

**Chapter 1 : NPR Choice page**

*The Russian (not so) Grand Ballet - Los Angeles I should have done my research. I love ballet, I love Christmas traditions and because of that I'm willing to forgive quite a bit when it comes to performances.*

The Ostromir Gospels of is the second oldest East Slavic book known, one of many medieval illuminated manuscripts preserved in the Russian National Library. Russian is the most geographically widespread language of Eurasia and the most widely spoken Slavic language. Slavic mythology and Russian folklore New Russian folklore takes its roots in the pagan beliefs of ancient Slavs which is nowadays still represented in the Russian folklore. Epic Russian bylinas are also an important part of Slavic mythology. The oldest bylinas of Kievan cycle were actually recorded mostly in the Russian North , especially in Karelia , where most of the Finnish national epic Kalevala was recorded as well. Some Russian poets, including Pyotr Yershov and Leonid Filatov , created a number of well-known poetical interpretations of classical Russian fairy tales, and in some cases, like that of Alexander Pushkin , also created fully original fairy tale poems that became very popular. There were two primary trends of folklore study during the decade: Formalism focused on the artistic form of ancient byliny and faerie tales, specifically their use of distinctive structures and poetic devices. Stalin and the Soviet regime repressed folklore, believing that it supported the old tsarist system and a capitalist economy. They saw it as a reminder of the backward Russian society that the Bolsheviks were working to surpass. Fairy tales were removed from bookshelves and children were encouraged to read books focusing on nature and science. Bogatyrs by Viktor Vasnetsov. The three heroes of Russian mythology: In , Maksim Gorky gave a speech to the Union of Soviet Writers arguing that folklore could, in fact, be consciously used to promote Communist values. Apart from expounding on the artistic value of folklore, he stressed that traditional legends and fairy tales showed ideal, community-oriented characters, which exemplified the model Soviet citizen. The attitudes of such legendary characters paralleled the mindset that the Soviet government wished to instill in its citizens. It then proceeded to redistribute copies of approved stories throughout the population. Meanwhile, local folklore centers arose in all major cities. These contemporary folktales combined the structures and motifs of the old byliny with contemporary life in the Soviet Union. Called noviny, these new tales were considered the renaissance of the Russian epic. They also explained to the performers the appropriate types of Communist ideology that should be represented in the new stories and songs [26] As the performers of the day were often poorly educated, they needed to obtain a thorough understanding of Marxist ideology before they could be expected to impart folktales to the public in a manner that suited the Soviet government. Besides undergoing extensive education, many folk performers traveled throughout the nation in order to gain insight into the lives of the working class, and thus communicate their stories more effectively. A number of them, despite their illiteracy, were even elected as members of the Union of Soviet Writers. These new folktales replaced magic with technology, and supernatural forces with Stalin. Descriptions of the Whites in noviny mirrored those of the Tartars in byliny. Written by individual authors and performers, noviny did not come from the oral traditions of the working class. Consequently, today they are considered pseudo-folklore, rather than genuine Soviet or Russian folklore. Specialists decided that attempts to represent contemporary life through the structure and artistry of the ancient epics could not be considered genuine folklore. Russian literature , List of Russian-language poets , and List of Russian-language writers Russian literature is considered to be among the most influential and developed in the world, with some of the most famous literary works belonging to it. This period and the Golden Age of Russian Poetry began with Alexander Pushkin , considered to be the founder of modern Russian literature and often described as the "Russian Shakespeare" or the "Russian Goethe". Tolstoy and Dostoevsky in particular were titanic figures, to the point that many literary critics have described one or the other as the greatest novelist ever. The age of the great novelists was over and short fiction and poetry became the dominant genres of Russian literature for the next several decades, which later became known as the Silver Age of Russian Poetry. Previously dominated by realism , Russian literature came under strong influence of symbolism in the years between and Following the Russian Revolution of and the ensuing civil war , Russian cultural life was left in chaos. Some prominent

writers, like Ivan Bunin and Vladimir Nabokov left the country, while a new generation of talented writers joined together in different organizations with the aim of creating a new and distinctive working-class culture appropriate for the new state, the Soviet Union. Throughout the s writers enjoyed broad tolerance. After his death the restrictions on literature were eased, and by the s and s, writers were increasingly ignoring official guidelines. The Soviet era was also the golden age of Russian science fiction , that was initially inspired by western authors and enthusiastically developed with the success of Soviet space program.

