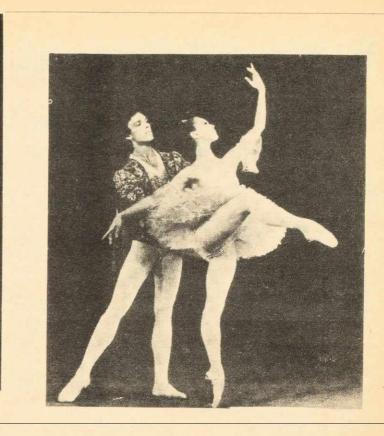


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Explosion of Russian Talent

By ALEXIS PILICHOS

The Ballet Sovietski Russkaya made a grand entrance to Halifax in a spellbinding performance that left the audience captivated. It presented the best of the classical tradition of the Russian-Soviet school of ballet. The Russian style is a looser, more expressive form of dance and much of the strength seen in the dancers and in their superb technique could not be equalled in many Canadian ballets.

Prepared in the classical and traditional choreography of ballet, the Ballet Sovietski presented Act III of *Sleeping Beauty* as the first scene. Although the dancing was beautiful, the choreography was quite dry and lacked the innovation accomplished by many other companies. In fact the choreographer was the original and well-known creator of the classic ballet, *Petipa*.

The grand pas de quatre was the delicate and elegant, Les Sylphides. It was performed by four women who created a very fluid and romantic mood for the seting. The following scene is one of the oldest in the ballet repetoires was a pas de deux from another classic, la Fille Mal Gardee.

There was a quick change of pace with *Three Dances* featuring ballet character work with folk dance style included solo performances in Russian, Gypsy and Ukranian themes.

The next scene that followed was the well-known ballet, *Giselle*. The section was taken from the second act when Albrecht, the lover who betrayed Giselle visits her grave and she appears before him and they create and enchanting pas-de-deux set in the moonlight. The captivated audience was whirled into a virtuousic tour de force with the scene, *Spring Waters*. The work showed the utmost agility and skill of the dancers. The couple dressed in loincloth costumes performed the pas de deux with many leaps and powerful jumps. The dancers were well shown off, especially the part in which the female dancer runs across the stage and leaps into her partner's arms with incredible ease and style.

The finale was the grand pas de deux from *Don Quixote*. The audience gave the company a standing ovation.

The recent appearance of the Ballet Sovietski Russkaya was made possible by the recent renegotiated Cultural Exchange Treaty between the U.S.S.R. and Canada. The artistic director of the company, former Bolshoi Ballet star, Viktor Viktorovich Smirnov-Golovanov has declared that he would like to see the opportunity for young artists to perform in areas other than just the large cities. The Company has travelled to Vietnam, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania and other republics across the U.S.S.R. In many aspects Canada is like the U.S.S.R. in that both countries are vast and it is extremely important for all people living in smaller and more remote centres to have access to the Arts.

The Ballet Sovietski Russkaya plans on travelling across Canada to smaller cities such as Kingston, Barrie, Waterloo, Banff, St. John. Hopefully the Sovietski Ballet will be as successful and stunning in its excellent display of the classical Russian-Soviet style of ballet as it was in Halifax.

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