

THE
NATIONAL
Ballet
OF CANADA

Karen Kain
Artistic Director

Ballet Notes



The Seagull

November 14-23,
2008

Sonia Rodríguez and Zdenek Konvalina
Photography: Sian Richards

THE
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2008/09 Souvenir Book

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Sian Richards

Heather Ogden
Photography: Sian Richards

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THE
NATIONAL
Ballet
OF CANADA

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Jeff Morris**
Stage Managers

Janelle Rainville
Stage Manager,
YOU dance

*Guest Artist-in-Residence
*On maternity leave

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Violins

- Fujiko Imaishi,
Concertmaster
- Jennie Baccante
Acting Concertmaster
- Lynn Kuo,
Assistant Concertmaster
- Dominique Laplante,
Principal Second Violin
- James Aylesworth
- Sheldon Grabke
- Xiao Grabke
- Nancy Kershaw
- Sonia Klimasko-Leheniuk
- Csaba Koczó
- Yakov Lerner
- Jayne Maddison
- Ron Mah
- Wendy Rogers
- Filip Tomov
- Joanna Zabrowarna
- Paul Zevenhuizen

Violas

Angela Rudden, *Principal*
Theresa Rudolph Koczó,
Assistant Principal
Valerie Kuinka
Johann Lotter
Beverley Spotton
Larry Toman

Cellos

Maurizio Baccante,
Principal
Olga Laktionova
Andrew McIntosh
Marianne Pack
Elaine Thompson
• Paul Widner

Basses

Hans J.F. Preuss, *Principal*
Paul Langley
Robert Speer
Cary Takagaki

Flutes

Leslie J. Allt, *Principal*
Maria Pelletier
Shelley Brown, *Piccolo*

Oboes

Mark Rogers, *Principal*
• Karen Rotenberg
Lesley Young,
English Horn

Clarinets

• Max Christie, *Principal*
• Emily Marlow
Gary Kidd, *Bass Clarinet*

Bassoons

Stephen Mosher, *Principal*
Jerry Robinson
Elizabeth Gowen,
Contra Bassoon

Horns

Gary Pattison, *Principal*
Vincent Barbee
Derek Conrod
Scott Wevers

Trumpets

Richard Sandals, *Principal*
Mark Dharmaratnam
Raymond Tizzard

Trombones

David Archer, *Principal*
Robert Ferguson
David Pell,
Bass Trombone

Harp

Lucie Parent, *Principal*

Timpany

Michael Perry, *Principal*

Percussion

Robert Comber, *Principal*
Mark Mazur

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Bethany Bergman, *Violin*
Foorije Gerritsen, *Violin*
Hiroko Kagawa, *Violin*
Mia King, *Violin*
Renée London, *Violin*
Aya Miyagawa, *Violin*
Sonia Vizante, *Violin*
Rebekah Wolkstein,
Violin
Nicholaos Papadakis,
Viola
Carolyn Blackwell, *Viola*
Mary Stein, *Cello*
Jill Vitols, *Cello*
Jasper Hitchcock, *Oboe*
Colleen Cook,
Acting Principal Clarinet

Michele Verheul, *Clarinet*
Rob Carli,

Tenor Saxophone
Christine Passmore,
Horn
Sasha Johnson, *Tuba*
Mark Harjes,

Piano/Celeste
Timothy Borton,
Percussion

Mark Duggan,
Percussion
Richard Moore,
Percussion
Samuel Morgenstein,
Percussion

• On Leave of Absence



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The 2008/09 season is presented by:  **THE GLOBE AND MAIL** 

Friday November 14, 2008 at 7:30 pm
Saturday November 15, 2008 at 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm
Sunday November 16, 2008 at 1:00 pm
Tuesday November 18, 2008 at 1:00 pm
Wednesday November 19, 2008 at 7:30 pm

Thursday November 20, 2008 at 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm
Friday November 21, 2008 at 7:30 pm
Saturday November 22, 2008 at 7:30 pm
Sunday November 23, 2008 at 2:00 pm

BMO  **Financial Group** presents *The Seagull*.

