



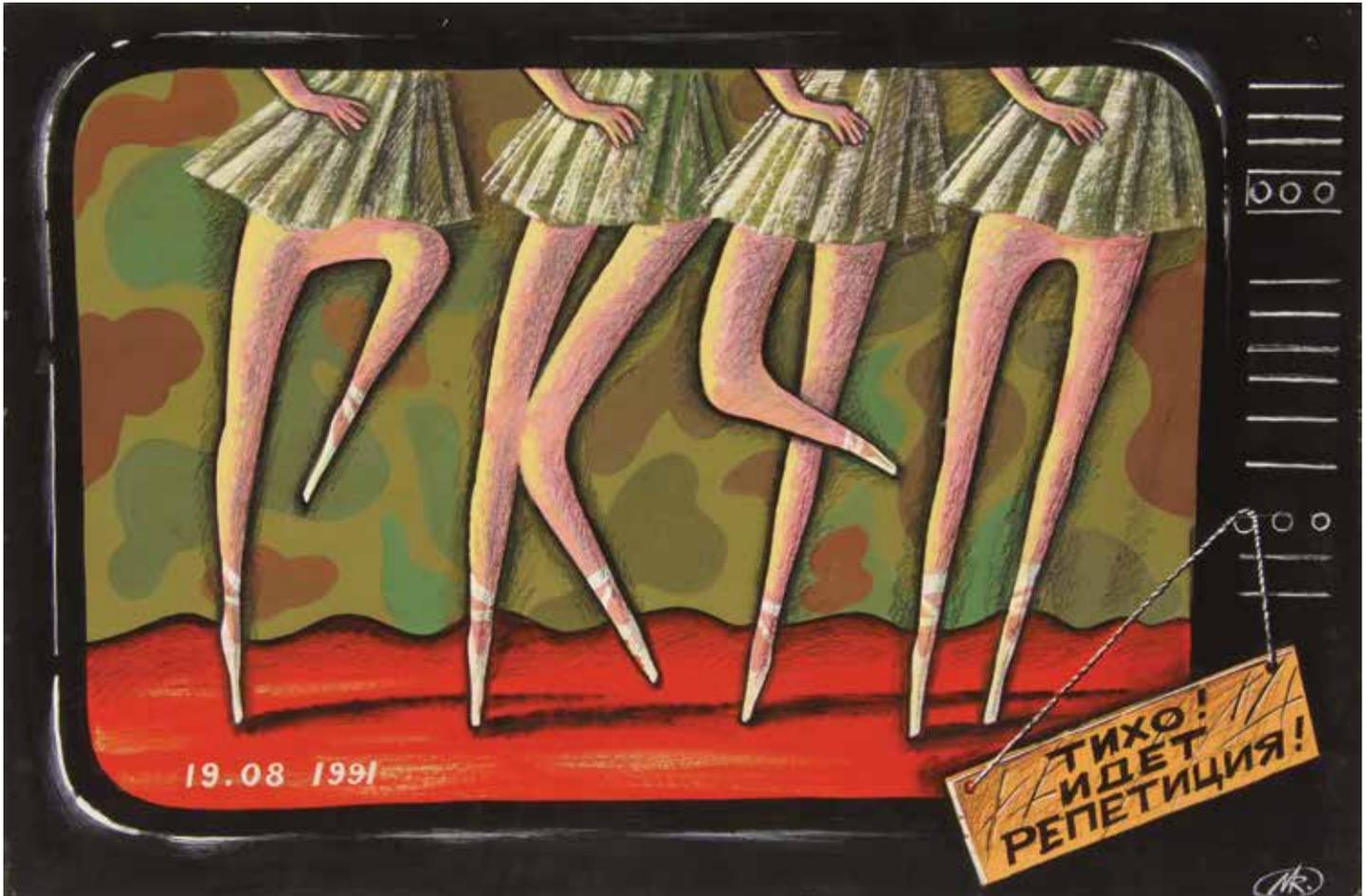
**RED SHOES: LOVE,
POLITICS, AND DANCE
DURING THE COLD WAR**

**September 16, 2018
to January 13, 2019**

Curated by Thomas E. Backer, PhD



**WENDE MUSEUM
OF THE COLD WAR**



Mikhail Rozhdestvin, *Quiet Please – Rehearsal in Session*, 1991, Soviet Union. Detail on cover



Ballet was part of the high drama of the “cultural Cold War,” as the United States and the Soviet Union jockeyed for position during the larger Cold War and attempted to win the allegiances of other nations. Especially in the 1950s and ’60s, each side invested considerably in cinema, theatre, music, dance, and visual arts, and in public relations promoting these creative works. All these efforts were designed to show their side’s cultural supremacy. In 1954, President Eisenhower obtained \$5 million from Congress to send American cultural groups abroad — including dance companies — and the Soviets responded by touring national institutions such as the Kirov and Bolshoi ballet troupes.

