

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS THE DAZZLING EIFMAN BALLET IN THE
WEST COAST PREMIERE OF BORIS EIFMAN'S ANNA KARENINA AND THE "COMIC
DELIGHT" (BOSTON GLOBE) DON JUAN & MOLIERE
WEDNESDAY – SUNDAY, JUNE 8 - 12**

BERKELEY, April 28, 2005 – The **Eifman Ballet** of St. Petersburg, under the direction of “one of the most creative people in Russia” (*The New York Times*) founder, artistic director and choreographer, **Boris Eifman**, will grace the stage of Cal Performances’ Zellerbach Hall for six performances. On **Wednesday & Thursday, June 8 & 9** the Eifman Ballet will present the West Coast premiere of *Anna Karenina*, based on the novel by **Leo Tolstoy** and choreographed by Mr. Eifman to music by **Piotr Ilych Tchaikovsky**. Speaking of the novel, Mr. Eifman said, “*Anna Karenina* allows us not only to submerge deep into the psyche of the heroine, but also to fully understand her psychoerotic essence.” On **Friday – Sunday, June 10 – 12** the Eifman Ballet’s engagement continues with *Don Juan & Molière*, a ballet in two acts choreographed by Mr. Eifman and set to music by **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** and **Hector Berlioz**. The *Chicago Sun-Times* hailed the Eifman *Don Juan* as an example of “the thrilling mix of bravura technique and seemingly spontaneous improvisational freedom that makes every Eifman performance so distinctive.”

BORIS EIFMAN

Boris Eifman, artistic director of the Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg, has been called “Russia’s leading modern choreographer” by *The New York Times*. The 57-year-old Mr. Eifman is a prolific choreographer, having created over 40 ballets. He was a rebellious and controversial force in the Soviet artistic establishment when he founded the New Ballet of Leningrad—the precursor to today’s Eifman Ballet—in 1977. His ballets combined relevant themes and deep psychological perception, philosophical ideas and fiery passions, audacity of movement and clarity of dramatic intent—combinations that were highly unusual and even revolutionary, for their time and place. Not long after the Eifman Ballet was formed, it toured Russia, performing to sold-out houses of Soviet fans hungry for original artistic expression. Despite the pressure for Mr. Eifman to leave the country for refusing to make so-called “Soviet art,” the company stayed in St. Petersburg without receiving government subsidies and continued to perform to tremendous popular acclaim. As a manager, he learned how to run an independent dance company and thrive. As choreographer, Mr. Eifman is concerned, above all, with the theatrical

impact of his productions. For that reason, he does not restrict himself to the conventions of pure classical ballet. Instead, he uses a language of movement and expressive dance steps, dynamic and riveting mass action scenes, unexpected moments of stillness, and innovative partnering.

Mr. Eifman was born in Siberia and received his ballet education at the Vaganova Ballet Academy and the Leningrad Conservatory. His ballet, *Tchaikovsky*, received the prestigious Russian Golden Mask award, and Mr. Eifman personally received a Golden Mask for his lifetime of achievement in contemporary choreography. He is a four-time recipient of St. Petersburg's prestigious theater award, The Golden Sofit, and many international awards including France's Order of Arts and Letters.

ANNA KARENINA

Leo Tolstoy's epic novel, *Anna Karenina*, has long held Mr. Eifman's interest, and this year he has brought the novel to the ballet stage. *Anna Karenina* tells the story of Anna, a member of St. Petersburg high society who leaves her husband when she falls in love with a handsome military officer, Count Alexey Vronsky. When Vronsky's love fades, Anna cannot bring herself to return to her hated husband, and instead chooses to take her own life. Eifman's ballet uses a variety of music by **Piotr Ilych Tchaikovsky**—some well-known, some obscure. Mr. Eifman's *Anna Karenina* had its world premiere in March 2005 in the southern Russian city of Krasnodar. It played to crowded halls and won rave reviews. The North American premiere of the production takes place in Boston in May 2005.

Tolstoy's tumultuous novel is a fitting candidate for Mr. Eifman's penetrating, emotionally charged choreography. "When reading Tolstoy, one can viscerally feel the author's acute understanding of his characters' psyche and revel in his astonishing sensitivity and incredible detail in portraying life in Russia," Mr. Eifman says. "Even today's literature does not offer such passion, metamorphoses, and phantasmagorias. All this stood at the core of my choreographic investigation."

All roles in the two-act ballet *Anna Karenina* will be danced in rotation by members of the Eifman Ballet. Anna will be danced by **Maria Abashova** and **Vera Arbuzova**, both principal dancers in the company. Karenin will be danced by **Albert Galichanin**, a principal

dancer, and **Oleg Markov**, an Eifman soloist. Vronsky will be danced by **Yuri Smekalov** and **Alexei Turko**, both principal dancers.

DON JUAN & MOLIÈRE

Eifman's *Don Juan & Molière* premiered in 2001 and became an instant sensation. "As sheer spectacle and exercise in provocative style, Boris Eifman's new ballet, 'Don Juan & Molière,' is a winner even by his own extravagant standards," wrote the *New York Times* upon its world premiere at City Center. The ballet features the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Hector Berlioz. Using multiple composers is a device Mr. Eifman also employed in *Russian Hamlet* (2000). and tells the tale of the French playwright Molière writing his drama *Don Juan* and, in the process, interacting with the characters he creates. Don Juan's character is identified with the Mozart music while Molière is identified with the Berlioz music. The ballet juxtaposes stories of Molière's life and scenes of Don Juan, with the handsome, rakish character becoming the unstable playwright's alter ego. Mr. Eifman's long-time collaborator **Slava Okunev** designed *Don Juan*'s dramatic two-level set—a theatrical proscenium above the real stage—that plays a significant part in the production.

Major roles in the two-act ballet *Don Juan & Molière* will be danced in rotation by members of the Eifman Ballet. Principal dancer **Albert Galichanin** and **Ilia Osipov** from the company's corps de ballet will dance the role of Molière. Don Juan will be danced by **Alexei Turko** and **Yuri Ananyan**, both principal dancers. The double roles of Amande, Molière's wife, and Donna Anna, from the play, are danced by either **Maria Abashova** or **Natalia Povoroziuk**, both principal dancers. "The movement aesthetic is firmly grounded in classical ballet, yet traditional moves are subverted by extravagant invention—a leap canted improbably sideways, a jeté corkscrewed mid-air," observed the *Boston Globe*.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the **Eifman Ballet** of St. Petersburg on **Wednesday - Friday, June 8 - 10 at 8:00 p.m., Saturday, June 11 at 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m., and Sunday, June 12 at 3:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$30.00, \$42.00, and \$56.00**. 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, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). 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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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Wednesday – Friday, June 8 – 10 at 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 11 at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 12 at 3:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus

Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

Dance

Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg

Boris Eifman, artistic director

Program A: Wed. & Thurs., June 8 & 9 at 8:00 p.m.:

Anna Karenina (2005); music by Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, choreography by Boris Eifman (West Coast premiere)

Program B: Fri. June 10 at 8:00 p.m.; Sat. June 11 at 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.; and Sun. June 12 at 3:00 p.m.:

Don Juan & Molière (2001); music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Hector Berlioz, choreography by Boris Eifman

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