

CONTACT:  
Christina Kellogg 510.643.6714  
ckellogg@calperfs.berkeley.edu  
Joe Yang 510.642.9121  
scyang@calperfs.berkeley.edu

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**MOISEYEV DANCE COMPANY, THE GRANDDADDY OF  
RUSSIAN FOLK ENSEMBLES, RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES**  
**FRIDAY-SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8-10 AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

**THE ENGAGEMENT CELEBRATES THE LIFE OF IGOR MOISEYEV AND  
THE COMPANY'S 70TH ANNIVERSARY**

**BERKELEY, January 8, 2008**—The breathtaking **Moiseyev Dance Company**, arguably the greatest of all folk dance groups, returns to Berkeley for four performances **Friday–Sunday, February 8–10** at Zellerbach Hall. The company was founded by the late **Igor Moiseyev** who was a principal dancer and choreographer for the Bolshoi Ballet before establishing his own troupe in 1937. The festivities surrounding the ensemble's 70th anniversary are bittersweet, however, with the recent passing of the 101-year-old Moiseyev. "Choreographer, genius, and innovator" (*The New York Times*), Moiseyev will be remembered for his visionary approach to theatrical folk dance in Russia and those derived from other folk traditions. The 200-member company is presently under the direction of **Yelena Shcherbakova** and "lives up to its hype as a national treasure, potently demonstrating the Russian genius for dance" (*The Guardian*).

**PROGRAM**

In Berkeley, the company performs a collection of 13 dances bearing testimony to the eclecticism of its repertoire, and demonstrating the talents for which the Moiseyev Dance Company has been known and admired throughout the years. Many of the dances focus on Russian culture including "Polyanka," danced with the accompaniment of tambourines and balalaikas; "Two Boys in a Fight," inspired by wrestling, a favorite pastime of the Nanayan people of Northern Russia; and "Gypsies," which takes place in Romania. The performance also includes Moiseyev's interpretation of dances from warmer climates with "Sirtaki," based on dances observed by the choreographer when he attended a village wedding during a tour of Greece; and "Gaicho," a dance presenting a competition among three Argentinian cowboys.

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Perennial crowd favorites are added to the mix: “Hora,” “Chyolirlie” and “Zhok,” a trio of Moldavian folk dances; and “Polovetsian Dances,” Moiseyev’s ballet from the opera *Prince Igor*.

### **IGOR MOISEYEV**

**Igor Moiseyev** was born in Kiev, Ukraine, in 1906. In childhood, Moiseyev became fluent in Russian and French, having spent his first eight years in Paris. At age 12, his family relocated to Moscow, and Moiseyev began lessons with former Bolshoi Ballet dancer Vera Moslova, who recognized his talent and brought him to the Bolshoi School. Upon graduating from the Bolshoi School of Choreography, Moiseyev joined the Bolshoi Ballet and gradually rose to principal dancer; soon choreography became his primary passion. At the Bolshoi, he created new productions that strayed from the strictures of classical ballet, among them “Salamambo,” “Three Fat Men” and “The Football Players.” Though there were numerous opponents who protested his departure from the strict programming of classical ballet, Moiseyev was hailed for his choreographic inventiveness and dazzling theatrical form.

His choreographed works for the Bolshoi became stepping stones for Moiseyev’s future career. Shortly after becoming Ballet Master for the Bolshoi Theatre in 1936, he was commissioned to organize a festival of national dance. The project led Moiseyev to conduct an ethnographic journey on foot and horseback around the Caucasus and Urals, during which time he became convinced that folk dancing needed a new life on stage. The State Academic Folk Dance Ensemble of the Soviet Union, known in the West as the Moiseyev Dance Company, was formed upon this belief in 1937. His strict requirements for his dancers to be classically trained made the company stand out in its superior ability and precision. “[Moiseyev’s] command of theatricality, prolific movement invention, cultural sensitivity, and understanding” (*Dance Magazine*) has contributed to his long-standing popularity. For his artistic contributions, Moiseyev was awarded the highest honors at home and abroad: in 1953 he was named a People’s Artist of the USSR and in 1967 was awarded the Lenin Prize for furthering peace among peoples. At his centenary celebration at the Kremlin Palace Theatre in Moscow, Moiseyev was presented with the Order of Merit, Russia’s top civilian honor for service to the nation from President Vladimir Putin.