**Chapter 2 : Russian Culture: Facts, Customs & Traditions**

*LEADER nam a ssj WaSeSS.*

History through The emergence of ballet in the courts of Europe Ballet traces its origins to the Italian Renaissance, when it was developed as a court entertainment. During the 15th and 16th centuries the dance technique became formalized. As a court entertainment, the works were performed by courtiers; a few professional dancers were occasionally participants, but they were usually cast in grotesque or comic roles. The subjects of these works, in which dance formed only a part alongside declamation and song, ranged widely; some were comic and others had a more serious, even political, intent. Eventually, developments at the French court pushed the arts aside, and the court ballet disappeared. But Louis XIV had established two academies where ballet was launched into another phase of its development: It was to last until the s. The academy was created to present opera, which was then understood to include a dance element; indeed, for fully a century ballet was a virtually obligatory component of the various forms of French opera. These works combined singing , dancing, and orchestral music into numbers that were unified by a loose theme. In the early years the most accomplished dancers were male, and it was not until that the first principal female dancer, Mlle La Fontaine , appeared. Gradually she and her successors became nearly as well-known and respected as male dancers such as Michel Blondy and Jean Balon. Its origin can be traced back at least to , when in London John Weaver produced *The Loves of Mars and Venus* , which he claimed echoed the pantomimes of ancient Rome. There Noverre was befriended by the actor David Garrick , who became an important influence in his artistic development. Although the other ballet masters, Jean Dauberval and Maximilien Gardel, forced Noverre out of the organization, they were no less committed to the new genre he had introduced. The revolution put an end to such support. The turn of the 19th century was a time of confusion for the arts, during which ballet gained greatly in popularity and prestige at the expense of its sister art, opera. Gardel was not only an experienced administrator but also a choreographer, esteemed throughout Europe. Meanwhile, ballet had also taken root in other European cities, most notably in Vienna and in Italian cities such as Milan and Naples. Among other celebrated choreographers working in Italy at this time were Gaetano Gioja and the French-born Louis Henry. Ballet as an aspect of Romanticism The world changed fast after the defeat of Napoleon in The base of the Parisian theatregoing public was broadening with the rise of a wealthy middle class, while in matters of artistic taste the younger generation rejected the neoclassical preferences of their elders and surrendered to the growing vogue for Romanticism. Ballet itself would be radically changed. Trained by Coulon and polished by her father, Taglioni had a style that set her apart from her contemporaries; she projected a spiritual quality that was said to touch the soul, and her virtuosity was subjugated to the creation of mood. The years from about to were a golden age for ballet. Taglioni was followed by other great stars, who like her enjoyed international renown, including the Austrian Fanny Elssler. After Elssler came Carlotta Grisi , who created the title role in *Giselle* , a ballet that remains, somewhat modified, in the 21st-century repertoire. The age was dominated by the ballerina at the expense of the male dancer. One centre in which the male dancer held his own was Copenhagen, where the Paris-trained August Bournonville directed the ballet for many years. He produced many ballets, including his own version of *La Sylphide* and *Napoli* ; both of these have remained in the repertoire into the 21st century, and both convey an authentic flavour of the Romantic style. London was another important centre of ballet at this time, but there ballet was largely an imported form, dominated by visiting stars from the Continent and by French choreographers. Outstanding among these was Jules Perrot , who produced a string of masterworks, including *La Esmeralda* and the all-star *Pas de Quatre* However, the great flowering of ballet in London was to be of short duration, and some 80 years were to pass before the first stirrings of a truly English ballet tradition were felt. The Imperial Russian Ballet As the 19th century drew to a close, the centre of ballet activity moved to St. Petersburg , where the art was supported by the bottomless resources at the disposal of the tsar. Petipa dominated the Russian ballet from to , virtually replenishing the repertoire with ballets of his own. Several of these have survived to form the basic ballet classics into the 21st century: Petipa also ensured the survival of