The Seagull

A ballet by John Neumeier after Anton Chekov

Company Premiere

Choreography: **John Neumeier**

After the play by Anton Chekhov

Music: **Dmitri Shostakovich***, **Evelyn Glennie****, **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**, **Alexander Scriabin**

Set, Costume and Lighting Design: **John Neumeier**

Lighting Director: **Ralf Merkel**

Staged by: **John Neumeier**, **Sonja Tinnes** and **Radik Zaripov**

Conductors: **David Briskin**, Music Director and Principal Conductor

(Nov 14, 15, 19, 20 eve, 22, 23)

Judith Yan, Assistant Conductor (Nov 16, 18, 20 mat, 21)

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Premiere: The Hamburg Ballet, June 16, 2002 – Hamburg, Germany

The Seagull is generously supported in part by an anonymous friend of the ballet.

“Chekhov, like Shakespeare, is an author who creates characters so complete, so true, that they live in the imagination outside and independent of the text. It is the emotional life behind Chekhov’s words that I transform into dance. For me, the central theme and conflict of *The Seagull* is the relationship between love and art – art and love.”

– John Neumeier

Irina Nikolayevna Arkadina, Prima Ballerina

Greta Hodgkinson (Nov 14, 15 eve, 19, 20 eve, 22)

Xiao Nan Yu (Nov 15 mat, 20 mat, 21, 23)

Heather Ogden (Nov 16, 18)

Konstantin (Kostya) Gavrilovich Triplev, her son

Zdenek Konvalina (Nov 14, 15 eve, 19, 20 eve, 22)

Ivan Urban* (Nov 15 mat, 20 mat, 21, 23)

Keiichi Hirano (Nov 16, 18)

Piotr Nikolayevich Sorin, her brother

Richard Landry

Boris Alexeyivich Trigorin, Choreographer

Aleksandar Antonijevic (Nov 14, 15 eve, 19, 20 eve, 22)

Piotr Stanczyk (Nov 15 mat, 16, 18, 20 mat, 21, 23)

Nina Mikhailovna Zarechnaya, young girl

Sonia Rodriguez (Nov 14, 15 eve, 19, 20 eve, 22)

Elena Lobsanova (Nov 15 mat, 20 mat, 21, 23)

Jillian Vanstone (Nov 16, 18)

Yevgeny Sergeyvich Dorn, Doctor

Piotr Stanczyk (Nov 14, 15 eve, 19, 20 eve, 22)

Jonathan Renna (Nov 15 mat, 16, 18, 20 mat, 21, 23)

Semyon Semyonovich Medvedenko, schoolteacher

Noah Long (Nov 14, 15 eve, 19, 20 eve, 22)

Etienne Lavigne (Nov 15 mat, 16, 18, 20 mat, 21, 23)

Ilya Afanasevich Shamrayev, Manager of Sorin's Estate

Kevin D. Bowles

Polina Andreyevna, his wife

Stephanie Hutchison (Nov 14, 15 eve, 16, 18, 19, 20 eve, 22)

Lisa Robinson (Nov 15 mat, 20 mat, 21, 23)

Masha, their daughter

Xiao Nan Yu (Nov 14, 15 eve, 19, 20 eve, 22)

Chan Hon Goh (Nov 15 mat, 16, 18, 20 mat, 21, 23)

Yakov and Dima, labourers

James Shee and Aarik Wells

Arkadina's admirers

Klara Houdet or Antonella Martinelli, Brett van Sickle or Ian Parsons,

James Leja or Joseph Welbes

Kostya's Dream Dancers

Elena Lobsanova or Klara Houdet, Tina Pereira or Jenna Savella, Juri Hiraoka or Chelsy Meiss, Keiichi Hirano or Wei Chen, Naoya Ebe, Jonathan Renna or Christopher Stalzer, Martin Lindinger or Robert Stephen

Les Etoiles de la Revue

Krista Dowson and Nan Wang (Nov 14, 15 eve, 19, 20 eve, 22)

