



# Rahvusvahelise tantsupäeva gala





Toomas Edur „Bajadeer” (Rahvusooper Estonia, 2013)  
Solor – Cristiano Principato  
Foto autor Rünno Lahesoo

# **Rahvusvahelise tantsupäeva gala / International Dance Day Gala**

**29. aprillil 2023 Rahvusooperis Estonia /  
April 29th 2023 at the Estonian National Opera**

**30. aprillil 2023 Vanemuise suures majas /  
April 30th 2023 at the Vanemuine Theatre Grand Building**

Rahvusooper Estonia ja Vanemuise teatri koostöö /  
A collaboration of Estonian National Opera and Vanemuine Theatre

**Dirigent / Conductor** Lauri Sirp

Rahvusooper Estonia sümfooniaorkester ja Vanemuise  
sümfooniaorkester / Estonian National Opera Symphony Orchestra  
and Vanemuine Symphony Orchestra

**Kunstilised juhid / Artistic Directors**

Linnar Looris ja/and Mare Tommingas

**Repetiitorid / Repetiteurs**

Linnar Looris, Jared Matthews, Marina Kesler, David Jonathan,  
Elita Erkina, Age Oks, Jelena Karpova, Rufina Noor,  
Marcos Becerra Alvarez, Fabrice Gibert, Mare Tommingas

**Valguskujundajad / Lighting Designers** Rasmus Rembel, Tõnu Eimra

**Video- ja helirežii / Video and Sound engineering by** Kalev Timuska

**Videorežii / Video engineering by** Andreas Kangur

**Helirežii / Sound engineering by** Vaiko Vreimann

**Inspitsiendid / Stage Managers** Anton Osul, Aime Roosileht

Eesti Rahvusballett ja Vanemuise balletitrupp /  
Estonian National Ballet and Vanemuine Ballet Company

Estonias toimuval galal antakse kahele rahvusballeti tantsijale üle MyFitnessi  
tantsuauhinnad ning Vanemuise balletitruppi tantsijale Goldtime'i auhind.

On April 29, the traditional MyFitness Dance Award will be given to two dancers  
of the Estonian National Ballet and the Goldtime award for a dancer from  
the Vanemuine Ballet Company.



Hea balletigurmaan,

kokku tulemiseks ei pea alati olema juubeli-laadset põhjust. Vöib lihtsalt külalised kutsuda ja koos midagi toredat teha. Meil on väga hea meel, et oleme koos ellu kutsunud ajaloolise rahvusvahelise tantsupäeva gala – Eesti kaks ainsat tipptasemel tantsuteatrit, üks ilus gala.

Täna õhtul on laval kahe peale kokku arvestatult 199-aastane Eesti ballett – 105 aastat Estonias ja 94 aastat Vanemuises kestnud otsingulise, oma töusu- ja mõõnaperioodidega balleti- ja tantsuteatri täänane pale.

Eesti ballett on oma võimalusi teadvustav, juuri hindav ja samas uuendusaldis – maailma tuultele valla. Balletteater austab oma publikut, ta intrigeerib ja ühtlasi ka harib, pakkudes tänapäeva inimesele elamus, mille sisu ja vorm on rikastunud inimkeha piiramatu vaimsuse kvintessentsis.

Meie teatrite parimad tantsijad on teie ees oma parimas vormis, tegemas seda, milleks nad on sündinud – puudutama meie köigi südameid. Täname ka molema teatri pühendunud orkestreid, kes meiega koos kunsti teevad.

Elagu ballett Eestis ja elagu meie tantsijad, õpetajad, koreograafid, meie toetajad ja meie publik!

Uute kohtumisteni Rahvusooperis Estonia ja teatris Vanemuine!

*Linnar Looris, Eesti Rahvusballeti kunstiline juht  
Mare Tommingas, Vanemuise balletijuht*

Teet Kask. „Louis XIV - kuningas Päike” (Rahvusooper Estonia, 2021)

Kuninganna - Madeline Skelly

Foto autor Jack Devant



# I vaatus

## Proloog balletist „Luikede järv“ (2021)

Helilooja Pjotr Tšaikovski  
Koreograaf Petr Zuska (Tšehhi)  
**Ingelliuk – Sayaka Nagahiro,**  
**Deemonluuk – Alain Divoux (Vanemuine)**

## Pas de deux balletist

### „Luikede järv“ (2016)

Helilooja Pjotr Tšaikovski  
Koreograaf Marius Petipa, Lev Ivanov  
**Ottilee – Ketlin Oja, Prints – William Newton (Eesti Rahvusballett)**

## Pas de deux balletist „Giselle“ (2017)

Helilooja Adolphe Adam  
Koreograaf Jean Coralli, Jules Perrot  
**Nanae Maruyama ja Sergei Upkin (Eesti Rahvusballett)**

## „Vihm“

Helilooja Philip Glass  
Koreograaf Marina Kesler  
**Raminta Rudžionyte-Jordan ja Benjamin Kyprianos (Vanemuine)**

## Stseen lühiballetist „Nähtamatud künised“ (2021)

Helilooja Niklas Paschburg  
*Journey Among Worlds*  
Koreograaf Jack Traylen (Austraalia)  
**Sayaka Nagahiro, Maria Engel, Georgia Toni Hyrkäs, Bradley Howell, Gerardo Avelar (Vanemuine)**

## „Hispaania tants“ balletist

### „Pähklipureja“ (2022)

Helilooja Pjotr Tšaikovski  
Koreograaf Mare Tommingas  
**Emily Ward ja Benjamin Newman (Vanemuine)**

## „Smile“

Heliloojad Charlie Chaplin, Nino Rota  
Koreograaf Marina Kesler  
**Leonardo Celegato ja Philippa McCann (Eesti Rahvusballett)**

## Duett balletist „Tulilind“ (2022)

Helilooja Igor Stravinski  
Koreograaf Ricardo Amarante (Brasiilia)  
**Tulilind – Yukiko Yanagi, Baso – Gus Upchurch (Vanemuine)**

## Trio balletist „Korsaar“ (2022)

Helilooja Adolphe Adam  
Koreograaf José Martinez  
**Joel Calstar-Fisher, Anna Roberta, Finn Adams (Eesti Rahvusballett)**

## „Prelüüdid“ balletiõhtust

### „Körvalised“ (1979)

Helilooja René Eespere  
Koreograaf Ülo Vilimaa  
Pianist Margus Riimaa (Vanemuine)  
**Olivia Lenssens ja William Halton (Vanemuine)**

## Duett balletist „Õhtused majad“ (2022)

Helilooja Gustav Mahler  
Koreograaf Tiit Härm  
**Jevgeni Grib, Laura Maya (Eesti Rahvusballett)**

## Coda balletist „Šahrazad“ (2022)

Helilooja Nikolai Rimski-Korsakov  
Koreograaf Ricardo Amarante (Brasiilia)  
**Gus Upchurch, Sayaka Nagahiro, Bleiddian Bazzard, Yukiko Yanagi, Caroline Maquignon, Olivia Lenssens, Selma Strandberg, Mirell Sork, Georgia Toni Hyrkäs, Alexandra Heidi Foyen, Miriam Ortega Paz, Natalie Barbis, Külli Reinkubjas, Colby Samuel Louis Catton, Yuta Irikura, Bradley Howell, Benjamin Kyprianos, Gerardo Avelar, Josef Jagger (Vanemuine)**

## VAHEAEG

# II vaatus

## „Incipience“

Helilooja Mikael Karlsson Stampede  
Koreograaf Gus Upchurch  
**Yuta Irikura, Benjamin Newman,  
Gerardo Avelar, Alain Divoux  
William Halton, Benjamin Kyprianos,  
Josef Jagger, Colby Samuel Louis  
Catton, Bradley Howell, Bleiddian  
Bazzard (Vanemuine)**

## Duett balletist „Anna Karenina“ (2020)

Helilooja Dmitri Šostakovitš  
Koreograaf Marina Kesler  
**Marta Navasardyan ja Marcus  
Nilson (Eesti Rahvusballett)**

## „Hea tuju“

Helilooja Aleksandr Glazunov  
Koreograaf David Jonathan  
**Anna Roberta, Jordan London,  
Beatriz Domingues, Abigail Mattox,  
Nattalia Tiemi, Lena Scherer, Cristina  
Krigolson, Joel Calstar-Fisher,  
Connor Williams, Luca Giovanetti,  
Pol Monsech, Hidetora Tabe, Jevgeni  
Grib (Eesti Rahvusballett)**

## „Orpheus ja Eurydike“ lühibal- letist „Metamorfoosid“ (2021)

Helilooja Antonio Vivaldi  
Koreograaf Jevgeni Grib  
**Eurydike – Alexandra Heidi Foyen,  
Orpheus – Bradley Howell,  
Bleiddian Bazzard, Gus Upchurch,  
William Halton (Vanemuine)**

