

Friday, March 3, 2017, 8pm
 Saturday, March 4, 2017, 2pm and 8pm
 Zellerbach Hall



Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo

FEATURING

Colette Adae	Varvara Bratchikova	Nadia Doumiefeyva
Lariska Dumbchenko	Nina Enimenimynimova	
Helen Highwaters	Nina Immobilashvili	Irina Kolesterolikova
Maria Paranova	Eugenia Repelskii	Moussia Shebarkarova
Alla Snizova	Olga Supphozova	Guzella Verbitskaya
Yakatarina Verbosovich	Doris Vidanya	Tatiana Youbetyabootskaya

and

Jacques d'Aniels	Ilya Bobovnikov	Roland Deaulin	Pepe Dufka
Ketevan Iosifidi	Stanislas Kokitch	Araf Legupski	
Marat Legupski	Sergey Legupski	Vladimir Legupski	Vyacheslav Legupski
Mikhail Mudkin	Boris Mudko	Boris Nowitsky	
Yuri Smirnov	Innokenti Smoktumuchsky	Kravlii Snepok	

Tory Dobrin, *artistic director*

Isabel Martinez Rivera, *associate director*

Liz Harler, *general manager*

*This performance is made possible, in part,
 by Patron Sponsor Ross E. Armstrong in memory of Jonas (Jay) K. Stern.*



Le Lac des Cygnes (Swan Lake, Act II)

Music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Choreography after Lev Ivanovich Ivanov
Costumes by Mike Gonzales
Décor by Jason Courson
Lighting by Kip Marsh

Swept up into the magical realm of swans (and birds), this elegiac phantasmagoria of variations and ensembles in line and music is the signature work of Les Ballets Trockadero. The story of Odette, the beautiful princess turned into a swan by the evil sorcerer, and how she is nearly saved by the love of Prince Siegfried, was not so unusual a theme when Tchaikovsky first wrote his ballet in 1877—the metamorphosis of mortals to birds and visa versa occurs frequently in Russian folklore. The original *Swan Lake* at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow was treated unsuccessfully; a year after Tchaikovsky's death in 1893, the St. Petersburg Mariinsky Ballet produced the version we know today. Perhaps the world's best-known ballet, its appeal seems to stem from the mysterious and pathetic qualities of the heroine juxtaposed with the canonized glamour of 19th-century Russian ballet.

Benno: Innokenti Smoktunovich
(friend and confidant to)

Prince Siegfried: Vyacheslav Legupski
(who falls in love with)

Yakatarina Verbovich (Queen of the Swans)

Swans
Colette Adae, Nadia Doumiefeyva, Nina Immobilashvili,
Irina Kolesterolikova, Maria Paranova, Eugenia Repelskii,
Doris Vidanya, Tatiana Youbetyabotskaya

(all of whom got this way because of)

Von Rothbart: Jacques d'Aniels
(an evil wizard who goes about turning girls into swans)

INTERMISSION

Pas de Deux, Solo, or Modern Work
To Be Announced

“Pas de Six”
from
Esmeralda

Music by Cesare Pugni
Choreography after Marius Petipa
Staged by Elena Kunikova
Costumes by David Tetrault
Lighting by Kip Marsh

La Esmeralda is a three-act ballet based upon Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*. Originally choreographed by Jules Perrot, the ballet premiered in London in 1844, with Carlotta Grisi in the title role. The Russian premiere, with new choreography by Marius Petipa, took place in St. Petersburg in 1886. The story is of the hopeless love of the deaf and hunchbacked Quasimodo for the gypsy girl Esmeralda. The great Russian ballerina Alexandra Danilova wrote in her memoirs: "... Esmeralda was in love with a very handsome officer who was romancing her while he was betrothed to another woman—the usual story—and, of course, he wouldn't marry her. She was burned at the stake. Very tragic." In this scene during the second act of the ballet, the heart-broken Esmeralda laments the two-timing officer while being consoled by her friend, Pierre Grengoire, and her fellow gypsies.