Stephanie Hutchison and Brett van Sickle (Nov 15 mat, 20 mat, 21, 23)

Catherine Maitland and Aarik Wells (Nov 16, 18)

Revue Dancers

Jordana Daumec, Andreea Olteanu, Elizabeth Marrable, Selene Guerrero-Trujillo, Alejandra Perez-Gomez, Jenna Savella or Alexandra Golden, Lise-Marie Jourdain, Marissa Parzei, Antonella Martinelli, Klara Houdet or Tina Pereira

Christopher Stalzer or Ian Parsons, Mark Dennis, Robert Stephen or Martin Lindinger, Joseph Welbes, Avinoam Silverman, James Shee, Aarik Wells or Nan Wang, James Leja, Brett van Sickle or Noah Long, Thomas Snee

Corps de Ballet of the Imperial Theatre

Nadine Drouin, Alexandra Golden or Krista Dowson, Sarah Wolff, Alexandra MacDonald, Tamara Jones, Elizabeth Marrable, Chelsy Meiss or Juri Hiraoka, Catherine Maitland or Krista Dowson

Wei Chen or Martin Lindinger, Avinoam Silverman, James Leja, Brett van Sickle or Noah Long, Brendan Saye, James Shee, Joseph Welbes, Aarik Wells or Nan Wang

* Guest Artist

What does it mean to be in love?

What does it mean to be an artist?

What does it mean to be an artist, who is in love?

What does it mean to be someone who loves to be an artist?

J.N.



The Seagull

A ballet by John Neumeier
after Anton Chekov

Cast of Characters

sister and brother



Trigorin
Successful Choreographer

passionately
involved



Arkadina
Prima Ballerina



Sorin
Estate Owner

infatuated with Trigorin



Nina
Aspiring Dancer

in love
with each
with other



her son

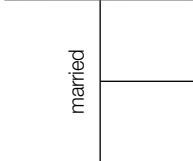


Kostya
Revolutionary Choreographer



Shamrayev
Manager of Sorin's Estate

married



Polina
in love
with Dorn

their daughter



Masha

in love with
Kostya but
marries
Medvedenko



Medvedenko
Schoolteacher

in love with Masha



Dorn
Doctor

Synopsis

Act I

The countryside by a lake

Kostya has built a stage in the garden of his uncle Piotr Sorin's estate. Nina, a girl from the neighbouring farm, arrives to dance the title role in his creation "Soul of the Seagull".

Kostya loves Nina. Nina loves Kostya.

Dmitri Shostakovich

*Piano Concerto No. 2 F-Major, op. 102,
1957, 2nd Movement*

Kostya's mother, the famous prima ballerina Irina Arkadina arrives with her lover, the choreographer Boris Trigorin. Among the other guests for Kostya's performances are: Ilya Shamrayev, manager of Sorin's estate, his wife Polina, their daughter Masha, the physician Dr. Dorn, and the village schoolteacher, Semyon Medvedenko.

Medvedenko loves Masha. Masha loves Kostya. Kostya loves Nina. Nina falls in love with Trigorin. Trigorin loves Arkadina but is fascinated by Nina. Arkadina loves Trigorin.

Polina loves Dr. Dorn.

Dmitri Shostakovich

*Symphony No. 15 A-Major, op. 141, 1971,
1st Movement*

Kostya, Nina

Sorin, Mascha, Medvedenko, Shamrayev,
Dorn, Polina, Arkadina, Trigorin, Labourers,
Arkadina's Admirers

Kostya's dance piece "Soul of the Seagull"

Evelyn Glennie

Excerpts from *Shadow behind the Iron
Sun, 2000*

Nina, Kostya and the Dream Dancers

Music from across the lake –

Arkadina recalls one of her famous roles

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

*December from The Seasons, op. 37a,
1875/76, No. 12*

Arkadina speaks with her son Kostya

Trigorin teaches Nina

Dmitri Shostakovich

*Symphony No. 15 A-Major, op. 141, 1971,
2nd Movement*

Card games and amusement

Arkadina, Trigorin, Mascha, Medvedenko,
Polina, Dorn, Shamrayev, Sorin, Yakow,
Dima