## Duett balletist „Onegin“ (2007)

Helilooja Pjotr Tšaikovski  
Koreograaf Vassili Medvedjev  
**Emily Ward ja Alexander Germain  
Drew (Vanemuine)**

## „Kevadveed“

Helilooja Sergei Rahmaninov  
Koreograaf Asaf Messerer  
**Laura Maya ja William Newton (Eesti  
Rahvusballett)**

## Hopakk balletist „Tarass Bulba“

Helilooja Vassili Solovjov-Sedoi  
Koreograafia Rostislav Zahharovi järgi  
**Leonardo Celegato (Eesti  
Rahvusballett)**

## Duett balleti „Pähklipureja“ (2022)

### I vaatusest

Helilooja Pjotr Tšaikovski  
Koreograaf Mare Tommingas  
**Maria – Caroline Maquignon,  
Matthias, Pähklipureja – Colby  
Samuel Louis Catton (Vanemuine)**

## Süit balletist „Don Quijote“

Helilooja Ludwig Minkus  
Koreograafia Jared Matthews ja  
Marina Kesler Marius Petipa järgi  
**Ami Morita, Akane Ichii, Ali Urata,  
Cristiano Principato (Eesti  
Rahvusballett)**  
**Eesti Rahvusballeti trupp**

## Finaal lühiballetist

### „Metamorfoosid“ (2021)

Helilooja Max Richter *Orlando:*  
*Modular Astronomy*  
Koreograaf Jevgeni Grib  
**Alexandra Heidi Foyen, Bradley  
Howell, Yukiko Yanagi, Benjamin  
Kyprianos, Olivia Lenssens, Gus  
Upchurch, Sayaka Nagahiro, Alain  
Divoux, Mirell Sork, William Halton,  
Raminta Rudžonyte-Jordan,  
Bleiddian Bazzard (Vanemuine)**  
**Eesti Rahvusballeti trupp**

# Estonia tantsuteatri ajalugu: 105 aastat tantsukingades

19. sajandi teiseks pooleks oli Euroopa kutseline tantsukunst, eeskätt klassikaline ballett, läbi teinud sajandite pikkuse arengu. Sel ajal Eestis alanud rahvuslik ärkamisaeg ning eesti kutseliste teatrite loomine Tallinnas ja Tartus 1906. aastal löid eeldused lavatantsu kujunemiseks ja arenguks. Esimene palgaline tantsutrupp loodi Estonia teatris 1918. aastal ja sinna kuulus neli tantsijat, **Emmy Holz, Lilian Looring, Rahel Olbrei** ja **Robert Rood**. Esimese öhtut täitva balletilavastuseni jõuti Estonias 1922. aasta 28. septembril, milleks oli Léo Delibes' "Coppélia" Moskva külalislavastaja Viktorina Krigeri käe all, kes tantsis ka peaosa. Hooajal mängiti balletti üksteist korda, mis töestas balleti kui iseseisva lavažanri elujöulisust.

Aastail 1925–1944 oli trupi eesotsas **Rahel Olbrei**, kes moodustas koosseisulise tantsurühma. Esialgu kuupalka ei makstud ning punktitasu alusel tantsiti sõnalavastuste, operettide ja ooperite tantsustseenides. 1936. aastal algas Eesti balletis uus ajajärg: tantsijate väljaõpppe aluseks sai klassikaline balletiöpe. Sel perioodil joudsid esmakordselt Eestis lavale suured klassikalised balletid, nagu Adami „Giselle“, Tšaikovski „Pähklipüre“ ja „Luikede järv“.

1940. aasta alguses kuulutas Estonia teater välja balletivõistluse, kuhu **Eduard Tubin** esitas pantomiimi „Kratt“. Ballett esietendus 1943. aastal Vanemuise teatris ja aasta hiljem Estonias. 9. märtsil 1944. aastal sai teatrihoone „Krati“ etenduse ajal Punaarmee pommirünnakus täistabamuse. Rahel Olbrei meenutab: „Ei tea isegi, kes esimesena ütles, et Estonia pöleb. Jooksime üle turuplatsi, etendusest osavõtjad nii, nagu nad olid, tütarlased kergeis tantsuseelikuis, pastlad paljaste jalgade otsas. Kratt, keda tol õhtul tantsis Boris Blinov, ei päisenud enam garderoobi, samuti oli lugu Kuradiga, kes oma leekivpunases mantlis nägi töepoolest kohutav välja. Inimesed aga, kes seda parajasti juhtusid nägema, ei möelnud palju, viimseti pingul närvid olid valmis vastu võtma kõike puhta kullana. Niisiis köneldi veel mitu päeva hiljem, et Estoniat hüppas välja kurat ise.“

Pärast sõja lõppu seisid Estonia ja Vanemuise teatrihooned rusudes, sõda oli laiali pillutanud teatritrupid. Kodumaalt olid põgenenud paljud kunstiinimesed, nende hulgas ka Rahel Olbrei, kelle käe all oli aastakümne jooksul välja kujunenud kutseline balletitrupp. II maailmasõja järgsel perioodil, aastail 1944–1951 juhtis Estonia balletitruppi **Anna Ekston**. 35-liikmelisest trupist oli alles vaid 21. Trupi täiendamiseks moodustati Ekstoni eestvedamisel teatri juurde balletistudio ja lasterühm. Viimase baasil moodustus **1946. aastal** Eesti esimene riiklik balletiöppeasutus – Eesti Riiklik Koreograafiline Kool (praegune Tallinna Muusika- ja Balletikool).

**1949. aastal** liideti Estonia draama-ruhm Eesti Draamateatriga ning Estoniast sai eesti teatri ajaloos esimene muusikateater. Sellega seoses kasvasid ka nõudmised balletitantsijatele ja nende osakaal teatris.

**1954. aastal** tõi **Vladimir Burmeister** lavale legendaarse „Luikede järv“, kus Odette-Ottile kaksikrollis esines esmakordselt **Helmi Puur**, kelle partneriks oli Estonia balleti esimene prints **Artur Koit**.

**1955.–1964. aastani** töötas balleti-juhina **Viktor Päri**, kes pööras põhitähelepanu balletirepertaari kulla-fondi lavale toomisele: esmakordselt joudsid lavale Glazunovi „Raimonda“, Minkuse „Don Quijote“, Tšaikovski „Jinuv kaunitar“.

**1964. aastal** lõpetasid Moskvas GITISe kolm noort koreograafi – **Mai Murdmaa, Ira Generalova ja Enn Suve**. Originaalse ja kaasaegse mötlemisega töid nad Eesti balleti-kunsti värskeid tuuli. Juba hooajal 1962/63 joudsid lavale balletiõhtu, kus esitati Generalova lavastatud „Süümfoonilisi tantse“ Rahmaninovi muusikale, Stravinski „Lugu sõdurist“ (1963) Enn Suve lavastuses ja Mai Murdmaa „Ballett-süümfoonia“ Tambergi muusikale. **Helmi Puuri** kõrval töoris veerandsajaks aastaks (1955–1980) esitantsijana esile **Tiiu Randviir**, kelle loomupäraseselt suur anne ja head eeldused võimaldasid luua meeldejäävaid lavakujusid enam kui neljakümnes lavastuses. Töötades aastakümneid balletikoolis, on Randviir üles kasvatanud mitu põlv-konda suurepäraseid tantsijaid, kelle hulka kuuluvad **Tatjana Voronina**,

**Kaie Kõrb, Juri Jekimov, Irina Härm, Age Oks, Toomas Edur, Maria Seletskaja, Galina Lauš, Ketlin Oja** jt. 1960ndad ja 70ndad olid Eesti balletiloos murrangulised – truppi lisandunud säratave ja mitmekülgsete kunstnikuisksuste kõrval avanes Estonia balletil võimalus reisida Venemaal, Ukrainas, Lätis, Leedus, Gruusias, Soomes, Ungaris, Rootsis, Bulgaarias, Poolas jm. Truppi lisandus mitmete andekate tantsijate seas ka **Tiit Härm**. Viimane on mõjutanud oluliselt eesti balletikultuuri, luues jäätigu pühendumusega terve rea eriilmelisi rolle jõulistest lüüriliste kangelasteni. 1966–1990 oli ta Estonia teatri esitantsija, tegutsedes juba siis ka koreograafina.

**Aastail 1967–1973** tegutses Estonia peaballettmeistrina **Enn Suve**, kes tõi balletklassika kõrval kavasse paljud XX sajandi heliloojate teosed. Lavale joudsid mitmed olulised originaalkoreografiaga lavastused: Štšedrin-Bizet’ „Carmen“ ja Štšedrini „Anna Karenina“, samuti Eugen Kapi „Kullaketravad“, Prokofjevi „Tuhkatriinu“ ja Delibesi „Coppélia“. 1988. aastal sai Enn Suvest pea veerandsajaks aastaks Tallinna Ballettkooli direktor. 2012. aasta lõpul võttis direktori ametit üle **Kaie Kõrb**.