How did the cultural Cold War affect Soviet and American ballet, and the place of dance in Soviet politics and life? How did they affect the personal stories of two couples dancing across Cold War borders? And as a new Cold War emerges in the 21st century, what lessons might be taken about how cultural exchanges could be helpful – and strategic – in the present day?



Poster of the classic 1948 film *The Red Shoes* with Moira Shearer and Leonide Massine

THE CULTURAL COLD WAR IN CLASSICAL BALLET

The US-Soviet cultural Cold War has been well documented in books like David Caute's *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War*. Theater, film, classical music, popular music, painting, sculpture, and ballet all were focal points of the cultural Cold War. For decades after the Bolshevik revolution, there was virtually no official cultural exchange between the two countries. But during the Cold War, both governments saw value in promoting cultural exchanges and began to structure them.

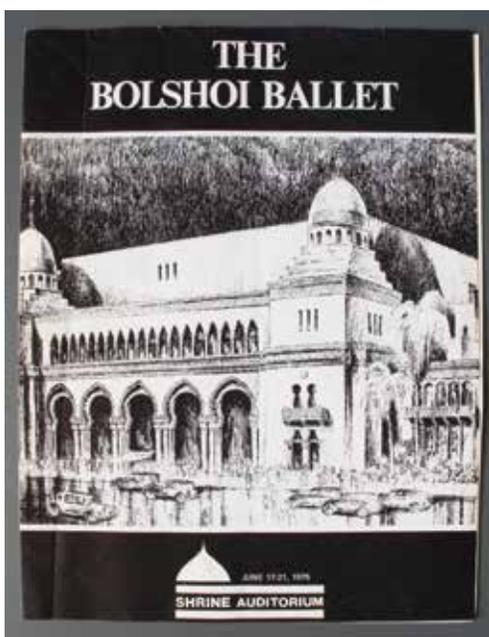
Complex negotiations brought tours of ballet companies from both sides, sometimes aided by impresario Sol Hurok. From the Soviet Union came

the Bolshoi in 1959, featuring renowned ballerina Galina Ulanova.

This was just the first in a long series of US tours for the Bolshoi.



Sculpture bust of Galina Ulanova



Program for the Bolshoi Ballet's June 17, 1975, performance at the Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles

American Ballet Theatre came to the Soviet Union first, in 1960, headed by legendary dancer Maria Tallchief. They were followed by New York City Ballet in 1962, led by Russian-born choreographer George Balanchine, who was returning to his homeland after an absence of more than 40 years.

Soviet performing artists sometimes were also the sites of protests by American activists concerned about the poor treatment of Soviet Jews, and other human rights issues.

In the US, performances by



Future Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky handing out flyers at a demonstration at the Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles, August 1970

FROM WEST TO EAST: FRANCIA RUSSELL AND KENT STOWELL

In October 1962, the US detected Soviet missiles in Cuba, setting in motion the events now known as the Cuban Missile Crisis. The week before, New York City Ballet arrived in Moscow to begin touring the Soviet Union. Despite all the tensions, NYCB was a great success in each of its tour stops, with sold-out audiences cheering the performances.

At age 23, Kent Stowell had just joined NYCB, and was thrilled to be sent with Balanchine for his 1962 tour of the Soviet Union. He recalls going each day during the Cuban Missile Crisis to the American Embassy in Moscow, to get a newsletter about the status of the crisis as seen by the US State Department, and sharing it with the other dancers.



Martha Swope, *Kent Stowell*, photograph, 1962

Stowell and his wife, Francia Russell, also a NYCB dancer, went on to found Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle. In 1988 Russell staged Balanchine's *Theme & Variations* at the Mariinsky Theatre in Leningrad with the Kirov company – an assignment Balanchine had promised to her before his death. Both are still active in the dance world, staging ballets for major dance companies.



Francia Russell and dancers at the end of a performance of *Theme & Variations*

FROM EAST TO WEST: LUDMILA LOPUKHOVA AND DEREK HART



Ludmila Lopukhova, *Legend of Love*, Kirov Ballet, 1972

Ludmila Lopukhova began ballet lessons at age five and entered the Kirov Ballet School at nine. After joining the Kirov Ballet, she was promoted to soloist and danced with other great artists like Valery Panov. She left the Soviet Union after marrying Derek Hart, a British filmmaker and former principal dancer with Ballet Rambert, who had come to the Kirov to make a film for Armand Hammer about the 200th anniversary of the famed company. Lopukhova did not defect – she emigrated legally – and left both to marry and for greater professional opportunity.