Giselle. The Imperial Ballet paid great attention to the training of its dancers, and an essentially Russian style emerged in the company. The Italian style taught by Enrico Cecchetti and the French style taught by Christian Johansson together formed the foundation for the Russian school that was to become dominant in 20th-century ballet. For the ballet season in the impresario Serge Diaghilev brought to Paris a company, called the Ballets Russes, that was made up of prominent dancers from the Imperial Ballet. The effect on the artistic world was shattering. Ballet, which in western Europe had sunk low in public estimation, became recognized as a major theatre art, one in which dance, music, and stage design contributed to an unprecedented and impressive overall effect. The dancing was of the highest quality. The greatest sensation was created by Vaslav Nijinsky, a male dancer of a standard not seen within living memory, and the ballerinas Anna Pavlova and Tamara Karsavina also made a lasting impression. Its appeal extended beyond the ordinary theatregoing public to embrace the artistic intelligentsia, so that ballet began to lose the somewhat louche reputation it had acquired in the 19th century. A main reason for this change in status was the participation of major artists—artists such as Alexandre Benois and Leon Bakst, who designed the scenery, and leading composers, notably Igor Stravinsky, who produced specially commissioned musical scores. As a choreographer Nijinsky proved an iconoclast, seeking nonclassical forms of movement. Although his choreographic output was limited, it included two ballets that achieved notoriety on account of their sexual inferences: *After World War I* Diaghilev made common cause with some of the modern art movements in Paris, and the prestige of his Ballets Russes was unabated until his death in 1929. Nonetheless, the Russian element within the company remained dominant, although the Russians were joined by dancers of other nationalities, including Anton Dolin (English), Ninette de Valois (Irish), and Alicia Markova (English). Independently of the Ballets Russes, Anna Pavlova traveled the world with her own company of supporting dancers. She brought her art to millions who had never seen ballet before, and she became in the process a veritable icon. The story of the Ballets Russes companies of the 1920s is too complicated for a brief treatment; most important was the development in that decade of a younger and more widely based public for ballet than the intelligentsia whom Diaghilev had courted. The new company soon produced its first stars: They and other dancers in the company were pupils of various distinguished Russian teachers notably Mathilde Kschessinska, Olga Preobrajenska, and Lubov Egorova who had settled in Paris and went on to establish Russian-style training in the West. The Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo continued the Diaghilev tradition by commissioning leading artists and composers to collaborate in the ballets. Blum broke with de Basil in 1929 to form his own short-lived company with Fokine as ballet master, while de Basil directed his own company under various names until his death. There was great rivalry between the two companies, which appeared simultaneously in London. Both survived World War II, but their former relevance was by then passing. The de Basil company, as it had become known, disbanded in 1940, and the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo in 1944. Russian ballet in the Soviet era The Revolution of 1917 exerted a profound influence on Russian ballet, which remained virtually untouched by the reforms that Diaghilev had brought to ballet in western Europe. Notwithstanding its imperial and aristocratic associations, ballet in the Soviet Union survived and flourished, although it took a different course than ballet in western Europe. While the one-act ballet that Diaghilev had introduced became the norm in the West, Soviet ballet remained wedded to the multiact form. This work, which is about Russian sailors who champion downtrodden Chinese dockworkers, was unashamedly propagandist and by current Western standards choreographically unadventurous. The ballet school in Leningrad attained unprecedented prestige under one of the most inspirational teachers of all time, Agrippina Vaganova. She formed a new generation of dancers, headed by a ballerina of inimitable artistry, Galina Ulanova. At the same time, an awareness of the historical traditions of Russian ballet was returning, and some of the classic ballets of the previous century were reintroduced into the repertoire. A new group of Soviet choreographers, working almost exclusively within the framework of the full-length ballet, matured, and, following the triumphant visit of the Bolshoi Ballet to London in 1946, ballet from the Soviet Union began to emerge from its isolation. In performances of the 1950s the full-evening work was the norm, typified by two ballets to scores that were greatly admired in western Europe: Western choreographers, such as Frederick Ashton and John Cranko, began to work to a larger scale, while Russian choreographers began to experiment with the single-act form that Diaghilev had favoured. The major companies that