Esmeralda
Nina Immobilashvili

Pierre Grengoire
Jacques d'Aniels

Gypsies
Artists of the Trockadero

INTERMISSION

Don Quixote

Music by Ludwig Minkus
Choreography after Marius Petipa and Alexander Gorsky
Costumes by Mike Gonzales
Lighting by Kip Marsh
Décor by Robert Gouge

Scene: The outdoor cafe of Lorenza's Inn

Waitresses

Colette Adae, Guzella Verbitskaya, Helen Highwaters, Nina Immobilashvili

Gypsies

Nadia Doumiateva and Eugenia Repelskii

Lorenza (mother to Kitri)

Maria Paranova

Kitri (the prettiest girl in the village, madly in love with Basil)

Alla Snizova

Basil (a peso-less barber with a roving eye and a weakness for strong drink)

Ilya Bobovnikov

The Marquise Cristobal Iglesias Habsburgo de Azuza y Cycamonga (a rich nobleman, desperately seeking a beautiful young wife)

Boris Mudko

Amour (who neatly ties together all the loose ends)

Olga Supphozova

Fairies

Artists of the Trockadero

*Don Quixote and Sancho Panza**

*Due to economic reasons, these two characters have been eliminated.
You may, if you like, imagine the aristocratic vagrant and his constant companion,
Sancho Panza, wandering about aimlessly and getting in everyone's way,
which in most versions is all they do anyway.

*The performance on Friday evening, March 3, will be followed by an onstage
post-performance talk with company artistic director Tory Dobrin.*

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo was founded in 1974 by a group of ballet enthusiasts for the purpose of presenting a playful, entertaining view of traditional, classical ballet in parody form and *en travesti*; the company first performed in the late-late shows in Off-Off Broadway lofts. The Trocks, as they are affectionately known, quickly garnered a major critical essay by Arlene Croce in *The New Yorker*, and following reviews in *The New York Times* and *The Village Voice* established themselves as an artistic and popular success. By mid 1975, the Trocks' inspired blend of their loving knowledge of dance, their comic approach, and the astounding fact that men can, indeed, dance *en pointe* without falling flat on their faces, was being noted beyond New York. Articles and notices in publications such as *Variety*, *Oui*, and *The Daily Telegraph* (London), as well as a Richard Avedon photo essay in *Vogue*, contributed to the company's national and international fame.

The 1975–76 season was a year of growth and full professionalization. The company found management, qualified for the National Endowment for the Arts Touring Program, and hired a full-time teacher and ballet mistress to oversee daily classes and rehearsals. Also during this season, the dancers made their first extended tours of the United States and Canada. Packing, unpacking, and repacking tutus and drops, stocking giant-sized pointe shoes by the case, running for planes and chartered buses soon became routine parts of life.

Since those beginnings, the company has established itself as an international dance phenomenon. It has participated in dance festivals around the world and made television appearances on programs as varied as a Shirley MacLaine special, *The Dick Cavett Show*, *What's My Line?*, *Real People*, *On-Stage America*, *Muppet Babies* with Kermit and Miss Piggy, and a BBC *Omnibus* special on the world of ballet hosted by Jennifer Saunders. Awards include honors for best classical repertoire from the prestigious Critic's Circle National Dance Awards (2007,

UK), the Theatrical Managers Award (2006, UK), and the 2007 Positano Award (Italy) for excellence in dance. In December 2008, the Trocks appeared at the 80th anniversary Royal Variety Performance, a benefit for the Entertainment Artistes' Benevolent Fund in London, attended by members of the British royal family.

The Trocks' numerous tours have been both popular and critical successes—their frenzied annual schedule has included appearances in more than 35 countries and 600 cities worldwide since the company's founding, including seasons at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow and the Chatelet Theater in Paris. The company continues to appear in benefits for international AIDS organizations such as DRA (Dancers Responding to AIDS) and Classical Action in New York City; the Life Ball in Vienna, Austria; Dancers for Life in Toronto, Canada; London's Stonewall Gala; and Germany's AIDS Tanz Gala. A documentary about the company, *Rebels on Pointe*, was recently completed and will travel to film festivals throughout 2017.

