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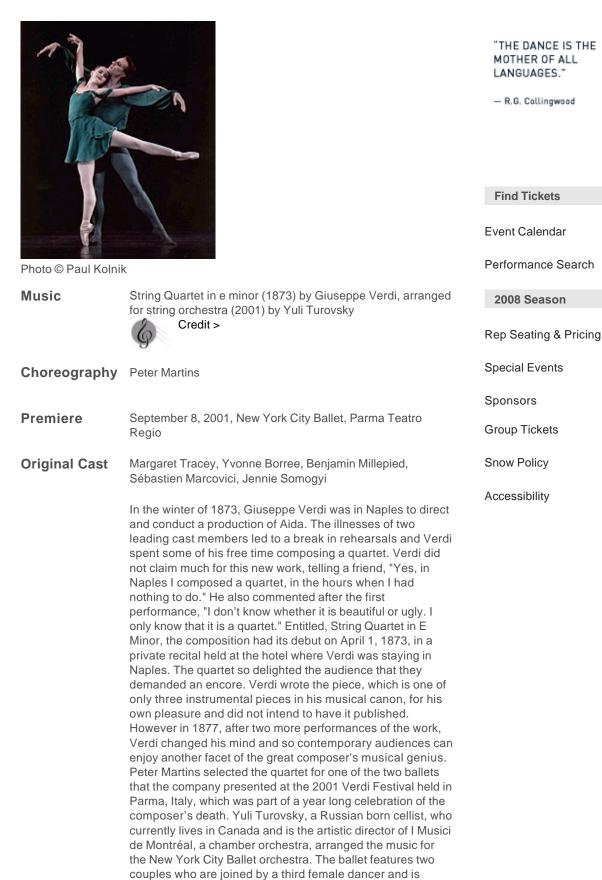
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distinguished by its delicate footwork and sweeping lifts. Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) did not have a formal music education, studying privately for the most part with local musicians. He completely changed the course of Italian opera with such masterpieces as Rigoletto, La Traviata, Aida, Otello and Falstaff, popularizing the art form like no other composer before or since. Verdi was also a fervent supporter of the movement for Italian independence, which led to his nomination for a seat in the Italian Parliament.

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