**1974. aastal** algas Estonia balletis **Mai Murdmaa** ajastu. Murdmaa keeruka koreograafilise kujundlikkusega teostes pöörati tähelepanu inimole-muse põhiprobleemidele. Murdmaad iseloomustavad pidevad otsingud ja muutumine, mis töid teda lähemale nüüdistantsule. Enim pakkus inspi-ratsiooni eesti heliloojate looming:

Tambergi „Joanna tentata“ (1971), Singi „Surma ja sünni laulud“ (1988), Pärdi muusikaga „Kuritöö ja karistus“ (1991), Tubina „Kratt“ (1999) jpt. 27 peaballettmeistri ametiaasta jooksul tõi Murdmaa Estonia lavale 17 täispikka balletilavastust ning ligi 30 lühiballetti.

Eesti taasiseseisvumise ja piiride avanemisega 1990ndate alguses avardusid ka eesti balleti võimalused – siia leidsid tee mitmed külalislavastajad läänest ja seni repertuaaris olnud Mihail Fokini, Maurice Béjart'i, George Balanchine'i ja Birgit Cullbergi teostele lisandus **Jeanne Yasko, Lázló Seregi, Martin Friedmanni, Kenneth Oberly, Robert Northi, Andy Wongi** ning **Russell Adamsoni** looming. Ka meie tantsijad said võimaluse teostada end välismaal. 1990. aastal toimus kahe Eesti tantsija jaoks töeline läbimurre – Toomas Edur võitis USAs Jacksoni balletikonkursil III koha ning koos partneri Age Oksaga ka parima balletipaari auhinna. Neist kahest said pea kahekümneks aastaks Inglise Rahvusballetti esitantsijad. Koduteatri esipaariks oli sel kümnendil **Kaie Körb ja Viesturs Jansons**, kelle körval hakkas silma paistma uus tantsijate põlvkond: **Marina Tširkova, Eve Andre-Tuga, Marika Muiste, Tiit Helimets, Eve Mutso-Oja, Galina Lauš, Luana Georg, Olga Rjabikova, Vladimir Arhangelski, Sergei Upkin, Maria Seletskaja, Linnar Looris, Artjom Maksakov** jt.

Olles vahepealsetel aastatel töötanud maailma suurimates teatrites ballett-

meistri, repetiitor, külalisõpetaja ja koreograafina, naasis **Tiit Härn** 2001. aastal Estoniasse, kus temast sai Rahvusooper Estonia balleti kunstiline juht aastani 2009. Härn tutvustas Eesti publikule tänapäeva koreograafide teoseid: Luciano Cannito „Cassandra“, Youri Vämose „Shannon Rose“ ning Mauro Bigonzetti julget nägemust Delibes'i „Coppéliast“.

**2009. aastal** asus balleti kunstilise juhi kohale rahvusvahelist karjääriteinud tunnustatud tantsija **Toomas Edur**. Eduri juhtimise all sündis **2010. aastal Eesti Rahvusballett**. 2012. aastal jõudis lavale Eduri esimene täispikk ballett „Modigliani – neetud kunstnik“ Tauno Aintsi muusikale, 2013. aastal Eduri lavastatud Minkuse „Bajadeer“, 2014 Tšaikovski „Uinuv kaunitar“, 2016 Tšaikovski „Luikede järv“ ja lühiballett „Vaikivad monoloogid“ Eesti heliloojate muusikale, 2018 täispikk ballett „Katariina I“ Tauno Aintsi muusikale ja 2019 Prokofjevi „Romeo ja Julia“.

Viimastel kümnenditel on Estonia afiššidele lisandunud sellised maailmanimed nagu **Sir Kenneth MacMillan, Jorma Elo, Nils Christe, David Nixon, Ronald Hynd, Uwe Scholz, Ben Stevenson, Wayne McGregor, Gianluca Schiavoni, John Cranko, Mary Skeaping, Serge Lifar** jt. Lisaks eelmistel kümnendil esiridadesse tõusnud tantsijatele on juhtivaid rolle tõlgendanud **Alena Shkatula, Olga Malinovskaja, Nanae Maruyama, Marta Navasardyan, Aleksandr Prigorovski, Maksim Tšukarov, Anatoli Arhangelski** jt.

Pärast eduka rahvusvahelise tantsijakarjääri lõppu asus **2019. aasta sügisel** Eesti Rahvusballeti kunstilise juhi kohale **Linnar Looris**. Looris on olnud Eesti Rahvusballeti, Birminghami Kuningliku Balletti ja Houstoni Balletti solist. Loorise ametiaja algusaastatesse jäi keeruline COVIDi pandeemias, mis puudutas raskelt kõiki maailma teatriteid. Hoolimata sellest jõudsid peagi lavale Marina Kesleri „Anna Karenina“ Šostakovitši muusikale (2020), Mai Murdmaa „6. sümfoonia“ Tšaikovski muusikale ja George Balanchine'i „Serenaad“ Tšaikovski muusikale (2020), Teet Kase algupärand „Louis XIV – kuningas Päike“ Timo Steineri ja Sander Mölderi muusikale (2021), Tiit Härm „Öhtused majad“ Gustav Mahleri muusikale (2022) ning teosed, mis esmakordsett Estonia ajaloos teatri repertuaari jõudsid: Adami „Korsaar“ (koreograaf José Martinez), Serge Lifari „Suite en blanc“ ning Katarzyna Kozielska „Open Door“ (2023).

Järjest rohkem jõub Eesti tantsukultuur ka välismaa lavadele. Eesti Rahvusballett on esinenud Leedus, Lätis, Valgevenes, Venemaal, Soomes, Rootsis, Saksamaal, Hispaanias, Ladina-Ameerikas, Itaalias, Hiinas, Süürias, Filipiinidel, Jordaanias, Kuveidis, Ungaris ja Bulgaarias, USA-s, Iirimaal, kogudes tunnustust köigil lavadel. Mitmed praegused suurepärased balletisolistid on täna õhtul teie ees: **Ami Morita, Nanae Maruyama, Marta Navasardyan, Ketlin Oja, Laura Maya, Anna Roberta,**

**Ana Gergely, Sergei Upkin, Jevgeni Grib, William Newton, Cristiano Principato, Leonardo Celegato, Akane Ichii, Marcus Nilson, Joel Calstar-Fisher, Ali Urata.**



**José Martinez. „Korsaar“  
(Rahvusooper Estonia, 2022)  
Medora - Anna Roberta  
Foto autor Rünno Lahesoo**

# Vanemuise tantsuteatri ajalugu

Vanemuise tantsuteatri sündiaasta osas on mitmeid eriarvamus, kuna lähestikku aastatel leidis aset mitu märgilist sündmust. 1935. aastal tuli Vanemuisesse tantsurühma juhiks **Ida Urbel**, kes moodustas esmakordsest kaks koosseisulist tantsurühma. 1937. aastal jõudis lavale esimene iseseisev tantsulavastus – divertiment tantsurühma tuluõhtuna. Siiski loetakse Vanemuise tantsuteatri alguseks **1939. aastat**, mil pealkirja all „Karnevalisüüt“ esitati paar pikemat kompositsiooni Pjotr Tšaikovski muusikale. Esimene terviklavastus, Cesare Pugni „Esmeralda“, jõudis publikuni 1941. aastal. Sellest alates on Vanemuises kõrvuti tegutsenud muusika-, tantsu- ja draamatrupp.

Kuigi II maailmasõja käigus Vanemuise teatrimaja hävis, õnnestus Ida Urbelil veel enne lavale tuua Eduard Tubina balett „Kratt“ (1943), mida helilooja ise dirigeeris. Sõja järel viidi etendustegevus üle Tartu Saksa teatri hoonesse (praegune Vanemuise väike maja). Ehkki paljud tantsijad olid sõjakeerises Eestist lahkinud ning väikesearvulises trupis oli vähe eriharidusega tantsijaid, jõudis keeruliste olude kiuste publiku ette Sergei Prokofjevi balett „Romeo ja Julia“ (1946).

1940. aastate teises pooles töusid Vanemuise tantsutrupi esimeseks esipaariks **Udo Väljaots ja Velda**

**Otsus**, kelle isikupärased ja südamesse minevaid tantsuroolle mee-nutatakse tänini. Ühtlasi olid nad head näitlejad ka draamalaval, Velda Otsusest sai pärast balletikarjääri lõppu suurepärane ja tunnustatud draamanäitleja. 1950. aastate lõpuks kujunesid teatri järgmiseks esipaariks **Ülo Rannaste ja Maie Maasik**. Rannaste oli Ida Urbeli õpilane ning joudis teatripraktika käigus õppides solistiosadesse. Maasikust sai pärast tantsjakarjääri lõppu Vanemuises hinnatud repetiitor.