3rd Movement

Jealousy and decisions

Nina, Kostya, Trigorin, Arkadina

Kostya's Dream Dances

4th Movement

Intermission

Act II

Moscow: Revue Theatre –

Nina is one in a chorus line

Les Etoiles de la Revue

Revue Dancers

Dmitri Shostakovich

*Moscow Cheryomushki, Operetta Suite,
op. 105, 1958, edited by Andrew Cornall,
No. 1 A Ride through Moscow*

Nina meets a changed Trigorin

The Revue goes on

Dmitri Shostakovich

Moscow Cheryomushki, Operetta Suite,
op. 105, 1958, edited by Andrew Cornall,
No. 2 Waltz

In the country: Kostya's Dream Dances

Dmitri Shostakovich

Piano Trio No. 2 e-minor, op. 67, 1944,
3rd Movement Largo

Nina's polka

Dmitri Shostakovich

Polka, No. 4 from Ballet Suite No. 1, 1949

Imperial Theatre: Trigorin's ballet

"Death of the Seagull"

Dmitri Shostakovich

Moscow Cheryomushki, Operetta Suite,
op. 105, 1958, edited by Andrew Cornall,
No. 4 Ballet

Arkadina, as M \ddot{o} wenprinzessin

Trigorin, as J \ddot{a} ger

Corps de Ballet of the Imperial Theatre

Masha decides to marry Medvedenko

Alexander Scriabin

Nocturne op. 9,2, 1894

Nina's letter to Kostya

Kostya, Sorin

Dmitri Shostakovich

Chamber Symphony for Strings c-minor,
op. 110a, 1960
Arrangement: Rudolf Barschai,
1st Movement

Autumn garden: Sorin faints

2nd Movement

Arkadina's visit – A sad wedding celebration

Sorin, Kostya, Masha, Medvedenko, Polina,
Dorn, Arkadina, Trigorin

3rd Movement

Nina's appearance – Nina's farewell

Nina, Kostya

4th and 5th Movement

Kostya's Dream Dances come to an end ...

Kostya

Arkadina, Dorn, Masha, Sorin

Dmitri Shostakovich

Symphony No. 15 A-Major, op. 141, 1971,
excerpts from the 4th Movement

Helene Bouchet and Ivan Urban of
The Hamburg Ballet.

Photography: Holger Badekow



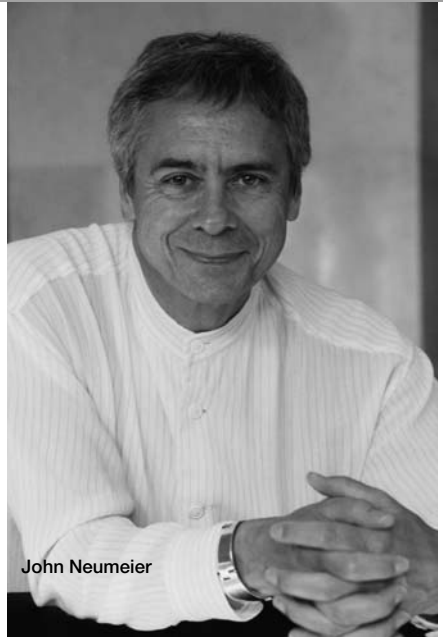
John Neumeier

Creating my "Seagull"

Literature has often inspired my choreography. After reading a book, a play or poem, I ask myself what aspects of the text touch my emotional memory, which characters ring true for me personally. In other words, where am I – or what part of me is in this text? Only then can I transform word into dance – create an original ballet having its own life, independent of its literary source.

My ballet *The Seagull* does not interpret the play. Its intention was to invent similar characters and situations parallel to those we find in Chekhov. Seeing the ballet you will not hear a single word of Chekhov. You need not be reminded of his text and surely should not miss it. In changing the actors and writers of Chekhov's play to dancers and choreographers, my ballet is not only about dance: It speaks through dance, it is dance!

