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Cincinnati Ballet presents

A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS
The adventures of Aladdin, Sinbad & Ali Baba

Choreography by Eldar Aliev
Music by Fikret Amirov
Set Design by Simon Pastukh

ARABIAN MASTERPIECE SPARKS EXOTIC BALLET:

CHOREOGRAPHER AND COMPOSER SHARE HOMETOWN

CINCINNATI, OH – March 6, 2008 – March 28 – 30, Cincinnati Ballet presents the spectacular full-length ballet, *A Thousand and One Nights: The adventures of Aladdin, Sinbad & Ali Baba*, at The Aronoff Center's Procter and Gamble Hall.

A Thousand and One Nights relates the tale of Scheherazade, a mysterious young woman who wins her life and the heart of a Persian sultan with her irresistible stories.

Choreographed by internationally renowned Eldar Aliev, the colorful ballet features extravagant costumes and sets built in St. Petersburg, Russia, and extremely athletic duets in the Russian style for the main characters

By turns funny, frightening and romantic, the ballet, one of several composed by Fikret Amirov, provides wonderful moments for breathtaking partnering in the athletic Russian style.

"The story is built on the conflict between the leading characters," says Aliev,

The all-powerful Sultan Shakhriar loves his beautiful wife Nurida, but she is faithless, and he finds her in the hands of his favorite slave after he returns from hunting.

Shakhriar makes the terrible decision to kill all the women in his kingdom because of Nurida's betrayal.

As the executions are taking place, Shakhriar encounters a mysterious stranger. "In the middle of this nightmare, she appears like a bird from paradise. She is so beautiful . . . and different, as though she came from another planet," says Aliev.

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“As the execution of Scheherazade is about to take place, the Sultan stops it.

“The first pas de deux between the Sultan and Scheherazade is the expression of their thoughts . . . something clicks between them,” says Aliev.

“Scheherazade intuits that she can save herself, and all the other women of the kingdom, by distracting the enraged Sultan.

So she tells him he doesn’t understand women, and that she will tell him stories to illustrate her point.

“Of course, we couldn’t do 1001 stories,” says Aliev, “so I chose three, symbolizing beauty, love and wisdom, the three best qualities of women.”

THE STORIES

Sinbad encounters an enchanted bird who is actually a maiden under the enchantment of the great evil bird, Roc, in this tale about a woman’s **beauty**. In a daring episode, Sinbad releases her from the spell, and she is turned back into human form.

Love is highlighted in the tale of Aladdin and his magic lamp. It is forbidden to look upon the princess Budur, but the infatuated Aladdin sneaks a peak. An evil and vengeful magician seizes Aladdin’s magic lamp, and separates the lovers. The resourceful Aladdin steals it back, and wins the princess.

In the final tale, representing **wisdom**, Ali Baba’s wife Marjana rescues her husband from the inept thieves by distracting them with her charms.

ARABIAN MASTERPIECE SPARKS EXOTIC BALLET

The history of the ballet, derived from a masterpiece of Arabian literature, is fascinating.

The stories, discovered in the year 1000, are anonymous, and seem to be Persian, but many are set in other countries, especially India.

Today we know them from Sir Richard Burton’s 19th century translation to English.

For choreographer Eldar Aliev, the former Kirov ballet principal dancer who has performed in over 30 countries, illustrating the stories was irresistible, especially since the powerful score by Fikret Amirov (1922-84) was written specifically for a full-length ballet.

CHOREOGRAPHER AND COMPOSER SHARE HOMELAND

Both choreographer and composer come from the Republic of Azerbaijan, located in the South Caucasus region of Eurasia, at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia. A place of contrasts, Azerbaijan has 9 of 11 existing climate zones. The region resembles a giant tray with sharp, mountainous edges sloping to the Caspian Sea, the largest salt water lake on the planet. Inhabitants and invaders across the centuries include Caucasians, Medes, Scythians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Mongols and Russians, among others.

