

# One Year On, Vaganova Ballet Academy Embraces Bolshoi Star Nikolai Tsiskaridze

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Nikolai Tsiskaridze

A year after former Bolshoi Theater ballet star Nikolai Tsiskaridze was appointed acting head of a Petersburg ballet school, prompting criticism in some circles, the staff of the Vaganova Ballet Academy have voted resoundingly to make his position official.

Tsiskaridze, who had been a star dancer at Moscow's Bolshoi Theater until he was fired in June 2013 amid a public falling-out with the theater's then-director, served as the acting head of the Vaganova Academy since October 2013.

"The vote was democratic, 227 people voted for Nikolai Tsiskaridze and 17 against. We believe the collective made the right choice. Nikolai Tsiskaridze is capable of creating stars of a global scale," Deputy Culture Minister Grigory Ivliyev said in comments to RIA Novosti.

Tsiskaridze said he had no plans to change the current makeup of Russia's oldest ballet

school, which marks its 276th birthday this year.

"I don't think I need to change anything, we need to carefully preserve it all. People have been studying ballet in these walls for longer than some governments have existed," Tsiskaridze was cited as saying by RIA Novosti.

Tsiskaridze's appointment a year ago initially prompted criticism from St. Petersburg cultural figures, who immediately wrote an open letter to the Culture Ministry complaining that he was "not a bearer and preserver of the St. Petersburg tradition."

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