



AS IT IS

Young Ukrainian Dancers Trapped Abroad

March 09, 2022

The Kyiv City **Ballet** danced to a full theater in Paris for the company's last show of its French **tour**. The tour has left the dancers without a place to go after the war started in Ukraine.

In other times, performing at the Théâtre du Chatelet would be a dream come true for the dancers. But with the ongoing war in their country, the dancers feel only a deep sadness.

“We are both physically and emotionally **exhausted**,” Ekaterina Kozlova told *The Associated Press*. She is the company's assistant director. “Everyone in the ballet is worried about their families, loved ones, friends, **colleagues** at home. It's been very difficult.”

The Théâtre du Chatelet, in the center of Paris, offered them the **stage** on Tuesday for the group's final show of a French tour.

The dance director of the Paris Opera and some members of her company joined the Ukrainians for a class before performing several ballet classics together. They danced parts of Russian composer Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker*.

For many of the dancers, the chance to train and dance was a way to think about “something other than the conflict in Ukraine,” Kozlova said.

One of the dancers will be going to the Ukrainian border in the coming days to pick up her young daughter who was taken out of the country.

Only some members of the company were traveling around France. Many of the ballet's best dancers stayed behind, waiting to join their friends after they reached Paris.

“Most of our artists are **stuck** in Ukraine,” Director Ivan Kozlov told the Paris crowd.

The city of Paris and the ballet community have helped find temporary housing for the Ukrainian dancers who say they hope to continue dancing in France and elsewhere. The Chatelet theater offered the whole group a **residency**. But for now, Tuesday's last-minute performance was their last.

All sales from their performances will go to nongovernmental organizations collecting and sending humanitarian aid to Ukraine and neighboring countries.

Ukrainian dancers have also looked to other countries for safe places to stay. The Romanian National Opera offered six ballet dancers fleeing the war in Ukraine a chance to work with their ballet company. Some of them could be performing next month.

I'm Dan Novak.

Dan Novak adapted this story for VOA Learning English based on reporting from The Associated Press.

Words in This Story

ballet — *n.* a kind of dancing that is performed on a stage and that uses dance, music, costumes, and scenery to tell a story

tour — *n.* a journey through the different parts of a country, region, etc.

strand — *v.* to leave in a place without a way of leaving it

exhausted — *v.* to use all of someone's mental or physical energy

colleague — *n.* a fellow worker

stage — *n.* a raised platform in a theater, auditorium, etc., where the performers stand

stuck — *adj.* difficult or impossible to move from a position

residency — *n.* a period of time when a writer, artist, etc., lives and works at a college or other institution
