

FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE

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**NORTH AMERICAN TOUR OF  
THE KIROV BALLET & ORCHESTRA OF THE MARIINSKY THEATRE  
BEGINS AT CAL PERFORMANCES  
OCTOBER 7-12, 2003**

**Legendary ballet company and orchestra from St. Petersburg appear together for the first time on the West Coast, performing a program of classic works by Mikhail Fokine and a second program featuring George Balanchine's *Jewels***

**BERKELEY, September 3, 2003** – Celebrating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of St. Petersburg, the world-famous **Kirov Ballet & Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre** launch their North American tour at Cal Performances **October 7-12, 2003** in Zellerbach Hall. A primary symbol of Russian artistic achievement, the Kirov has been synonymous with classical ballet at its finest since the company was founded over two centuries ago, producing an astonishing number of ballet greats, including Petipa, Balanchine, Nijinsky, Nureyev, Makarova, and Baryshnikov. It has been 12 years since the troupe has been to the Bay Area, and their Cal Performances engagement marks the first time the Ballet and Orchestra have appeared together on the West Coast. In Berkeley, the Kirov Ballet & Orchestra perform two programs: Mikhail Fokine's *Chopiniana*, *The Firebird*, and *Scheherazade* (October 7-9); and Balanchine's three-part masterpiece *Jewels* (October 10-12), especially fitting as the dance world celebrates the famed choreographer's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2003. "As ever, the Russians are pushing up the benchmark of excellence," writes *The Independent* of the company's performances in Covent Garden in 2001. "What's new is that this isn't exclusively in the Russian classics department. The Kirov is developing a taste for British and American choreography...imbued with a sensibility that has St. Petersburg stamped through the middle."

Acclaimed conductor and General Director of the Mariinsky Theatre **Valery Gergiev** makes a special appearance to lead the Kirov Orchestra on the opening night performance at Cal

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Performances October 7; Mariinsky Theatre Conductor **Mikhail Agrest** leads all other performances during the Berkeley engagement.

### PROGRAM

The Kirov Ballet & Orchestra engagement opens Tuesday, October 7 at 8:00 p.m. (Program I) with a program of works by Russian choreographer Mikhail Fokine. One of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century's most influential choreographers, Fokine was a champion of the one-act ballet, and the Kirov pays tribute to the choreographer's style in this genre. First on the program is *Chopiniana*, also known as *Les Sylphides* (the female dancers are costumed to resemble sylphs, an image in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romantic art Fokine found particularly intriguing). Created in 1908, the piece is an abstract composition choreographed in three movements to a suite of piano pieces by Frederic Chopin. Also on the program is the dark drama of *Scheherazade*, first premiering in Paris in 1910 with Vaslav Nijinsky in the role of the Golden Slave and Ida Rubinstein as Zobeide, the Shah Shahryar's favorite wife. Set to Rimsky-Korsakov's undulating symphonic suite of the same name, Fokine's *Scheherazade* skillfully entwines the multiple expressions of passion, guilt, grief, debauchery, anger and desperation into a one-act story taken from *Tales from a Thousand and One Nights*. Rounding out the program is *The Firebird*, a work set to the music of Igor Stravinsky that dazzled Paris at its premiere in 1910. Fokine created the aura of *The Firebird* by juxtaposing several elements—classical dance, free movement, folkloric dance, and the grotesque—at the same time imbuing the central character of the magic bird and her scenery with breathtaking color hues and visual beauty. The piece was revived in 1994 by Fokine's granddaughter, Isabelle Fokine, and Andris Liepa. Program I repeats Wednesday & Thursday, October 8 & 9 at 8:00 p.m.

In the spirit of the centennial of George Balanchine's birth, the Kirov's performance of *Jewels* is one of the most highly anticipated events of Cal Performances' 2003/04 season (Program II: Friday, October 10 at 8:00 p.m.; Saturday, October 11 at 2:00 & 8:00 p.m.; and Sunday, October 12 at 3:00 p.m.). Premiering in 1967 by the New York City Ballet, Balanchine's *Jewels* was the first full-length plotless ballet ever created, and a brilliant manifestation of the choreographer's diverse heritage in a modern, evening-length work. In three acts, Balanchine pays tribute to three countries that played such important roles in his creative life: France ("Emeralds"), America ("Rubies"), and Russia ("Diamonds"). "Emeralds"

