

Controversial Bolshoi Ballet 'Nureyev' to Premiere in December

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Ballet dancers Rudolf Nureyev and Zhanna Ayupova (Yuri Belinsky / ITAR-TASS)

A controversial ballet based on the life of legendary dancer Rudolf Nureyev will debut in December, even as its director Kirill Serebrennikov is under house arrest on embezzlement charges seen as politically motivated.

“Nureyev,” based on the life of the openly gay dancer, was set to open in July, but the Bolshoi Theater abruptly called off its premiere on the grounds that it was not ready.

Bolshoi director Vladimir Urin [told](#) the state-run TASS news agency on Friday that “Nureyev” will premiere on Dec. 9 and Dec. 10.

“The decision,” Urin said, “was made after a meeting with director Kirill Serebrennikov.”

Urin added that he had seen Serebrennikov, who has been under house arrest since August for embezzling state funds for his contemporary culture project, and said the director had given his consent to premiere the ballet, even if he is unable to attend.

“Most of Kirill Serebrennikov’s work has been done,” Urin was quoted as saying, adding most of the remaining work was related to choreography.

Media reports in July suggested that billionaire Roman Abramovich personally intervened to ensure “Nureyev” would premiere this year.

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