

Tasman Davids learned this week that he had gained a nomination for the Golden Mask Awards for his performance as Gamache in Don Quixote. The awards recognise the best of each season's professional theatre performances across Russia. The Golden Mask Festival is held with the support of the Presidential Grants Foundation, the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, the Moscow Government - the Golden Mask Festival Directorate. It is a tremendous honour to be considered by the panel and extraordinary to be nominated. Most recipients are principal performers of some standing.

In 2019, the Russian National Theatre Award and the Golden Mask Festival celebrates its 25th anniversary. The Golden Mask Award ceremony will take place on April 16 at the Bolshoi Historical Stage and will be broadcast live.

A panel of 10 plus a chairman viewed 302 performances in more than a hundred cities in Russia. They then viewed specific performances again on multiple occasions before making the final selections and announcing the nominees at a press conference on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October. Don Quixote by St Petersburg's Yacobson Ballet has gained 7 nominations second only to the Bolshoi's new production of a ballet about Nureyev. It was choreographed for the Yacobson company by Johan Kobborg, who was formerly the principal dancer of the Royal Ballet, Covent Garden. He is now renowned worldwide as a choreographer. He transformed what is usually a comic mime role into a dancing role which has gained Tasman reviews in many countries.

*The ginger dunderhead Gamache, played by Tasman Davids (the very first alumnus of the Vaganova Ballet Academy hailing from the faraway New Zealand), is absolutely amazing; perfectly hilarious.* **Leila Guchmazova Rossiyskaya Gazeta - Federal Issue №7458 (292)**

*...while the rich nobleman Gamache, whose part is traditionally based on character acting and expressive pantomime, has been gifted complex new choreographic variations, which Tasman Davids tackles with enviable audacity, making a whopping eighteen fouetté swirls that are commonly done by female dancers.*  
**Igor Stupnikov - Dancing Times**

Tasman was both amazed and thrilled that his name was announced on the list, but even more so that the next name was of a Bolshoi dancer whom he greatly admires. Each step of his experience in Russia has seemed a huge achievement for a kiwi - training, subsequent graduation, employment in a company in St Petersburg, gaining soloist roles, dancing at the Mariinsky Theatre, but never did he think that he would ever be accorded such an honour. Thank you to all who have encouraged and supported him along the way.