The Moiseyev Dance Company served as cultural ambassadors to areas of the world that were generally mistrusting of the Soviet regime. Because of Moiseyev's fluency in French, he was able to communicate to various forms of Western media. At times, Moiseyev and his company were criticized by the Soviet State for too willingly embracing the ideals of the West, but Moiseyev's sheer ingenuity and popularity locally and internationally won over skeptics. Moiseyev toured with his company until 1999. He died in Moscow in November 2007.

### **MOISEYEV DANCE COMPANY**

Now in its seventieth year, the Moiseyev Dance Company tours extensively. As the first professional folk dance troupe in Russia, the company set an example of integrating folklore into dance. When the Cold War eased in 1955, the company began to tour outside of the Soviet Union and Asia. Following its successful visit to Paris in 1955, the company was the first professional Russian dance ensemble to visit the United States in the wake of the Cold War. Their debut at New York's Metropolitan Opera House in 1958 resulted in a 25-minute ovation and was declared by Joe Martin of the *New York Times* to be "stupendous... Moiseyev is an astute folklorist and a good artist. His company, 100 strong, is warm, vital, vivacious, remarkably trained, energetic beyond belief and, above all, performers deluxe. The result is a marvelous show."

Since then, the Moiseyev Dance Company has come to be the defining standard of the folk dance tradition. The company's repertoire is ever-expanding, encompassing folk traditions from areas as varied as Russia, China, Argentina, and even American jazz and rock-and-roll. The company now numbers more than 200, has its own orchestra and school, and possesses a repertoire in excess of 200 dances.

Currently under the direction of Elena Scherbakova, the Moiseyev Dance Company returns to North America for a tour commemorating the life and work of Moiseyev, the 50th Anniversary of their first United States tour, and the 70th Anniversary of the Company. "The Moiseyev Dance Company's...ingenious distillation of folk styles from many lands set audiences cheering worldwide" (*The New York Times*).

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets for **Moiseyev Dance Company** on **Friday–Sunday, February 8–10** at Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$24, \$36** and **\$48**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org); and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org).

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced two hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20.00 for all other community members. Information is available at 510-642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

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Cal Performances 2007/08 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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### **CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

#### **CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Friday, February 8 at 8:00 p.m.**  
**Saturday, February 9 at 2:00 & 8:00 p.m.**  
**Sunday, Feb 10 at 3:00 p.m.**

**Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus**  
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave, Berkeley

*Dance*

**Moiseyev Dance Company**

**Program:**

*Summer*, a Russian Dance: music by S. Galperin and V. Zhmykhov, choreography by Igor Moiseyev

*Kalmuk Dance*: music by P. Rybakov, choreography by Igor Moiseyev

*Khorumi*: music by P. Rybakov, choreography by Igor Moiseyev

*Polyanka*, a Russian Dance: music by E. Avksentiev, choreography by Igor Moiseyev

Suite of Moldavian Dances: *Hora*, *Chyolirlie*, *Zhok*: music by M. Smuzikov, choreography by Igor Moiseyev

*Sirtaki*, Suite of the Greek Dances: set to traditional music, choreography by Igor Moiseyev

*Yablotchko* (part of the *Naval Suite*): set to traditional music, choreography by Igor Moiseyev

*Gypsies*: music by S. Galperin, choreography by Igor Moiseyev

*Gaicho*: set to traditional music, choreography by Igor Moiseyev

*Nanayan National Play "Two Boys in a Fight"*: choreography by Igor Moiseyev

*Polovetsian Dances*: music by A. Borodin, choreography by Igor Moiseyev

**Tickets: \$24.00, \$36.00 and 48.00**, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org); and at the door.

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