

BEAUTY OF THE BEAST

Performance by Anton Ovchinnikov

Duration 40 minutes

Russian classical ballet is today one of the main products of Russian cultural export and one of the symbols of Russian art and culture outside of Russia. The performance "Beauty of the Beast" suggests looking at classical Russian ballet as an aestheticized form of violence against a person and over the body.

Today, when the Russian army destroys cities and the population of Ukraine, inhumanity and destruction become new symbols of Russia. How can this metamorphosis change the view of Russian classical ballet? Can it still be a cover for the lawlessness, anti-humanism and imperial habits of the Russian elite?

Mikhail Piotrovsky, the director of Hermitage Museum told in his interview that: *"By the start of the special operation in Ukraine, exhibitions from Russian museums were everywhere. In Paris, we had the Morozov exhibition and exhibitions in Italy. The most unsettling exhibition, Fabergé, was in London. The Russian Museum hosted an exhibition in Spain.*

This was, if you will, our 'special operation,' a major cultural offensive."

What if we imagine that a ballet class is just another way of training a perfect warrior whose entire weapon power is fed by the energy of the audience and the music of Pyotr Tchaikovsky?

The performance is based on the poem "New Russian Ballet" by Anton Ovchinnikov, which was written at the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, namely on March 31, 2022

