Karamazov Brothers bring antics to Upstate

'4-Play' at Clemson's Brooks Center features act's greatest hits from 40 years

By Paul Hyde
Arts Writer
phyde@greenvilleonline.com

Even after 40 years of juggling, joking and dancing in a kilt or tutu, Paul Magid said each Flying Karamazov Brothers show is a personal treat.

"I love doing the show," said Magid, speaking on the phone from Seattle. "It's scripted but also improvisational by nature, so every show is a delight. You never know what's going to happen. Performing on stage for me is like being on vacation."

The one-of-a-kind Flying Karamazov Brothers are returning to the Upstate, bringing their special brand of juggling, comedy, vaudeville and "silly dance" to Clemson University's Brooks Center Monday night.

The four-member group's current show, "4 Play," is a sort of greatest hits performance, intended for the whole family.

"It's a show that we did in New York for two years and it was very well-received," said Magid, also known as Dimitri. "It's a compendium of various things we've done over the years that appeals to everyone."

He added: "It's loads of fun."

For "4 Play," the four-member troupe is reviving one of its more famous stunts, the "Terror Trick." The jugglers introduce nine very strange items — a cleaver, a torch, a salt shaker, a ukulele, a skillet, a fish, an egg, a block of dry ice and a bottle of champagne — then juggle all of them at once only to end up cooking the fish and the egg in the skillet and drinking the champagne.

Another famous bit is called "The Gamble." Magid juggles any three items provided by the audience. The objects must weigh more than an ounce, less than 10 pounds, be no bigger than a breadbox and must not be a live animal.

If Magid succeeds at "The Gamble," he gets a standing ovation. If he fails, he gets a pie in the face.

The group got its name from

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YOU CAN GO

What: The Flying Karamazov Brothers
When: 7 p.m. Monday
Where: Clemson University's Brooks Center for the Performing Arts
Tickets: $15 for adults; $10 for students
Information: 864-656-7787 or www.clemson.edu/Brooks

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Dostoevsky's novel "The Brothers Karamazov," and though they refer to each other onstage as brothers, the four are not actually related.

Magid is the only founding member still in the group. The other performers are Roderick Kimball (who goes by "Pavel"), Stephen Bent ("Zossima") and Andy Sapora ("Nikita").

The New York Times said the Brothers are "as close to a sure thing as can be found onstage, 100 minutes of cleverness and comedy that go by in a flash."

The troupe is known for its constant touring to venues internationally — and for having never canceled a show. The group recently visited Spain, performing the show completely in Spanish.

Audiences always love the Brothers, although Magid remembers a performance in London 31 years ago where the show seem to be failing.

"It was when we first went to London and the British were still very reserved," Magid said. "We thought the show wasn't going over very well and, in fact, they thought it was one of the most hilarious things they've ever seen. They were just being British."

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The Flying Karamazov Brothers perform at Clemson's Brooks Center Monday night. PROVIDED