

Company Profile



Moscow City Ballet

Moscow City Ballet is committed to the classics.

If you think the Bolshoi Ballet is the only Moscow-based company with an extensive classical repertoire and a far-reaching tour schedule, think again. The Moscow City Ballet performs a classical repertoire adapted by Victor Smirnov-Golovanov, choreographer and artistic director of MCB.

The company has come a long way since its humble beginnings in 1988: In its early days, MCB held rehearsals in a gym in an old part of Moscow. Yet even though the company has never received government funding, relying instead on private investors and ticket sales, MCB has achieved international stature with the help of a hardworking arts presenter.

"Our motto is quality, quality and quality on any stage. We set the bar high and are proud of that," says Smirnov-Golovanov, a graduate of the Moscow School of Choreography, former Bolshoi Ballet soloist and chief ballet master at the Odessa State Opera and Ballet Theater. "We are looking for artists for whom the theater is not a

place to earn money, but the essence of life," he says.

Principal dancers (and husband and wife) Mikhail Mikhailov and Tatiana Krasnova enjoy dancing Don Quixote, Sleeping Beauty, Giselle and Swan Lake. For Mikhailov and Krasnova, the highlight of the year, and MCB's latest addition, has been Romeo and Juliet, set to the score by Prokofiev. This large-scale production required MCB's costume designer to create more than 1,000 garments for the company's 58 dancers.

For Mikhailov and Krasnova, the dedicated artistic staff is what sets MCB apart from other companies. "The contribution of the rehearsal directors and teachers is enormous," says Mikhailov. In fact, a close family atmosphere comes easily, because Ludmila Nerubashenko, MCB's chief ballet mistress, is also Smirnov-Golovanov's wife.

While in Moscow, MCB performs in the ballroom of the Cosmos Hotel, but the company tours extensively both internationally and domestically and has been especially well-received in the United

Kingdom, where MCB has given more than 1,000 performances since 1991. The Moscow City Ballet Orchestra accompanies MCB at home and on the road.

No matter how successful MCB is abroad, loyalty to the Russian tradition is a company trademark. Smirnov-Golovanov has found that audiences both at home and away are hungry to see the standards. "I always pray at the temple of classical ballet," he says, and future projects for MCB are limited to the classics. "I strongly believe that contemporary ballet is a separate art form and not a continuation of classical ballet."

AT A GLANCE

Number of dancers: 58
 Contract length: 1 year
 Associated school: none
 Performances per year: 150
 Auditions: The best way to audition is to attend company class.
 Website: www.mtu-net.ru/smirnov-ballet