

For Immediate Release: February 16, 2024

[Cal Performances press room](#)



Images of The Joffrey Ballet performing *Anna Karenina* are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#). A trailer of The Joffrey Ballet performing *Anna Karenina* can be viewed [on YouTube](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
THE BAY AREA PREMIERE OF
THE JOFFREY BALLET, *ANNA KARENINA*
MARCH 15–17 AT ZELLERBACH HALL
LAUNCHING A RENEWED MULTISEASON RESIDENCY ON THE BERKELEY
CAMPUS WITH THE COMPANY'S FIRST-EVER NARRATIVE BALLET**

**CHOREOGRAPHED BY YURI POSSOKHOV WITH A SCORE BY ILYA DEMUTSKY
TO BE PERFORMED LIVE BY THE BERKELEY SYMPHONY**

Berkeley, February 16, 2024—Cal Performances at UC Berkeley welcomes back Chicago's esteemed Joffrey Ballet March 15–17 at Zellerbach Hall, launching a renewed multiseason partnership between the company and the campus. As part of this year's engagement, the company performs the Bay Area premiere of its first full-length narrative ballet, *Anna Karenina*, choreographed by Yuri Possokhov, the choreographer in residence at the San Francisco Ballet. The dance features an original score by award-winning composer Ilya Demutsky, to be performed live at Zellerbach Hall by the Berkeley Symphony under the baton of conductor Scott Speck.

Based on the novel by Leo Tolstoy, Possokhov's adaptation—winner of the 2019 “Oscars of Dance” Benois de la Danse International Prize for Best Choreography—follows the beautiful but

married Anna, who finds herself caught in a life-changing affair with the dashing Count Vronsky. Set in the late 19th century of Imperial Russia, Tolstoy's classic shows the triumph of romance, family, and faith against a backdrop of fraught political and social transformation.

These performances mark the start of a renewed multiseason arrangement between the Joffrey and Cal Performances, for which the company will come for four engagements on the Berkeley campus over eight years, showcasing both repertory works and, for its first time in Berkeley, full-length narrative ballets. The partnership builds on a long-standing relationship between Cal Performances and the Joffrey, which visited Berkeley each summer in the 1970s in a project that culminated in the Berkeley Ballets, a series of dances still in the company's repertoire. During the 2021–22 season, the Joffrey concluded its most recent three-visit, six-year residency, which focused on the development of new works at UC Berkeley.

Of the renewed partnership, Ashley Wheater, the Mary B. Galvin Artistic Director of The Joffrey Ballet, shared, "I applaud Cal Performances for making such a commitment to the Joffrey. We're incredibly grateful for it. In this [first year] coming to Berkeley, we have the opportunity to show the audiences Joffrey's commitment to beautiful storytelling. We've always taken a very eclectic and more abstract repertoire to Berkeley, but with *Anna Karenina*, audiences will be introduced to a breathtaking production of massive scale, adapted from one of history's greatest works of literature."

The Joffrey Ballet was founded in 1956 and has since earned an international reputation for innovation, eclecticism, and excellence. In recent years, The Joffrey Ballet has continued to embody its mission of promoting dance through excellence, education, and innovation, building upon a legacy of groundbreaking achievements since its founding. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Ashley Wheater, since 2007, The Joffrey Ballet has maintained its status as America's Company of Firsts, pioneering new forms of expression and captivating audiences globally. Wheater is known to Bay Area dance audiences from when he was a member of the San Francisco Ballet from 1989 until 1997, when he retired from dancing and was then appointed the San Francisco Ballet's Ballet Master and, later, Assistant to the Artistic Director. Today under his leadership, The Joffrey Ballet stages annual home performances in Chicago while embarking on national and international tours, further solidifying its position as one of the world's premier dance companies.

On opening night, Friday, March 15, Cal Performances will offer live audio descriptions and a haptic tour for blind and visually impaired audience members. Headsets and a space on the tour may be reserved by contacting the Cal Performances Ticket Office at (510) 642-9988 or tickets@calperformances.org. Also that evening, all UC Berkeley students in attendance are invited to attend a reception on the Zellerbach Hall Mezzanine immediately following the performance. Information about the student reception as well as student tickets and discounts is available at calperformances.org/ucb-students.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

[Friday, March 15, 8pm](#)
[Saturday, March 16, 8pm](#)
[Sunday, March 17, 3pm](#)
campus

Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley

Dance

The Joffrey Ballet
Berkeley Symphony
Scott Speck, conductor
Yuri Possokhov/*Anna Karenina* (Bay Area Premiere)

Program:

The Joffrey Ballet returns to Berkeley with *Anna Karenina*, a full-length story ballet choreographed by Yuri Possokhov and featuring an original score by award-winning composer Ilya Demutsky, performed live by the Berkeley Symphony. Based on the famous Tolstoy novel, love is all-consuming for the beautiful but married Anna, who finds herself caught in a life-changing affair with the dashing Count Vronsky. Set in the late 19th century of Imperial Russia, Tolstoy's classic shows the triumph of romance, family, and faith against a backdrop of fraught political and social transformation. When it premiered at the Joffrey in 2019, the production won the "Oscars of Dance," the Benois de la Danse International Prize for Best Choreography.

Live Audio Description and Haptic Tour:

Live audio descriptions and a haptic tour for blind and visually impaired audience members are available for the Friday, March 15, performance of *Anna Karenina*. Headsets and a space on the tour may be reserved by contacting the Cal Performances Ticket Office at (510) 642-9988 or tickets@calperformances.org. Additional information about services available for patrons with disabilities can be found at calperformances.org/accessibility.

Tickets: \$44–\$162 (prices subject to change).

For UC Berkeley Students:

UC Berkeley students can access exclusive discounts, including half-price tickets in all sections of the theater, and are also eligible to purchase a limited number of \$10 tickets for the best seats in the house for *Anna Karenina*, beginning at 12pm on Friday, March 1, through the [Golden Bear Circle](#) seating program.

All UC Berkeley students in attendance at the March 15 performance are invited to attend a reception on the Zellerbach Hall Mezzanine immediately following the performance. Learn more at calperformances.org/ucb-students.

Tickets are available at calperformances.org, by phone at (510) 642-9988, or in person at the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, Tuesday–Friday, 12–5:30pm, and Saturday–Sunday, 1–5pm. More information about student tickets and discounts is available at calperformances.org/ucb-students. For information about other discounts, visit calperformances.org/discounts.

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