Perm Theatre in 1931. Having been re-staged there more than 10 times, it has become a highlight of the theatre’s repertoire. It is therefore not by chance that the Perm Ballet performed Swan Lake at the Bregenz Festival in Austria 20 years ago to inaugurate the Company’s first Western tour.

At different periods of its existence, the ballet Swan Lake has been presented to the audience as a fairytale or a fantastic poem, a realistic novel or a philosophical parable. But in all these versions it remained a drama, purely lyrical and spiritual, exciting us as a real event.

It is this classical version of the undying ballet that has come to us, telling of an eternal story of love, of delusions and hopes, of a belief into human beauty, which holds out against falsehood and evil.

The Perm Ballet’s present, fully staged production of Swan Lake is choreographed and directed by Natalia Makarova, the superlative of the legendary Kirov Ballet and renowned companies of the West, who for many years thrilled the world as the preeminent Odette/Odile. Now she has given Perm her own version of Tchaikovsky’s tale of immortal love.

Note: When Natalia Makarova staged her production of Swan Lake for the London Festival Ballet in 1988, Sir Frederick Ashton was by her side. He was present during Ms. Makarova’s rehearsals of the Final Act, giving her an entirely free hand to use his choreography as she thought fit and to make emendations that seemed necessary for her conception of the ballet. He trusted her fully and was happy with the changes that she made. In Ms. Makarova’s current production, Ashton’s choreography includes the Waltz in Act I, Scene 1, and a portion of the Final Act.

Swan Lake by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky is a masterpiece of world classical choreography. Of all ballets, it is the best known and most popular.

Its secret is not only in the perfection of the great composer’s music, but also in that extraordinarily deep, poetic thought which it inspires and powerfully expresses. It is in the psychological essence of the ballet with its complex heroines’ characters, whose fate we are following with great interest.

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Tchaikovsky insisted on one condition, however: they must never meet, but communicate by correspondence only. His patroness readily assented, and it was an agreement they kept for 14 years.

The period of subsidy by Mme. von Meck was abundantly productive for Tchaikovsky. Among many other works, he completed the ballet Sleeping Beauty and the opera Eugene Onegin, his fourth and fifth symphonies and The Nutcracker. In St. Petersburg in 1893, Tchaikovsky finished his sixth symphony, the Pathétique, during a period of almost unbreakable psychological depression. Ten days after conducting the first performance of the new work, he drank—perhaps not accidentally—a glass of contaminated river water and died of cholera on November 6, 1893.

Natalia Makarova (choreographer) began her career in her native Leningrad, entering the Vaganova School at the age of 13, where she was placed in a special experimental class condensing the nine-year program into six. After graduating, she joined the Kirov Ballet, rapidly rising to the rank of Ballerina. She came to international prominence when she danced Giselle, which became one of her signature roles, with the Kirov in London. She won the Gold Medal in Varna in 1965.

On September 4, 1970, while on tour in London with the Kirov Ballet, Ms. Makarova requested asylum in Britain. Soon thereafter, she began her career with American Ballet Theatre, making her debut with the company in 1972; her repertoire with that company includes Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, Manon, Song of the Earth, Romeo and Juliet, George Balanchine’s Theme and Variations, Apollo, Jerome Robbins and Kenneth MacMillan’s Romeo and Juliet.

Ms. Makarova has appeared as guest artist with major ballet companies worldwide. Her repertoire includes Onegin (for which she won the Evening Standard Award in 1983), La Bayadère, Firebird; Don Quixote, Coppélia; La Fille Mal Gardée, Notre Dame de Paris, Carmen; Proust; Le Jeune Homme et la Mort; John Cranko’s Romeo and Juliet, Raymonda; and La Sylphide. Among the ballets and pas de deux created especially for Makarova are Robbins’ Other Dances; Sir Frederick Ashton’s Le Rossignol; a MacMillan Pas de Deux; Neumeier’s Epilogue, Tetley’s
Mr. Farmer has collaborated with Robert Cohan and Robert North on numerous productions for London Contemporary Dance Theatre. These include Cohan’s Stages, No-Man’s Land, Sky, Consolations of the Rising Moon, Stone Garden, In Memory, Metamorphoses, Crescendo, North’s Meeting, Parting and Troy Game.