subsequently flourished in France , the United Kingdom, and North America were the direct beneficiaries of his vision. As a choreographer Lifar created a vast repertoire of ballets, inviting the collaboration of contemporary musicians and artists much as Diaghilev would have done; as a dancer unsurpassed for his allure, Lifar provided the example for others to follow. After his retirement the company continued to flourish under the direction of another iconoclastic figure, Rudolf Nureyev , who produced a spectacular range of classics from the Petipa period. In Britain an even more dramatic development took place. Founded by Ninette de Valois , the company possessed a choreographer of genius, Frederick Ashton. His muse was Margot Fonteyn , a ballerina who achieved international renown. Ashton and his successor, Kenneth MacMillan , between them created the foundation of a rich and varied repertoire. The development of ballet in the United States has been no less dramatic. Although the country has no national ballet, its leading companies stand comparison with the principal national companies of Europe. The most important of these are the New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre , founded respectively in as the American Ballet Company; the name was changed in and as Ballet Theatre; the name was changed in Many other countries, notably Germany, Holland, Italy, Sweden, Denmark , and Cuba, to name only a few, established ballet companies of note in the 20th century, and countless smaller companies and groups became active all over the world, playing their part in the extraordinary flowering of ballet after World War II.

**Chapter 3 : An American's experience with Russian education, culture and red tape - Russia Beyond**

*A provocative examination of the role of dance in British literary culture from to*

Bertin , which refer to a group of Norsemen who called themselves Rhos qui se, id est gentem suam, Rhos vocari dicebant and visited Constantinople around 838. The Byzantine emperor sent an angry letter to his western counterpart, reprimanding him for usurping the title of emperor. He argued that the Frankish rulers are simple reges , while the imperial title properly applied only to the overlord of the Romans, that is, to Basil himself. He also pointed out that each nation has its own title for the supreme ruler: To that, Louis replied that he was aware only of the Avar khagans, and had never heard of the khagans of the Khazars and Normans. Like other Muslim geographers, Gardizi relied on traditions stemming from the 9th century. Paul Robert Magocsi and Omeljan Pritsak date the foundation of the Khaganate to be around the year 682. Moreover, ibn Fadlan , in his detailed account of the Rus , designated their supreme ruler as malik "king". From this fact, Peter Golden concluded via an argumentum ex silentio that the khaganate collapsed at some point between 838 and 865. There is no evidence of a Norse presence in Kiev prior to the 10th century. The First Novgorod Chronicle describes unrest in Novgorod before Rurik was invited to come rule the region in the 860s. The first Norse settlers of the region arrived in the lower basin of the Volkhov River in the mid-8th century. These sit below the royal throne: Moreover, some scholars have noted similarities between this dual kingship and the postulated relationship between Igor and Oleg of Kiev in the early 10th century compare Askold and Dir in the 9th century. Archaeologists found convincing evidence that Holmgard, Aldeigja, Alaborg , Izborsk were burnt to the ground in the 860s or 870s. Some of these settlements were permanently abandoned after the conflagration. The Primary Chronicle describes the uprising of the pagan Slavs and Chudes Finnic peoples against the Varangians, who had to withdraw overseas in 879. The First Novgorod Chronicle , whose account of the events Shakhmatov considered more trustworthy, does not pinpoint the pre-Rurikid uprising to any specific date. The 16th century Nikon Chronicle attributes the banishment of the Varangians from the country to Vadim the Bold. The absence of coin hoards from the 860s and 870s suggests that the Volga trade route ceased functioning, precipitating "the first silver crisis in Europe". Zuckerman associates this recovery with the arrival of Rurik and his men, who turned their attention from the Volga to the Dnieper, for reasons as yet uncertain. The Scandinavian settlements in Ladoga and Novgorod revived and started to grow rapidly. During the first decade of the 10th century, a large trade outpost was formed on the Dnieper in Gnezdovo , near modern Smolensk. Another Dnieper settlement, Kiev, developed into an important urban centre roughly in the same period. The Kievans seem to have had a very vague notion about the existence of the khaganate. Slavonic sources do not mention either the Christianization of the Rus in the 860s nor the Paphlagonian expedition of the 860s.