San Francisco Ballet program, March 26, 1988, *La Fille mal gardée*, with Ludmila Lopukhova in the title role

In the US, she joined San Francisco Ballet as a principal and danced many leading roles with them. In 1987 she performed *Le Corsaire* and *The Dying Swan* at Armand Hammer's 87th birthday party in Los Angeles. Both Lopukhova and Hart are now retired from dance and living in Taos, New Mexico.



Ludmila Lopukhova and Derek Hart, Hollywood, 1984

LEAPING TO FREEDOM: THE DEFECTORS

Rudolf Nureyev, Mikhail Baryshnikov, and Natalia Makarova were great classical ballet dancers whose defections from the Soviet Union significantly influenced the cultural Cold War. Rudolf Nureyev came to Paris in May 1961 with the Kirov Ballet. He was an instant star – writer Janet Flanner called him “the strangest, and uncontestedly the most influential, personality – as well as the greatest technician – since Nijinsky, to whom he is the first ever to be compared.” Just before he was to be whisked back to the Soviet Union by his nervous Soviet handlers, he defected on June 16, 1961, at the Paris airport.

Nine years later, Natalia Makarova defected while on tour with the Kirov in London. Mikhail Baryshnikov followed, defecting from the Kirov in Toronto in 1974. Both said they defected for access to greater artistic opportunity, not for political reasons, as also was true of Nureyev.



Kenn Duncan „New York Ballet“
Juni/Juli '81

PHOTOGALERIE THE COMPAGNIE Lehman 79 2000 Hamburg 70

Poster of Photogalerie show of Kenn Duncan's work “New York Ballet,” Hamburg, 1981, featuring a photograph of Rudolf Nureyev



Poster of Mikhail Baryshnikov and Natalia Makarova, *Giselle*, photograph by Max Waldman, 1974

All three dancers went on to high-wattage international dance careers in the West, and helped create a much higher level of awareness about classical ballet in the US, likely increasing attendance at dance performances, the growth of dance schools, and the choice of dance as a career by young Americans.

DANCE IN SOVIET LIFE AND POLITICS

Classical ballet had a prominence in the Soviet Union that eclipsed its presence in the US. Ballet was seen by the Soviet government as a useful canvas for political propaganda, and dancers and dance companies were controlled tightly but also given resources far beyond other cultural institutions. This was especially true for the two most prominent companies – the Bolshoi and the Kirov. There were state-sponsored schools for ballet



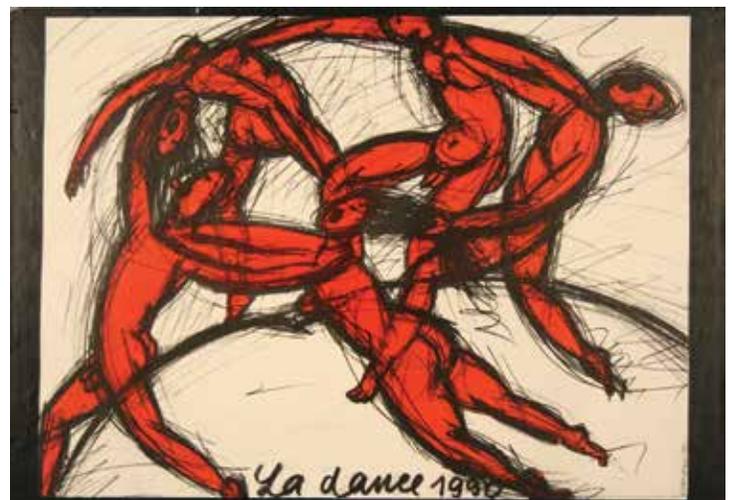
Ballet "Beauty Bar" soap, East Germany

dancers, ballet companies, and amateur groups throughout the Soviet Union, all controlled from Moscow. Dancers from outside the "dance capitals" of Moscow and Leningrad could have significant careers, and dance was generally known to the public at a level not matched in the US.



Postcard for Russian Ballet Youth Festival, 1956

As a result, dance often provided a metaphor for political commentary, and was accessible to a much wider audience than classical ballet fans. Dance was talked about and appreciated more broadly than has ever been the case in the US. For decades, ballet was used for propaganda purposes, to tell stories of Soviet workers and communicate the positive values of communism.