The original concept of Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo has not changed. It is a company of professional male dancers performing the full range of the ballet and modern dance repertoire, including classical and original works in faithful renditions of the manners and conceits of those dance styles. The comedy is achieved by incorporating and exaggerating the foibles, accidents, and underlying incongruities of serious dance. The fact that men dance all the parts—heavy bodies delicately balancing on toes as swans, sylphs, water sprites, romantic princesses, angst-ridden Victorian ladies—enhances rather than mocks the spirit of dance as an art form, delighting and amusing the most knowledgeable, as well as novices, in the audiences. In the future, there are plans for new works in the repertoire; new cities, states, and countries to perform in; and for the continuation of the Trocks' original purpose—to bring the pleasure of dance to the widest possible audience. They will, as they have done for more than 40 years, “Keep on Trockin’.”

MEET THE ARTISTS

Colette Adae was orphaned at the age of three when her mother, a ballerina of some dubious distinction, impaled herself on the first violinist's bow after a series of rather uncontrolled *fouette voyage*. Colette was raised and educated with the "rats" of the Opera House but the trauma of her childhood never let her reach her full potential. However, under the kind and watchful eye of the Trockadero, she has begun to flower, and we are sure you will enjoy watching her growth.

Varvara Bratchikova, People's Artist and Cat's Meow, was educated at the Revanchist Institute. She began her career as Pistachia in V. Stolicznaya's production of *The Nutcracker* and achieved stardom as Odette/Odile/Juliet/Giselle/Aurora in the famous *Night of the 1000 Tsars*. Her repertoire encompasses nearly all the works she appears in.

Nadia Doumiefeyva. No one who has seen *Heliazpopkin* will soon forget the spiritual athleticism of Nadia Doumiefeyva, a child of the Caucasus who changed her name for show business reasons. Her fiery attack combined with lyric somnolence produce confusion in audiences the world over, especially when applied to ballet.

Lariska Dumbchenko. Before defecting to the West, Lariska's supreme agility aroused the interest of the Russian space program, and in 1962 she became the first ballerina to be shot into orbit. Hurling through the stratosphere, she delivered handy make-up tips to an assembled crowd of celebrities back on earth, including the now legendary "Whitney Houston, we have a problem..."

Nina Enimenimynimova's frail spiritual qualities have caused this elfin charmer to be likened to a lemon soufflé poised delicately on the brink of total collapse. Her adorably over-stretched tendons exude a childlike sweetness that belies her actual age.

Helen Highwaters has defected to America three times and been promptly returned on each occasion—for "artistic reasons." Recently discovered *en omelette* at the Easter Egg Hunt in Washington, DC, she was hired by the Trockadero, where her inexplicable rise to stardom answers the musical question: Who put the bop in the bop-shibop shibop?

Nina Immobilashvili, for more years than she cares to admit, has been the Great Terror of the international ballet world. The omniscient and ubiquitous Immobilashvili is reputed to have extensive dossiers on every major dance figure, living and/or dead. This amazing collection has assured her entree into the loftiest choreographic circles; the roles she has thus been able to create are too numerous to mention. We are honored to present this *grand dame* in her spectacular return to the ballet stage.

Irina Kolesterolikova was discovered, along with Rasputin's boot, adrift in a basket on the River Neva, by kindly peasants. Her debut at the Mariinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, was marred by her overzealous *grand jeté* into the Tsar's box, impaling a Grand Duchess. Banished from Russia, she made her way arduously to New York, where she founded—and still directs—the École de Ballet de Hard-Nox. Her most famous exercise is the warm-up, consisting of a martini and an elevator.

Maria Paranova's remarkable life story—only now coming to light after 19 dark years in near hopeless conviction that she was Mamie Eisenhower—will never fully be told. The discovery of her true identity (at a Republican fundraiser in Chicago) brought her to the attention of the Trockadero, where she is slowly recovering her technical powers.

Eugenia Repelskii. The secrets of Mme Repelskii's beginnings lie shrouded behind the Kremlin wall; in fact, no fewer than six lie in the wall (in jars of assorted sizes). Dancing lightly over pogroms and other sordid reorganizational measures, Eugenia has emerged as a ballerina *nonpareil* whose pungency is indisputable.

