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Baryshnikov Hatches Grand Plan for a New Arts Center

By JENNIFER DUNNING

Putting New York at the center of his artistic universe once more, Mikhail Baryshnikov, the international ballet star and former artistic director of American Ballet Theater, says he will open an arts center in Manhattan in 2004. He has disbanded his touring modern dance troupe, the White Oak Dance Project.

Mr. Baryshnikov said that the Baryshnikov Center for Dance, which is to have its headquarters on West 37th Street, plans to offer space to performing arts groups at subsidized rates. But he emphasized that its major program will be a laboratory in which artists will work with mentors from the worlds of dance, theater, film and lighting and costume design. Participants will be chosen by members of the center's 18-person artistic advisory panel, which includes

the Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar, the modern dance pioneer Merce Cunningham, the choreographer William Forsythe, the Georgian puppeteer Rezo Gabriadze, the violinist Gidon Kremer, the director Peter Sellars, the writer Susan Sontag and the lighting designer Jennifer Tipton.

Mr. Baryshnikov, who is 55, said in a recent interview that he had fallen behind in his work on the new building and could not devote enough time to White Oak.

"The fund-raising pressures were enormous," he said. "I couldn't do both, so I cut it short." He will continue to dance, appearing in the spring and summer in a national tour of a solo program that will be performed only once in each tour city, to raise money for his new project.

The center, which will occupy three floors in a new performing arts complex under construction at 450 West 37th Street, will

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Mikhail Baryshnikov is returning to New York to create a laboratory in which the fields of dance, theater, film and design will mingle.

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