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For Immediate Release



Diana Vishneva in "LE DIVERTISSEMENT DU ROI" Choreography by Maxim Petrov, Photos by Yulia Plakhotnikova

RULE BREAKER

**THREE AMERICAN PREMIERES AND TWO U.S. CHOREOGRAPHIC DEBUTS
PERFORMED BY PRINCIPALS FROM AMERICAN BALLET THEATER,
MARIINSKY BALLET, NEW YORK CITY BALLET AND STUTTGART BALLET
HIGHLIGHT ARDANI 25 DANCE GALA, AUGUST 19 and 20 AT 8PM
AT NEW YORK CITY CENTER**



"Clay" Choreography by Vladimir Varnava, photo by N.Razina

Instead of the usual gala fare—bits of firecracker variations and pieces of ballet classics—Sergei Danilian's "Ardani 25 Dance Gala" at New York City Center, August 19 and 20, is classic Danilian. The intrepid impresario, who has never side-stepped risk, will celebrate Ardani Artists's quarter century of producing in the United States and abroad with a trio of U.S. premieres, two by young, unknown, but up-and-coming Russian choreographers, and one by American Ballet Theatre principal Marcelo Gomes.

Challenging their performers stylistic and theatrical versatility, the three dramatically different ballets feature 16 principal dancers from the American Ballet Theatre, Mariinsky Ballet, New York City Ballet, and Stuttgart Ballet.

MORE



“TRISTESS” Choreography by Marcelo Gomes, photo by Stav Levshin

Two of the program’s premieres, “Clay” by 27-year-old Valdimir Vanava and “Le Divertissement du Roi” by 24-year-old Maxim Petrov, were first spotted by Danilian at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg last March. The dances had been originally created at the Mariinsky’s Creative Workshop for Young Choreographers, a newly established program by the theater to encourage the development of young Russian ballet dance artists. Marcelo Gomes’s “Tristesse” had been part of Danilian’s Ardani 25 Gala at the London Coliseum last year, where it won the hearts of audiences and critics for its poetic presentation of the evolving relationship between four men.

Vladimir Varnava’s contemporary ballet “Clay,” an energetic, emotional response to its jazz inflected score by Darius Milhaud, has a cast of six dancers performing a mix of solos, duets and ensemble pieces. Inspired by the surrealist French poet Paul Eluard’s “Barely Disfigured,” Marcelo Gomes’s “Tristesse,” which alternates between the joyous camaraderie, sadness, and loneliness of a friendship between four young guys, is set to a selection of sections of Chopin Etudes, primarily Opus 10. The program also features Maxim Petrov’s nod to 17th Century court dancing in “Le Divertissement du Roi.” With its dancers dressed in sumptuous velvet, satin and lace costumes reflecting the over-the-top royal fashion of the period, the ballet is set to Rameau, and stars Diana Vishneva as Louis XIV, marking the prima ballerina’s first performance in a male role.

In addition to Vishneva, the evening is comprised of performances by Mariinsky dancers Denis Matvienko, Soslan Kulaev, Vasily Tkachenko, Denis Zainetdinov, Yevgeny Konovalov, Andrei Arsenev, Victoria Brileva, Zlata Yalinich, Yulia Kobzar, Maxim Zyuzin, Alexey Nedviga, Yury Smekalov; American Ballet Theatre’s Marcelo Gomes; New York City Ballet’s Joaquin de Luz, and Friedemann Vogel from the Stuttgart Ballet.

A short documentary by award-winning filmmaker Charles Evans Jr. introduces the evenings with backstage and front-of-house glimpses of Ardani productions seen on stages throughout the world over the past five years.

“Impresario: Dancer in New Dimensions,” a 500–page coffee table book of 750 black and white and color photographs chronicling performances produced by Ardani Artists over the years and



“LE DIVERTISSEMENT DU ROI” Choreography by Maxim Petrov, photo by V.Baranovsky

backstage portraits of the participating artists, will be released in conjunction with the New York City Center performances. The international line-up of contributing photographers includes Patrick Demarchelier, Alice Blangero, Lucas Chilczuk, Fabrizio Ferri, Michael Khoury, Jason Kim, Alessio Migliardi and Nina Alovert. “Impresario” will be available at major bookstores in New York City, and online www.ardani.com/onlinestore.php

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets range between \$55 - \$175 and can be purchased by calling 212-581-1212; at the City Center box office located at 131 West 55th Street or online at nycitycenter.org

