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Encore! Folk troupe to dance at Hult

By Layne Lakefish
Encore Reporter

Traditional Russian song and dance will take the spotlight tonight as a group of native Russian performers travels to Eugene.

The troupe call themselves The Rustavi Company, and tonight they will make themselves at home on the Hult Center's Silva Concert Hall stage. The show begins at 8.

"The Rustavi Company will be giving the audience a showcase of folk arts — folk dance — from their homeland," said Pat Cusick, Hult Center assistant marketing director. "Their performance is typically what the word 'folk' means."

The 60-member company will bring to Eugene the sounds, styles and traditions of their homeland which date back as far as a thousand years. They are based in Tbilisi, the capitol of the Russian state of Georgia, and have succeeded in researching and restoring the age-old traditions of their state.

Georgian dance combines fast-paced moves with subtle grace. The men jump, spin and leap through the air, while the women glide among them.

"It's a lot like the Russian dance scene in *Fiddler on the Roof*," Cusick said. "The men's movement is wild. They leap and jump. The women, on the other hand, use a lot of leg movement to glide across the stage and among the men."

Unlike classical ballet, Rustavi women do not dance on toe, but Rustavi men do — without the aid of blocked shoes. They are the only men in the world to dance on toe without specially equipped toe shoes.

An all-male choir provides the music for Rustavi dancers, and ancient Georgian instruments such as the shepherd's flute add to the flavor of the show.

Costume design is yet another way in which the members of Rustavi Company draw the audience into their performance. Dancers wear bright colors and traditional styles.

The Company has performed over 2,500 concerts, recorded over 200 Georgian folk songs and toured in more than 40 countries.

A reviewer for *La Nueva Espana* of Spain



Courtesy photo

Members of The Rustavi Company from Soviet Georgia will perform traditional folk dances tonight on the Silva Hall Stage at the Hult Center.

wrote, "The company deserves the highest praise. We were enraptured by this display of Georgian art performed to the height of perfection. Each item on the program elicited a storm of applause."

After traveling all over the Soviet Union and throughout Europe, this is the Rustavi Company's first North American tour. The company's four-month tour, which began in January, was made possible as a result changes taking place in Russia under Gorbachev's leadership.

Tickets for the show are \$12.50, \$16.50 and \$18.50, depending on seating section, and can be purchased at the Hult Center box office.

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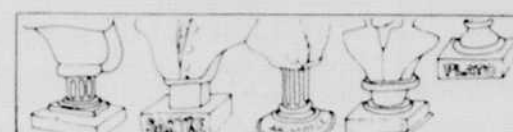
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