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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 26, 2008

**TCHAIKOVSKY PERM BALLET & ORCHESTRA RETURNS TO
CAL PERFORMANCES WITH NATALIA MAKAROVA'S PRODUCTION OF
SWAN LAKE AT ZELLERBACH HALL MARCH 28 – 30**

**BALLET STARS POLINA SEMIONOVA AND DENIS MATVIENKO
DANCE MARCH 28 & 30**

**SCHOOLTIME: THE COMPANY WILL PERFORM EXCERPTS FROM SWAN LAKE
FOR BAY AREA STUDENTS MONDAY, MARCH 31 AT 11:00 A.M.**

BERKELEY, February 26, 2008 – In 2006, **Natalia Makarova** delighted Bay Area audiences—and dance lovers across the country—with her new production of *Swan Lake* featuring **Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet & Orchestra**. “These exquisite dancers from the Perm Ballet, which has a direct lineage to the Maryinsky, know how to tell a vivid story in the purest classical dance” (*The New York Times*). Cal Performances is pleased to welcome back this esteemed production for four performances **Friday – Sunday, March 28 – 30** at Zellerbach Hall. The engagement has the added distinction of featuring two celebrated guest artists **Polina Semionova** of Berlin State Ballet and **Denis Matvienko** of the Bolshoi Ballet on Friday, March 28 and Sunday, March 30. *Swan Lake* is the world’s best-known and most-loved ballet, treasured for **Pyotr Tchaikovsky’s** musical score, whose symphonic range and emotional depth fundamentally changed ballet music. Makarova, who for many years thrilled the ballet world as the preeminent Odette/Odile, conceived, directed and choreographed this production, in combination with the classic choreography of Marius Petipa, Lev Ivanov and Sir Frederick Ashton. The production features sets and costumes by **Peter Farmer** who has designed for most of the major ballet companies in the world. Company conductor **Valery Platonov** will be in the pit. The 2006 tour was hailed “one of the year's indispensable ballet experiences” by the *Los Angeles Times*.

Additionally, Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet & Orchestra will give a *SchoolTime* performance for Bay Area students in Zellerbach Hall on **Monday, March 31 at 11:00 a.m.**; tickets are available in advance only.

NATALIA MAKAROVA

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Natalia Makarova entered the famed Vaganova Ballet Academy in her native Leningrad at age 13 and was placed in an experimental program that condensed the nine-year program into six years. She graduated and joined the Kirov Ballet, where she quickly rose to the rank of ballerina. Her international renown grew out of a performance of *Giselle* with the Kirov Ballet in London. She became known for both outstanding classical technique and the ability to emotionally embody the characters she danced. *Giselle* became one of her signature roles. In 1970, she joined the American Ballet Theatre, dancing its vast repertory and working with Anthony Tudor, George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, and Glen Tetley. In 1972, she began a fruitful association with the Royal Ballet in London, and has since appeared as a guest artist with major ballet companies worldwide. In 1980, Makarova staged the first full-length production of *La Bayadere* in the West for American Ballet Theatre, a production that is now in the repertoire of companies worldwide.

In 1989 Makarova was the first Russian artist-in-exile invited to perform in the Soviet Union. She returned to her native Leningrad and danced with the Kirov Ballet on the stage where she began her career. *Makarova Returns*, a documentary film of this historic event, was produced by the BBC. In recent years, she has added acting to her resume, appearing in *Tovarich* in London, *Two for the Seesaw* in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and George Bernard Shaw's *Misalliance* at the U.K.'s Chichester Festival.

While Makarova's *Swan Lake* contains some of the classic choreography by Petipa and Ivanov, she also acknowledges the contribution of Sir Frederick Ashton to the production. When Makarova staged *Swan Lake* for the London Festival Ballet in 1988, Ashton was present during rehearsals for the final act and gave her free rein to use his choreography. In this current production, Ashton's choreography includes the waltz in act one and portions of the final act.

POLINA SEMIONOVA

Born in Moscow in 1984, **Polina Semionova** studied at the Bolshi Ballet School in Moscow. After graduating in 2002, Semionova joined the Berlin State Ballet as a principal dancer at 18 years of age. Semionova has proven her talent by winning several international ballet competition awards, including the gold medal at the Moscow International Ballet Competition in 2001 and First Prize at the Vaganova-Prix Ballet Competition in St. Petersburg in 2002. She has toured in Japan partnering with Vladimir Malakov, and received the Junior Prize at the Nagoya International Ballet Competition

in 2002 while abroad in Japan. Semionova's recent performances of Odette/Odile with the English National Ballet were praised as "dazzlingly seductive—a performance of total confidence and virtuosity" by London's *Sunday Times*.

DENIS MATVIENKO

Denis Matvienko was born in 1979 in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine. In 1989, Matvienko entered the Kiev State Choreographic School, graduating in 1997. Since leaving the Kiev school, Matvienko has worked as the leading ballet-dancer at the Kiev State Theatre of Opera and Ballet from 1997 until 2001 and as their principal dancer since 2003. Matvienko has also performed as the leading ballet dancer at the Maryinsky Theater as well as the principal dancer of the Mikhailovsky Opera and Ballet Theatre, both in St. Petersburg. Additionally, he has worked as the principal guest dancer in the New National Theatre Ballet, Japan. Since 2005, Matvienko has been the principal guest dancer of the Bolshoi Ballet, recently stirring New York crowds, "like a throwback to the days of wildly exhibitionistic star dancing by the likes of Rudolf Nureyev and Alexander Godunov" (*The New York Times*).