My first theatre experience with Chekhov was a production of *Three Sisters* directed by Lee Strasberg in New York during the 60s. This production made an unforgettable impression on me. Inspired by Chekhov, the possibility of orchestrating varied and contrasting human emotions through movement began to fascinate me. It was long my wish to make a ballet of the *Three Sisters*. However, on the 1st of January 1996, I saw *The Seagull* at the Schaubühne Theatre in Berlin and my Chekhov fixation changed its focus. It became immediately clear to me that *The Seagull* dealt not only with the emotional relationships between a particular group of people at a specific time in history (as in *Three Sisters*), but rather with something universally true and timelessly valid. Dealing with the world of art and artists, it seemed the perfect vehicle for transformation into dance. That day, I knew that I would, I had to someday choreograph *The Seagull*! As an artist I was



John Neumeier

particularly struck by what an important role "art" played in all the love relationships. The delicate balance between love and art: Success in love – failure in art? Success in art – failure in love? I was moved by the character's constant reflection on the past, their lost chances and squandered possibilities.

In *The Seagull*, the characters' relationship to the music is extremely important because it tells us not only a lot about their particular character, but illuminates their inner emotional states. In choreography, there are several ways to play with the relationship between movement and music. Should it be clear, for example, that the dancer reacts, i.e. dances to music outside himself? A music, whose source is clearly the orchestra pit, whose musicians may, in fact, be visible as in a ballroom. Or, do we hear music because the dancer experiences a situation so intensely that we hear his emotion? Or is the dance exactly opposite to that which we hear, thereby giving us the feeling that what this character is dancing, is in direct opposition to his true feelings? In *The Seagull*, I have used a

method of contrasting action and emotion, similar to Chekhov, where people often do not say what they think or feel. Their trivial conversation may function as a form of distraction or signal a hidden intention. For example, in the scene of seduction between Trigorin and Nina, when the dancers at a musical climax stop and remain motionless, rather than expressing physically the emotion and dynamic of the music, their stillness communicates a wish to distance themselves from reality or extreme emotional tension.

The characters in Chekhov's comedy speak a lot about literature – in my ballet they dance a lot and in many styles. With Kostya's avant-garde choreography, for example, we experience an invented form of dance that reminds us of the interesting development, the explosion in modern art at the beginning of the 20th century. On the other hand, the main line of character relationships is choreographed in a style continuing the dramatic-emotional tradition of Antony Tudor, Frederic Ashton, or John Cranko. Other sections of the ballet contrast Kostya's experimental choreography with a vision of the Imperial ballet world of Arkadina, a legendary star ballerina,



reminiscent of Anna Pavlova. Nina's desire and efforts to realize a career as a dancer reveal elements of cabaret or revue dance as it might have been at the beginning of the 20th century. Contrasting these four sometimes diametrically opposed types of movement, my *Seagull* also becomes a lesson in dance history.

The translation of literature into dance can never be simply word for word. I choreograph between Chekhov's lines and my ballet visualizes scenes only described in the play. We experience, for example, what might have happened to Nina in Moscow, what one of Arkadina's Imperial ballet performances might have looked like, what Kostya's Dream Dances might have been. In a ballet, we can only understand what we see. We can only be moved by what we recognize in our own hearts as true.

Anna Pavlova and George Balanchine, two Russian-born titans of dance, inspired John Neumeier for the characters of Arkadina and Trigorin in *The Seagull*.