is set to music from *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Shylock* by Fauré; Stravinsky's *Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra* frames "Rubies"; and "Diamonds" is choreographed to the last four movements of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 3 in D major. Added to the Kirov's repertory in 1999, the production's signature color-specific costumes were designed by **Barbara Karinska**; the scenery created by **Peter Harvey**; and lighting designed by **Perry Silvey** (original lighting design was created by Ronald Bates). "It is fascinating to see how the Kirov translate Western choreography into their familiar Russian ballet idiom," wrote London's *Observer* of Kirov performances of *Jewels* in 2001. "They return George Balanchine to his Mariinsky roots, dancing his three-act *Jewels* as though it were made for the imperial court. They understand the romantic ballet references in 'Emeralds' and the elegiac classicism of 'Diamonds,' and 'Rubies' is given a high-gloss polish."

### CASTING

Principal dancers traveling to Berkeley for the October engagement of the Kirov are **Zhanna Ayupova, Diana Vishneva, Uliana Lopatkina, Irma Nioradze, Victor Baranov, Andrian Fadeyev, Igor Kolb, Danila Korsuntsev, Alexander Kurkov, Farukh Ruzimatov, and Igor Zelensky**. First Soloists include **Sofia Gumerova, Irina Zhelonkina, Daria Pavlenko, Elvira Tarasova, Irina Golub, Leonid Sarafanov, and Andrey Yakovlev**. Soloists include **Tatiana Amosova, Ruben Bobovnikov, Andrei Ivanov, and Anton Korsakov**. Character dance soloists include **Bazhenova Elena, Rakhmanova Galina, Baimuradow Islom, Yakovlev Andrey, and Zubkovsky Nikolay**. For specific casting details, please contact Cal Performances' Public Relations department at (510) 643-6714 or (510) 642-9121.

### THE HISTORY OF THE MARIINSKY THEATRE

The history of the Kirov Ballet and Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre dates back to 1783, when Catherine the Great ordered an impressive stone theater to be built in the Second Admiralteisky district of St. Petersburg, to take the place of a wooden structure that served as a performance space for events. The theater opened in 1783 with a performance of Paisiello's *Il Mondo della Luna*, and at that time was considered one of the finest theaters in Europe. It was reconstructed once in 1802 by Jean-François Thomas de Thomon and then again in 1836 by Albert Cavos. Ten years later, fire destroyed the building and it was reconstructed primarily as a venue for musical performances, assuming the name Mariinsky Theatre (after Alexander II's

wife Maria). The opera company of the former Bolshoi Theatre took up residence, soon followed by the ballet company. The building was enlarged and renovated in the 19th century on two separate occasions—first by architect Victor Schroeder and then by engineer N.V. Smirnov—and the resulting layout and splendid décor has remained mostly unchanged to this day. During World War II, more than 20 shells struck the building, but restoration was largely complete by 1944.

### **THE KIROV BALLET OF THE MARIINSKY THEATRE**

The history of St. Petersburg ballet in the 19th century was associated with the work of Charles Didelot, Jules Perrot, and Arthur Saint-Leon. In 1869, the position of principal ballet master was entrusted to Marius Petipa, who markedly raised the professional standards of the company, and produced such celebrated ballets as *Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, and *Raymonda* during his time with the company. Over the years the legacy of dancers that the Ballet of the Mariinsky Theatre is responsible for producing is awe-inspiring: Nijinsky, Gerdt, Legat and others around the turn of the century, and Natalia Makarova, Irina Gensler, Mikhail Baryshnikov and Rudolph Nureyev from the 1950s to the 1970s. Known for the better part this century as the Kirov Ballet (named in 1935 after the mayor of Leningrad, Sergei Kirov), the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 saw many organizations reverting back to their pre-revolutionary (1917) titles. Thus the Kirov has changed back to the Ballet of the Mariinsky Theatre, though the company tends to use both names when traveling outside of Russia.

### **VALERY GERGIEV**

The Mariinsky Theatre's General Director, **Valery Gergiev**, was born in Moscow to Ossetian parents, and studied piano and conducting at the Leningrad Conservatory. He made his Kirov debut in 1978 with *War and Peace*. In addition to his directorship at the Mariinsky, he is Principal Guest Conductor at the Metropolitan Opera and Principal Conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra. Gergiev is also the Artistic Director of St. Petersburg's White Nights Festival, the Russian Easter Festival in Moscow, the Mikkeli Festival in Finland, and the Rotterdam/Gergiev Festival.

