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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 31, 2005

KIROV BALLET & ORCHESTRA OF THE MARIINSKY THEATRE
RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES WITH THE ENDURING CLASSIC
***THE SLEEPING BEAUTY*, OCTOBER 12 – 16**

200 DANCERS AND MUSICIANS INCLUDING PRIMA BALLERINA DIANA VISHNEVA
COME TO ZELLERBACH HALL FOR SIX PERFORMANCES

BERKELEY, August 31, 2005 – The first Centennial Event of Cal Performances 2005/06 season will be the legendary **Kirov Ballet & Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre's** production of ***The Sleeping Beauty*, October 12 – 16**. Few ballets share the historic and emotional significance of *The Sleeping Beauty*, and no ballet company's history is more entwined with this great work than the Kirov's, "an ensemble of undiluted classical purity" (*Ballet* magazine). Since its debut in St. Petersburg in 1890, with its score by **Pyotr Tchaikovsky** and choreography by **Marius Petipa**, *The Sleeping Beauty* has been a crown jewel of Russian ballet. The version of *The Sleeping Beauty* presented in Berkeley includes revised choreography by **Konstantin Sergeyev** and choreographic elements by **Fedor Lopukhov**, and employs sets and costumes by **Simon Virsaladze**; the orchestra will be led by **Boris Gruzin** and **Alexander Polianichko**.

Anticipation is especially high for **Diana Vishneva's** appearance as Princess Aurora (October 12 and 15). Vishneva's Aurora comes on the heels of her stunning performance this summer as Giselle with the American Ballet Theatre in New York City. The *New York Times* declared her Giselle to be "ballet history," delivering "a performance that surely surpassed anything else she has done here. She had it all: impeccable, inspiring technique; personal charm; and heartbreaking dramatic prowess." She will dance opposite two other Kirov stars – **Igor Zelensky** and **Igor Kolb**.

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THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

The fairy tale ballet of *The Sleeping Beauty* is the result of a remarkable collaboration between two artists of unmatched genius, Tchaikovsky and Petipa, who were at the height of their creative powers when they created the ballet in the late nineteenth century. The story of Aurora, a princess who is cursed to sleep for a century and is awakened by a passionate kiss, comes from *La Belle au bois dormant*, published by Charles Perrault in Paris in 1697. The version of *The Sleeping Beauty* presented by the Kirov Ballet is one of the most enduring and popular pieces in the company's storied history. Its debut at the Mariinsky Theatre in 1890 was one of the most ambitious projects ever attempted by the company. The ballet has undergone many changes over its history, and the version currently presented was largely set in place in 1952 when Sergeyev, the Kirov Ballet's artistic director at the time, revised Petipa's choreography and added richly colored, romantic costumes and sets designed by Virsaladze, a versatile theatrical painter. Virsaladze also created costumes and sets for many other Kirov and Bolshoi Ballet productions, including *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *Stone Flower*, *Legend of Love*, and *Spartacus*.

Tchaikovsky's score for *The Sleeping Beauty* is dramatic and romantic, yet spiritual and at times tinged with melancholy. According to Tchaikovsky's own records, he wrote the music in about 40 days, and considered it to be among his best compositions. It is also generally considered his first successful ballet, although it came more than a decade after his *Swan Lake* in 1877. One reason for its success was that Tchaikovsky and Petipa worked closely together during the entire creation of the ballet. Although contemporary reviews of *The Sleeping Beauty* were mixed, the ballet was popular with the public and was performed at the Mariinsky Theatre more than 50 times within two years of its premiere.

CASTING

Opening night, October 12, promises to be an unforgettable evening of ballet, with three of the Kirov's brightest stars taking the stage: **Diana Vishneva** will dance Princess Aurora, **Igor Zelensky** will portray Prince Desire, and **Uliana Lopatkina** will appear as the Lilac Fairy. For all six performances, **Vladimir Ponomarev** will dance the role of The King and **Elena Bazhenova** will portray his Queen. Other lead roles will be danced by company members in