Photography: Madge Abercrombie and Holger Badekow, George Balanchine image courtesy of New York Public Library



Selected Biographies

**Karen Kain,
C.C., LL.D., D.Litt., O.Ont.,
Artistic Director**

Acknowledged as one of the leading classical ballerinas of her time, Karen Kain is also one of Canada's foremost arts advocates, bringing the same passion and dedication she exemplified as a dancer to her roles as a spokesperson for Canadian culture and as the Artistic Director of The National Ballet of Canada. A native of Hamilton, Ontario, Ms. Kain studied at Canada's National Ballet School, graduating in 1969 when she joined The National Ballet of Canada. After quickly rising to the rank of Principal Dancer, she came to the attention of international audiences when she won the Silver Medal at the Moscow International Ballet Competition in 1973. This led to a highly successful career on stages throughout the world. Ms. Kain retired from dance in 1997 and shortly afterwards assumed the position of Artist-in-Residence with the National Ballet. In 1999, her role was expanded to that of Artistic Associate and in June of 2005, she was

appointed Artistic Director of the company. Ms. Kain has received numerous accolades and awards throughout her career. She is a Companion of the Order of Canada, the first Canadian recipient of the Cartier Lifetime Achievement Award and was named an Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters by the government of France. In 2002, she was honoured with a Governor General's Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement and from 2004 to 2008 was Chair of the Canada Council for the Arts. In 2007, she received the Barbara Hamilton Memorial Award for demonstrating excellence and professionalism in the performing arts.

**John Neumeier
Choreographer,
Set, Costume and
Lighting Designer**

John Neumeier was born in 1942 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he received his first dance training. He continued his dance studies in Chicago as well as at Marquette University where he created

his first choreographic works. After further ballet study both in Copenhagen and at The Royal Ballet School in London, John Cranko invited him in 1963 to join Stuttgart Ballet, where he progressed to solo dancer and continued his choreographic development. In 1969, Ulrich Erfurth appointed Mr. Neumeier Director of Ballett Frankfurt, where he soon caused a sensation due to his new interpretations of such well-known ballets as *The Nutcracker* and *Romeo and Juliet*. In 1973, he joined The Hamburg Ballet as Director and Chief Choreographer and under his direction, The Hamburg Ballet became one of the leading ballet companies on the German dance scene and soon received international recognition. In 1972, he set his first work for The National Ballet of Canada, *Don Juan* with Rudolf Nureyev in the title role. Among several awards, Mr. Neumeier holds the Dance Magazine Award (1983), the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany and the French Order of Arts and Letters and

the Legion d'honneur. In 2006, he was awarded the prestigious Nijinsky Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Dmitri Shostakovich

Composer

Dmitri Shostakovich was born in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1906. After a period influenced by Prokofiev and Stravinsky, Shostakovich developed a hybrid of styles that juxtaposed a wide variety of trends within a single work, such as the neo-classical style and post-romantic style. His unique approach to tonality involved the use of modal scales and some astringent neo-classical harmonies à la Hindemith and Prokofiev. His music frequently includes sharp contrasts and elements of the grotesque. Shostakovich prided himself on his orchestration, which is clear, economical, and well-projected. This aspect of Shostakovich's technique owes much to Gustav Mahler. His most popular works are his 15 symphonies and 15 string quartets. His works for piano include two piano sonatas, an early set of preludes, and a later set of 24

preludes and fugues. Other works include two operas, six concertos and a substantial quantity of film music. Shostakovich had a complex and difficult relationship with the Soviet government, suffering two official denunciations of his music and the periodic banning of his work. At the same time, he received a number of accolades and state awards and served in the Supreme Soviet. Despite the official controversy, his works were popular and well received.

Evelyn Glennie

Composer

Dame Evelyn Glennie was born in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1965. An internationally renowned solo percussionist, she gives more than 100 performances a year worldwide, with some of the greatest conductors, orchestras, and artists. Ms. Glennie's collaborations have been with such artists as Nana Vasconcelos, Kodo, Béla Fleck, Bjork, Bobbie McFerrin, Sting, Emmanuel Ax, The Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Fred Frith. Ms. Glennie has commissioned 150 new works for solo

percussion from many of the world's most eminent composers and also composes and records music for film and television. Her first high quality drama produced a score so original she was nominated for a British Academy of Film and Television Arts award. Of her 25 recordings to date, Ms. Glennie's first CD, *Bartok's Sonata for two Pianos and Percussion* won her a Grammy in 1988. A further two Grammy nominations followed, one of which she won for a collaboration with Béla Fleck. Ms. Glennie has received over 80 international awards. In 1993, she was named Officer of the British Empire. This was extended in 2007 to Dame Commander for her contributions to music. After 20 years in the music business Ms. Glennie has begun teaching privately.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Composer

