

Russian ballet company to perform two shows



ON SATURDAY, THE RUSSIAN National Ballet performs "Sleeping Beauty" featuring its two greatest stars, Tatiana Andreeva as Princess Aurora and Norlan Abugaliyev as Prince Desire.

COURTESY PHOTO

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let's music, shaping his dances along its structure. Sergei Radchenko, a former dancer with the Bolshoi Ballet, now serves the Russian National Ballet as artistic director. The only member of the company who speaks English, Radchenko acts as spokesman on its American tour.

When mounting a classic production like "Swan Lake" or "Sleeping Beauty," Radchenko relies on the memory of the ballet's former dancers. He does not trust videotapes or dance notation to revive the essence of a ballet.

"You must work with teachers. If you use other methods, it's only mechanically adopting. You never understand the use of classical line in ballet," he said.

Dancers for a revival spend two to three months working with the ballet's former dancers. They must learn not only the steps but also the style of the choreography.

"They must be one clockwork machine," Radchenko said.

Because the process is so intense, Radchenko finds it easier to work with soloists than a corps; with a corps of dancers, the need for precision and uniformity compounds the struggle for expression.

Radchenko believes American audiences should see Russian ballets in their original form for a number of reasons.

First, American dance is not without its Russian influences. American ballet, in particular, has much to attribute to Russian ballet.

Radchenko cited George Balanchine, the founder of the New York City Ballet, as an example.

Balanchine studied in Russia at the Imperial School of Ballet before coming to America in 1933. In the United States, he became the father of neoclassicism, fusing the ideas of classic ballet with the newer, freer forms of dance he encountered in America.

"He is the god of choreography of the United States. His basis he got in Russia," Radchenko said.

In addition to seeing and understanding ballet's heritage, audiences cherish the romantic stories of "Swan Lake" and "Sleeping Beauty," Radchenko said.

In "Swan Lake," a young prince falls in love with a beautiful maiden who has been turned into a swan by an evil sorcerer. Through the strength of their true love, they are able to overcome the power of the sorcerer.

The fairy tale classic "Sleeping Beauty" tells

the story of a young princess. This ballet, often considered Petipa's crowning achievement, capitalizes on the grand, lavish premises of romantic ballet.

Though American audiences may be familiar with these two ballets, this will be the first chance for Americans to see the Russian National Ballet, as this is the company's first visit to the United States.

Radchenko said the tour is evidence of the narrowing gulf between American dance and Russian dance.

"A lot of star Russian dancers are dancing in America, and the classical dancing methods of teaching in America are similar to what we have in Russia," he explained.

Unfortunately, Russian National Ballet dancers will have few opportunities to see American dance while they are here.

"Our touring schedule is too rigorous. We go without stopping," Radchenko said.

So far, Radchenko has felt audiences have been very receptive to the company's performances.

"Everyone in America loves ballet. They're very open. If they like, they like. If they don't, they don't," he said.

A&E Briefs

Presley drops suit against the Enquirer
 LOS ANGELES (AP) — Lisa Marie Presley dropped her lawsuit against the National Enquirer, which had said she was suicidal.

"I am satisfied with the settlement," Presley said Wednesday, explaining the lawsuit was designed to send a message to tabloids that she won't tolerate publication of untruths.

Enquirer editor Steve Coz was outraged by Presley's announcement.

"She is living if she means to suggest that she proved false the 1997 article," Coz said from his Lantana, Fla., office. "If Lisa Marie wanted a public airing of the facts surrounding these matters she would not have dropped her lawsuit."

The tabloid reported that Presley tried to kill herself and performed self-mutilation, drawing blood from her body and scrawling, "Nobody loves me" and "I'm ugly" on her arms.

Carnegie hires new executive director
 NEW YORK (AP) — Carnegie Hall has a new chief to replace the late Judith Aron.

Franz Xaver Ohnesorg was named Wednesday as Carnegie's executive and artistic director. He's been director of Philharmonic Hall in Cologne, Germany, since 1983.

"Before I studied business, I was a flutist," he said at a news conference.

"Now I play concert hall. It's a much bigger instrument, with a wider repertoire."

Ohnesorg has a two-year Carnegie contract that takes effect in September.

He was the first choice of Aron, who died of cancer in December.

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