Vanemuise balletti on läbi aastate iseloomustanud vormi ja väljendus-vahendite mitmekesisus, otsingulisus ning eksperimentaalsus. 1940. ja 1950. aastatel möjutas tantsukeelt tugevasti ühiskondlik ideooloogia, mis välistas aastateks erinevate tant-sustiilide sünteesimise ning muutis klassikalise varvastantsu peaegu ainuvõimalikuks väljendusvahendiks. 1950ndatel kahanes Vanemuise balletirühm 41 tantsijalt 18 tantsijale. Kuigi 1957. aastaks oli balletirühmas taas 24 artisti, oli see mitmekesisema ja nöödlikuma repertuaari lavale toomiseks ebapiisav ning Vanemuise muusika- ja tantsuteatri vajalikkus sattus küsimärgi alla.

Ida Urbel töötas Vanemuise peaballett-meistrina aastani 1974. Niipea kui kultuuripoliitika leebus, arendas Urbel edasi talle iseomast stilili, mis sün-teesis omavahel balletti, vabatantsu ja pantomiimi. Samas möjutasid lavastuste tantsukeelt ka trupiga liitunud klassikalise koolitusega tant-sijaid (**Elena Poznjak-Kölar, Regina**

**Tõško).** Kuigi maailmaklassika sel perioodil repertuaaris tugevalt kanda ei kinnitanud, sai 1950ndate lõpul esietendunud „Peer Gyntist“ (nimiosas Ülo Rannaste) teatri populaarsemaid tantsulavastusti.

1960ndatel toimus terves Nõukogude Liidus ning ka Eesti ühiskonnas loominguline vabanemine. Ajastule iseloomuliku vormina tõusis esile lühiballett, milles tähtsustati kaasaegset tantsukeelt ning psühholoogilist värvингut, süzeelisust jäi aga tagaplaanile. Esimesena joudis selles žanris lavale Udo Väljaotsa lavastus „Ballett-sümfoonia“. 1960. aastate märgilisemate lavastuste hulka jäavad Ida Urbeli uusversioon balletist „Kratt“ (1961, nimiosas Maie Maasik), „Orleans'i neitsi“ (1962), Sergei Rahmaninovi muusikale lavastatud „Paganini“ (1963, nimiosas Ülo Vilimaa) ning Ülo Vinteri „Kevade“ (1968). Alates 1960ndate lõpust tegutses Urbel põhiliselt ooperi- ja operetilavastajana.

1962. aastal asus Vanemuises solistina tööle Tallinna Koreografiakooli lõpetanud **Ülo Vilimaa**. 1960ndate teisel pool alustas ta ka ballettmeistrina, tuues lavale lühiballetti „Ööbik“ ning balletiõhtu „Kontrastid“ Bach, Raveli ja Brubecki muusikale. Süzeetu lühiballeti viljelemine võimaldas esile pääseda Vilimaa musikaalsusele ning heal stiilitajul.

Ehkki trupis oli selleks ajaks ka häid klassikalistele (**Elena Poznjak-Kõlar**, **Rufina Noor**, **Alla Udovenko** jt) ning Vilimaal oli klassikalise balleti haridus, domineeris Vilimaa loomingus huvi

vabaplastika vastu. Lisaks kombineeris ta tundlikult valgust, värvе, heli ja tantsu. Aastatel 1974–1997 oli Ülo Vilimaa Vanemuise peaballettmeister. 1970. aastatel töi ta lavale balletiõhtu „Käed“, Alo Pöldmäe „Merineitsi“, balletiõhtu „Kontrastid III“, René Eespere „Kõrvalised“ jm. Samuti käis sel perioodil Vanemuises mitmeid külalislavastajaid.

1981. aastal liitus Vanemuise baletitrupiga **Vassili Medvedjev**, kes asus tööle solisti ja ballettmeistrina. Medvedjevi lavastajatöödena joudsid publikuni Sergei Prokofjevi „Petja ja hunt“, François Benoist, Napoléon Henri Reberi ja Cesare Pugni „Satanilla“, Benjamin Britteni „Pagoodide prints“ jm. Lisaks tantsis Medvedjev rohkelt peaosi. Kuivõrd 1980ndad olid ühiskonnas stagnatsiooniaastad, mil kunstilisi uuendusi ei toimunud, kajastas tantsuteater kas kaasaja paineid või tegeles rahvusliku ainesega. Viimase suuna eredamat näited on Lydia Austeri „Tiina“ (1984) ja Eugen Kapi „Kalevipoeg“ (1985), mõlemad Ülo Vilimaa lavastuses.

1997. aastal sai Vanemuise balletjuhiks **Mare Tommingas**, kes alustas tantsijana teatri balletirühmas. 1989. aastal lõi Tommingas oma esimese lavastuse „Kevadised manuskriptid“ ning 1992. aastal moodustas Vanemuise juurde noorte tantsustudio, millele tuginesid mitu järgnevad lavastust. Vanemuise koosseisulistest solistidest tegid sel perioodil tipprollle **Aivar Kallaste** ja **Jelena Karpova**.

Tomminga käe all on muuhulgas lavale jõudnud Carl Orffi „Carmina

Burana“ (1991), Peeter Volkonski „Väike prints“ (1991), Sergei Prokofjevi „Romeo ja Julia“ (1993), Béla Bartóki „Imeline mandariin“ (1994), Pjotr Tšaikovski „Pähklipureja“ (1994), „Wolfgang Amade Mozart“ (2000), Edvard Griegi „Peer Gynt“ (2006), rahvusvaheline balletigala „Vanemuise ballett 70“ ning 1994. aasta lavastuse uusversioonina Pjotr Tšaikovski „Pähklipureja ehk Imeline jõuluöö“ (2022). Tantsulavastuste kõrval on Tommingas publiku ette toonud ka muusikalavastusi, nende seas Leigh' muusikali „Mees La Manchast“ (1995), Straussi opereti „Nahkhiir“ (2006) ning Tambergi ooperi „Cyrano de Bergerac“ (2023).

Mare Tommingas on balletijuhina rõhku pannud huvitava repertuaaripildi koostamisele, trupi ressursside kainele hindamisele, järjepidevusele, avatusele ning uudsuseihale. Balletitrupi repertuaaris on seega nii klassikaline ballett kui ka kaasaegsemad ning otsingulisemad tantsulavastused. Lisaks teeb balletitrupp kaasa teatri ooperi-, opereti- ja muusikallavastustes. Selle sajandi esimese poole menukamate tantsulavastuste seas on koreograaf Pär Isbergi „Pähklipureja“ (2004), Stanislav Feco „Giselle“ (2007), Vassili Medvedjevi „Onegin“ (2007), Ruslan Stepanovi „Kevade“ (2009), David Sonnenblucki „Casanova“ (2011), Janek Savolainen „Meister ja Margarita“ (2015), Giorgio Madia „Don Juan“ (2016), Mai Murdmaa „Ninasarvik“ (2017) ja „Armastuse tango ehk Aegade lõpus“ (2002/2019), Petr Zuska „Romeo ja Julia“ (2018) ja „Luikede järv“ (2021),

Wang Yuanyuan „Lageda laulud“ (2019) ja Ricardo Amarante „Tulilind / Šahrazad“ (2022).

Alates 2008. aastast on Vanemuise tantsutrupp olnud aina rahvusvahelisem. Tantsijaid Eestist, Lätist, Rootsist, Saksamaalt, Prantsusmaalt, Ühendkuningriigid, Belglast, Itaaliast, Mehnikost, Panamast, Jaapanist, USA-st, Kanadast, Venemaalt, Koreast ning Austraaliast on avardanud trupi võimalusid ning rikastanud Vanemuise tantsuteatri repertuaari. Vanemuise ballett on eelkõige meeskond, kus igaüks panustab oma isikupäraga lavastuse kunstiliste taotluste õnnestumisse.