BACKGROUND

ARDANI ARTISTS was founded in 1990 by Sergei and Gaiane Danilian to produce, present and tour major international performing arts companies and artists in the United States and abroad. Its innovative, award-winning work includes creating new productions of dance that showcase emerging and established choreographers commissioned to create ballets for an international roster of dancers from the world’s greatest companies (American Ballet Theatre, Mariinsky, Royal Ballet, New York City Ballet, among others). Created in collaboration with the Segerstrom Center for the Arts, the productions, which toured both domestically in the U.S. and internationally include “Kings of the Dance,” “Tour de Force I and II,” “Reflections,” and “Diana Vishneva: Beauty in Motion,” which won three Golden Mask Awards, Russia’s most prestigious national theater award. (The awards were for Best Ballet Event of the season, Best Ballerina Award and the Critics’ Choice Award, marking the first time in 15 years that it had been given to a dance production.) In 2011 Ardani Artists, in collaboration with the Diana Vishneva Foundation, produced “Diana Vishneva: Dialogues” for which it received another two Golden Mask Awards (Best Ballet Production and Best Female Dancer). Its production of “Solo for Two” received five nominations for 2016 Golden Mask Awards. Last July, Ardani produced Ardani 25 Dance Gala at the London Coliseum, which brought its sold-out audience to its feet and British reviewers to cheers.

Working with the Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Ardani created the 2006 Mariinsky Festival which featured performances by the Mariinsky Opera, Ballet and Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev, which took place at Segerstrom in Costa Mesa, CA over the course of three weeks in 2013. The company brought the Mariinsky Ballet and Orchestra for a return tour of major California venues last year.

In addition to introducing American audiences to the Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg in 1998, and presenting the 50-member company's annual return engagements to theaters across the U.S., Ardani presented the American debuts of the Mikhailovsky Ballet, Polina Semionova & Friends, and most recently created a national tour for Les Ballets de Monte Carlo.

In July 2016, Sergei Danilian was selected as one of 150 of Russia's most influential men by GQ Russia magazine.

MARCELO GOMES

Marcelo Gomes, a native of Brazil, began his dance studies at the age of five at the Helena Lobato and Dalal Aschar ballet schools in Rio de Janeiro. Upon winning the Revelation Prize at the Festival of Dance in Joinville in 1993, he traveled to the United States to continue his training at The Harid Conservatory in Boca Raton, Florida, as well as at the schools of the Boston Ballet, Houston Ballet, and Cuba Ballet, where he studied under Alicia Alonso. Mr. Gomes was awarded second place at the National Society of Arts and Letters in 1994, and was the recipient of the Hope Prize at Lausanne in 1996, after which he spent a year at the school of the Paris Opera Ballet.

Mr. Gomes joined American Ballet Theatre in 1997, where he rose quickly through the ranks, becoming a soloist in 2000 and principal dancer in 2002. He has performed in virtually every full-length classical ballet in the company's repertoire, including Romeo in Romeo and Juliet, Albrecht in Giselle, Prince Siegfried, Benno, and von Rothbart in Swan Lake, Solor in La Bayadere, Prince Desire in Sleeping Beauty, Franz in Coppelia, Espada and Basilio in Don Quixote, Prince Charming in Cinderella, Onegin and Prince Gremin in Onegin, Conrad, Ali the Slave, and Lankendem in Le Corsaire, the Cavalier in The Nutcracker, the Moor in Othello, Jeanne de Brienne and Abderakman in Raymonda, Lescaut and Des Grieux in Manon, and Pyotr in The Bright Stream. Mr. Gomes has performed leading roles in the works of George Balanchine, Mikhail Fokine, Anthony Tudor, Sir Kenneth MacMillan, Jerome Robbins, Sir Frederick Ashton, John Cranko, and Martha Graham, and has worked with, as well as created roles for, Twyla Tharp, William Forsythe, Paul Taylor, Mark Morris, Jiri Kylian, Lar Lubovitch, James Kudelka, Nacho Duato, Jorma Elo, Benjamin Millepied, Christopher Wheeldon and Alexei Ratmansky.

In addition to his touring with American Ballet Theatre, he has appeared at many international dance festivals, and has been a guest artist with the Kirov Ballet, Bolshoi Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, Houston Ballet, Teatro Colon, Teatro Municipal Do Rio de Janeiro, Universal Ballet, and New York City Ballet. He accompanied Alessandra Ferri on her farewell tour in Japan and Italy in 2008, and was the recipient of the prestigious Prix Benois de la Dance award in Moscow the same year.

Mr. Gomes has recently begun a successful choreographic career, and has created pieces for dancers from American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet, La Scala and Kings of the Dance. His ballet *Apothéose*, created for Julie Kent and Roberto Bolle, had its premiere on the opening night of American Ballet Theatre's Metropolitan Opera House engagement in May 2013. His most recent work, *Aftereffect*, will be performed by ABT at the Kennedy Center Opera House in Washington, D.C. this past spring.

