

Adrienne Dellas Thornton is the new Artistic Director of The Kirov Academy of Ballet

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Kirov Academy Newsletter



Adrienne Dellas Thornton

The Kirov Academy of Ballet is very pleased to announce that its new Artistic Director is Adrienne Dellas Thornton. For Mme. Dellas, this is a homecoming, as she taught at KAB in its early days.

Mme. Dellas, a master Vaganova teacher for more than 40 years, studied as a dancer with great teachers herself: Robert Joffrey, Richard and Barbara Thomas, Alexandra Danilova, Vera Volkova, Birger Bartholin and Hector Zaraspe among them. She has taught dancers all over the world, and has connections not only to KAB, but to other internationally recognized arts organizations that are part of the Universal Ballet Foundation, including the Little Angels of Korea and the Universal Ballet Company.

Mme. Dellas was invited to South Korea to start the Ballet Department of the Little Angels Arts Middle and High School, and later established the Universal Ballet Company in Seoul (of which quite a few KAB graduates have been, and are, members). She was that company's Founding Artistic Director, and choreographed many original full-length ballets for UBC, in addition to staging ballet classics. Mme. Dellas's ballet *Shim Chung* was performed at the Olympic Games Seoul Arts Festival in 1988, and she was awarded the Gold Medal for Artistic Achievement in Teaching and Choreography by the President of Korea that year.

Mme. Dellas came back to America to join the newly established Kirov Academy of Ballet, where she taught for nearly ten years, the only American in the otherwise Russian faculty. She is especially recognized for giving her students a rock solid foundation in classical ballet, and for her sure eye in recognizing talent. Many of her pupils are now principal dancers.

One of Mme. Dellas's pupils was the daughter of the famed dancer and choreographer Debbie Allen, and from 2001- 2008, Mme. Dellas was the Academy Director at the Debbie Allen Dance Academy in Los Angeles. Recently, she has been teaching at the Pennsylvania Regional Ballet in Harrisburg and giving master classes at schools throughout the area.

Mme. Dellas is internationally known for her expertise as a teacher and choreographer, as well as for directing and teaching ballet intensives, judging competitions, creating and conducting specialized teacher seminars, and coaching professional dancers. This, coupled with her love of classical ballet and its students and dancers as well as her familiarity with KAB and belief in its mission, is a strong indication that KAB's best days are ahead.

Alexandra Tomalonis has been a dance critic for over 30 years, writing frequently for the *Washington Post*, *Dance Magazine*, and other publications. She is the editor of *DanceView* magazine and the lecturer for the Kennedy Center's Ballet 360 series. Ms. Tomalonis also teaches ballet history and related courses at KAB.