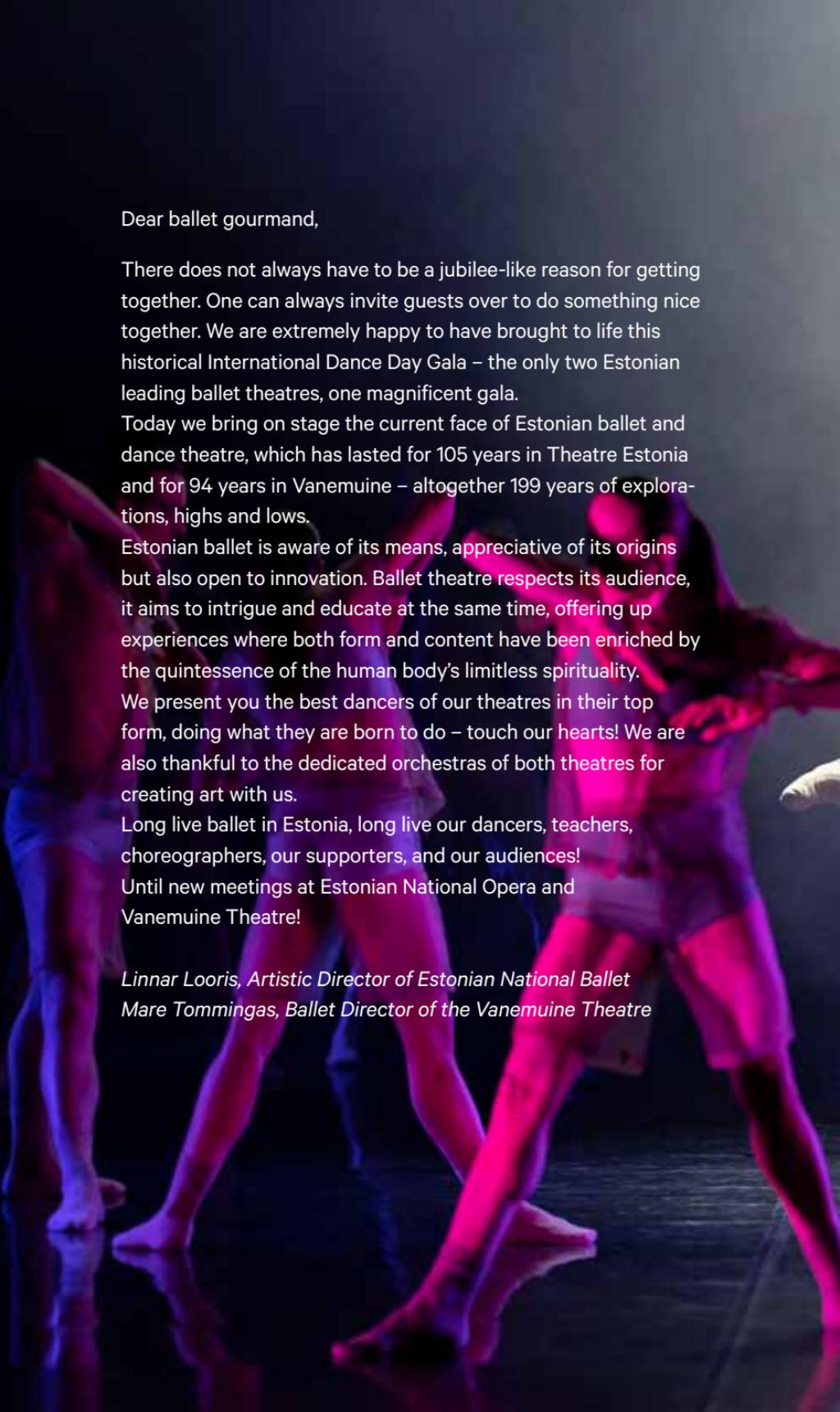
Aastail 2005–2022 hoidis Vanemuise balletitrupi kunstilist taset körgel **Hayley Jean Blackburn**, kes pühendas end jäälgitult Eesti balettile. Täna on trupi esisolendid **Alain Divoux**, **Sayaka Nagahiro**, **Gus Upchurch**, **Maria Engel**, **Alexander Germain** **Drew**, **Raminta Rudžionyte-Jordan**, **Emily Ward** ja **Yukiko Yanagi**, kellest nii mõnigi on pälvinud tunnustust Eesti teatri aastaauhindadel.

1994. aastal moodustati Vanemuise teatri juurde Vanemuise Balletistudio (praegune Vanemuise Tantsu- ja Balletikool). Kooli juhib Elena Poznjak-Kõlar. Balletikool on aktiivselt kaasatud Vanemuise repertuaari, näiteks lavastuste „Tilda ja Tolmuingel“ (2020) ja „Pähklipureja ehk Imeline jõuluöö“ (2022) näol. Teatri ja Balletikooli koostöö raames on õpilased iseseisvalt üles astunud Teatri Kodus lavastustes „Kuldvõtme-kese lugu“ (2013), „Inetu pardipoeg“

(2015), „Klaabu“ (2019) jt. Nii mõnedki koolituse läbinud noored tantsijad on hiljem liitunud Vanemuise ja Rahvusooper Estonia tantsutruppidega.

Tänane Vanemuise balletitrupp vatab tulevikku, hoides samas mälestusi au sees. Seepärast on tänavusel rahvusvahelise tantsupäeva galal publiku ees Ülo Vilimaa 1979. aastal trupi kauaaegsele solistile Rufina Noorele lavastatud „Prelüüdid“. Siin kohal tasub meenutada Vanemuise esimese balletijuhi Ida Urbeli sõnu: „**Mälestusi ma ei kirjuta, sest mind huvitab, mis on ees!**“

Petr Zuska. „Luikede järv“ (Vanemuine, 2021)  
Ingelluik – Sayaka Nagahiro, Deemonluik – Alain Divoux  
Foto autor Rünno Lahesoo



Dear ballet gourmand,

There does not always have to be a jubilee-like reason for getting together. One can always invite guests over to do something nice together. We are extremely happy to have brought to life this historical International Dance Day Gala – the only two Estonian leading ballet theatres, one magnificent gala.

Today we bring on stage the current face of Estonian ballet and dance theatre, which has lasted for 105 years in Theatre Estonia and for 94 years in Vanemuine – altogether 199 years of explorations, highs and lows.

Estonian ballet is aware of its means, appreciative of its origins but also open to innovation. Ballet theatre respects its audience, it aims to intrigue and educate at the same time, offering up experiences where both form and content have been enriched by the quintessence of the human body's limitless spirituality.

We present you the best dancers of our theatres in their top form, doing what they are born to do – touch our hearts! We are also thankful to the dedicated orchestras of both theatres for creating art with us.

Long live ballet in Estonia, long live our dancers, teachers, choreographers, our supporters, and our audiences!

Until new meetings at Estonian National Opera and Vanemuine Theatre!

*Linnar Looris, Artistic Director of Estonian National Ballet*

*Mare Tommingas, Ballet Director of the Vanemuine Theatre*



Jack Traylen. „Väikesed küünised” (Vanemuine, 2021)

Foto autor Rünno Lahesoo

# Act I

## Prologue from the ballet

### *Swan Lake (2021)*

Composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky

Choreographer Petr Zuska (Czech)

**Angel Swan – Sayaka Nagahiro,**

**Demon Swan – Alain Divoux (Vanemuine)**

## Pas de deux from the ballet

### *Swan Lake (2016)*

Composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky

Choreography by Marius Petipa, Lev Ivanov

**Ottlie – Ketlin Oja, Prince – William**

**Newton (Estonian National Ballet)**

## Pas de deux from the ballet

### *Giselle (2017)*

Composer Adolphe Adam

Choreography by Jean Coralli, Jules Perrot

**Nanae Maruyama and Sergei Upkin**

**(Estonian National Ballet)**

## “Rain”

Composer Philip Glass

Choreographer Marina Kesler

**Raminta Rudžionyte-Jordan and**

**Benjamin Kyprianos (Vanemuine)**

## A Scene from the short ballet

### *Invisible Claws (2021)*

Composer Niklas Paschburg *Journey*

*Among Worlds*

Choreographer Jack Traylen (Australia)

**Sayaka Nagahiro, Maria Engel, Georgia**

**Toni Hyrkäs, Bradley Howell, Gerardo**

**Avelar (Vanemuine)**

## “Spanish Dance” from the ballet

### *The Nutcracker (2022)*

Composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky

Choreographer Mare Tommingas

**Emily Ward and Benjamin Newman**

**(Vanemuine)**

## “Smile”

Composers Charlie Chaplin, Nino Rota

Choreographer Marina Kesler

**Leonardo Celegato and Philippa**

**McCann (Estonian National Ballet)**

## Duet from the ballet *Firebird* (2022)

Composer Igor Stravinsky

Choreographer Ricardo Amarante (Brasil)

**Firebird – Yukiko Yanagi,**

**Baso – Gus Upchurch (Vanemuine)**

## Trio from the ballet *The Corsair* (2022)

Composer Adolphe Adam

Choreographer José Martinez

**Joel Calstar-Fisher, Anna Roberta,**

**Finn Adams (Estonian National Ballet)**

## “Preludes” from the ballet evening

### *Outsiders (1979)*

Composer René Eespere

Choreography by Ülo Vilimaa

Pianist Margus Riimaa (Vanemuine)

**Olivia Lenssens and William Halton**

**(Vanemuine)**

## Duet from the ballet *Twilight*

### *Houses (2022)*

Composer Gustav Mahler

Choreographer Tiit Härn

**Jevgeni Grib, Laura Maya (Estonian**

**National Ballet)**

## Coda from the ballet

### *Scheherazade (2022)*

Composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Choreographer Ricardo Amarante (Brasil)

