The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Animal Dance for Ecology Fest

By Alexander Bratersky

October 26, 2011



Wilson, seen here in “Midnight in Paris,” will appear at the show Friday.

Trained ballet dancer Natalya Guslistaya will join up with Hollywood star Owen Wilson in a show grandly titled “Love, Earth, Universe” in the Kremlin on Friday.

Guslistaya, who is also an actress and choreographer, will stage her ballet “Stella,” which made its debut at the UNESCO headquarters in New York in April.

Wilson will attend, but it is not known whether he will take to the stage during the event, which is supposed to raise awareness of ecological issues.

Guslistaya said she hopes to bring something new into Russian ballet with her performers who imitate the moves of different animals while dancing.

“All American actors were taught this method, and I have introduced it into ballet,” Guslistaya said while moving her head and shoulders, imitating the moves of a snake.

“I like to turn into a snake,” added Guslistaya, who bought a python to watch its movements

while preparing for the show.

The granddaughter of a former deputy head of Gazprom, Guslistaya studied ballet at the Bolshoi Theater before going on to attend the Royal Ballet School in London. She then branched out into acting, where she uses the stage name Natalie Burn, and did choreography for the likes of Kylie Minogue and Mariah Carey. It was while filming the latter that she injured herself doing a back flip.

"I like to do everything myself because I started out in action films," Guslistaya said during a break from rehearsals at a Moscow ballet studio.

Guslistaya says her grandfather could have given her a cushy life, but she decided to make it on her own, giving ballet classes to children to pay her way when she moved to L.A.

"He could have put me anywhere," Guslistaya said, "but not into acting."

She has taken classes at the prestigious Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute and the Actors Studio, although her movie roles have been less highbrow than classical ballet. She has a role in "The Name of the King 2," a fantasy fairy tale, based on a popular video game, starring Dolph Lundgren. She also acted in the new film "Blubberella," about an obese female superhero who fights Nazis.

In Russia, Guslistaya will appear in the sequel to the hugely popular television series "Brigada," which portrayed the life of 1990s Russian gangsters. Her character, an American, is involved in white-collar crime in Wall Street in the series.

The ballet is part of an international ecological festival, although the only other events in the festival are a one-day photo exhibit in a restaurant for invited guests only, the planting of five trees in the Moscow region and a news conference called "Saving the Future of the Planet" with Wilson, Guslistaya and members of the political and business elite, none of whom organizers would name Thursday.

"Love, Earth, Universe" in on Friday at 7 p.m. at the Kremlin Palace. Metro Borovitskaya. Tel. 638-5232.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/10/26/animal-dance-for-ecology-fest-a10442