**Chapter 4 : Top 10 Greatest Ballets - Listverse**

*The Festival views its mission as to attract modern audience to the high art of the classical Russian ballet which by all right is considered to be the great achievement of the Russian and world culture.*

December 14, While outsiders may see the country as drab, Russia has a very visual cultural past, from its colorful folk costumes to its ornate religious symbols. Here is a brief overview of Russian customs and traditions. The Homeland Russian culture places a high value on the homeland and on family, according to Talia Wagner, a marriage and family therapist with a specialty in cultural dynamics. The Soviet Union broke up in There are plains, taigas, steppes, plains and mountains. A Glimpse at a Vast Landscape ] For example, in the Russian volcano called Kambalny erupted after nearly years of dormancy. The eruption was a surprise and the plume of smoke could be seen from space. We continue the monitoring and will analyze possible threats as data come in. Population and ethnic makeup Russia is the largest country in the world in terms of territory, with a total area of 6,, square miles 17,, square kilometers. By comparison, the United States comprises 3,, square miles 9,, square km. According to data by The World Bank , the population of Russia is more than ,, a decline since its peak of ,, in Russia is home to at least ethnic groups, according to the BBC. The rest of the population consists of 3. Languages While Russian is the official language, many Russians also speak English as a second language. More than minority languages are spoken in Russia today, according to the BBC. The most popular is Dolgang, spoken by more than 5. Although these minority populations account for a small percentage of the overall Russian population, these languages are prominent in regional areas. Religions "Religion has always been a primary component of Russian life, even during times of oppression," Wagner said. There are nearly 5, registered religious associations in Russia. Tengrism originates from the Turk and Mongol populations of Central Asia and has enjoyed a revival in parts of Russia as it is seen as part of a certain Central Asian ethnic identity by some regional independence movements. Arts, literature and architecture Ballet is a popular notable art form coming out of Russia. Founded in , the Bolshoi Ballet is a classical ballet company based at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow and known throughout the world. Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, a 19th-century Russian composer, is world renowned for "Swan Lake" and the " Overture," among other pieces. There are several museums, including his childhood home, showcasing his personal belongings and musical artifacts. Russian nesting dolls are well-known symbols of the country. These sets of dolls, known as matrioshka dolls, consist of a wooden figure that can be pulled apart to reveal another smaller version of the same image inside, and so on, often with six or more dolls nested inside one another. The painting of each doll, which can be extremely elaborate, usually symbolizes a Russian peasant girl in traditional costume. Colorfully painted onion domes first appeared during the reign of Ivan the Terrible, according to Lonely Planet. They are commonplace in Russian architecture and are predominant atop church structures. It has been speculated that they represent burning candles or vaults to heaven and often appear in groups of three representing the Holy Trinity. The onion-shaped domes of St. Vladitto Shutterstock Russian food and drink One of the most well-known traditional Russian foods that may seem strange to an outsider is borshch, also spelled borscht. This is a beet soup that is full of vegetables and meat and is typically served with a dollop of sour cream, a staple of many Russian dishes. Pirozhkis are small baked buns that can be filled with potatoes, meat, cabbage or cheese. They should not be confused with pierogis, which are Polish dumplings, boiled and then fried and stuffed with meat, cheese, potatoes or sauerkraut. Caviar, or ikra, traditionally made from the eggs of sturgeon found in the Black Sea or Caspian Sea, is often served on dark, crusty bread or with blini, which are similar to pancakes or crepes. Blini are also served rolled up with a variety of fillings, ranging from jam to cheese and onions, or even chocolate syrup. Vodka is a popular alcoholic drink traditionally made from the distillation of fermented potatoes. Beer and tea are also widely consumed. Russian folk characters are very colorful, and they also betray ancient pagan roots: Another tale tells of the Fire Bird, an enchanted creature with fiery plumage that is very difficult to catch, therefore its capture or that of one of its feathers is often the challenge facing the hero. Both the Baba Yaga and the Fire Bird can either be good or bad, terrifying or benevolent, and they can bestow favorable or hostile

enchantments, de Rossi said. Above all, they must never be antagonized! Some Russians observe Christmas on Jan. Russia Day is celebrated on June