He designed Anna Karenina for the Ballet de Santiago and the Norwegian Ballet; La Traviata for London City Ballet; Cinderella for the Cincinnati Ballet; Giselle for the Star Dancers Ballet Foundation in Tokyo; Coppelia for the Portuguese National Ballet and the Inoue Ballet Foundation in Tokyo; and The Nutcracker for Pittsburgh Ballet. He designed Kenneth MacMillan’s Winter Dreams for the Royal Ballet and Manon for the Australian, Vienna and Houston ballets. In 1991, Mr. Farmer designed Peter Darrell’s Tales of Hoffmann for the Hong Kong Ballet and Les Sylphides and Coppelia for the Birmingham Royal Ballet, returning to Birmingham in 1995 to design Ashton’s Birthday Offering. He also designed the full-length Butterfly for the Australian Ballet and Swan Lake for the English National Ballet at the Royal Albert Hall in London.

The Tchaikovsky Opera and Ballet Theater of Perm is one of Russia’s most distinguished artistic companies. Its ballet company became a permanent institution in the mid-1920s. A performance of Giselle opened the Company’s first ballet season on February 2, 1926. Since then, the theater has produced a growing number of classical and contemporary works, with an emphasis on the operas and ballets of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

The magic of Ulanova, Dudinskaya, Sergeyev, Vecheslova and other Kirov artists profoundly influenced the appearance of the nation’s third-in-importance ballet company, which shares the standards and the style of the famous Kirov school. The Ballet Company is unique in that it draws all of its dancers from its own school, which is the most prestigious training institution for ballet in Russia.

The school entered a new phase upon the arrival of the outstanding ballet teachers Ludmila Sakharova, its present artistic director, Yuly Plakh and Galina Kuznetsova, who represent a new breed of Russian ballet stars, trained in the classical pattern, but who bring together musicality, theatrical passion and superb technical skill.

Former graduates and dancers of the Perm Ballet School, whose names are known the world over, include Galina Ragozina-Panova, Lyubov Kunakova, Galina Shlyapina, Nadezda Pavlova (who went on to become a prima ballerina with the Bolshoi Theatre), Olga Tchenchikova, Marat Daukayev and various Mariinsky stars.

Today, a new generation of artists, such as Elena Kulagina (the Company’s prima ballerina and People’s Artist of Russia), Natalia Moiseeva, Yulia Mashkina and Vitaly Poleschuk, have distinguished themselves in national and international ballet competitions and festivals and have won international fame.

With 70 dancers, including one People’s Artist, three Honored Artists of Russia and four winners of major international competitions, the Company is dedicated to establishing and maintaining a solid tradition of superior Russian classical dance.

The Company’s varied repertoire highlights ballet’s most treasured classics, original works and new works of respected choreographers like Ben Stevenson, and the latest co-production of Concert Barocco, a gift of the Balianse Fund to Perm Ballet.

Some of Company’s soloists work with ballet companies in Boston, Philadelphia, New Jersey, Amsterdam, Switzerland and elsewhere.

The Company is now known far beyond Russia’s borders. Numerous foreign tours and appearances at international arts festivals in Vienna, Bregenz, Spoleto, Seget, Dubrovnik, Servantino in Mexico and others have brought fame and success to the Tchaikovsky Ballet.
He is the director of numerous important cultural projects, the most recent the renowned Diaghilev Festival and the bearer of a lot of national and international prizes and awards among which is the highest in Russian culture State Premium of the Russian Federation received by him for his grand project Pushkin in Opera.

As a director of vast scope, Mr. Isaakyan is keen on and inspired by the original works rarely performed both in Russia and abroad. His recent creation feature a brand new production of novel, to the music by the contemporary composer Rodion Shchedrin.

With the Perm Ballet Company, which she was invited to join that same year, she has danced leading roles in all the major classical ballets, including The Nutcracker, Don Quixote and The Sleeping Beauty. She has extended her repertoire by expressive performance of contemporary choreography in Vasiliev's Anyuta (Anyuta), Salimbene's The Seven Beauties (Aisha) and Boyarchikov's Romeo and Juliet (Juliet).

Ms. Akhmarova has distinguished herself in several ballet competitions, including the Moscow International competition in 1981, where she was a bronze medallist; at a competition held in Peru in 1987, she won a gold medal.

