



## Oleg Vinogradov

Artistic Director

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Oleg Vinogradov (born in Leningrad, USSR, 1937) is a world renowned choreographer and Director of opera, ballet and television as well as a lecturer on ballet and scenery and costume designer. He began his career when he studied at the Leningrad State Choreographic Institute (later renamed the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet ) where he was a student of Alexander Pushkin and a classmate of Rudolf Nureyev. After graduating in 1958, he joined the Novosibirsk Ballet as a dancer and became an assistant to Pyotr Gusev, Artistic Director, renowned not only as an expert for his revision and restaging of classical ballets but also as an inventor of new steps and lifts. In 1961, Vinogradov became the Resident Choreographer for the Novosibirsk Theatre where he created his first important, decidedly new, staging of Prokofiev's *Cinderella* (1964) and *Romeo and Juliet* (1965). Critics from both Moscow and Leningrad declared his work to be “professional birth of daring and original choreographic talent.”

Vinogradov developed a symbolic movement vocabulary which portrayed depth of meaning beyond the classical physical lines of beauty. He drew upon his earlier training as a visual artist when creating sketches which became the basis for his choreography and he used the sketches to help develop movements in the rehearsal studio. At this time, Vinogradov stated “The spectator that comes to the ballet only to admire the beauty of the dancing is robbing himself. Modern Ballet can and should excite not only feelings but thoughts as well.”

With his fresh approach to productions, sometimes considered too radical, Vinogradov's name began to receive a lot of attention throughout Russia. In 1967, the Bolshoi Ballet invited him to stage the full length ballet *Asel*, with music by V. Vlasov and in 1968 the Kirov Ballet asked him to choreograph *Goryanka (A Mountain Maiden)* music by M. Kazhlaev. From 1968 - 1972, he continued choreographing for the Kirov Ballet Company as a resident choreographer. From 1973 - 1977, as Artistic Director and Chief Choreographer of the Maly (now Mikhailovsky) Ballet Theatre, his experimentation helped to build the Maly Theatre's reputation for daring and innovations.

In 1977, Vinogradov became the Artistic Director and Chief Ballet Master of the Kirov Ballet Company. As the Artistic Director (1977-2003) he returned the historic Kirov/Mariinsky Theatre to worldwide prominence. He made drastic and sometimes controversial changes in order to revive the once grand company. He did this by imposing a strict aesthetic look and style for the dancers. Thus the Company, which had not been approached for a tour in many years, began touring abroad and had great success. During his more than twenty years as the Artistic Director of the Kirov, Vinogradov successfully revived the Company by bringing in younger dancers and introducing them to international audiences around the world and dramatically broadening and modernizing the repertoire.

For many years, Vinogradov wanted to bring foreign choreographers to St Petersburg: "The works of great western choreographers were out of reach for us behind the iron curtain. Most of my conscious artistic life was without knowing what was happening on the global ballet stage. That is why my first aspiration, after I became an Artistic Director of Kirov-Mariinsky Ballet, was to change this situation." Because of Vinogradov's vision and tremendous effort, for the first time choreography by George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins was presented as well as works by August Bournonville, Roland Petit, Maurice Béjart, Pierre Lacotte, Antony Tudor and John Neumeier and others. In the late 1980's, he took full advantage of Glasnost when it reached the ballet world and opened up additional communication and experimentation and cultural exchange. Vinogradov negotiated the return of Natalia Makarova and Rudolf Nureyev to Russia, to perform for the first time, after their defection from the Kirov Stage.

In 1989, he founded the Kirov Academy of Ballet of Washington, D.C. where he was Artistic Director until 2008. In 1998-2005, he became the Artistic Director of the Universal Ballet Company (UBC) in Seoul, Korea where he brought the level of the Company up to the highest international standard. In 2011, Vinogradov became a member of The Russian Federation Academy of the Liberal Arts Aesthetics in recognition of his achievements. In 2013, due to public request, a nonprofit foundation in his name was established: "The Oleg Vinogradov Foundation for the Preservation and Development of Classical Ballet".

Currently, Vinogradov is the Artistic Director of the Department of Choreography of Saint Petersburg University of the Humanities and Social Sciences as well as the Artistic Director of the Ballet Theater of Saint Petersburg affiliated with the Rimsky-Korsakov Saint Petersburg State Conservatory. In the United States, he was named the Artistic Director of the International Center for Choreography and Ballet Pedagogy, a new division of Classical Dance Alliance, Inc. a nonprofit organization based in New York, NY. Under his guidance, Festivals, professional workshops and courses in ballet pedagogy have been produced for the benefit of choreographers, ballet dancers and teachers in Russia and the USA.

Vinogradov is the author of "The Confessions of A Choreographer" (2007) not yet translated into English. His filmography includes: "Grand Pas in White Nights" (1987), "The Sleeping Beauty" (1989), "Kirov Classics" (1991), "My Religion - Ballet" (1998), "The Dame of Spades" (choreography 2002), "Positions of Oleg Vinogradov" (2007), "Meet the Master" (2010) and "The Art to Live" (2010). He continues to work as a Guest Artist, all over the world, and is a citizen of both Russia and the United States.

## **Prizes and Awards of Oleg Vinogradov**

1968 - The Distinguished (also translated as Merited or Honored) Artist of Dagestan Republic

1970 - Official State Prize of Russian Federation

1979 - Marius Petipa Prize (for preserving and advancement of art of classical ballet)

1981 - The Paris Academy of Dance Prize for the best modern choreography

1983 - The People's Artist of Russian Federation

1985 - American Express Canada Prize

1985 - Parliament of Greece Award

1986 - Pablo Picasso Prize, for the choreography of the ballet *The Knight in the Tiger Skin*

1986 - Order of Chivalry and the title of Chevalier from The French Republic for special merit in the arts and culture and for furtherance of international relations

1987 - The People's Artist of USSR

1988 - Laurence Olivier Prize

1989 - Prix Lumière (Lumiere Award)

2011 - Honorable member of The Russian Federation Academy of the Liberal Arts Aesthetics