**Chapter 5 : What Do Ballet Dancers Really Think of Ballet Movies? | Playbill**

*Ballet a complete guide to learning and loving the ballet / Robert Greskovic. History of ballet and modern dance/ Judith Steeh. The history of dance/ Mary Clarke & Clement Crisp.*

Share13 Shares As I was browsing through the many lists of listverse, i realized something. There has never been a list on Ballets. And I felt this was such a shame. Ballets have fallen off the cliff when it comes to popularity, especially here in America, where I live. The music in ballet is just as, if not more beautiful, than any piece of music ever written. When put together with flawless, graceful movements and wonderful spectacle, Ballets can be a sight and a sound that will move you to tears, to laughter and to emotions you have never felt before. Here is a list of the Ten Greatest Ballets. Prokofiev is one of my favorite composers, with fantastic composing skills, and his Cinderella is no exception. Based on the fairy tale, the ballet is noted for its fantastic score and very humorous tone. Marius Petipa, Music By: The story follows Don Quixote on his quest of chivalry and the slaying of mythical beasts. Originally staged in 4 acts and 8 scenes, it is an immensely charming and fun ballet, with some great music. Pyotr Tchaikovsky No, not the Disney movie, but this beautiful ballet has some of the most beautiful music of all time. They are married at the end of the ballet. With soaring, beautiful musical numbers, this one jumps onto the list 7 Choreographed by Fredrick Ashton, Music By Felix Mendelssohn http: The story is obviously based on the play of the same name, by the late great William Shakespeare, and has quickly become one of the most popular American Ballets of all time. It is my personal favorite ballet, but I kept it low due to the fact that it is only about 30 minutes in length, but the importance, beauty, and emotion behind this ballet is enormous. It Premiered in Paris, in , and it started a riot. When they went to see the performance, they were not prepared for the ungrace of it? Being used to soaring melodies of Russian Ballet, audience members were shocked to find gritty harmonies, and less than graceful, and jarring movements. It is much better received by todays audiences. The story is that of a sacrifice of a young girl to the god of spring. She is killing herself through dance. The story tells of Nikiya and Solor, who have sworn to be faithful to each other. In his jealousy, the High Brahmin wishes to have Solor the warrior killed, but his plan does not come to pass. Instead, Nikiya is killed by a snake set forth by a man named Rajah, who believes Solor should be with his daughter rather than Nikiya. Yes, that was a VERY short version of a rather deep plot line, but nonetheless, it has some of the most celebrated movements such as the Kingdom of Shades scene of any ballet. Petipa and Ivanov, Music by Pyotr Tchaikovski This piece was almost universally panned when it premiered, in , in St. Petersburg, but has since grown to be one of the most popular ballets of today, due to its ties with Christmas. He is later transformed into a beautiful prince and they go to the kingdom of the Sugar Plum Fairy Confiturembourg to rule forever after. With cherished music and wonderful dance, it has become the staple of poplar ballets in the 20th century. Based on the poem of Heinrich Heine, it is about a young peasant girl named Giselle, who meets a nobleman dressed as a commoner and falls in love with him, not knowing that he is of noble birth. When another man who loves Giselle, named Hilarion, outs the nobleman, Giselle realises that she cannot be with him, upon which she goes mad and dies of a weak heart. When the nobleman comes, the Wilis sentence him to death as well, but the spirit of Giselle saves his life, and she then departs at peace to the afterlife. A Ballet filled with emotion and beautiful dance, it is considered a classic among all forms of entertainment. Originally performed in , in Czechoslovakia, it was significantly reworked and revised, and opened anew in , in Leningrad, Russia. This Ballet is considered to be a the epitome of music and movement, and the masterpiece ballet of Prokofiev. This is a ballet that is truly too beautiful to be talked about, but must be seen and heard to be fully understood and loved. The movement, and the music, and the colors, I weep just thinking of it now. When it first went up it was viewed with harsh criticism, it was believed to be too difficult and unmemorable. The story is that of Odette, a princess who is cursed by Von Rothbart to become a swan by day, but is human by night. A prince, named Siegfried, sees the swan form of Odette transform into a beautiful woman and falls in love on the spot. They go to a ball together, until morning when she leaves to transform back into her swan alone. The prince looks for her and finds another woman, named Odile played by the same woman who playes Odette who looks the twin of the swan queen Odette.