**Gus Upchurch, Sayaka Nagahiro,**

**Bleiddian Bazzard, Yukiko Yanagi,**

**Caroline Maquignon, Olivia Lenssens,**

**Selma Strandberg, Mirell Sork, Georgia**

**Toni Hyrkäs, Alexandra Heidi Foyen,**

**Miriam Ortega Paz, Natalie Barbis, Külli**

**Reinkubjas, Colby Samuel Louis Catton,**

**Yuta Irikura, Bradley Howell, Benjamin**

**Kyprianos, Gerardo Avelar, Josef Jagger**

**INTERMISSION**

# Act II

## “Incipience”

Composer Mikael Karlsson Stampede  
Choreographer Gus Upchurch  
**Yuta Irikura, Benjamin Newman,  
Gerardo Avelar, Alain Divoux**  
**William Halton, Benjamin Kyprianos,  
Josef Jagger, Colby Samuel Louis  
Catton, Bradley Howell, Bleiddian  
Bazzard (Vanemuine)**

## Duet from the ballet

### **Anna Karenina (2020)**

Composer Dmitri Shostakovich  
Choreographer Marina Kesler  
**Marta Navasardyan and Marcus  
Nilson (Estonian National Ballet)**

## “The Good Mood”

Composer Alexandr Glazunov  
Choreographer David Jonathan  
**Anna Roberta, Jordan London,  
Beatriz Domingues, Abigail Mattox,  
Nattalia Tiemi, Lena Scherer, Cristina  
Krigolson, Joel Calstar-Fisher,  
Connor Williams, Luca Giovanetti,  
Pol Monsech, Hidetora Tabe, Jevgeni  
Grib (Estonian National Ballet)**

## “Orpheus and Eurydice” from the short ballet **Metamorphoses (2021)**

Composer Antonio Vivaldi  
Choreographer Jevgeni Grib  
**Eurydice – Alexandra Heidi Foyen,  
Orpheus – Bradley Howell,  
Bleiddian Bazzard, Gus Upchurch,  
William Halton (Vanemuine)**

## Duet from the ballet **Onegin (2007)**

Composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky  
Choreographer Vassily Medvedev  
**Emily Ward and Alexander Germain  
Drew (Vanemuine)**

## “Spring Waters”

Composer Sergei Rachmaninoff  
Choreographer Asaf Messerer  
**Laura Maya and William Newton  
(Estonian National Ballet)**

## Hopak from the ballet **Taras Bulba**

Composer Vassili Soloviev-Sedoy  
Choreography after Rostislav Zakharov  
**Leonardo Celegato (Estonian  
National Ballet)**

## Duet from Act I of the ballet

### **The Nutcracker (2022)**

Composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky  
Choreographer Mare Tommingas  
**Maria – Caroline Maquignon, Mat-  
thias, Nutcracker – Colby Samuel  
Louis Catton (Vanemuine)**

## Suite from the ballet **Don Quixote**

Composer Ludwig Minkus  
Choreography by Jared Matthews  
and Marina Kesler after Marius Petipa  
**Ami Morita, Akane Ichii, Cristiano  
Principato (Estonian National Ballet)  
Estonian National Ballet**

## Finale from the short ballet

### **Metamorphoses (2021)**

Composer Max Richter *Orlando:  
Modular Astronomy*  
Choreographer Jevgeni Grib  
**Alexandra Heidi Foyen, Bradley  
Howell, Yukiko Yanagi, Benjamin  
Kyprianos, Olivia Lenssens, Gus  
Upchurch, Sayaka Nagahiro, Alain  
Divoux, Mirell Sork, William Halton,  
Raminta Rudžionyte-Jordan,  
Bleiddian Bazzard (Vanemuine)  
Estonian National Ballet**

## History of Estonian National Ballet: 105 Years in Dancing Shoes

By the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, European professional dance, especially classical ballet, had gone through centuries of development. The Estonian national awakening, which emerged around that time, and the resulting establishment of Estonian professional theatres in Tallinn and Tartu in 1906 made it possible for stage dance to begin to take shape and develop. The first salaried dance company was founded in the Estonia Theatre in 1918 and it included four dancers: **Emmy Holz**, **Lilian Looring**, **Rahel Olbrei** and **Robert Rood**. The first full-length ballet production was performed in the Estonia Theatre on September 28, 1922. It was *Coppélia* by Léo Delibes, directed by Victorina Kriger – a guest director from Moscow, who also starred in the leading role. The ballet was performed eleven times during the season, proving the vitality of ballet as an independent stage genre.

Between 1925 and 1944, the company was led by **Rahel Olbrei**, who formed a permanent dance troupe. No monthly salary was paid at first and the dancers performed in the dance scenes of straight plays, operettas and operas for a piece rate. In 1936, a new era began in Estonian ballet: classical ballet education became the basis of the dancers' training. The great classical works of

ballet, such as *Giselle* by Adam, *The Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake* by Tchaikovsky, were first brought on stage in Estonia during that period. At the beginning of 1940, the Estonia Theatre announced a ballet competition, to which **Eduard Tubin** submitted the pantomime ***Kratt***. The ballet premiered in 1943 in Vanemuine Theatre and a year later in the Estonia Theatre). On March 9, 1944, the theatre building received a full-force hit in the bombing raid of the Soviet Army during a performance of *Kratt*. Rahel Olbrei recalls: "I'm not even sure who was the first to say that the Estonia Theatre was on fire. We ran across the market-place, the performers as they were, girls in lightweight dance skirts, slippers on bare feet. *Kratt*, played by Boris Blinov that evening, did not make it to the dressing-room first; it was the same with the Devil, who looked indeed fearsome in his scarlet cloak. The people who happened to witness it did not stop to think; their nerves, strained to the limit, were willing to accept anything as pure gold. Hence, people were talking for days about the Devil himself leaping out of the Estonia Theatre."

When the war was over, the Estonia and Vanemuine Theatre buildings were in ruins, theatre troupes had been scattered by war. Many artistic people had fled from their home country, including Rahel Olbrei, under whose leadership a professional ballet company had developed

in the course of a decade. Theatre buildings as well as theatre culture were in need of restoration. In the period after World War II, between 1944 and 1951, the ballet company of the Estonia Theatre was led by **Anna Ekston**. Only 21 dancers had remained from the 35-member troupe. In order to replenish the company, a ballet studio and a children's troupe were established in the theatre at the initiative of Ekston. On the basis of the latter, Estonia's first public institution for ballet education was formed in **1946** – the Estonian National Choreography School (now the Tallinn Music and Ballet School).

**In 1949**, the drama troupe of the Estonia Theatre was incorporated with the Estonian Drama Theatre, and the Estonia Theatre became the first musical theatre in our country's history. As a result, the demands set for ballet dancers as well as their importance within the theatre grew.

**In 1954**, **Vladimir Burmeister** staged the legendary *Swan Lake*, with **Helmi Puur** starring for the first time in the dual role of Odette/Ottolie; her partner was the first prince of Estonian ballet **Artur Koit**.

**From 1955 to 1964**, the director of ballet was **Viktor Päri**, who focused on staging the masterpieces of ballet repertoire: *Raymonda* by Glazunov, *Don Quijote* by Minkus and *The Sleeping Beauty* by Tchaikovsky were brought on the stage for the first time.

**In 1964**, three young choreographers – **Mai Murdmaa, Ira Generalova** and **Enn Suve** – graduated from GITIS (University of Theatre Arts) in Moscow. With their original and modern way of thinking, they breathed new life into Estonian ballet. Already in the 1962/63 season, a ballet evening took place that featured Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances* adapted to the stage by Generalova, Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* (1963) directed by Enn Suve, and Tamberg's *Ballet Symphony* adapted for the stage by Mai Murdmaa. In addition to **Helmi Puur, Tiiu Randvīir** emerged for a quarter of a century (1955–1980) as a first dancer; her great natural talent and excellent aptitude gave rise to memorable stage characters in more than forty productions. Randvīir, who has worked at the ballet school for decades, has brought up several generations of terrific dancers, including **Tatyana Voronina, Kaie Körb, Irina Härm, Age Oks, Maria Seletskaya, Galina Laush, Ketlin Oja** and many others.

The 1960s and 70s were revolutionary in the history of Estonian ballet – apart from the addition of some brilliant and versatile artistic personalities to the company, the Estonia Theatre ballet company received the opportunity to tour Russia, Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia and Uzbekistan. The stages of Finland, Hungary, Sweden, Bulgaria, Poland, etc. followed. Among many talented dancers, **Tiit Härm** was added to the

company. The latter has significantly influenced the Estonian ballet culture by creating a variety of roles from vigorous heroes to lyrical ones with uncompromising dedication. Tiit Härm began his ballet training in Tallinn in 1957 and went on to study at the Vaganova Ballet Academy in Leningrad (Saint Petersburg). In the years 1966–1990 he served as the first dancer as well as choreographer at the Estonia Theatre.

