

Detroit Opera

State Ballet of Georgia to perform Balanchine-themed program at Detroit Opera House, April 29–30



The State Ballet of Georgia will perform George Balanchine's *Serenade* at Detroit Opera House, April 29 and 30. Photo courtesy State Ballet of Georgia

DETROIT, April 11, 2023—The State Ballet of Georgia will make its Detroit Opera House debut with performances on April 29 and 30. Since 2004, ballet superstar **Nina Ananiashvili** has been artistic director of the company, based in Tbilisi, Georgia. The Detroit program will include two works choreographed by the late **George Balanchine**—*Serenade* and *Concerto Barocco*—plus **Yuri Possokhov**'s neoclassical ballet *Sagalobeli*. Guest conductor Gavriel Heine will lead the **Detroit Opera Orchestra** in live performances of music by Tchaikovsky and Bach in the Balanchine ballets. Possokhov's *Sagalobeli*, featuring elements of Georgian folk dance, has become a signature work for the company since it was first performed in 2008; the Detroit performances will feature recorded Georgian folk music.

The State Ballet of Georgia tours internationally yet is not often seen in the United States. Artistic director Nina Ananiashvili, born in Tbilisi, Georgia, is former prima ballerina with Russia's Bolshoi Ballet and the American Ballet Theatre. "We really love to dance

Balanchine—I mean, we are Georgian, and these ballets are masterpieces,” says Nina Ananiashvili (*Pointe Magazine*). “People love Possokhov’s *Sagalobeli* everywhere we perform it. It’s also very important to me to present my country, our culture, our company.... I can’t wait until we’re there, sharing our love and art with the United States.”

George Balanchine co-founded New York City Ballet and transformed American dance. Balanchine (original name Georgy Melitonovich Balanchivadze) was of Georgian heritage, and is considered to be one of the most influential choreographers of the 20th century. Early in his career, he choreographed for Diaghilev's famous Ballets Russes in Europe, but ultimately came to America and with Lincoln Kirstein co-founded the New York City Ballet where he developed his neoclassical style. Balanchine’s 1934 four-movement masterpiece, *Serenade*, set to Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s *Serenade for Strings*, was the first ballet Balanchine choreographed in the United States. Balanchine’s three-movement *Concerto Barocco*, set to Johann Sebastian Bach’s Concerto in D minor for Two Violins, BWV 1043, was one of three ballets at the first New York City Ballet performance on October 11, 1948.

PERFORMANCE DETAILS

State Ballet of Georgia

Saturday, April 29, 7:30 pm

Sunday, April 30, 2:30 pm

Detroit Opera House

Tickets from \$29 at detroitopera.org or 313.237.7464

Pre-concert talks: Pre-concert talks will take place at Detroit Opera House one hour before each performance.

Masterclass: Detroit Opera will offer a ballet master class with State Ballet of Georgia on Saturday, April 29, from 11am to 12:30pm. The class for intermediate–advanced level dancers ages 13 and up will take place at the Margo V. Cohen Center for Dance in the Ford Center for Learning at the Detroit Opera House. The class is free with a ticket to either performance, or \$25 without a ticket. [Pre-registration is required.](#)

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit the Detroit Opera House [website](#).

Detroit Opera’s spring dance sponsor is Ford Motor Company Fund.

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