Moussia Shebarkarova. A celebrated child prodigy back in the Brezhnev era, Moussia Shebarkarova astounded her parents at the age of two by taking a correspondence course in ballet. Sadly, due to the unreliable Russian postal system, she has only just graduated.

Alla Snizova enjoyed great success as a baby ballerina at the mere age of nine. Being a child prodigy, she developed serious allergy problems and could only perform short pieces. Known as the “little orphan,” Miss Snizova joined the Trockadero on tour, appearing cloaked in an enigma (complete with zip-out lining). A consummate actress, she has danced the part of Little Miss Markova and the title role of Glinka’s *Popoy—The Sailor Man*.

Olga Supphozova made her first public appearance in a KGB line-up under dubious circumstances. After a seven-year-to-life hiatus, she now returns to her adoring fans. When questioned about her forced sabbatical, Olga’s only comment was, “I did it for Art’s sake.” Art, however, said nothing.

Guzella Verbitskaya was born on a locomotive speeding through the Ural Mountains. She quickly realized the limitations of her native folk dancing and quaint handicrafts. After her arrival in America, she learned everything she now knows about ballet from a seminar entitled “Evil Fairies on the Periphery of the Classical Dance.”

Yakatarina Verbosovich. Despite possessing a walk-in wardrobe so large that it has its own ZIP code, Yakatarina remains a true ballerina of the people. Indeed, she is so loved in her native Russia that in 1993 the grateful citizens of Minsk awarded her the key to the city. That might well have remained the “golden moment” of this great ballerina’s career had they not subsequently changed the locks.

Doris Vidanya. The legendary Vitebsk Virago first achieved recognition as a child performer, appearing with the famous Steppe Brothers in

the world premiere of *Dyspepsiana* (based on an unfinished paragraph by M. Gorki). As a favorite of Nicholas, Alexandra, Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia and the czarevich, La Effhrvia (as she is known to her admirers) was compelled to flee St. Petersburg disguised as a Karsky shashlik. Upon arrival in the New World, she established herself as the Prima Ballerina Assoluta de Kalamazoo, a title she still retains.

Tatiana Youbetyabootskaya comes to the ballet stage after her hair-raising escape from the successful (but not terribly tasteful) overthrow of her country’s glamorous government. She made a counter-revolutionary figure of herself when she was arrested for single-handedly storming the People’s Museum, where her fabulous collection of jewels was being insensitively displayed alongside a machine gun. The resilient Madame Youbetyabootskaya is currently the proprietress of American’s only mail order course in classical ballet.

Jacques d’Aniels was originally trained as an astronaut before entering the world of ballet. Strong but flexible, good natured but dedicated, sensible but not given to unbelievable flights of fantastic behavior, d’Aniels is an expert on recovering from ballet injuries (including the dread “Pavlova’s clavicle”).

Ilya Bobovnikov, the recipient of this year’s Jean de Brienne Award, is particularly identified for his Rabelaisian ballet technique. A revolutionary in the art of partnering, he was the first to introduce crazy glue to stop purported pirouettes.

Roland Deaulin. Having invented the concept of the “bad hair year” or “annus hairibilis,” French born Roland now devotes his spare time to selling his new line of Michael Flatley Wigs on the QVC shopping channel.

Pepe Dufka. The ballet world was rocked to its foundations last month when Pepe Dufka sued 182 of New York’s most ardent ballet lovers for loss of earnings. Dufka claims that 19 years of

constant exposure to rotten fruit and vegetables has led to painful and prolonged bouts of leaf-mould, cabbage root fly, and bottom-end rot. Sadly, this historic court case comes too late for a former colleague whose legs were recently crushed by a genetically modified avocado: he will never dance again.

Ketevan Iosifidi was dismissed from the Kirov Ballet in 1991 when he blackmailed the horn section of the orchestra and forced them to play “Papa Don’t Preach” in the third act of *Romeo and Juliet* while he vlogged *en pointe*. Though Ketevan’s appreciation of high culture is second to none, he still thinks that *prima donna* means any song recorded before “Like a Virgin.”