rotation: Aurora will be performed by **Diana Vishneva** (Oct. 12 and Oct. 15 evening), **Ekaterina Ocmolkina** (Oct. 16), **Alina Somova** (Oct. 14), **Irma Nioradze** (Oct. 15 matinee), and **Olesia Novikova** (Oct. 13). Prince Desire will be danced by **Igor Zelensky** (Oct. 12), **Leonid Sarafanov** (Oct. 13 and Oct. 16), **Andrian Fadeev** (Oct. 14), **Igor Kolb** (Oct. 15 evening), and **Anton Korsakov** (Oct. 15 matinee). The gentle Lilac Fairy will be portrayed by **Uliana Lopatkina** (Oct. 12 and Oct. 15 evening), **Irma Nioradze** (Oct. 16), **Daria Pavlenko** (Oct. 13), **Olga Esina** (Oct. 14), and **Elena Vostrotina** (Oct. 15 matinee). The evil Carabosse Fairy will be portrayed by **Igor Petrov** (Oct. 12, Oct. 14, and Oct. 15 evening), and **Roman Skripkin** (Oct. 13 and Oct. 15 matinee).

THE KIROV BALLET OF THE MARIINSKY THEATRE

The Kirov Ballet last performed in Berkeley in 2003, after a dozen-year hiatus from the Bay Area, and garnered rave reviews. The *San Francisco Chronicle* said, “There has been little onstage in recent memory to match the energy, the sheer winsome appeal of the company.” The *Contra Costa Times* described the company’s corps de ballet as “world-renowned for its exactitude” and said, “One can only hope that we won’t have to wait another 12 years before we see them in the Bay Area again.”

The company’s true name is the **Ballet of the Mariinsky Theatre**, after their renowned home in St. Petersburg, Russia. However, the company was known for the better part of the twentieth century as Kirov Ballet—so named in 1935 after Sergei Kirov, mayor of Leningrad (as St. Petersburg was known at the time). The collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 saw many Russian institutions reverting to pre-revolutionary names, but because of its long association with the name Kirov, the ballet company uses both names when traveling outside of Russia.

In its history, the Ballet of the Mariinsky Theatre has produced many legendary dancers, including **Vaslav Nijinsky**, **Paul Gerdt**, **Sergei** and **Nicolai Legat**, **Anna Pavlova**, **Natalia**

Makarova, Irina Gensler, Mikhail Baryshnikov, and Rudolph Nureyev. Its choreographers and ballet masters, too, are synonymous with the greatest artistic traditions: **Charles Didelot, Jules Perrot, Arthur Saint-Léon, and Petipa.** Today, the company is led by Director of the Ballet **Makhar Vaziev**, and famed international conductor **Valery Gergiev** serves as Artistic and General Director of the Mariinsky Theatre.

THE KIROV ORCHESTRA OF THE MARIINSKY THEATRE

Founded during the reign of Peter the Great in the eighteenth century, the Kirov Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre was originally known as the Russian Imperial Opera Orchestra. It is one of Russia's oldest musical institutions and has called St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre home since 1860. In the second half of the nineteenth century the orchestra enjoyed a golden age under the music direction of Eduard Napravnik, who trained a generation of outstanding conductors—developing what came to be known as the “Russian school of conducting”—and raised the orchestra's musical standards and international stature. In recent years, under Gergiev's direction, the orchestra has again risen in worldwide prominence and mounted ambitious international tours. The orchestra's most recent visit to Cal Performances was in April 2005 when Gergiev conducted an all-Russian program.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the **Kirov Ballet & Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre** presenting *The Sleeping Beauty* **Wednesday and Thursday, October 12 and 13, at 7:00 p.m.; Friday, October 14 at 8:00 p.m.; Saturday, October 15 at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.; and Sunday, October 16 at 3:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$48.00, \$68.00, \$90.00, and \$110.00.** 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 & Thursday, October 12 & 13 at 7:00 p.m.

Friday, October 14 at 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 15 at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 16 at 3:00 p.m.

**Zellerbach Hall
UC Berkeley Campus**

Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

Dance

Kirov Ballet & Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre

The Sleeping Beauty

Valery Gergiev, Artistic and General Director of the Mariinsky Theatre

Makhar Vaziev, Director of the Ballet

Boris Gruzin & Alexander Polianichko, conductors

Program:

The Kirov Ballet & Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre perform *The Sleeping Beauty* featuring Pyotr Tchaikovsky's score and Marius Petipa's choreography revised by Konstantin Sergeyev, with choreographic fragments by Fedor Lopukhov, as well as sets and costumes by Simon Virsaladze.

Tickets: \$48.00, \$68.00, \$90.00, and \$110.00, 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.