

Red Palette Pictures Presents

Happy To Be So

A film by **Yelena Demikovsky**

Oleg Briansky and Mireille Briane

a lifetime of dance

PRESS KIT



1133 Broadway Ste 1505
New York, NY 10010
Ph: +1 646 489 4010
www.redpalettepictures.com

SYNOPSIS



HAPPY TO BE SO is a close and warm-hearted look at the lives of an extraordinary couple, the Brianskys, former principal dancers and currently well-known ballet masters, united for over 50 years in marriage and dance. Throughout the film, Oleg Briansky and Mireille Briane offer up their pas de deux of shared histories of glory days, humorous anecdotes, shining hours, and sad reversals of fortune.

Briansky, of White Russian descent, and Briane, a true Parisian, met in Paris, in the 1950s. At that time Oleg was hailed as “the most sought after male dancer in the world.” He partnered with such ballet luminaries as Alicia Markova and Margot Fonteyn, and later, became a personal friend of Princess Grace of Monaco.

In 1963, however, Oleg’s meteoric career was cut short. The couple relocated to New York and established the Briansky Saratoga Ballet Center in Saratoga, New York. It soon became one of the most distinguished international summer ballet academies and earned glowing accolades from such dance luminaries as Mikhail Baryshnikov, Peter Martins, and Leslie Caron.

Happy To Be So casts the Brianskys as performers and narrators of their own life stories. The live dance footage from the 1950s and 1960s and various photographs weave into the narrative, linking the past and present. A piano accompaniment from ballet class plays throughout the film, as if to underscore the continuum of these dancers’ lives.

Happy To Be So honors two strongly independent individuals whose personalities continue to inspire and complement one another.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"I am interested in those individuals who live their lives for their ideas; creating, moving forward, searching and never stopping; people who are driven by their passion."

I admire the Brianskys for their eternal youth, their dedication to ballet, and their need to pass their knowledge on to their students. Teaching ballet is their life and art and they are consumed by it.

This charismatic couple, both former principals with important European ballet companies, are the keepers of the flame for excellence in dance. The Brianskys are charming and funny, with an insatiable curiosity about life, and yet, very serious about what they do. They are dedicated to upholding the classical ballet tradition in which they were trained. There are few teachers of their caliber and they are very important for the dance world.

My film is intended for a general audience. It's for young people to see how two artists carry out their mission of educating youngsters and for mature audiences to appreciate that the passion and openness to all of life is what makes people go on living and stay forever young.





- Dance On Camera Film Festival: Official selection - Lincoln Center, New York 2008
- New Filmmakers NY: Screening at Film Anthology Archives, New York 2009
- Video Dance Festival: Official selection - San Carlos, Brazil 2009

"An affectionate and often funny portrait celebrating 50 years of a wonderful yin and yang partnership in classic ballet and married life"

- Clive Barnes, New York Post

Accolade for Brianskys

"...You both represent the Best of all the French Italian Russian and American Schools! But that is not all - your knowledge and talent is given selflessly, your devotion, respect for all who work with you, your intelligence is welded to your big Hearts!!! That is the true achievement, so rare, the real treasure..."

- Violette Verdy

"Oleg Briansky and Mireille Briane have trained young dancers and students in ballet with utmost regard for the highest standards. Their summer dance school is a time-tested and valuable experience."

- Anna Kisselgoff, Chief Dance Critic, The New York Times

"...Your love of dance is evident in the high quality of the teaching at BSBC, and your dedication to the craft is an inspiration to all in the dance world. I tip my hat to you!"

- Misha Baryshnikov

CAST

OLEG BRIANSKY

As both premier danseur and choreographer, Mr. Oleg Briansky has performed with such renowned companies as the Ballet des Champs-Elysees, the Ballet de Paris, London Festival Ballet (English National Ballet) the New York Metropolitan Opera Ballet, the Munich Opera Ballet, the Teatro Colon of Buenos Aires and the Chicago Opera Ballet. During his career, he has also partnered many leading ballerinas, Margot Fonteyn, Maria Tallchief and Violette Verdy to name a few.



An international teacher and coach, Mr. Briansky has directed principal dancers from the New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, the Boston Ballet, the National Ballet of Canada. His ballets "Scheherazade" and "The Firebird" are in the repertory of the Ballet Memphis and the Southern Ballet Theatre in Orlando.

"Briansky tall, handsome, lithe and virile is the most exciting male classical dancer in England today. His technique is magnificent, strong and certain, but with a refinement which lifts it from the realms of competence"

Ballet - September 1952 London

"Oleg Briansky Don Quichotte has become the Rudolph Valentino of ballet."

Observer - Richard Buckle - London January 1953



CAST

MIREILLE BRIANE



Shortly after beginning her ballet training at 8 years-old with the Paris Opera, Ms. Briane was performing in the famous children's ballet "L'Eventail de Jeanne." At sixteen she became a principal dancer at the Grand Theatre of Bordeaux, France. Since then she has appeared with the Ballets de Paris, the Chicago Opera Ballet and London Festival Ballet (English National Ballet).

Ms. Briane has directed highly successful children's ballets for Radio Television Francaise and she created a year-long series of educational ballet programs for Britain's Independent Radio Television. She also led her own ballet school in London.



DIRECTOR

Producer / Director: YELENA DEMIKOVSKY

Yelena Demikovsky is a founder of Red Palette Pictures. Born in Russia, she has lived in the United States for more than 15 years. She is a documentary and narrative filmmaker with a broad theatre background in the United States and Russia.

Demikovsky has directed three full-length documentaries - *Unity*, the award-winning *The Story of Fenist* and *Happy to Be So*, which had its world premiere in January 2008 at the Dance on Camera Film Festival at the Lincoln Center, NY and short documentary, *Vera. An Intimate Sketch*.

Her narrative short, *Shell*, received two Honorary Mention awards and became an Official Selection at the Barcelona Short Film Festival, San Diego Black Film Festival. Her last short narrative, *Through The Door* received two awards of Excellence for a short subject and dramatic impact at The Indie Fest, 2010.

Demikovsky has two masters degrees, one in theatre (Moscow, Russia), and another in video (Boston, USA) and had taught theatre directing in Moscow.



CREW

Executive Producer: BRIAN SINGH

Brian has been funding Red Palette projects for the past ten years, being passionate about art and independent film. He was an Executive Producer of *Shell and Through The Door*, *Happy to Be So* and *Vera. An Intimate Sketch*. Mr. Singh is Chairman and CEO of WTEC USA and Canada, has more than 25 years experience in the wind and solar industry.

Editor: FATIMA BENBRAHIM

Fatima has been collaborating with Yelena Demikovsky as an editor and script supervisor on short narratives and documentaries. She has been extensively working with PBS/WNET Thirteen, TV5, France 2, France 3, Al-Jazeera, MBC, Abu Dhabi TV and Morocco's 2M TV.

Camera: HASSAN KAMEL

Hassan Kamel has been working for NTCA, an Arabic TV Channel in NYC, for more than twenty years. Prior to coming to America from his homeland in Egypt, he worked extensively in TV and Film for seven years.

Hassan has been a part of the Red Palette Pictures team as camera operator on such documentaries as *The Story of Fenist*, *Happy To Be So*, and *Vera. An Intimate Sketch*.