**Between 1967 and 1973**, the head ballet master of the Estonia Theatre was Enn Suve, who introduced a number of works by 20<sup>th</sup> century composers into the programme in addition to ballet classics. Several important productions with original choreography made it onto the stage: *Carmen* by Shchedrin/Bizet and *Anna Karenina* by Shchedrin, as well as *The Gold Spinners* by Eugen Kapp, *Cinderella* by Prokofiev, and *Coppélia* by Delibes. In 1988, Enn Suve became the director of Tallinn Ballet School for nearly a quarter of a century. At the end of 2012, **Kaie Kõrb** succeeded him as the director.

**In 1974**, the era of **Mai Murdmaa** commenced in Estonian ballet. Murdmaa's works, typified by a complex choreographic figurativeness, focused on the basic problems of human nature. Murdmaa was characterised by constant seeking and changing, which drew her closer to modern dance. Most of all she was inspired by the works of Estonian composers: Joanna Tentata (1971)

by Tamberg, *The Songs of Death and Birth* (1988) by Sink, *Crime and Punishment* (1991) to music by Pärt, Kratt (1999) by Tubin, etc. In the course of her 27 years as the head ballet master, Murdmaa brought 17 full-length and nearly 30 short ballets onto the stage.

With the restoration of Estonia's independence and the opening of the borders in the early 1990s, the possibilities of Estonian ballet also broadened – a number of guest directors found their way here from the West, and the works of **Jeanne Yasko, László Seregi, Martin Friedmann, Kenneth Oberly, Robert North, Andy Wong and Russell Adamson** were added to those by Mikhail Fokin, Maurice Béjart, Auguste Bournonville, George Balanchine and Birgit Cullberg that had already figured in the repertoire. Many of our dancers got a chance to show their talent abroad. In 1990, a real breakthrough occurred for two Estonian dancers – Thomas Edur won the 3rd place at the International Ballet Competition in Jackson and together with his partner Agnes Oaks they won the best ballet duet prize. They became the principal dancers at the English National Ballet for nearly two decades. The premiere dancers of our home theatre consisted of **Kaie Kõrb** and **Viesturs Jansons** in that decade. A new generation of dancers emerged: **Marina Chirkova, Eve Andre-Tuga, Marika Muiste, Tiit Helimets, Eve**

**Mutso-Oja, Galina Laush, Luana Georg, Olga Ryabikova, Vladimir Arhangelski, Sergei Upkin, Maria Seletskaja, Linnar Looris, Artyom Maksakov** etc.

In 2001, one of Estonia's most famous male ballet dancers, **Tiit Härm**, after having also worked as a ballet master, repetiteur, guest teacher and choreographer in world renowned theatres, returned to the Estonian National Opera, where he served as the artistic director of the ballet company at the Estonian National Opera until 2009. Härm introduced Estonian audiences to various works by contemporary choreographers: *Cassandra* by Luciano Cannito, *Shannon Rose* by Youri Vámos and the bold interpretation of Mauro Bigonzetti of *Coppélia* by Delibes.

**In 2009**, the post of the artistic director of ballet was filled by an internationally renowned dancer **Thomas Edur**, whose career has taken him to many famous stages. **In 2010, Estonian National Ballet** was established. Edur's full length and one act productions include Edur's first full-length ballet *Modigliani – the Cursed Artist* (2012) to the music of Tauno Aints, Minkus' *La Bayadère* (2013), Tchaikovsky's *The Sleeping Beauty* (2014), a short ballet *Silent Monologues* (2016) to the music of Estonian composers, Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* (2016), a full-length ballet *Catherine I* (2018) to the music of Tauno Aints and Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* (2019).

Over the past decade, several world-renowned names have been added to the posters of the Estonian National Opera: **Sir Kenneth MacMillan, Jorma Elo, Nils Christe, David Nixon, Ronald Hynd, Uwe Scholz, Ben Stevenson, Wayne McGregor, George Balanchine, Gianluca Schiavoni, John Cranko, Mary Skeaping, Serge Lifar** etc. In addition to the principal dancers of the past decades, leading roles have been interpreted by Alena Shkatula, Olga Malinovskaja, Nanae Maruyama, Marta Navasardyan, Aleksandr Prigorovski, Maksim Tšukarjov, Anatoli Arhangelski among others.

After successful international dancing career, **in autumn 2019**, the position of Artistic Director of the Estonian National Ballet was filled by **Linnar Looris**. Looris was the leading soloist at Estonian National Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet and Houston Ballet. Looris has led Estonian National Ballet through the Covid pandemic while bringing in the works from choreographers like Marina Kesler (*Anna Karenina* to the music of Shostakovich, 2020), Mai Murdmaa (*Tchaikovsky's 6<sup>th</sup> Symphony*) and George Balanchine (*Serenade* to the music of Tchaikovsky, 2020), Teet Kask (*Louis XIV – the Sun King* to the music of Timo Steiner and Sander Mölder, 2021), Tiit Härm (*Twilight Houses*

the first time in Estonian National Ballet's history: Adam's *The Corsaire* (choreographer José Martinez), Serge Lifar's *Suite en blanc* and Katarzyna Kozielska's *Open Door*.

Estonian dance culture is making more and more appearances on international stages. The Estonian National Ballet has given performances in Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Latin America, Italy, China, Ukraine, Russia, Syria, the Philippines, Jordan, Kuwait, Hungary, Bulgaria and USA, Ireland, winning international acclaim wherever they perform.

Many of the current ballet stars of Estonian National Ballet, **Ami Morita, Nanae Maruyama, Marta Navasardyan, Ketlin Oja, Laura Maya, Anna Roberta, Ana Gergely, Sergei Upkin, Jevgeni Grib, William Newton, Cristiano Principato, Leonardo Celegato, Akane Ichii, Marcus Nilson, Joel Calstar-Fisher, Ali Urata**, will be on stage tonight.



Jean Coralli, Jules Perrot „Giselle” (Rahvusooper Estonia, 2017)

Albrecht - Sergei Upkin, Giselle - Ketlin Oja

Foto autor Rünno Lähesoo

## History of the Vanemuine Dance Theatre

There are differing opinions regarding the birth year of Vanemuine dance theatre, as several significant events occurred in the span of a few years. In 1935, **Ida Urbel** started working as the head of the dance troupe in Vanemuine, and for the first time two permanent dance groups were formed. The first independent dance performance, a divertissement for the benefit of the dance troupe was brought on stage in 1937. Nevertheless, it is agreed upon that Vanemuine dance theatre began **in 1939**, when a few longer compositions for Tchaikovsky's music were performed under the title *A Carnival Suite*. The first complete production, Cesare Pugni's *Esmeralda*, reached the audience in 1941. Ever since, Vanemuine has been a home for the three genres of music, dance and drama.

The theatre building was destroyed in World War II. However, shortly before that Ida Urbel succeeded in bringing on stage Eduard Tubin's ballet *Kratt (Sparktail)* (1943), conducted by Tubin himself. After the war, Vanemuine started working in the building of Tartu German Theatre (now the Vanemuine Theatre Small Building). Many dancers had left Estonia in the turmoil of the war and the remaining troupe featured very few professional dancers. Despite the complications, 1946 saw the premiere of Sergey Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet*.

In mid-1940s, **Udo Väijaots** and **Velda Otsus** became the first leading dancers at Vanemuine. Their dance roles are still remembered today as remarkably original and always going to the heart. Both were also good drama actors. After her ballet career, Velda Otsus became an excellent and esteemed drama actor. By the end of the 1950s, the new leading ballet stars were **Ülo Rannaste** and **Maie Maasik**. Rannaste was Ida Urbel's student and grew into a solo artist through the course of working in the theatre. Maasik proceeded to become an esteemed repetitor after her career as a dancer.

Over the years, ballet in Vanemuine has been characterised by a richness in form and in means of expression, for its searching and even experimental quality. In the 1940s and 1950s the language of dance was strongly influenced by the social ideology of the time, which excluded the synthesis of various dancing styles for many years, thus turning the classical toe dancing into nearly the only possible means of expression. In the 1950s, the Vanemuine ballet troupe diminished from 41 dancers to 18 dancers. Although by 1957 the troupe consisted of 24 artists, it was insufficient for staging a more demanding and diverse repertoire, leading to the questioning of the overall necessity of dance and music theatre in Vanemuine.

Ida Urbel worked as the head ballet master of Vanemuine until 1974.

As soon as cultural politics became more lenient, Urbel continued developing her unique style which combined ballet, free dance and pantomime. At the same time, the classical training of recently joined dancers (**Elena Poznjak-Kölar, Regina Töško**) equally had an impact on the language of dance in the productions. The great classics never felt very much at home in Vanemuine's repertoire in this period. Despite that, the late 1950s' production of *Peer Gynt* with Ülo Rannaste in the titular role became one of Vanemuine's most popular dance productions.

