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For immediate release:

## **St. Petersburg Ballet Theatre Brings Ballet Classics to the Mondavi Center**

*January 16, 2008; Davis, California*—Founded more than 40 years ago in the birthplace of classical Russian ballet, the **St. Petersburg Ballet Theatre** is known for its matchless precision, elegance, and technical excellence. One of the most distinguished companies in Russia, the St. Petersburg Ballet Theatre will perform two full evenings of stunningly beautiful classical ballet at the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts** at UC Davis.

The performances will begin at 8 pm on February 15 and 16 in the Mondavi Center's Jackson Hall on the UC Davis campus. The February 15 performance features a program entitled *Russian Seasons*, a tribute to the **Ballet Russes** of **Serge Diaghilev** that includes choreography by **Mikhail Fokine** and **Yuri Petukhov** and music by **Chopin**, **Rimsky-Korsakov**, and **Ravel**. The February 16 event, *Romeo & Juliet*, features Petukhov's choreography and **Prokofiev**'s popular score. (Both events feature recorded music.) Tickets are available from the Mondavi Center Ticket Office at 530.754.ARTS (2787) or online at [MondaviArts.org](http://MondaviArts.org).

St. Petersburg Ballet Theatre, founded in 1966, performs under the leadership of choreographer, honored dancer, and Artistic Director Yuri Petukhov, who took the helm in 2001. Critical response to the company's touring productions has been strong. "The sheer power and beauty of the dancers was breathtaking," wrote the *Kansas City Star* of *Russian Seasons*, while *Romeo & Juliet* was "genuinely moving and a beautifully executed example of the wonders that can be achieved through an inspired approach to choreography," wrote the *Portland Press-Herald*.

The St. Petersburg Ballet Theatre holds a special position in Russian ballet. Hailing from the city recognized as the birthplace of classical Russian ballet, the SPBT is one of only three troupes, along with the **Kirov Ballet** and **Bolshoi Ballet Theatre**, to have been given the status of State and Academic Ballet by the Russian government. The company's repertoire consists of both classical and modern works, including more than 60 dance items and 20 one-act ballets.

The St. Petersburg Ballet Theatre company regularly gives performances to packed audiences not only in its home town and on the stages of the prestigious Mariinsky and the Hermitage theaters, but in Moscow and other major cities throughout Russia and in more than 50 countries around the world. Nearly all of the company's teachers, coaches, and dancers have studied and graduated from the revered **Vaganova Ballet Academy**, which signifies the highest level of training.

The SPBT was founded as the Theatre of Ballet in Russia in 1966 by **Peter Gusev**, a former director of the Kirov Ballet and a graduate of the **Petrograd Choreographic Academy**. Beginning in 1969, the company came under the leadership of Artistic Director **Leonid Jacobson**, whose mastery of different epochs and theater styles demanded that the company evolve into an extraordinarily versatile and accomplished ensemble. His best-known ballets include *Schurale*, *Spartacus*, and *The Bug*, and he specialized in a form that came to be called “choreographic miniatures,” often danced to the music of classical composers such as **Grieg** (*The Hunter and the Bird*), **Tchaikovsky** (*Reflection*), **Strauss** (*Wien Valtz*), **Stravinsky** (*Troika*), and **Berg** (*Rodin*).

In 1976, according to Jacobson’s will, his close friend and favorite dancer **Askold Makarov** succeeded him as artistic director. During the 22 years of Makarov’s leadership, several ballet masters known throughout the world worked with the company, and the list of choreographers to work with SPBT included many of the best in contemporary ballet.

“[The St. Petersburg Ballet Theatre] occupies the first and the best place among those who represent the contemporary ballet in Russia,” **Yuri Grigorovich**, artistic director of the Bolshoi Ballet, said of the company. “All the dancers are not just highly technically trained, but also have the great academic knowledge characteristic of true artists—most important—all of them can speak the language of choreography.”

After Makarov’s death in 2000, the post of artistic director passed on to Yuri Petukhov. Born in 1953, Petukhov is an acclaimed dancer who since 1979 has danced with the **Maly Opera and Ballet Theatre**. He has created roles in works by acclaimed choreographers including **N. N. Boyarchikov**, **M. M. Gasiev**, **L. S. Lebedev**, and others, and has danced leading roles in major works including Albert (*Giselle*), Siegfried (*Swan Lake*), Basil, Desire, and Prince (*The Nutcracker*), Romeo, Mercutio, and Benvolio (*Romeo & Juliet*), and Orpheus (*Orpheus and Eurydice*). As a choreographer, he has created and staged ballets including *Don Quixote*, *White Knight*, *Carmen*, *Cinderella*, *The Nutcracker*, and many others.

“We look forward to the St. Petersburg Ballet Theatre, which brings us, for the first time, an example of the great Russian ballet tradition,” said **Don Roth**, the Mondavi Center’s executive director.

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**What:** **St. Petersburg Ballet Theatre**  
**When:** ***Russian Seasons***  
Friday, February 15 • 8 pm  
***Romeo & Juliet***  
Saturday, February 16 • 8 pm  
**Where:** Jackson Hall  
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts  
University of California, Davis  
**Admission:** \$49/\$44/\$39 Adults • \$24.50/\$22/\$19.50 Students & Children  
**Tickets/Info:** 530.754.ARTS (2787)  
866.754.ARTS (toll-free)  
<http://www.MondaviArts.org>  
530.754.5402 [TDD]

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