

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PREMIER BALLET DANCERS “GUEST STAR” IN *ON POINTE* EXHIBITION

TORONTO, ON, April 15, 2008 – Ballet shoes from several world famous ballet dancers are featured in the exhibition *On Pointe: The Rise of the Ballet Shoe*, a collaborative effort between the Bata Shoe Museum and Canada’s National Ballet School, on view to the public beginning Wednesday, April 16, 2008.



Canada’s National Ballet School has produced many of the world’s premier ballet dancers including Karen Kain, Frank Augustyn and Veronica Tennant. Karen Kain did some of her most famous pointe work with the National Ballet of Canada where she is now its Artistic Director.

Veronica Tennant, one of Canada’s most famous ballerinas, was renowned for her precise pointe work and dramatic flare. Like all ballerinas she wore through innumerable pointe shoes over the course of her illustrious career.

Other famous dancers include Mikhail Baryshnikov, one of the most accomplished and admired ballet dancers in the 20th century. Born in 1948 in what was Soviet Russia, Baryshnikov studied ballet at the Vaganova Academy and his extraordinary talents led to his fame in the Kirov Ballet. While on tour with the Kirov in 1974, Baryshnikov defected in Toronto. The next time the world saw him dance it was with the National Ballet of Canada.



Evelyn Hart made her debut with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in 1976. She was promoted to soloist in 1978 and to principal dancer in 1980. She received a gold medal award during the International Ballet Competition in Varna, Bulgaria in 1980, amassing the highest point total ever by a female dancer.



Rudolf Nureyev was seventeen when he entered the Soviet Vaganova Academy but his extraordinary talent and drive made up for his late start. Upon graduation, he joined the Kirov and quickly became one of the company’s star performers allowed to travel beyond the confines of the Iron block to perform. In 1961, his dramatic defection to France, electrifying performances and flawless technique made him an international celebrity. His famed partnership with prima ballerina Margot Fonteyn brought him even greater renown.

Considered by many to be the greatest British ballerina of all time, Dame Margot Fonteyn de Arias (1919-1991), was the *prima ballerina assoluta* of the Royal Ballet in London for decades. The famed choreographer Frederick Ashton created many roles just for her, including 'Apparitions' (1936), 'Symphonic Variations' (1946), and 'Ondine' (1958). In the 1960s she began a celebrated performing partnership with Rudolf Nureyev that sky-rocketed both to incredible international fame.

On Pointe: *The Rise of the Ballet Shoe* will be on view at the Bata Shoe Museum located at 327 Bloor Street West at St. George until September 28, 2008. Exciting programming activities based on the exhibition will run throughout the summer. Please visit the Bata Shoe Museum and Canada's National Ballet websites for more information.

Lending Partner:

Media Partner:



About Canada's National Ballet School

Canada's National Ballet School is a world leader in the training of professional dancers and teachers. Dedicated to advancing the art of ballet, NBS develops dance professionals in a student-centred environment by weaving innovation and evolving practice with the finest teaching traditions. NBS graduates can be found as dancers, choreographers, artistic directors, teachers, and administrators in over 65 dance companies world-wide and even more schools around the globe. NBS will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2009/10. Further information is available at www.nbs-enb.ca.

About the Bata Shoe Museum

The Bata Shoe Museum is dedicated to uncovering the role of footwear in the social and cultural life of humanity. The Museum's growing international collection of over 13,000 objects touches on 4,500 years of history. A varied programme of events and exhibitions lets visitors discover the stories behind footwear from many lands and cultures. Further information is available at www.batashoemuseum.ca.

For more information, interviews or visuals please contact:

Rosmarie Gadzovski
Marketing & Public Relations Manager
Bata Shoe Museum
416.979.7799 x225
rosmarie.gadzovski@batashoemuseum.ca

Laura Cartledge
Media Relations and Communications Officer
Canada's National Ballet School
416.964.3780 x2117
lcartledge@nbs-enb

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