Stanislas Kokitch, “The Forgotten Man” of ballet, is hardly ever mentioned in reviews by critics or in discussions by devoted balletomanes, despite having created several important roles in now-forgotten ballets. He is the author of *The Tragedy of My Life*, an autobiography not at all reliable.

The Legupski Brothers—Araf, Marat, Sergey, Vladimir, and Vyacheslav—are not really brothers; nor are their names really Araf, Marat, Sergey, Vladimir, or Vyacheslav; nor are they real Russians; nor can they tell the difference between a pirouette and a *jeté*... but... well... they do move about rather nicely... and they fit into the costumes.

Mikhail Mudkin, the famed Russian *danseur* for whom the word “Bolshoi” was coined, comes to American from his triumphs as understudy to a famous impresario in the role of the Bear in *Petrushka*.

Boris Mudko is the Trocks’ newest *danseur*, having joined the company only last year. Boris is a drunken but talented Russian from Dzerzhinsk, in the former Soviet Union, who insisted on an audition while the company was on

tour. It took some time to sober him up and to make him coherent—he was given gallons of tea and several enemas—but finally he was accepted into the company. He has since given up all drink and is doing quite well.

Boris Nowitsky has been with the greatest ballerinas of our time; he has even danced with some of them. One of the first defective Russian male stars, he left the motherland for purely capitalistic reasons. Amazingly, between his appearances on television and Broadway, as well as in movies, commercials, magazines, special events, and women’s nylons, he occasionally still has time to dance.

Yuri Smirnov, at the age of 16, ran away from home and joined the Kirov Opera because he thought Borodin was a prescription barbiturate. Luckily for the Trockadero, he soon discovered that he didn’t know his arias from his elbow and decided to become a ballet star instead.

Innokenti Smoktumuchsky is known only to the most cultured and refined balletomanes in the dark alleyways of St. Petersburg. Originally a promising dancer-choreographer, his only ballet—*Le Dernier Mohicain*—was stolen by the director of the company. In severe depression and shock, Smoktumuchsky burned his ballet slippers and fled to the sewers, only to surface these 40 years later.

Kravlji Snepek comes to the Trockadero from his split-level birthplace in Siberia, where he excelled in toe, tap, acrobatic, and Hawaiian. This good-natured Slav is famous for his breathtaking technique: a blend of froth and frou-frou centered on a spine of steel, painfully acquired at the hands and feet of his teacher, Glib Generalization, who has trained many able dancers. As an artist in the classical, heroic, tragical mold, young Kravlji wrenched the heart of all who saw him dance Harlene, the Goat Roper, in *The Best Little Dacha in Sverdlovsk*.

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo

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DANCERS

Olga Supphozova and Yuri Smirnov
Moussia Shebarkarova and Vyacheslav Legupski
Guzella Verbitskaya and Mikhail Mudkin
Varvara Bratchikova and Sergey Legupski
Helen Highwaters and Vladimir Legupski
Alla Snizova and Innokenti Smoktumuchsky
Yakatarina Verbosovich and Roland Deaulin
Tatiana Youbetyabootskaya and Araf Legupski
Nadia Doumiafeyva and Kravljí Snepek
Lariska Dumbchenko and Pepe Dufka
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Maria Paranova and Boris Nowitsky
Eugenia Repelskii and Jacques d'Aniels
Nina Enimenimynimova and Ketevan Iosifidi

Robert Carter
Paolo Cervellera
Jack Furlong, Jr
Giovanni Goffredo
Duane Gosa
Carlos Hopuy
Chase Johnsey
Laszlo Major
Philip Martin-Nielson
Raffaele Morra
Christopher Ouellette
Matthew Poppe
Alberto Pretto
Giovanni Ravelo
Carlos Renedo
Joshua Thake
Long Zou

COMPANY STAFF

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Make-Up Provided By M-A-C

Special thanks to:

Elena Kunikova; Karina Elver; Lynn Shipley of Ballet Hispanico;
and Jenny Palmer of IMG Artists

COMPANY BIOGRAPHIES

Robert Carter

Birthplace: Charleston, SC. Training: Robert Ivey Ballet School, Joffrey Ballet School. Joined Trockadero: November 1995. Previous companies: Florence Civic Ballet, Dance Theater of Harlem Ensemble, Bay Ballet Theater.