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born in Votkinsky, Russia, on May 7, 1840. At the age of four, he composed his first song and soon began piano lessons. When Tchaikovsky was 19, his

studies for a career in law gave way to his childhood love of music to which he was to devote his life. In 1861, he entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music. By 1866, Tchaikovsky had begun to teach theory of composition in Moscow, and became a local celebrity with his compositions. In 1876, Tchaikovsky was able to turn his attention fully to composing through the patronage of Nadezhda von Meck. In February of 1878, he completed his opera Eugene Onegin. In 1890, von Meck suddenly announced that she was bankrupt and could no longer support Tchaikovsky. Her claim was false and, although the composer was no longer financially dependent on her, it was a shattering blow to his self-esteem. This occurred during his writing of the score for *The Nutcracker* and added to the difficulties he was having composing for what he considered an uninspiring scenario. The last three years of Tchaikovsky's life were filled with great despondency and he did not live to see the success of either *The Nutcracker* or his earlier ballet score, *Swan Lake*.

Alexander Scriabin

Composer

Alexander Nikolayevich Scriabin was born in 1872 in Moscow, Russia. In 1894, Scriabin debuted as a pianist in St. Petersburg, performing his own works to positive reviews. Mitrofan Petrovich Belaieff hired Scriabin to compose for his publishing firm that included other notable composers such as Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov. This was followed by a period of extensive touring in Russia and abroad, culminating in a highly successful 1898 concert in Paris. That same year, he became a professor of piano at the Moscow Conservatory. Scriabin wrote five symphonies, including the *Divine Poem* (1903), the *Poem of Ecstasy* (1907), and the *Poem of Fire or Prometheus* (1909). His ten piano sonatas are staples of many pianists' repertoire. Scriabin's hundreds of preludes, études and poems are considered masterpieces of 20th century pianism, and his "titled" pieces such as *Fragilité*, *Satanic Poem*, *Etrangeté*, *Désir* and *Caresse Dansé*, are greatly admired. Scriabin's style changed enormously as he progressed. The early pieces

are romantic, fresh and easily accessible, while his later compositions explore harmony's further reaches. His work influenced composers such as Olivier Messiaen, Sergei Prokofiev and Igor Stravinsky. Immediately upon Scriabin's sudden death in 1915, Sergei Rachmaninoff toured Russia in a series of all-Scriabin recitals.

Ivan Urban

Guest Artist

Ivan Urban was born in Gomel, Belarus. He was educated at the Minsk Ballet School and The School of The Hamburg Ballet. Mr. Urban became a member of The Hamburg Ballet in 1994. He was promoted to Soloist in 1997 and to Principal Dancer in 1998. Mr. Urban has danced important roles in many ballets by John Neumeier including Telemachos in *Odyssee*, King Koll/Fortinbras in *Hamlet* (1997 version), Eros in *Bernstein Dances*, Serge Diaghilev in *Nijinsky* and Frederick the Great in *Tod in Venedig* as well as in Time after Time from *Bartók-Bilder*, *Messias*, *Winterreise*, *Préludes CV* and Nocturnes from *Lieder der Nacht*. Recently, he performed

the role of Kostya in *The Seagull* (2007) and Jago in *Othello* (2008). Yukichi Hattori created a solo for Mr. Urban in *Wege* in 2005.