V. Kavrigina, *La Danse*, 1990, Soviet Union

EXHIBITION OBJECT LIST

Poster of the classic 1948 film *The Red Shoes*, featuring images of star Moira Shearer and Leonide Massine (1896–1979), a Russian dancer and choreographer born in Moscow who worked extensively with Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes, and danced mostly in the West. The film brought attention to classical ballet in the West, and to its Russian roots.

Program for a screening of the restored film *The Red Shoes*, September 14, 2017, at California State University, Northridge, Mike Curb College of Arts, Media and Communication. After nearly 70 years it is likely still the best-known feature film about classical ballet, and inspired a 2017 ballet choreographed by Sir Matthew Bourne.

Video, “It isn’t Wrong Because it isn’t Russian,” shows esteemed Danish dancer Erik Bruhn, who had studied with a Russian émigré teacher in Copenhagen, and Rudolf Nureyev at the barre, in class together – they also were lovers at the time, and Nureyev had studied Bruhn’s technique with pirated ballet films.

Video, “Pas de Deux” from *Le Corsaire*, choreographed by Marius Petipa, danced by Ludmila Lopukhova and Christopher Boatwright for Armand Hammer’s 87th birthday party, accompanied by the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.

Video, “The Dying Swan,” danced by Ludmila Lopukhova, for Armand Hammer’s 87th birthday party, with accompaniment by the renowned Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich.

The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War by David Caute (Oxford University Press, 2003).

Bust of Galina Ulanova, the reigning Soviet ballerina for 30 years, who danced with the Bolshoi Ballet in the company’s 1956 appearances in London, came to New York with the Bolshoi in 1959, and retired in 1960. Stalin had earlier sent her to the West to perform in the late 1940s.

Program for the Bolshoi Ballet’s June 17, 1975, performance at the Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles. The ballets performed were *Spartacus*, choreographed by Yuri Grigorovich and premiered at the Bolshoi in 1968 – it was the Bolshoi’s signature work for 30 years – and classic ballets *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, and *Don Quixote*.

Photo of former Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky—long before he was elected to that office—handing out flyers at a demonstration at the Shrine Auditorium, where the Moiseyev dancers performed in August 1970.

Photo of Shrine event sign in the background and protesters with picket signs in the foreground; the Shrine sign announces the upcoming performance of Moiseyev Dance Company.

Lajos Sostarics, *Béke leszerelés: Követelik a világ népei!*, 1962.

Hungarian cartoon showing Khrushchev handing a note to Kennedy. The note reads “Béke leszerelés,” which literally means “peace disarmament.” Khrushchev is quickly moving toward Kennedy, suggesting that he was the one who gave in to the build-up of military pressure. The artist, Lajos Sostarics, was born in 1896 in Zagreb.

Martha Swope, *Kent Stowell*, photograph, 1962.

Francia Russell working with Altynai Asylmuratova, principal dancer for Balanchine’s *Theme & Variations* at the Mariinsky Theatre, Leningrad, February 1989.

Francia Russell and dancers at the end of a performance of *Theme & Variations*.

Talk with audience at *Theme & Variations* performance, with Barbara Horgan, Suzanne Farrell, Oleg Vinogradov (Artistic

Director, Kirov Ballet), Francia Russell and Alla (interpreter).

Francia Russell during dress rehearsal for *Theme & Variations*.

Ludmila Lopukhova thrusting Baryshnikov forward, *Prodigal Son*, performance of Kirov Ballet, 1972.

Ludmila Lopukhova, *Legend of Love*, soloist, performance of Kirov Ballet, 1977 .

Program for Kirov Ballet performance, February 11, 1984, October Hall, Leningrad. It was Ludmila Lopukhova's last performance with the Kirov. She arrived in the United States on February 29, 1984. Lopukhova danced the Pas de Trois in *Paquita*, choreographed by Marius Petipa.

Ludmila and Derek, photograph taken in Leningrad, 1983.

Ludmila and Derek, photograph taken in Hollywood, 1984.

"LA Chamber Ballet Rewards a Full House," Sasha Anawalt, review in *Herald Examiner*, May 18, 1985.

Program for 87th Birthday Celebration, Armand Hammer.

Letter from Armand Hammer, April 10, 1984.

Ludmila Lopukhova, *The Dying Swan*, photo by David Robin.

San Francisco Ballet program, 1987. Lopukhova danced the title role in *La Sylphide*.

San Francisco Ballet program, March 26, 1988, *La Fille mal gardée*, with Ludmila Lopukhova in the title role.

Program for Nureyev's guest-artist appearance with National Ballet of Canada, April 2, 1974, Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles, dancing *Don Juan*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Giselle*.

Program for Nureyev's appearance with American Ballet Theatre, *Raymonda*, February 16, 1976, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles.