MAXIM PETROV

Maxim Petrov, who was born in St. Petersburg, graduated from the Vaganova Russian Ballet Academy in 2012. He was immediately invited to join the Mariinsky Ballet, where he has danced works created by George Balanchine, Alexey Ratmansky, Hans Van Manen, Angelin Preljocaj, Sasha Waltz, Mikhail Fokine and others. In 2014 he made his choreographic debut with "Cinema" as part of A Creative Workshop for Young Choreographers at Mariinsky Theater. That year he also participated in a new project, *Dance-Platform* in Yekaterinbur (Russia), where he choreographed *Quartet*, set to music Gabriel Fauré. In 2015 he choreographed *Ballet N2*, set to music by Alexander Tsfasman and "Le Divertissement du Roi" set to music by Jean-Philippe Rameau, both of which which were presented at the Mariinsky Theatre, as well as dances in operas *War and Peace* (staged by Graham Vick, 2014) and *Golden Cockerel* (staged by Anna Matison, 2014).

VALDIMIR VANAVAL

Vladimir Varnava was trained at the Khanty-Mansiysk branch of the Moscow State University of Culture and the Arts. In 2008 he was invited to join the Music Theatre of the Republic of Karelia, where he performed lead roles in classical and contemporary ballets. Since 2011 he has worked as a choreographer creating work that includes *Pulcinella* at the Music Theatre of the Republic of Karelia. Vladimir Varnava has lived and worked in St Petersburg since 2012. He has staged a series of choreographic miniatures for soloists at various St Petersburg theaters, including *Beginning* for Mariinsky principal Igor Kolb. In 2013, he created *Plus, Minus* for Bolshoi prima ballerina Svetlana Zakharova. Varnava was awarded the prestigious Golden Mask Award for Dancing in 2010 and the Harlequin Award for Choreography in 2011.

CHARLES EVANS JR.

At age nine, Charles Evans Jr.'s first film work was clearing 16mm trim bins for his mother, documentarian Frances Evans, while she edited.

Evans earned his undergraduate degree at UC-Berkley with a major in "Short Story Writing." His thesis, a collection of short stories, won the University's Eisner Prize For Literature.

Evans went on to complete the production program at University of Southern California's film school. He wrote, produced and directed his thesis, "Second Son". Shot in 35mm, the film went on to win twelve awards including the Grand Prix at Clermont-Ferrand's competition.

Evans worked for two years at Touchstone Pictures as Director of Development for Randal Kleiser Productions, before founding Acappella Pictures in March, 1993.

Evans produced Johnny Depp's directorial debut, THE BRAVE, based on the novel by Gregory Mcdonald. Johnny and Marlon Brando starred. The production was an official selection for competition in the 1997 Cannes film festival.

Evans' enduring commitment to produce a film on the life of Howard Hughes resulted in THE AVIATOR (2004, BAFTA, Golden Globes).

Evans' directorial debut, ADDICTION INCORPORATED, a feature length documentary about the tobacco industry told through 30 years in the life of one scientist, won the National Institute on Drug Abuse's (NIDA's) media award in 2014, and is being translated and distributed to countries around the world by the World Health Organization through their "Tobacco Free Initiative."

Evans' photographs have been published internationally in Vanity Fair, Variety, In Style, Art in America, L'Espresso, Razor and Photo World, and have been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Gescheidle Gallery in Chicago and the McGrath Gallery in Los Angeles.

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED SCHEDULE FOR PROGRAM DETAILS AND CASTING.

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Ellen Jacobs Associates

ARDANI 25 DANCE GALA

August 19 at 8:00pm August 20 at 8:00pm

New York City Center

CLAY

First performance: March 21, 2015, Mariinsky Theater as a part of the Project «A Creative Workshop of Young Choreographers»

Music by Darius Milhaud

Choreography by Vladimir Varnava

Lighting Designer Igor Vints

Costumes by Irina Varnava

Performed by

Victoria Brileva, Zlata Yalinich, Yulia Kobzar, Maxim Zyuzin, Alexey Nedviga, Yury Smekalov

TRISTESSE

First performance: December 5, 2014, Mikhailovsky Theater as a part of the Project «Kings of the Dance»

Choreography by Marcelo Gomes

Inspired by French poet Paul Éluard

Music by Frederic Chopin (Etudes)

Lighting Design by Antonio Marques

Performed by

Marcelo Gomes, Joaquin de Luz, Friedemann Vogel, Denis Matvienko

Dimitri Dover (piano)

LE DIVERTISSEMENT DU ROI

First performance: March 21, 2015, Mariinsky Theater as a part of the Project «A Creative Workshop of Young Choreographers»

Ballet in one act

Choreography by Maxim Petrov

Music by Jean-Philippe Rameau

Bogdan Koloryok's scene plan

Costume Designer: Tatiana Noginova

Lighting Designer: Konstantin Binkin

French translation by Julia Montel

The designs make use of sketches by Jean Berain for productions at the Royal Academy of Music in Paris (1679-1697) and by Lodovico Burnacini for Antonio Cesti's opera Il pomo d'oro (Vienna, 1667)

Performed by

The King; Diana Vishneva

Master of Ceremonies; Soslan Kulaev

Ensemble: Vasily Tkachenko, Denis Zainetdinov, Yevgeny Konovalov, Andrei Smekalov