Paolo Cervellera

Birthplace: Putignano (Bari), Italy. Training: San Carlo Opera House Ballet School. Joined Trockadero: November 2012. Previous company: San Carlo Opera House Ballet Company, Naples Italy.

Jack Furlong, Jr.

Birthplace: Boston, MA. Training: Valentina Kozlova. Joined Trockadero: September 2014. Previous company: Quark Contemporary Dance Theater.

Giovanni Goffredo

Birthplace: Noci, Italy. Training: Ballett-Akademie München, La Scala Opera Ballet School. Joined Trockadero: October 2013. Previous companies: DeMa Dance Company, Peridance Contemporary Dance Company.

Duane Gosa

Birthplace: Chicago, IL. Training: University of Akron, Ailey School. Joined Trockadero: September 2013. Previous companies: Jennifer Muller/The Works, Brooklyn Ballet, The Love Show.

Carlos Hopuy

Birthplace: Havana, Cuba. Training: Escuela Nacional de Arte, Havana. Joined Trockadero: February 2012. Previous companies: National Ballet of Cuba, National Ballet of Costa Rica, Ballet San Antonio. Awards: international ballet competitions in Havana (gold medalist 1999, 2001, 2002), Nagoya (gold medalist 2002), and Jackson, Mississippi (finalist 2010).

Chase Johnsey

Birthplace: Winter Haven, FL. Training: Harrison Arts Center, Virginia School of the Arts.

Joined Trockadero: April 2004. Previous company: Florida Dance Theatre. Named *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" in 2008. UK National Dance Award for Best Male Dancer (2016).

Laszlo Major

Birthplace: Mosonmagyaróvár, Hungary. Training: Győr Dance and Art School. Joined Trockadero: September 2014. Previous companies: North Carolina Dance Theater, Atlantic City Ballet, Compagnie Pål Frenàk.

Philip Martin-Nielson

Birthplace: Middletown, NY. Training: Natasha Bar, School of American Ballet, Chautauqua Institution of Dance. Joined Trockadero: September 2012. Previous company: North Carolina Dance Theater.

Raffaele Morra

Birthplace: Fossano, Italy. Training: Estudio de Danzas (Mirta & Marcelo Aulicio), Accademia Regionale di Danza del Teatro Nuovo di Torino. Joined Trockadero: May 2001. Previous company: Compagnia di Danza Teatro Nuovo di Torino.

Christopher Ouellette

Birthplace: San Francisco, CA. Training: San Francisco Ballet School. Joined Trockadero: May 2014. Previous company: Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre.

Matthew Poppe

Birthplace: Phoenix, AZ. Training: School of American Ballet, School of Ballet Arizona. Joined Trockadero: June 2014. Previous companies: Boston Ballet, Ballet Arizona.

Alberto Pretto

Birthplace: Vicenza, Italy. Training: Academie de Danse Classique Princesse Grace, Monaco. Joined Trockadero: February 2011. Previous companies: English National Ballet, Stadttheater Koblenz.

Giovanni Ravelo

Birthplace: Bucaramanga, Colombia. Training: Ballet Anna Pavlova (Bogota), The Rock School,



Escuela del Ballet Nacional de Cuba. Joined Trockadero: October 2008. Previous companies: Roney Ballet, Ballet Nacional de Colombia.

Carlos Renedo

Birthplace: Barcelona, Spain. Training: Jorge Fdez-Hidalgo Estudi de Dansa Barcelona, Steps on Broadway (NYC). Joined Trockadero: February 2012. Previous companies: Metropolitan Opera Ballet, Steps Ensemble, Rebecca Kelly Ballet.

