FROM: **AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE**
890 Broadway
New York, New York 10003
(212) 477-3030

ONEGIN

Excerpts from *Eugene Onegin* by Alexander Pushkin

PUSHKIN'S TATIANA

So, she was called Tatiana.
Even has she her sister's beauty
Or her rosy-cheeked freshness
Would eyes have been cast in her direction.
Untamed, sad, and reticent,
As timid as a woodland doe,
In her own family
She seemed someone else's little girl.
She knew not how to be affectionate
With her father and mother.
Herself a child, among a throng of children
She did not want to play and romp.
And often the whole day long, alone,
Sat silently by the window.

Novels appealed to her at an early age,
They were a substitute for everything.
She fell for the deceptions
In Richardson as in Rousseau.
Her father was a decent chap,
Behind the times; in the past century,
But saw no harm in books.
Never having read any, he considered
Them a harmless diversion
And did not seek to discover
What clandestine volume
Drowsed till dawn under her pillow.
His wife, on the other hand,
Was wild about Richardson.

(more)

PUSHKIN'S ONEGIN

No, soon enough his emotions cooled,
Society's hubbub became a bore,
Beauties were not for long
The subject of his usual thoughts.
Faithlessness soon made him weary,
Friends and friendship too tiring.
Besides, how could he be expected
To wash down with a bottle of champagne
Beef-steaks and Strasbourg pies
And spout witticisms
When his head ached.
And though a fervent rake,
He finally stopped caring for
Frays, the saber, and also lead.

TATIANA'S LETTER
Act I, Scene Two

I am writing to you – what more?
What else can I say?
Now, I know, it is within your power
To punish me with scorn,
But you, for my unfortunate lot
Had but a drop of pity,
Would not forsake me.
At first I intended to remain silent.
Believe me, my mortification
You would never had discovered,
Had I the hope,
Though infrequent, but once a week
To see you in our village,
If only to hear you speak,
To say a word to you, and then
Only to think, think of only one thing
Both day and night until another meeting.
But it is said you are unsociable,
Remote places, the country bore you
While we… shine in no way,
Though welcome you with open heart.

Why did you visit us?
In the remoteness of this forgotten hamlet
Not knowing you,
I would not suffer bitter torment.
The agitation of my inexperienced heart
Having subdued in time (who knows?)

(more)

TATIANA'S LETTER (cont.)

I could have found a man after my own heart
Could have been a faithful wife,
A virtuous mother.

Another!…No, to no one else on earth
Could I give my heart!
It is ordained by higher powers…
It is heaven's will: I am yours;
My entire life was staked
On our inevitable meeting.
I knew, you were sent to me by God,
You are my keeper to the grave.
You have appeared to me in dreams,
Indiscernible, you were dear to me already.
Your lovely glance tormented me,
Your voice rang in my soul
Long ago. No, it was not a dream!
The moment you entered, I recognized you at once,
I froze, I burned.
And in my thoughts articulated: it is he!
Is it not so? I heard you:
You spoke to me inaudibly
When I worked with the poor,
Or when I prayed to placate
The anguish of my agitated soul.
And at this very instant
Was it not you, beloved vision,
Appearing momentarily in the translucent darkness
Who quietly bent close to the head of the bed?
What are you, my guardian angel
Or an insidious tempter?
Dispel my doubts.
Perhaps, all this is a pipe dream,
The deception of an inexperienced heart!
And something entirely different is fated…
So be it, then! My destiny
Henceforth to you I do deliver,
Shed tears before you,
And beg for your protection.
Imagine: I am here alone,
No one understands me,
My reasoning founders
And standing mute, I must perish.
I wait for you: a single look
Inspiring hope will revive my heart
Or put an end to this wretched dream,
Alas, with a well-deserved rebuke!

(more)

TATIANA'S LETTER (cont.)

I must end! Dreading to reread this…
Ashamed and apprehensive I hold my breath…
But relying on your honor
I wholeheartedly consign my being to its care.

ONEGIN'S REJECTION OF TATIANA
Act II, Scene One

But I was not born for bliss,
It is foreign to my soul.
Your accomplishments are to no purpose
I am decidedly unworthy of them.
Believe me (conscience is my guarantee),
Matrimony will be insufferable for us.
No matter how much I loved you,
Once used to you, I'd cease to love you instantly;
You would start to weep: your tears
Would not touch my heart,
But simply would enrage it.
Be the judge; what roses
Could Hymen lay in store for us
And, conceivably, for many days?

TATIANA'S REJECTION OF ONEGIN
Act III, Scene two

Onegin, I was younger then,
And better, I believe, in those days,
And I loved you; what of it?
What did I find in your heart?
What response? Only harshness.
Is this not true? The love a diffident girl
Was no novelty for you.
And now – God! – My blood runs cold
As I recall your frigid expression
And your sermon…But I
Do not blame you: at that frightful hour
You behaved nobly,
You were honest with me.
I thank you for it from my heart…

(more)

TATIANA'S REJECTION OF ONEGIN (cont.)

And bliss had been so tangible,
So near! …But my fate
Has been decided. Heedless,
Was my action, perhaps:
With tears my mother implored
Me importunately; for poor Tanya
It was all the same…
I married. You must,
I beg you, let me be.
I know that at heart
You are both proud and honorable.
I love you (why play the hypocrite),
But I was given to another
And shall be true to him forever.

Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* is a novel in verse. These excerpts are a revised literal translation by Helen V. Atlas for the souvenir book of the Stuttgart Ballet's first visit to the United States in 1969.