

10 Bolshoi Dancers Suspended for Tashkent Performance

Was it theater politics or international politics?

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The Bolshoi Theatre. **Diego Delso (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Ten top dancers at the Bolshoi Theater have been suspended for a month after performing at a gala in Uzbekistan, [Russian](#) media reported this week.

The dancers, including stars such as Vladislav Lantratov and Yevgenia Obraztsova, were flown to Tashkent by the Foundation for the Development of Culture and Art of Uzbekistan.

Dancers regularly perform in other theaters, and it is not clear why they were suspended for this performance. One possible reason is that the Tashkent theater used the Bolshoi Theater logo without authorization; another is that the dancers did not formally request permission from the director, Makhar Vaziyev.

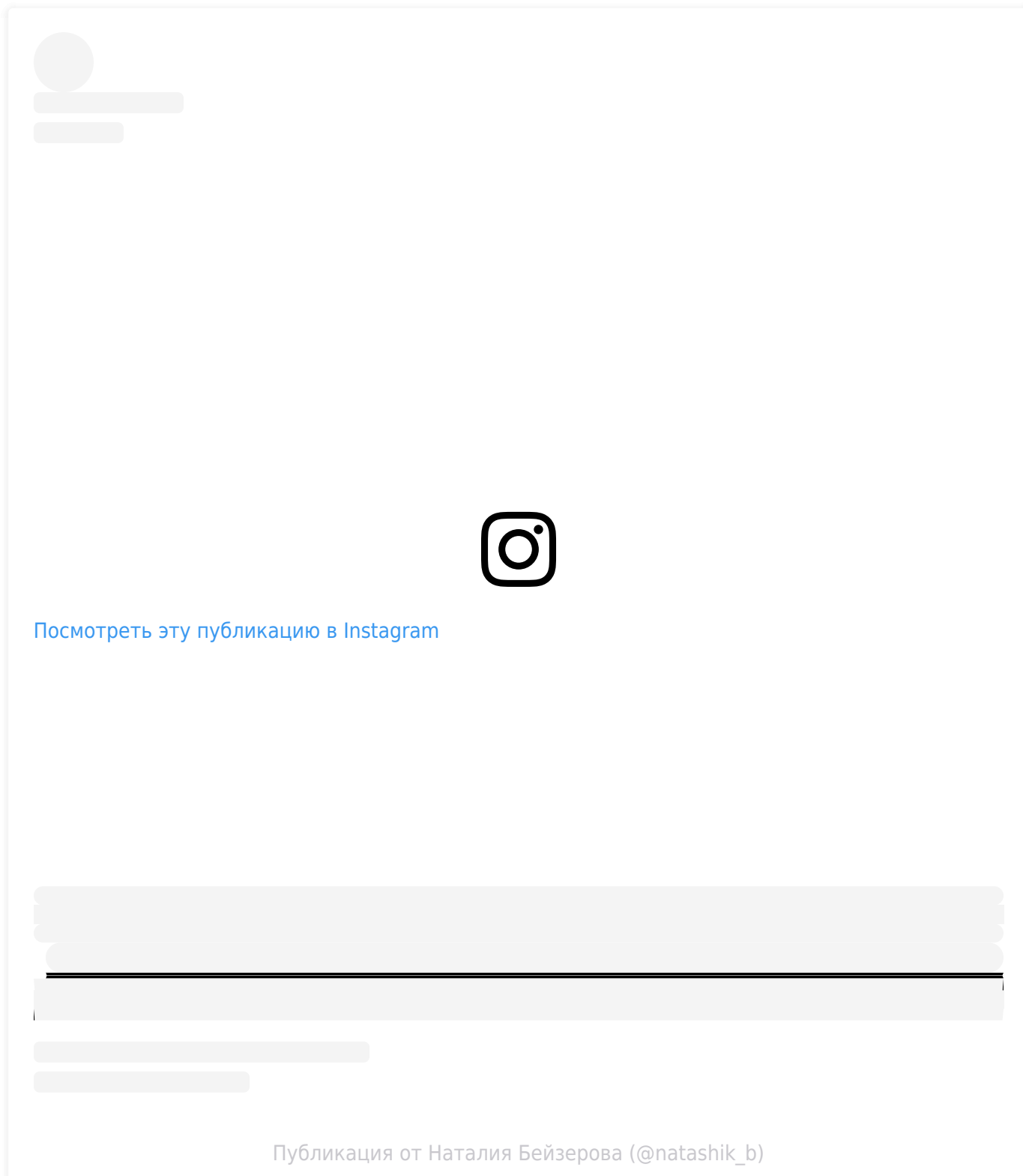
Some commentators in [foreign](#) media speculated that the reason might be political: Uzbekistan has stopped processing Russian Mir credit card transactions and has welcomed

Russian draft-dodgers.

Regardless of the reason, the suspension of 10 dancers at once has got the theater scrambling to rehearse stand-ins and placate angry ballet lovers.

Below the blogger Natalia Beizerova writes, in part, "new dancers have to learn the leading roles in four days. Which raises the question: how safe is it for artists to prepare for a part in such a short period of time, and what will the quality of the performance be for the viewers?"

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On Oct. 5, the Bolshoi announced that it would return ticketholders' money "in response to requests from theatergoers" who were unhappy to discover that the principal dancers they expected were not dancing. This was done, the theater [wrote](#) on its Telegram account, "as an exception to the general rule."

The theater also [permitted](#) ticketholders to get their money back when the Bolshoi canceled performances of the ballet "Nureyev" and opera "Don Pasquale" in the spring after Kirill Serebrennikov, who created "Nureyev" and Timofei Kulyabin, who directed "Don Pasquale," criticized the war in Ukraine.

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