Joshua Thake

Birthplace: Providence, RI Training: Boston Ballet School, San Francisco Ballet School, Brae Crest School of Classical Ballet. Joined Trockadero: November 2011. Previous company: Man Dance Company of San Francisco.

Long Zou

Birthplace: Li Ling, China. Training: Central School of Ballet (London), Guangzhou Art School. Joined Trockadero: May 2009/rejoined 2016. Previous companies: Ballet Central (UK), Guangzhou Ballet, Jin Xing Dance Theatre.

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, Inc. is a nonprofit dance company chartered by the State of New York. All contributions are tax-deductible as provided by law.

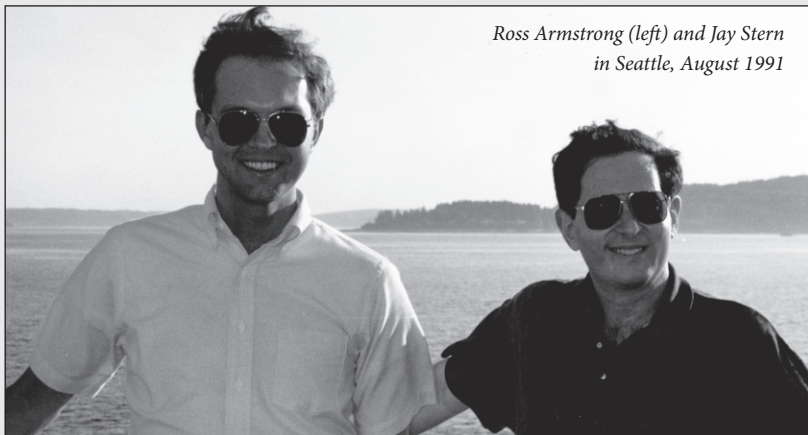
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Lucille Lewis Johnson, *vice president*
Tory Dobrin, *secretary/treasurer*
James C. P. Berry
Martha Cooper

Music for *Swan Lake* is conducted by Pierre Michel Durand with the Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra; Pavel Prantl, *leader*.

BOOKING INQUIRIES

Liz Harler, *general manager*
liz@trockadero.org



*Ross Armstrong (left) and Jay Stern
in Seattle, August 1991*

Donor Spotlight

Cal Performances' 40th anniversary celebration of Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo is generously sponsored by Ross E. Armstrong, in memory of his husband, Jonas (Jay) K. Stern. Ross is also the most recent member of the Nancy Douglass Legacy Society, a group of individuals who have expressed their intentions to provide for Cal Performances in their estate plans.

Ross grew up in western New York state, where there was a strong tradition of high school bands. Many young people also took private piano lessons, but there was almost no opportunity to hear live music performed professionally. Ross found he was bored in school. Even though his parents were not musically inclined, they noticed he liked to pick out tunes on an old, broken-down piano. They decided to have him start piano lessons, and this led to his life-long passion for music.

In 1983 Ross was living in Vacaville, working as a physician in the Air Force, when he met Jay, who was living and working in San Francisco. For four years they commuted back and forth on weekends, spending much of their time together sharing their love of music. They began subscribing to Cal Performances as soon as Ross moved to Oakland in 1987. The two were so devoted to attending each season that they even planned their vacations around the on-sale date, to ensure they could obtain tickets for all the shows they wanted to see. Cal Performances was a place where they could discover new forms of art and music, all for the price of a ticket. But it also became much more: Cal Performances became an extension of their family, a place where they would see old friends and meet new ones.

In 1984 Ross and Jay saw the "Trocks" for the first time. Then in 2014, 30 years later, they returned to see the Trocks in Zellerbach Hall for a stroll down memory lane and a chance to relive their youth. They were in stitches, laughing and having fun. Though Ross is not "a dance person," even he could tell that this was also quality, serious dancing.

Ross is amazed to think about how much music has helped him throughout his life. After Jay died in 2015, returning to Cal Performances was a bittersweet experience, but attending performances also helped him realize how very important this place had been in his life with Jay. Ross wanted to create a legacy in both their names as a gift to audiences in the Bay Area. He hopes this will help ensure that Cal Performances will continue to be known for the richness of its cultural offerings.