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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE OF
EIFMAN BALLET OF ST. PETERSBURG'S *THE SEAGULL* AND THE RETURN
ENGAGEMENT OF *ANNA KARENINA* THURSDAY-SUNDAY,
MARCH 7-11 IN ZELLERBACH HALL**

**CHOREOGRAPHER BORIS EIFMAN CELEBRATES HIS COMPANY'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY WITH
WORKS SET TO MUSIC BY RACHMANINOFF AND TCHAIKOVSKY**

BERKELEY, January 30, 2007—Two titans of Russian literature come vibrantly to life at Zellerbach Hall, when Cal Performances presents the impassioned artistry of **Eifman Ballet of St. Peterburg**, under the direction of Russia's leading contemporary choreographer **Boris Eifman**. The company opens its engagement with the world premiere of Eifman's *The Seagull*, based on the **Anton Chekhov** play and set to music by **Sergei Rachmaninoff** and **Alexander Scriabin**, **Wednesday** and **Thursday, March 7** and **8**. Three performances of *Anna Karenina* based on the novel by **Leo Tolstoy** and set to music by **Piotr Ilych Tchaikovsky** will follow on **Saturday** and **Sunday, March 10** and **11**. Eifman's "extraordinarily accessible and passionate dance drama" (*Los Angeles Times*) combines folk, modern, classical, contemporary, and acrobatic movements with deep psychological drama. "Ballet is a very special art form that gives us an opportunity to permeate into the subconscious and dive into the heart of psychological drama," explains Eifman. "Each new ballet is an expedition into the unknown."

THE SEAGULL

Basing *The Seagull* on Anton Chekhov's 1896 play, Eifman has retained the basic story but has moved the action from a country estate to a ballet hall where the fashionable choreographer Trigorin clashes with the daring innovator Treplev, and the young dancer Zarechnaya competes with prima ballerina Arkadina. The themes of the ballet, including the quest for new art forms, truth, love and success, are ripe for Eifman's trademark choreographic approach, fusing classically rooted, avant-garde dance with the methods of the 21st century dramatic theater. Having spent years in the planning stage of this piece, Eifman always believed that the music by Sergei Rachmaninov was right for his ballet. He, however, added music by Alexander Scriabin plus electronic soundscape to the mix. "We were able to fully express,

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through the sound, my choreography” said Eifman. Arkadina will be danced by **Nina Zmievets** and **Natalia Povorozniuk**; Treplev by **Dmitri Fisher** and **Oleg Gabyshev**; Zarechnaya by **Maria Abashova** and **Anastassia Sitnikova**; and Trigorin by **Yuri Smelakov** and **Oleg Markov**. The sets are designed by **Zinovy Margolin** with lighting by **Gleb Filshinsky**. Costumes were created by **Natalia Zuzkevich**, **Olga Kulizhnova** and **Daria Prokhorova**.

ANNA KARENINA

Hailed since its 2005 premiere, Eifman’s adaptation of Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* focuses the intricate plot on a classic love triangle of a beautiful but unhappy woman, a despised husband and a beguiling lover. “The insanity in Eifman’s *Red Giselle*, the sense of being torn apart by sex in his *Tchaikovsky*, the horror of being alone on a fatal course in *Russian Hamlet* – all are united in [*Anna Karenina*] at Tolstoyan scale” (*Los Angeles Times*). The ballet is set to a potpourri of works by Piotr Ilych Tchaikovsky, including *Serenade for Strings*, *Theme and Variations*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

The work utilizes a two-level set designed by **Zinovy Margolin** as the canvas for **Gleb Filshinsky**’s light scheme. **Slava Okunev**’s costumes seek to isolate Anna, Vronsky and Karenin during ensemble passages, at once exposing and heightening the dancer’s movements and athleticism. “Always a man of the theatre, Eifman ingeniously utilizes all the instruments of his craft: costumes, uncannily flexible sets, lighting that employs cinematic dissolves and ensemble choreography that punctuates the action,” notes *The Center* magazine, London.

Tolstoy’s novel is a fitting candidate for Eifman’s 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,” Eifman says. “Even today’s literature does not offer such passion, metamorphoses, and phantasmagorias. All this stood at the core of my choreographic investigation.” *Anna Karenina* was first performed at Cal Performances in 2005.

The role of Anna will be danced by **Vera Arbuzova** and **Maria Abashova**; Karenin by **Oleg Markov** and **Albert Galichanin**; and Vronsky by **Alexei Turko** and **Yuri Smekalov**. The

sets and lighting are designed by the same team that worked on *The Seagull*, **Zinovy Margolin** and **Gleb Filshinsky**, respectively. Costumes were created by **Slava Okunev**.

BORIS EIFMAN

Boris Eifman, artistic director of the Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg, has been called “one of the most creative people in Russia” by *The New York Times*. A prolific choreographer, Eifman has 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 combine 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 on 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, 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.

The 59-year-old 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, 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.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the **Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg** on **Wednesday and Thursday, March 7 and 8 at 8:00 p.m.**, **Saturday, March 10 at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.**, and **Sunday, March 11 at 3:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$32.00, \$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.calperformances.net; 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.calperformances.net.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Wed. & Thurs., March 7 & 8 at 8:00 p.m.
Sat., March 10 at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
Sun., March 11 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., March 7 & 8 at 8:00 p.m.:

The Seagull (2007); music by Sergei Rachmaninoff and Alexander Scriabin, choreography by Boris Eifman (world premiere)

Program B: Sat. March 10 at 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.; Sun. March 11 at 3:00 p.m.:

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

Tickets: \$32.00, \$42.00, and \$56.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.net; and at the door.
