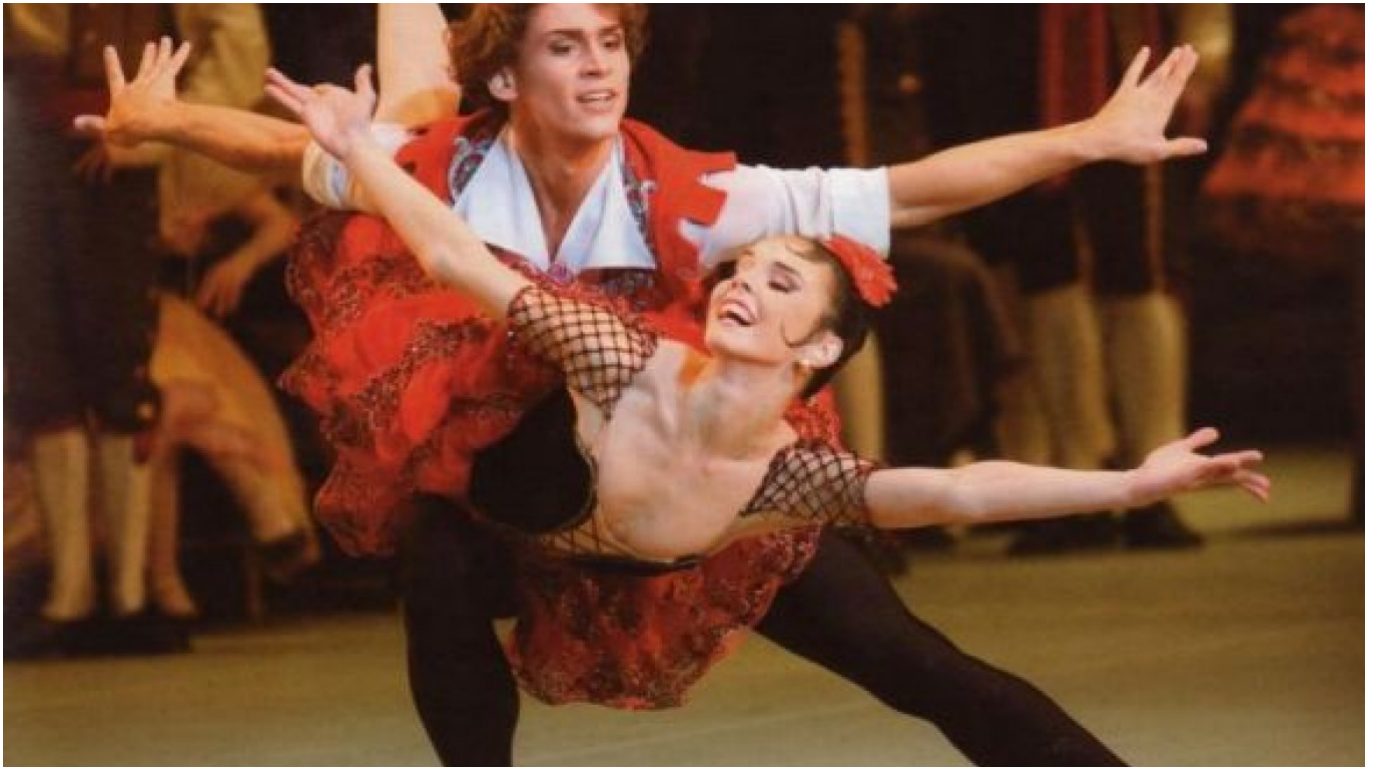


# Bolshoi Loses Top Dance Duo

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Vasilyev and Osipova will now dance at St. Pete's Mikhailovsky Theater. **Damir Yusupov**

Two of the Bolshoi Theater's top dancers, Natalya Osipova and Ivan Vasilyev, shocked the ballet world this week by announcing that they were quitting the country's top ballet theater for St. Petersburg's Mikhailovsky Theater.

The duo, a couple in real life, will make their debut in St. Petersburg on Dec. 1.

"The main reason I'm leaving the Bolshoi is the lack of repertoire. Everything I could dance there I have already performed," Osipova told the St. Petersburg web site Fontanka.ru: "We strive for creative freedom. When life becomes too comfortable for me, I feel a huge need to change something, to get rid of that comfortable and stable current."

The Bolshoi Theater reacted sharply with Anatoly Iksanov, general director of the Bolshoi Theater, accusing the pair of moving for monetary gain.

"As for the motives for the ballet soloists' decision, then I am certain that it is in no way

connected to creativity,” Itar-Tass reported Iksanov as saying, calling it “an attack on the chief theater of the country.”

The Bolshoi Theater announced that it was introducing a new system for buying tickets after media reports about the situation at the box office. Touts hired down-and-outs to queue for tickets, The Moscow Times reported last month.

Purchases can now only be made with a passport, said the theater’s director, Iksanov, media reported. Iksanov had previously said the theater could do nothing more to stop tickets being bought and sold on at vastly inflated prices.

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