

FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE

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**A VIBRANT DISPLAY OF ATHLETICISM AND BALLETTIC GRACE,  
THE VIRSKY UKRAINIAN NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY  
HAS ITS BAY AREA DEBUT AT CAL PERFORMANCES  
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 AT 3:00 P.M. IN ZELLERBACH HALL**

**BERKELEY, August 6, 2004** – The **Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company** brings the spirit of the Ukraine to Berkeley, presenting a dynamic program of folk dance and music **Sunday, September 19 at 3:00 p.m.** at Zellerbach Hall. Named for famed Russian ballet master **Pavlo Virsky**, the ensemble is world-renowned for its athletic choreography, elaborate costuming, and creative stagings of Eastern European folk dance traditions. “To watch the fabulous virtuosity of this company’s young men and women in their vibrantly colored costumes [is] to appreciate great dancing by any definition,” wrote Anna Kisselgoff of *The New York Times*. Combining ballet techniques with the folk dancing choreography of the region—gravity-defying split-leaps and spins, mazurka steps, loose-hipped kicks and squatting Cossack dances, among others—the 85-member troupe of dancers and musicians captures the beauty of Ukrainian cultural history with passion, skill, and a sense of humor. The September 19 program features works by the late Pavlo Virsky (*Vyshyvalntysi; Zaporozchi; Moriaky; Oi, Pid Vishneiu;* and *Hopak*), and current Artistic Director **Myroslav Vantukh** (*Ukraino, My Ukraino!; Povzunets; Tsygansky; The Volynsk Patterns; Ukrainian Dance with Tambourines; Carpathians Choreographic Suite; The Years of Youth; Bereznianka;* and *Kozachok*).

**VIRSKY UKRAINIAN NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY**

The **Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company** was founded in Kiev in 1937 when **Pavlo Virsky** and **Mykola Bolotov**, two well-known Ukrainian ballet masters, brought together a group of dancers to explore folkloric traditions, which Virsky believed portrayed a people’s culture and soul. Virsky’s ballet sensibilities imbued the company’s aesthetic from the beginning to the present day, “hence the larger-than-life plasticity of the men, whose deep plies, flips and spins in the air and loose-hipped kicks are executed with a lightness that makes their bravura all the more astonishing,” wrote Kisselgoff in *The New York Times*. “Effort is concealed; power is redefined.” Virsky helmed the company from 1955 to 1975, and it was

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under his guidance that the ensemble matured into a highly professional dance company whose talent became known by dance lovers around the world. Virsky choreographed such classic compositions as *Moriaky* (“Sailors”) and *Oi, Pid Vishneiu* (“Oh, Under a Cherry Tree”), both of which will be included on the September 19 program. During World War II, Virsky’s troupe performed for soldiers at the Russian front, and the ensemble was accorded further recognition in connection with the Decade of Ukrainian Art and Literature in Moscow in 1951, and the choreographer was awarded a number of honors prior to his death in 1975. The ensemble has toured countries far away from its native Ukraine, including Austria, England, Argentina, Brazil, Belgium, Greece, Ecuador, Italy, India, Spain, Canada, Columbia, China, Cuba, Korea, Mexico, Mongolia, Germany, Peru, Poland, Portugal, France, Czech Republic, Chile, Switzerland, and many others.

### **MYROSLAV VANTUKH**

**Myroslav Vantukh**, Pavlo Virsky’s disciple and leading expert in folk traditions and ethnography, has been Artistic Director of the Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company since 1980. His primary objective and continuing creative quest is the careful preservation and development of the choreographic art of the Ukraine. Dynamic choreography, a bright palette of costume colors, and a vast range of musical accompaniment are characteristic features of Vantukh’s work; *The Carpathians Choreographic Suite*, *The Tambourine Dance*, *The Years of Youth*, *In Peace and Harmony*, and *The Russian Suite* are all a permanent part of the ensemble’s repertoire.

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets for the **Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company** on **Sunday, September 19** at **3:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$24.00**, **\$36.00** and **\$48.00**. 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 and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount. For more information, call Cal Performances 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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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

**Sunday, September 19 at 3:00 p.m.**

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

*World Stage*

**Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company**

**Program:**

*Ukraino, My Ukraino!*; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh  
*Povzunets* (Cossack comic dance); choreography by Myroslav Vantukh  
*Tsygansky* (Gypsy dance); choreography by Myroslav Vantukh  
*The Volynsk Patterns*; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh  
*Ukrainian Dance with Tambourines*; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh  
*Vyshyvalntysi* ("Embroideresses"); choreography by Pavlo Virsky  
*Zaporozchi* (National Ukrainian Dance of Cossacks); choreography by Pavlo Virsky  
*Carpathians Choreographic Suite*; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh  
*The Years of Youth*; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh  
*Bereznianka*; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh  
*Moriaky* ("Sailors"); choreography by Pavlo Virsky  
*Kozachok*; choreography by Myroslav Vantukh  
*Oi, Pid Vishneiu* ("Oh, Under a Cherry Tree"); choreography by Pavlo Virsky  
*Hopak* (Ukrainian folk dance); choreography by Pavlo Virsky

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