TCHAIKOVSKY PERM BALLET & ORCHESTRA

The **Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet & Orchestra** is one of Russia's most distinguished companies. Presenting classical and contemporary orchestra compositions, ballet and opera, the company places an emphasis on the ballets and operas of Pyotr Tchaikovsky, who was born near Perm. Widely recognized as one of Russia's premier ballet troupes, Perm Ballet maintains an active touring schedule, recently visiting China, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Spain and Italy. The company has 70 dancers, all drawn from its own prestigious ballet school; alumni, including Galina Shlyapina, Lyubov Kunakova and Nadezhda Pavlova, have gone on to dance with leading companies around the world.

The city of Perm, perched spectacularly above the Kama River in Russia's Ural Mountains, has a long tradition of music and dance, dating back to the founding of the Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet & Orchestra's precursor, the Perm Theatre, in 1870. A permanent ballet company was established in the mid-1920s, and a performance of *Giselle* opened its inaugural season in 1926. *Swan Lake* was first performed on the stage of the Perm Theatre in 1931 and has been staged there ten times since; and it was the first production the company toured abroad, some 20 years ago. The city was home to Sergei Diaghilev, the impresario behind *Ballets Russes* who launched Anna Pavlova and Vaslav

Nijinsky onto the world stage. The Perm Theatre now hosts the Diaghilev Festival, and the city is the traditional center for the Arabesque Open Russian Ballet Competition, supervised by Vladimir Vasiliev and Ekaterina Maximova.

The Artistic Director and General Director of the Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet & Orchestra is **George Isaakyan**, a native of Yerevan in the Armenian Republic and a graduate of the Moscow State Institute of Theatre Arts. He joined the organization in 1991 as an opera director and became artistic director in 1996. During his tenure as artistic director, Isaakyan has created over 40 productions, guest-directing and producing operas worldwide, including the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Latvian National Opera in Riga, and the Sakai City Opera in Osaka, Japan. Isaakyan also participates in the production of Perm's Diaghilev Festival.

Director of the Perm Ballet, **Natalia Akhmarova**, began her classical training in the Perm's ballet school in 1974 and appeared with the company for several years, dancing lead roles in *Nutcracker*, *Don Quixote*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and other productions. She won several international competitions and received critical acclaim as a member of *Stars of the Russian Ballet* company, which toured South Korea, France, India, Japan, and the United States. Akhmarova danced with the Boston Ballet from 1992 through 1997, and returned to the Perm Ballet in 2002 as *repetiteur*. She became head of the company in 2003, bringing a wealth of educational, artistic and personal experience to the position.

Valery Platonov, principal conductor, is a 1982 graduate of the Ural State Conservatory and began his career at Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet & Orchestra, co-staging *Ivan Susanin*, *War and Peace*, *The Fiery Angel*, and *Khovanshchina*, among others. In 1992, Platonov became principal conductor of the Bashkiria State Opera and Ballet Theatre in Russia, where he staged and conducted classical productions as well as several operas based on Bashkir folklore. Platonov returned to the Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet & Orchestra in 2001 as principal conductor.

Robert Cole, director of Cal Performances, has been the principal guest conductor of the Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet & Orchestra since 2004.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet & Orchestra** presenting **Natalia Makarova's *Swan Lake*** **Friday, March 28 at 8:00 p.m.; Saturday, March 29 at 2:00 & 8:00 p.m.; and Sunday, March 30 at 3:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$34.00, \$52.00, \$76.00 and \$90.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; 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.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 Ticket hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday – Saturday, March 28 – 29 at 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, March 29 at 2:00 p.m.
Sunday, March 30 at 3:00 p.m.

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

Dance

Swan Lake

Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet & Orchestra

Natalia Markarova, choreographer and director

George Isaakyan, artistic director and general director

Natalia Akhmarova, director of the Perm Ballet

Valery Platonov, principal conductor

Polina Semionova, guest artist (March 28-30 only)

Denis Matvienko, guest artist (March 28-30 only)

Program:

Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet & Orchestra performs *Swan Lake*, set to Pyotr Tchaikovsky's score with new choreography by Natalia Makarova (after Petipa and Ivanov, with additional choreography by Ashton).

Tickets: \$34.00, \$52.00, \$76.00 and \$90.00 available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

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Monday, March 31 at 11:00 a.m.
SCHOOLTIME PERFORMANCE

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

Dance

Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet & Orchestra

Natalia Makarova's *Swan Lake*

Program: Tchaikovsky Perm Ballet & Orchestra of Perm, Russia, performs excerpts from Natalia Makarova's new production of *Swan Lake* for Bay Area school children.

Tickets: \$4.00 per student or adult chaperone, available in advance only through Cal Performances at (510) 642-1082. *SchoolTime* performances are open to students in grades 2 through 12 in Bay Area public and private schools. Supplemental study guides for the classroom are provided. For more information about the *SchoolTime* program, contact the *SchoolTime* coordinator at Cal Performances by email at eduprograms@calperfs.berkeley.edu or by phone at (510) 642-0212.

-Cal Performances-