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## State Ballet Theatre of Russia presents 'Cinderella' as part of Marshall Artists Series

By DEREK HALSEY For The Herald-Dispatch  
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Courtesy of The State Ballet Theatre of Russia The State Ballet Theatre of Russia will perform Sergei Prokofiev's "Cinderella" 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24, at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center as a part of the Marshall Artists Series. Tickets range from \$79.

HUNTINGTON - The details of the classic fairy tale of Cinderella are well known, yet can vary from person to person, depending on the version they saw or read first.



It seems almost every generation produces an adaptation of the tale. In America, Disney's 1950s cartoon version rings true for many as well as the variety of the story found in "Grimm's Fairy Tales." But the roots of the Cinderella story go back centuries.

The varieties of Cinderella number in the 100s and perhaps 1,000s, going back hundreds of years to many different countries. NPR explored the history of Cinderella in 2015 and found that, even by the year 1893, there was a book written by Marian Rolfe Cox that contained 345 "variants" of the Cinderella story found through the various time periods.



The great Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev composed music based on the Cinderella story in the 1940s, and the composition's beauty and breadth has inspired many choreographers to create new versions of dance for the piece.

The State Ballet Theatre of Russia will perform Prokofiev's "Cinderella" at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24, at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center as a part of the Marshall Artists Series. Tickets range from \$45 to \$79.

The production showcases 55 dancers and is choreographed by Vladimir Vasiliev. At one time in his career, Vasiliev was the principal dancer with the Bolshoi Theater Ballet and was hailed as the best male dancer of the 20th Century.

The origins of the State Ballet Theatre of Russia can be traced to the early 1960s. The troupe is the touring wing of the Voronezh State Theatre of Opera and Ballet and was formed by Maya Plisetskaya. Plisetskaya first gained notoriety as the prima ballerina assoluta of the Bolshoi Ballet



during the communist Soviet Union era of Russia's history. She was one of the few high-profile artists in Russia who did not defect to the West during that time. Plisetskaya died in 2015 at 89, and a square in Moscow was named in her honor.

The State Ballet Theatre of Russia is now led by Nikolay Anokhin, an award-winning dancer and one-time soloist for the Moiseyev Dance Company.

Russian native Igor Levine and his company Hollywood Stars International Management Inc. is the agency that has brought the State Ballet Theatre of Russia to the United States. Levine came to America two decades ago to start his unique business.

"This is my third year of working with the State Ballet Theatre of Russia," Levine said. "They are a very good company and all audiences like them. I am from Russia, but I left 24 years ago to move to Los Angeles. I used to work and live in Russia, and I worked all of my life with orchestras and ballet theatre. So, 24 years ago when I immigrated to the United States, I opened this agency and brought from Russia the best attractions."

Levine went through the challenging gauntlet of Russian music schools as a kid to become a professional musician before becoming involved in the production end of the business.

"I was all of my life a musician," Levine said. "I used to play trombone in the symphony orchestra. I grew up in the city of Samara on the Volga River, and I left to study music at the Moscow Conservatory and then became a professional musician. The music schools and choreography and dance schools in Russia are very hard because you work almost 24 hours every day. Young people in Russia still want to learn to dance and play music, but the schools and conservatories do not take everybody as you have to have a special physical condition to be invited in as a potential ballet dancer. When I worked in Russia, I worked for most of my life with ballet companies. When I came here, I continued to work with ballet companies and bring them here to tour."

The production of "Cinderella" also showcases elaborate stage design and costumes.

"The ballet company brings all of their costumes from Russia," Levine said. "It is hard to bring such a big troupe across the ocean because they bring props and costumes and they have to be organized and apply for work permits in America and so on. It is not so easy. Americans seem to love Russian ballet as well as the orchestras that also come here. And, it is very interesting and



enjoyable for the Russian artists to come here and perform in America. It is a nice trip because they can stop at many places along the road and they get to meet many Americans at almost every performance. They like to meet normal people and not let politics get involved."

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