Ms. Akhmarova also received tremendous critical acclaim as an active, creative member of the joint company Stars of the Russian Ballet while touring South Korea, France, India, Japan and the United States.

Her dancing career has taken her to the United States to work with Boston Ballet from 1992 to 1997, where she performed lead roles in productions of such renowned choreographers as John Cranko, George Balanchine, August Bournonville, Michael Gordon, Bruce Marks, Ben Stevenson and others. She appeared in all the major classical ballets as well.

Natalia Akhmarova returned to her home Perm Ballet Company in 2002 to become a répétiteur. In 2003, she was appointed Head of the Company, bringing educational, artistic and personal experiences to her position, her main goal being to nurture and structure a superb ballet company.

After graduating from the Ural State Conservatory in 1982, Valery Platonov (principal conductor) began his career at the Perm Opera and Ballet, where he co-staged Ivan Susanin, War and Peace, The Fire Angel, Khovanshchina and others. He has guest conducted in major opera houses all over the former Soviet Union.

He has also conducted ballet performances in Germany, the Czech Republic, the United States, Ireland and Switzerland. In 1992, he became principal conductor of the Bashkiria State Opera and Ballet Theatre. There, he staged and conducted Carmen, The Barber of Seville, La Bohème, Faust, several operas based on the national Bashkir folklore, as well as some ballet scores.

In 2001, he re-joined the Perm State Opera and Ballet Theatre to assume the post of principal conductor.

After Elena Kulagina (prima ballerina) graduated from the Perm Ballet School in 1982 and joined the Perm Ballet Company the same year, the young dancer immediately occupied the leading position. Since then, she has danced a wide range of roles including Odette-Odile in Swan Lake, Aurora in The Sleeping Beauty, Giselle, Kitri in Don Quixote, Raymonda, Juliet in Romeo and Juliet, Phrygia in Spartacus, Masha in The Nutcracker and others.

Ms. Kulagina’s delicate classical approach and emotional sophistication is well illustrated by her dancing in the ballets Chopiniana and George Balanchine’s Theme and Variations, among others.

To her portrayal of Juliet in Nikolai Boyarchikov’s production of Romeo and Juliet Ms. Kulagina brings a particularly youthful and romantic quality and a musical sensitivity to Prokofiev’s rich, symphonic score.
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Academically fine technique, romantic grace and feminine charm characterize her dancing in La Sylphide.

The Company’s prima has danced on many world stages. She won an honorary award for “Best Ballerina of Ireland in 1996–97 among the touring companies.” She has been awarded the two highest national titles: Honored Artist and People’s Artist of Russia.

One of the most gifted graduates of the Perm Ballet School, Vitaly Poleshchuk (principal) joined the Perm Ballet Company in 1986. His exceptional physical and professional gifts have enabled him to perform the full range of classical repertoire, including The Nutcracker, Don Quixote, Swan Lake, Raymonda, Romeo and Juliet, Giselle, The Sleeping Beauty and La Sylphide.

Particular exactness in mastering the roles and creative search have extended his repertoire range by expressive performing of contemporary works: Anyuta and Tsar Boris, as well as works by George Balanchine and others.

Mr. Poleshchuk was a prize-winner in the Arabesk-90 competition. The duo of Natalia Moiseeva (Mr. Poleshchuk’s wife) and Mr. Poleshchuk won a special Ekaterina Maksimova-Vladimir Vasiliev Award for “Best Duet” at the Arabesk-92 competition. In 1993, she won a silver medal at the competition in Nagoya, Japan. In 1998, she received the distinguished title, Honored Artist of Russia.

On graduation from the Perm Ballet School in 1988, Yulia Mashkina (principal) was appointed a principal in the Company. A gifted, promising ballerina with good professional endowments, Ms. Mashkina has won admirers through her leading roles in Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty, Giselle, Raymonda, Chopiniana, Don Quixote, La Sylphide, Peer Gynt and others. She is also adept at performing contemporary choreography. She has good academic training, demonstrating psychological interpretations of the characters.

Ms. Mashkina has participated in several ballet competitions: the 1990 national competition in Perm in 1990; Arabesk-92, where she was the runner-up and won the love of the audience; Nagoya, Japan, in 1993, where she was a bronze medallist; and Arabesk-94, where she was awarded a special prize for the best performance of a choreographed work.