



Press Release

FOR RELEASE:

October 13, 2022

PHOTOS LOCATED [HERE](#).

The United Ukrainian Ballet to make U.S. Debut

in the

U.S. Premiere of Alexei Ratmansky's *Giselle*

**February 1–5, 2023 in the Kennedy Center Opera House
with the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra**

Performances mark sole engagement in the U.S.

**Company replaces the National Ballet of China, which canceled its
engagement due to continued challenges of touring and global
transportation**

(WASHINGTON)—United by the tragedy of war and an ardent hope for the future, **The United Ukrainian Ballet** will make its **U.S. debut** at the Kennedy Center, February 1–5, 2023 with the **U.S. premiere** of world-renowned choreographer **Alexei Ratmansky's *Giselle***. Tickets for Members are scheduled to go on-sale November 1, 2022 with public on-sale on November 9, 2022. The performances mark the company's sole engagement in the U.S.

Consisting of 60 professional artists in exile from the national theaters of Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odessa, and others, each member has their own story of how they reached safety to join the company. The personal journeys of the dancers and their homeland, and the urgency of the ongoing crisis, resonate powerfully with *Giselle's* timeless themes of love, betrayal, death, and mercy. Considered to be one of the greatest romantic ballets in the classical repertoire, this new interpretation was created specifically for the company by Ratmansky, who himself is a

Ukrainian citizen. Principal casting for the U.S. Premiere includes dancers of The United Ukrainian Ballet as well as special guest Christine Shevchenko, principal dancer of American Ballet Theatre, and others to be confirmed.

“I am delighted that the United Ukrainian Ballet is to perform *Giselle* at the Kennedy Center.” stated **Alexei Ratmansky**. “When we started this project in April, we had nothing but goodwill and determination. Since then this Company of refugees has performed across the Netherlands and to great acclaim at the London Coliseum. Our purpose has been fourfold: to preserve Ukraine’s long history of ballet culture; to give meaningful employment to dancers till the war is won; to entertain the public; and finally, to keep public support for Ukraine through giving a personal emotional experience. The USA has led the world in its support for Ukraine. It seems only right that the United Ukrainian Ballet should perform in the nation’s capital.”

The United Ukrainian Ballet, under the artistic direction of Igone de Jongh, formed after Ukrainian dancers fled their homeland. The company is based in The Hague at the former Royal Conservatoire building, where they live and work through the generous support of local business and the government. The company has toured this special production of *Giselle* to several Dutch cities, including at the prestigious Royal Theatre Carré in Amsterdam in August 2022 before transferring to the London Coliseum Theatre in the West End for its highly acclaimed U.K. season in September 2022. These performances were graciously supported by the English National Opera who provided the orchestra, Birmingham Royal Ballet, who loaned the sets and costumes, and the Royal Opera House who provided rehearsal space and other logistical support; all united in the support of the company and the country this project represents.

The United Ukrainian Ballet will replace the National Ballet of China, which was scheduled to be the cornerstone of the Center’s 2023 Lunar New Year celebrations and perform *Chinese New Year (A Ballet in Two Acts)*. Due to continued challenges of touring and global transportation, National Ballet of China is holding on international touring. The Center and the company look forward to future engagements in the coming seasons.

“As the National Cultural Center, we believe in the importance of bringing the rich and wide-range of cultures from across the world to the nation’s capital, particularly at this moment. To welcome this extraordinary company to Washington is a pleasure and privilege.” said **Deborah F. Rutter**, President of the Kennedy Center. “Many may know Alexei Ratmansky’s work from his relationship with the American Ballet Theatre, which performs annually as part of the Center’s season. His deep connection and dedication to this project gives an opportunity for audiences to support this other piece of his identity and heritage. And to the resilient artists of the company, we thank you for sharing your talent with us.”

National Ballet of China patrons will have the options of donating tickets and receiving a tax deduction for the total ticket value; exchanging tickets for an alternate show (where possible);

exchanging tickets for a Kennedy Center gift certificate, or receiving a full refund for the value of the ticket and associated fees. Further information can be obtained by calling the Advanced Sales Box Office at 202-416-8540 or via an [online form](#).

About The United Ukrainian Ballet Company

The company, based in the old building of the Hague Royal Conservatory (now converted into a refugee Centre for Ukrainians), consists of 60 dancers who sought safety from the Russian invasion of their home country. It aims to preserve Ukrainian Ballet Culture, give meaningful employment to dancers till the war is won and to keep public support for Ukraine strong through giving a personal emotional experience. Its first production is *Giselle*—a version of the world-famous ballet by Alexei Ratmansky which premiered in the Netherlands and then the London Coliseum over summer 2022. The personal journeys of the dancers and their homeland, and the urgency of the ongoing crisis, resonate powerfully with *Giselle*'s timeless themes of love, betrayal, death, and mercy.

Performance Schedule

The United Ukrainian Ballet
Giselle (Adam/Ratmansky)
With the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra

Costume and Set Design by Hayden Griffin and Peter Farmer
Lighting Design by Andrew Ellis
Conducted by Victor Oliynik

Wednesday, February 1 – Saturday, February 4 at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, February 3 – Sunday, February 5 at 1:30 p.m.

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