The 1960s saw a creative liberation in the entire Soviet Union, including Estonia. The short ballet rose to the forefront as the characteristic form of the era. It prioritised a modern language of dance and psychological colouring, the importance of plot was secondary. *Ballett-sümfonia* (*The Ballet Symphony*) by Udo Väljaots was the first short ballet to premiere in Vanemuine. The noteworthy productions of the 1960s include Ida Urbel's new version of *Kratt (Sparktail)* (1961, Maie Maasik in the lead role), *The Maid of Orleans* (1962), the ballet staged for Sergey Rachmaninoff's music, titled *Paganini* (1963, Ülo Vilimaa in the lead role), and Ülo Vinter's *Kevade (Spring)* (1968). After the 1960s, Urbel mostly continued as an opera and operetta producer.

In 1962 Ülo Vilimaa, a graduate from the Tallinn Choreography School, joined Vanemuine as a soloist. In the second half of the 1960s he also started working as ballet master, staging the short ballet *Nightingale* and the ballet night *Contrasts* for the music of Bach, Ravel and Brubeck. The short ballet format without a plot effectively highlighted Vilimaa's musicality and good sense of style.

Although by that time the company included some excellent classical dancers (**Elena Poznjak-Kölar, Rufina Noor, Alla Udovenko** and others) and Vilimaa had an education in classical ballet, he was highly interested in free plastic dance. Additionally, he combined light, colour, sound and dance with great sensitivity. In 1974–1997 Ülo Vilimaa was the head ballet master in Vanemuine. In the 1970s he staged a ballet night titled *Käed (The Hands)*, Alo Pöldmäe's *Merineitsi (Mermaid)*, the ballet night *Contrasts III*, René Eespere's *Körvalised (The Outsiders)*, etc. The Vanemuine ballet company also worked with various guest directors at the time.

In 1981, **Vassily Medvedev** joined the ballet company as soloist and ballet master. He performed in numerous leading roles but also staged several productions, including Sergey Prokofiev's *Peter and Wolf*, François Benoist, Napoléon Henri Reber and Cesare Pugni's *Satanilla*, Benjamin Britten's *The Prince of the Pagodas*, etc. As the 1980s were a period of

stagnation in society, with no creative innovations taking place, dance theatre either depicted the oppression of the current times or turned to national themes. Lydia Auster's *Tiina* (1984) and Eugen Kapp's *Kalevipoeg (The Son of Kalev)* (1985), both staged by Ülo Vilimaa, are memorable examples of the latter trend.

In 1997, Mare Tommingas became the ballet master of Vanemuine. Starting off as a dancer in the ballet company, she staged her first production *Kevadised manuskriptid (Spring Manuscripts)* in 1989. In 1992, she founded a dance studio for young people in Vanemuine and staged many of her subsequent productions with the studio's dancers. Among the professional soloists of Vanemuine, **Aivar Kallaste** and **Jelena Karpovalova** performed some of their best roles during this period. Tommingas's stage productions include Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* (1991), Peeter Volkonski's *Little Prince* (1991), Sergey Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* (1993), Béla Bartók's *The Miraculous Mandarine* (1994), Pyotr Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* (1994), Wolfgang Amade Mozart (2000), Edvard Grieg's *Peer Gynt* (2006), the international ballet gala *Vanemuine Ballet 70*, and Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker – A Miraculous Christmas Eve* (2022) as the new version of her 1994 production. In addition to dance productions, Tommingas has staged several music productions, such as Leigh's

musical *Man of La Mancha* (1995), Strauss's operetta *Die Fledermaus* (2006), and Tamberg's opera *Cyrano de Bergerac* (2023).

As ballet master, Mare Tommingas has put much emphasis on creating an interesting repertoire and fairly assessing the company's resources, as well as on consistency, openness and a drive for innovation. The company's repertoire thus includes both classical ballet and more modern and experimental works. Additionally, the ballet troupe takes part in the theatre's productions of operas, operettas and musicals. Some of the more successful dance productions of the beginning of this century are Pär Isberg's *The Nutcracker* (2004), Stanislav Feco's *Giselle* (2007), Vassily Medvedev's *Onegin* (2007), Ruslan Stepanov's *Spring* (2009), David Sonnenbluck's *Casanova* (2011), Jane Savolainen's *The Master and Margarita* (2015), Giorgio Madia's *Don Juan* (2016), Mai Murdmaa's *The Rhinoceros* (2017) and *Tango of Love or At the End of Time* (2002/2019), Petr Zuska's *Romeo and Juliet* (2018) and *Swan Lake* (2021), Wang Yuanyuan's *Moorland Elegies* (2019), and Ricardo Amarante's *Firebird / Scheherazade* (2022).

Since 2008, Vanemuine's ballet company has been more international than ever. Dancers from Estonia, Latvia, Sweden, Germany, France, the UK, Belgium, Italy, Mexico, Panama, Japan, the USA, Canada, Russia, Korea and Australia have

expanded the company's opportunities and enriched the repertoire of Vanemuine dance theatre. The ballet company is above all a team where each member contributes with their uniqueness to the success of a performance's artistic ambitions.

Much of Vanemuine ballet company's artistic quality in 2005–2022 is owed to **Hayley Jean Blackburn** who devoted herself wholly to Estonian ballet. Today, the company's first soloists are **Alain Divoux, Sayaka Nagahiro, Gus Upchurch, Maria Engel, Alexander Germain Drew, Raminta Rudžionyte-Jordan, Emily Ward and Yukiko Yanagi**. Many among them have earned acclaim at the Estonian Theatre Annual Awards.

In 1994, the Vanemuine Ballet Studio (today's Vanemuine Dance and Ballet School) was founded in Vanemuine Theatre, with Elena Poznjak-Kölar as the head of school. The ballet school is actively engaged in the theatre's repertoire, for instance in the productions of *Tilda and the Dust Angel* (2020) and *The Nutcracker or A Miraculous Christmas Eve* (2022). The collaboration of the theatre and the ballet school has also seen the students giving independent performances in the productions for Teatri Kodu, such as *The Story of the Golden Key* (2013), *The Ugly Duckling* (2015), *Klaabu* (2019), and others. Several of the school's young graduates have proceeded to join the ballet companies in Vanemuine and the Estonian National Opera.

The Vanemuine ballet company of today looks into the future but honours memories at the same time. For that reason, this year's International Dance Day gala presents to the audience Ülo Vilimaa's *Preludes*, staged in 1979 for the company's longstanding soloist Rufina Noor. To recall the words of Vanemuine's first ballet master Ida Urbel: "I will not write memoirs because I'm interested in what will come!"



Jevgeni Grib. „Metamorfoosid”  
(Vanemuine, 2021)  
Foto autor Rünno Lahesoo

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Eesti Rahvusballeti kunstiline juht /

Artistic Director of the Estonian National Ballet **Linnar Looris**

Kunstilise juhi assistent / Assistant to the Artistic Director **Jared David Matthews**

Balletti koordinaator / Ballet Coordinator **Kaire Kasetalu**

Repetiitorid / Repetiteurs **Katrin Kivimägi, Marina Kesler, Luana Georg,**

**Daniel Kirsipuu, David Jonathan, Elita Erkina**

Kontsertmeistrid / Pianists-Repetiteurs **Yuliya Braun, Olena Ilnitska, Vladima Jeremjan**

Etenduse juht/ Stage Manager **Anton Osul**

Esitantsijad / Principal Dancers **Ami Morita, Alena Shkatula, Jevgeni Grib, Sergei Upkin**

Solistid / Soloists **Nanae Maruyama, Laura Maya, Marta Navasardyan, Ketlin Oja, Anna Roberta, Madeline Skelly, Andrea Fabbri, Patrick Foster, Francesco Piccinini, Cristiano Principato, Ali Urata, William Newton**

Nooremsolistid / Demi Soloists **Joel Calstar-Fisher, Leonardo Celegato,**

**Ana Maria Gergely, Nikos Gkentsef, Akane Ichii, Marcus Nilson**

Naistantsijad / Female Corps de Ballet **Nadežda Antipenko, Beatriz Domingues,**

**Marjana Fazullina, Kim Jana Hügi, Christina Krigolson, Triinu Leppik-Upkin,**

**Karina Laura Leškin, Mia Li, Jordan London, Abigail Mattox, Philippa McCann,**

**Gili Neria, Marianna Odinets, Ellinor Piirimäe, Maarja Praks, Oksana Saar, Lena Scherer,**

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Kontsertmeistrid / Concertmasters **Olga Kadajane, Andre Hinn**

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**Rufina Noor, Jelena Karpova, Rita Dolgihh, Fabrice Gibert**

Taastuspedagoog / Physiotherapist **Marika Aidla**

Esisolistid / First Soloists **Raminta Rudžionyte-Jordan, Sayaka Nagahiro,**

**Maria Engel, Alain Divoux, Alexander Germain Drew, Gus Upchurch**

Solistid / Soloists **Yukiko Yanagi, Olivia Lenssens, Emily Ward,**

**Georgia Toni Hyrkäs, Benjamin Kyriani, Gerardo Avelar**

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