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Amirov's music is strongly influenced by his homeland's folk melodies, and has been performed by renowned symphonic orchestras throughout the world. His father was a famous singer from the Azerbaijan region, who composed and played tar, a mandolin-type stringed instrument with a hint of the balalaika. You can hear this exotic instrument throughout the ballet's score.

About Cincinnati Ballet Webisodes

Cincinnati Ballet Webisodes, which premiered during the 2006-07 season to popular acclaim, aim to propel fun-loving young professionals to the web stratosphere in starring roles with professional dancers. **Wednesday, March 19 at 6:30 pm**, a mix of cast members and the general public unite to party and view the newest hilarious webisode at BlackFinn Restaurant and Saloon, 19 East 7th Street. 1001 stories? OK, just three but you have to figure out which one is true! Join our dancers back at the loft where they each have a tall tale to tell. Decide who is telling the truth—then vote at the party or at www.cincinnatiaballet.com, and get \$10 off your ticket to *A Thousand and One Nights*.

About Cincinnati Ballet's After Hours at the Ballet Barre

After Hours at the Ballet Barre occurs every Thursday one week before production week. **Thursday, March 20, 2008**, watch Cincinnati Ballet dancers rehearse a work from *A Thousand and One Nights* for an hour beginning at 5:15 pm; afterwards mingle at an informal reception and meet the dancers at The Cincinnati Ballet Center, Mickey Jarson Kaplan Performance Studio, 1555 Central Parkway, Cincinnati, OH 45214. Admission: \$5; reservations recommended. 513-621-5219.

About Cincinnati Ballet After Parties

Enjoy a night at the ballet, then mingle, meet the dancers and enjoy complimentary *hors d'oeuvres* and a cash bar during the *After Parties*, just across the street at the Contemporary Arts Center.

About Cincinnati Ballet's Footnotes, a Pre-performance Discussion

Have you ever wanted to know the story behind a particular ballet or what was going through the choreographer's mind? Cincinnati Ballet's free pre-performance talk, *Footnotes*, is the perfect way to find out. You'll have the opportunity to hear background information, learn interesting facts and ask questions in a casual setting. *Footnotes* discussions occur forty-five minutes before every performance at the Aronoff Center Stage Room (entrance across from the Westin Art Gallery), and are led by choreographers, designers and Cincinnati Ballet directors and staff.

About Cincinnati Ballet

For 44 years, Cincinnati Ballet has been the cornerstone professional ballet company of the Cincinnati tri-state area, presenting a mix of full-length and mixed repertory ballets, regularly with live orchestral accompaniment. The company has maintained an annual *Nutcracker* series since 1974. During 2006-07, Cincinnati Ballet celebrated the tenth anniversary season of Artistic Director Victoria Morgan, who has choreographed extensively for the company, and attracted an intriguing mix of renowned choreographers to challenge her dancers in well-received world premieres. Under Morgan's guidance, Cincinnati Ballet has also established a national and international presence and enjoyed ground-breaking collaborations. The Otto M. Budig Academy, the official school of Cincinnati Ballet, is dedicated to developing dancers with a strong classical technique and unified style.

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WHAT: Cincinnati Ballet presents

A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Choreography by Eldar Aliev

Music by Fikret Amirov

WHEN: 03/28/08 – 03/30/08

Friday, 03/28/08 8:00pm

Saturday, 03/29/08 2:00pm

Saturday, 03/29/08 8:00pm

Sunday, 03/30/08 2:00pm

WHERE: The Aronoff Center
650 Walnut Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

TICKETS: \$21 - 66; at The Cincinnati Ballet Office at 513-621-5282, or online at www.cincinnatiaballet.com.

Cincinnati Ballet's 2007-2008 season is generously sponsored by:

The Otto M. Budig Family Foundation and the Larry and Rhonda Sheakley Family Foundation.

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