David Briskin
Music Director and
Principal Conductor

A conductor renowned for the versatility of his repertoire and the depth of his musical interpretations, David Briskin joined The National Ballet of Canada as Music Director and Principal Conductor in 2006. Prior to his appointment with The National Ballet of Canada, Mr. Briskin served as Conductor with American Ballet Theatre for seven years, leading performances at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York's City Center and in major opera houses throughout the world. Since 2006, Mr. Briskin has been a regular guest conductor with New York City Ballet appearing most recently with the company in Copenhagen in September 2008. Last season he appeared with San Francisco Ballet for their New Works Festival, celebrating the company's 75th anniversary and will join the company again this season in Chicago, New York and San Francisco. Mr.

Briskin has also conducted for Houston Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet of Chicago, and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, among others. For 12 years he served as Conductor of The Juilliard School's Dance Division. Equally at home on the concert stage and in the opera house, Mr. Briskin has conducted symphony orchestras and opera productions throughout Europe, Asia and North America and served for six years as the Music Director of the Masterwork Chorus and Orchestra, conducting annual performances of Handels's *Messiah* at Carnegie Hall. In July 2008, he was appointed Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music and Conductor of the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Judith Yan
Assistant Conductor

A native of Toronto, Judith Yan joined The National Ballet of Canada as Assistant Conductor in 2007. As Staff Conductor of the San Francisco Opera, Ms. Yan served as assistant to Donald Runnicles and as Cover/Rehearsal Conductor on 12 productions. For the

company, she conducted three productions, one of which was included in the San Francisco Chronicle's Top Ten Performances of 2005. Prior to her position at the SFO, Ms. Yan was Conductor-in-Residence at the Canadian Opera Company. Appointed by the late Richard Bradshaw, she worked on numerous productions, recordings and concerts. Ms. Yan made her German conducting debut with Mozart's *Idomeneo* in 2005, and her Italian conducting debut with Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* in 2007. She recently returned to Italy to conduct *La Bohème*.

Ernest Abugov
Stage Manager

Ernest (Ernie) Abugov has served as Stage Manager of The National Ballet of Canada since 1973, working with every Artistic Director in the company's history from Celia Franca to Karen Kain. He has traveled with the company all over the world touring to Israel, Asia, Europe, Mexico, New York and throughout North America. Mr. Abugov has worked with many of the world's most renowned choreographers who have created original works for the

National Ballet including John Neumeier, William Forsythe and Glen Tetley. Mr. Abugov was born in Montréal, Québec. Before beginning his long association with the National Ballet, he worked with Les Feux Follets, The Charlottetown Festival, La Poudriere Theatre and The Studio Lab Theatre. He worked at Expo '67 in Montréal, stage managing over 4,000 puppet shows. Mr. Abugov also toured with Harry Belafonte. In what little spare time that he has, Mr. Abugov guest-lectures to theatre students.

Jeff Morris

Stage Manager

Jeff Morris studied technical theatre production and administration at Ryerson Theatre School. After graduating, he worked as Production Stage Manager for Toronto Dance Theatre and with the Fringe Festival of Independent Dance Artists, in addition to a broad range of Toronto's independent dance artists. In 1995, Mr. Morris joined The National Ballet of Canada and has since stage-managed a wide range of the company's classical and contemporary repertoire, including world premieres of James Kudelka's *The Four*

Seasons, Cinderella and *An Italian Straw Hat*. He is also an adjunct faculty member at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, where he teaches Production Elements for Dancers.

The National Ballet of Canada Orchestra

The National Ballet of Canada is privileged to have its own full orchestra with over 60 members. The orchestra has performed in each of the National Ballet's 57 seasons and is led by Music Director and Principal Conductor David Briskin. The company's first Music Director was George Crum who, along with Founder Celia Franca, was a pioneer of the company. Mr. Crum held the position from the company's inception in 1951 to 1984, when he was appointed Music Director Emeritus. The orchestra was led by Ermanno Florio from 1985 to 1990 and Ormsby Wilkins from 1990 to 2006. The National Ballet Orchestra has toured extensively with the company through Canada, the United States and Europe. Over the years, the orchestra has received much acclaim from audiences and critics alike and has recorded two CDs of Michael Torke's

compositions for *The Contract (The Pied Piper)* and *An Italian Straw Hat*.

For more detailed information visit national.ballet.ca