

# Ballet Raises Funds For Humanitarian Aid in Ukraine

“Nadiya Ukraine: A Ballet for Ukraine Relief and Recovery” will take place at 2 and 7 p.m. Oct. 27 at The Sharon.

By TAYLOR STRICKLAND  
Daily Sun Senior Writer

Amid the devastation of Russia’s ongoing war in Ukraine, the National Ballet of Ukraine is keeping the country’s arts heritage alive.

The National Ballet of Ukraine, one of the world’s top ballet companies, comes to The Villages as part of their premiere tour of the United States. Joining them are the historic Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, featuring traditional Ukrainian music and costumes. The tour, “Nadiya Ukraine: A Ballet for Ukraine Relief and Recovery,” marks the company’s first visit to the U.S. since the dissolution of the USSR.

“This tour represents much more than a typical dance performance,” said Ukrainian ambassador Oksana Markarova, who was appointed as ambassador to the U.S. by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in 2021. “It is a symbol of the resilience and bravery of the embattled Ukrainian people, and an opportunity for Ukraine to celebrate

its rich and remarkable cultural legacy. The dancers are not just showcasing Ukrainian culture, they are preserving it.”

Even more importantly, Markarova said, the tour will raise urgently needed funds to help the embattled citizens of her home country as they continue to combat the Russian military’s invasion.

Proceeds from the tour, merchandise and individual donations go to Humanite Peace Collective, a nonprofit organization working directly with Ukrainian families to provide crisis relief. The tour is also endorsed by the Ukrainian government and Ukraine House in Washington, D.C.

“Ongoing violence across Eastern Ukraine leaves huge humanitarian gaps in its wake — gaps that most affect children, elderly people, the poor and displaced,” said Jeremy Courtney, CEO and one of Humanite’s co-founders. “There are still huge parts of the country without regular access to food, water, electricity, medicine and shelter.”

Humanite was officially established in the winter of 2022, but its founders have been working on humanitarian efforts together for nearly two decades. Most of them are veterans and survivors who have experienced



The National Ballet of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers teamed up with Humanite Peace Collective to help Ukrainian families in need. To raise money and awareness, the two dance companies will perform “Nadiya Ukraine: A Ballet for Ukraine Relief and Recovery” at 2 and 7 p.m. Oct. 27 at The Sharon.

war and displacement firsthand.

When the Russian invasion of Ukraine happened, Courtney said, Humanite’s founders realized they had an opportunity to mobilize and help those most affected by the war. Knowing that news coverage can move on quickly, they brainstormed how best to keep Americans interested in donating to Ukraine on a long-term basis. The partnership with the National Ballet of Ukraine was their solution.

Instead of a singular ballet, the National Ballet of Ukraine

will perform highlights from its classical repertoire that were selected to showcase and preserve Ukrainian culture and identity. The program is called “Nadiya Ukraine,” which translates to “Hope of Ukraine.” It includes some of the most challenging and emotionally gripping dances from beloved ballets such as “La Bayadère,” “Giselle,” “The Dying Swan,” “Don Quixote” and “Harlequinade.”

Ballet culture in general runs deep in Ukraine, but deeper still are the traditional folk dances performed by the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers. Shumka, meaning “whirlwind,” is a quintessentially Ukrainian dance style — full of fast-paced turns, acrobatics and vibrant costumes.

“The tour allows us to give people something beautiful to focus on,” Courtney said. “It reminds people what’s really at stake here — the beauty, the art, the culture, the people.”

To learn more about Humanite’s fundraising efforts for Ukraine, go to humanite.org.

The National Ballet of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers share “Nadiya Ukraine” with The Villages at 2 and 7 p.m. Oct. 27 at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

Tickets for the show start at \$44, and VIP tickets include premium seating, a signed poster, and a commemorative T-shirt. Go to thevillagesentertainment.com.

Senior writer Taylor Strickland can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5334, or taylor.strickland@thevillagesmedia.com.

Restyle & Remount

- Custom design a new ring
- Reset your diamond or our diamond
- Large variety of diamonds & settings available
- 0% Interest for 12 months - Bank Financing Available

Turn Ordinary

Into Extraordinary

CERTIFIED EARTH MINED & LAB GROWN DIAMONDS

WATCH REPAIRS

ROLEX

and other fine watches

- ROLEX ORIGINAL PARTS
- 2 YEAR WARRANTY
- ROLEX FACTORY TRAINED WATCH MAKERS

3455 Wedgewood Lane • Southern Trace Plaza  
Between Publix & Ace Hardware  
352-430-0303

BOOK YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY!

Jewelry Design

for CERTIFIED DIAMONDS

1040 Bichara Blvd • La Plaza Grande  
2 doors to the right of Belk  
352-751-0202

www.jewelrydesignthevillages.com • Jeweler in The Villages® community since 1999

Custom

WINDOWS AND EXTERIOR DESIGN, INC.

Elevate your lanai with a beautiful versatile glass enclosure

Get Enclosed!

DREAM. DESIGN. ENCLOSE.

Call to Schedule a Complimentary In-Home Estimate • 352-787-9797

37 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

Custom Windows AND EXTERIOR DESIGN, INC. EST. 1987

SERVING LAKE & SUMTER COUNTIES OVER 21,000 SATISFIED CUSTOMERS

3606 Parkway Blvd., Leesburg 34748

Showroom Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4 pm

customwindowsrus.com

LICENSED & INSURED

STATE LICENSE # SCC056672

A+ Rating