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## PRESS RELEASE FROM THE RUSSIAN CULTURAL CENTER KALINKA IN SENEGAL

### Moscow's GITIS Illuminates Dakar: A Unique Fusion of Classical Ballet and the West African Tale of Kirikou

**Release Date:** For Immediate Release

**Dakar, Senegal** – A major cultural and diplomatic event is taking place in Senegal: the Moscow State Institute of Theatrical Art (GITIS), one of Russia's oldest and most prestigious arts institutions, has arrived in Dakar to implement an exceptional creative project as part of a strategic cultural partnership with Senegal.

This large-scale collaboration stems directly from the 2023 agreement signed between GITIS and the Grand National Theatre of Dakar (GTN). Responding swiftly to the GTN's request for cooperation, GITIS Rector **Gregorii ZASLAVSKIY** endorsed this innovative initiative aimed at uniting the richness of West African folklore with the tradition of classical ballet.

#### A Creative Project Led by the Stars of GITIS

The project brings together distinguished artists and students of GITIS:

- **Maksim VALUKIN** - Professor of the Department of Choreography and Ballet Direction at GITIS, head of master workshops, Honored Artist of the Republic of Buryatia, and Doctor of Arts.

Alongside Professor Valukin, **students of the GITIS Ballet Mastery Faculty** have come to Dakar to perform their roles in the ballet "**Kirikou and the Sorceress Karaba**" - a collaborative artistic production uniting Russian students of GITIS and dancers from Dakar:

- **Nadezhda SVIRINA**
- **Dmitrii SHEVELA**
- **Anastasiia BEZOLIUK**
- **Zakhar KOCHEV**

The production represents a joint artistic project between GITIS students and Senegalese performers.

The **second part** of the performance will feature a **divertissement**, presenting highlights of the Russian classical ballet heritage.

Rehearsals and artistic preparation are carried out jointly at the **School of Academic Ballet**, directed by **Slu Akimgereeva** - an honorary professor of GITIS, alumna of the institute, and a long-time supporter of Russian choreographic art and cultural exchange.

As part of the project, GITIS professors and artists lead intensive rehearsals and high-level masterclasses for Senegalese performers at the Ballet Academy of the Daniel Sorano National Theatre and at the **Grand National Theatre Doudou Ndiaye Rose**.

Working side by side with Senegalese artists, the Russian team embodies the essence of the partnership: mutual enrichment through shared expertise and co-creation.

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## A Unique Performance:

World Premiere of Choreographic Episodes and Timeless Classics\*\*

The results of this joint creative work will be presented to the public on **December 2 at 7:00 PM** on the stage of the **Grand National Theatre Doudou Ndiaye Rose**.

The evening program, consisting of **two parts**, will immerse the audience in two artistic worlds:

**1. A world preview of scenes from the ballet “Kirikou and the Sorceress Karaba,”** whose world premiere is scheduled for June 2026 in Dakar. This historic project marks the first time the iconic West African tale will be presented in the form of classical ballet.

**2. A tribute to great ballet masterpieces** - vibrant scenes from *Carmen* and *The Nutcracker*, performed with the virtuosity and artistic precision that define the GITIS tradition.

## Long-Term Cooperation Prospects

This joint project opens broad perspectives for continued artistic and professional collaboration. Beginning in 2026, Senegalese artists and specialists will have new educational opportunities, enabling them to study at GITIS across bachelor's, master's, and specialized professional programs.

In parallel, an exchange program of touring performances is being developed, which will introduce the richness of West African dance to Russian audiences on prestigious theater stages across the country.

As tickets for the performance are limited, early reservations are strongly recommended.

## Practical Information

**Event:** Exceptional Performance by GITIS

**Date:** Tuesday, December 2, 2025 - 7:00 PM

**Venue:** Grand National Theatre Doudou Ndiaye Rose, Dakar

**Tickets:** 15,000 FCFA (Adult) / 10,000 FCFA (Child)

**Reservations:** +221 77 096 15 15 / +221 77 252 20 54 / +221 77 713 87 85

## About GITIS

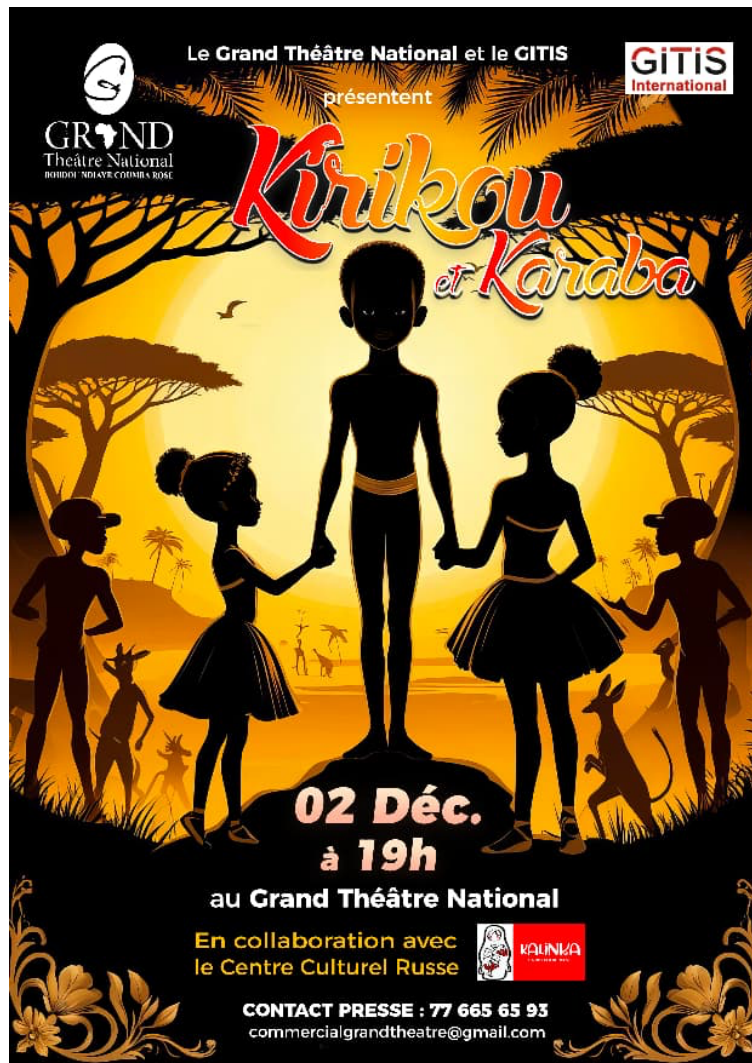
Founded in 1878, the Moscow State Institute of Theatrical Art (GITIS) is the largest and one of the oldest drama schools in Russia and Europe. It trains actors, directors, choreographers, and art scholars of international acclaim.

## About the Grand National Theatre Doudou Ndiaye Rose

The Grand Theatre is a major cultural institution of Senegal, dedicated to promoting the performing arts in all their diversity, strengthening international cooperation, and supporting the training of young artists.



**KALINKA**  
CENTRE CULTUREL RUSSE



### About the Russian Cultural Center “Kalinka” in Senegal

The Russian Cultural Center “Kalinka” in Senegal is a **non-profit, apolitical association** established in accordance with Senegalese law and open to all - Senegalese, Russians, and residents of other nationalities living in Senegal and the sub-region.

The Center warmly welcomes new members and volunteers who share its mission of strengthening relations between the peoples of Russia and Senegal through cultural, social, and educational initiatives.

The **mission** of RCC “Kalinka” is to foster cultural exchange and dialogue between peoples through artistic and educational projects.

### Press Contact

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