### **MAKHAR VAZIEV**

**Makhar Vaziev**, Director of the Kirov Ballet of the Mariinsky Theatre, was born in Alagir, North Ossetia. He graduated from the Vaganova Academy under Yury Umrikhin in 1981. In 1979 he joined the Kirov Ballet and became a principal dancer in 1989; in 1995 he was appointed Director. During his time in the position, the following new productions have entered the repertoire: Balanchine's *Symphony in C*, *Serenade*, *Apollo* and *Jewels*; Roland Petit's *Carmen* and *Le jeune homme et la mort*; Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon*, and *Le baiser de la fe*, *Poeme de l'extase*, *Middle Duo* and *Cinderella* by Alexey Ratmansky, among many others.

### **THE KIROV ORCHESTRA OF THE MARIINSKY THEATRE**

The **Kirov Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre** enjoys a long and distinguished history as one of the oldest musical institutions in Russia. Founded in the 18th century during the reign of Peter the Great, it was known before the revolution as the Russian Imperial Opera Orchestra. Housed in the Mariinsky Theatre since 1860, the Orchestra entered a "golden age" during the second half of the 19th century under the music direction of Eduard Napravnik. Napravnik oversaw the Imperial Theatre from 1863 to 1916 and under his leadership the Mariinsky Orchestra grew to be recognized as one of the most accomplished in Europe. He also trained a generation of outstanding conductors, developing what came to be known as "the Russian school of conducting."

Conductor **Mikhail Agrest** has been with the Mariinsky Theatre since 2001, where he conducts for the Theatre's opera and ballet companies. In July 2003, Agrest made his Metropolitan Opera debut with *Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*.

### **GEORGE BALANCHINE**

Widely regarded as one of ballet's foremost choreographers and one of the great artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, **George Balanchine** had an immense influence on the world of dance. He is known to have said, "Everything I taught I learned as a child in St. Petersburg at the Mariinsky School." Born in St. Petersburg in 1904, as a young child he danced several roles in the Mariinsky Theatre's productions of the *Nutcracker*, making his debut as the Nutcracker Prince at age 15. In 1924, Balanchine left St. Petersburg for Paris, where he was soon appointed ballet master Serge Diaghilev's legendary Ballets Russes. Following Diaghilev's death, which marked the end of the company, Balanchine traveled around Europe, serving as guest ballet master at the

Royal Danish Ballet for a time, until he arrived in America in 1933, at the invitation of arts enthusiast Lincoln Kirstein. Kirstein's dream was to create an American ballet company that rivaled those of Europe, and felt that Balanchine was the one to do it. The two opened the School of American Ballet in January 1934, and went on to establish the New York City Ballet in 1948.

From the time the school was established until his death in 1983, Balanchine led NYCB to international acclaim, while creating a vast ballet repertory that is for the most part unparalleled in the history of dance. A catalogue of Balanchine's creative output lists 425 works created from 1920 to 1982, many of which are recognized as masterpieces of 20<sup>th</sup>-century artistic achievement and are performed today by ballet companies around the world.

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets for the Cal Performances presentation of the **Kirov Ballet and Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre, Tuesday – Sunday, October 7 – 12** in Zellerbach Hall, are priced at **\$42.00, \$62.00, \$92.00** 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](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu); and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty, 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 the Cal Performances Ticket Office at (510) 642-9988 or visit the Cal Performances web site at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu).

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*San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco* magazine, and KDFC Classical 102.1 FM are season media sponsors of Cal Performances' 2003/04 performing arts season.

All Cal Performances programs are supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Zellerbach Family Foundation.

Cal Performances' presentation of the Kirov Ballet and Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre is sponsored by AT&T.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

*Special Event*

**Kirov Ballet & Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre**  
**Tuesday-Friday, October 7-10 at 8:00 p.m.**  
**Saturday, October 11 at 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.**  
**Sunday, October 12 at 3:00 p.m.**

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

**Program I:** Tues. 10/7, Wed. 10/8 and Thurs. 10/9 at 8:00 p.m.

*Chopiniana* (1908 - revised by Agrippina Vaganova 1931): music by Chopin; choreography by Mikhail Fokine

*Scheherazade* (1910): music by Rimsky-Korsakov; choreography by Mikhail Fokine

*The Firebird* (1910): music by Stravinsky; choreography by Mikhail Fokine

**Program II:** Fri. 10/10 at 8:00 p.m., Sat. 10/11 at 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m., and Sun. 10/12 at 3:00 p.m.

*Jewels* (1967): music by Fauré, Stravinsky, and Tchaikovsky; choreography by George Balanchine

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