Poster for Photogalerie Show of Kenn Duncan's work "New York Ballet," 1981, Hamburg, Germany, featuring photograph of Rudolf Nureyev.

Christie's Catalog for New York City Auction, January 12-13, 1995, for auction of contents of Rudolf Nureyev's Paris and New York City apartments.

Rudolf Nureyev by Diane Solway (William Morrow & Co, 1998). The book is signed by the author, and is opposite a letter from Lola Fisher to Solway - Lola Fisher toured the Soviet Union in 1960 as Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*, after being understudy to Julie Andrews on Broadway.

Joel Lobenthal, *Alla Osipenko: Beauty and Resistance in Soviet Ballet* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Program for American Ballet Theatre Gala, March 6, 1976, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles, with Baryshnikov, Makarova, and many others.

Poster of Mikhail Baryshnikov and Natalia Makarova, *Giselle*, photo by Max Waldman, 1974.

Baryshnikov in Color, photographs by Martha Swope and others (Harry K. Abrams, 1980).

Baryshnikov at Work, photographs by Martha Swope (Alfred A. Knopf, 1976).

Genrikh Frantsevich Bzhozovsky, *Portrait of Ludmilla*, 1965.

The Minsk-born artist Genrikh Frantsevich Bzhozovsky created more than 2,000 paintings before his death in 2006 at age 94. This portrait is of his daughter, who danced in the Opera and Ballet of the Republic of Belarus (near her home) and at the Bolshoi Theatre. She continues to teach ballet in Belarus.

Vera Tsignadze, 1970s.

A paper packet with eight black-and-white photos of the ballerina Vera Tsignadze in various roles. The back says: "People's artist of the GSSR Winner of State Prizes: She was Georgia's first prima ballerina."

Swan Lake, music by Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky, Melodiya 3-disc set, 1969.

Recording of the Symphony Orchestra of All-Union Radio and Television, conducted by Gennady Rozhdestvensky.

Postcard for Russian Ballet Youth Festival, 1956.

The Russian Ballet Youth Festival was one of many festivals organized to present the talents of young dancers in the Soviet Union.

Poster for the State Concert Ballet Ensemble of the USSR, 1972.

The State Concert Ballet Ensemble was under the artistic direction of Yuri Zhdanov (whose name appears on the poster).

Ballett "Beauty Bar," n.d.

In German it is called "Ballett Schönheitsseife," a product line manufactured by the East German soap factory Konsum Seifenwerk Riesa. During its production between 1949 and 1989, the "Beauty Bar" was available for 1.20 German Marks in the former German Democratic Republic.

Mikhail Rozhdestvin, *Quiet Please - Rehearsal in Session*, 1991, Soviet Union.

The image of four sets of ballerina's legs is framed by a television screen, and the dancers are in front of a camouflage-print stage curtain. The dance position of the legs spells out the Russian acronym GKChP, which stands for the State Emergency Committee, the group of eight men that staged the 1991 failed coup to overthrow Gorbachev. On the bottom left of the screen is the date 19.08.1991, which was the exact day of the attempted coup. The sign hanging from a knob of the television reads "Quiet! Rehearsal in session!" which references the planning of the coup while ridiculing it by comparing it to a ballet performance; the military-patterned curtains refer to the military intervention that shut down the coup attempt.

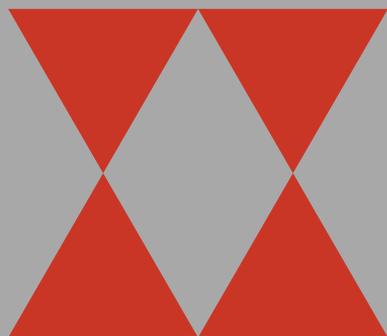
V. Kavrigina, *La Danse*, 1990, Soviet Union.

This poster reflects and distorts Henri Matisse's famous work *La Danse*, of which there are two versions: the first, lighter-colored study, and the second, more vibrantly colored painting of the same female figures, joined by the hand in a circular dance. Here, the dancers are clearly male, shown by the sketched male genitalia, and their dance appears painful and forced, with the figures connected by violently grabbing each other's hair rather than each other's hands. These figures dance on a white background, rather than the blue-green background of the original work, and their mouths are open in a silent yell as opposed to Matisse's close-mouthed figures.

The Wende Museum thanks Thomas E. Backer, PhD, Ludmila Lopukhova and Derek Hart, Francia Russell and Kent Stowell, and Ed Monsson for lending objects featured in this exhibition.

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Exhibition Designers: Joes Segal and Amanda Roth



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OF THE COLD WAR

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