This is planned, of course, by Von Rothbart, and when Siegfried falls for Odile, Odette is cursed to be a swan forever. Realizing his mistake Siegfried seeks forgiveness, but Odette is eternally bound to be a swan, so the Prince and the Princess kill themselves and ascend into heaven together. The powerful story is seen by modern day audiences in more ways than just the Opera. It is a true masterpiece of ballet, and is always considered one of the, if not the, greatest ballet of all time.

**Chapter 6 : Russian culture - Wikipedia**

*The book chronicles ballet's transition from the aristocratic courtier world in Europe through its place as a professional discipline in the Imperial Court of Russia, and finally as a technique.*

It is now a private residence, a windowless house full of domestic splendour, but the old Mercury Theatre is a place where one still senses the ghost of a thousand short passages from Debussy and Tchaikovsky, a notion of young men and women, most of them now dead, who once danced over these boards in the era of British ration books and airships, creating a movement in modern art to the tick of a metronome. Standing in the old theatre also caused me to remember that culture is a process by which people continually excavate what is beautiful and what is true in order to live properly. The ghosts of the Mercury Theatre reminded me, in their own way, how that is something which must always be fought for, though we might wonder whether the fight for ballet as part of everyday British culture is not already lost. The following evening, at the Royal Opera House, Monica Mason, the director of the Royal Ballet, stepped from behind the huge curtain to say a few words before the beginning of Cinderella. It is a basic demand, but one that ballet may no longer be required to meet or even address. There is no story: That may be a good thing in some ways, given the way these forms have sometimes been abused in the past to meet the ends of a narrow patriotism. Yet I also suspect that these areas of the arts are shunted into the elitist category because of their difficulty; there is technique involved, there are questions of tradition and bodies of knowledge, and these are not favoured in a culture where populism and "instant access" are considered the be-all and end-all. Ballet is a subtle and rather inobvious art; it requires patience and belief and a certain knowledge, which may explain why even the most prominent productions are never discussed on the cultural reviews that happen every other night on British television and radio. When was the last time a ballet was reviewed on Newsnight Review? When was the last time an opera was featured on Saturday Review? Needless to say, there was no question of these programmes not reviewing The Producers or the new album from U2. In my view, the fantastic energy of popular culture has been allowed to devastate the patient arts, and most producers and presenters are too weak to oppose it. Ballet companies have to survive, dancers have to pursue their careers, and they do so by adding artificial sweeteners to the high arts in an attempt to make them palatable. The Nutcracker sweet enough, one would have thought therefore becomes The Hard Nut, with cocaine-sniffers usurping the sugar plums; Swan Lake turns into a madcap and very enjoyable forum for the contemplation of gender politics; and from there it is only a few ill-taken steps to the "bums-on-seats" spectacle being put together by Peter Schaufuss, former head of the London Festival Ballet, called Diana "The Princess, with music by a British pop band. His company has already done a good job of diminishing expectations, with successful tours of ballets about Elvis Presley and the Beatles. To some, of course, this will all be evidence of a smart move on the part of the ballet world, an attempt to introduce new themes usually referred to as "fresh challenges" and to increase the audience for an otherwise dying art. And they may be right. But we may still ask the question: Should it degrade itself? Should it water down? Should it continue to bend backwards in an effort to gain media attention and meet the current craving for banality? Alicia Markova spent a lifetime in pursuit of nearly impossible standards, and her audience came with her. I can only wonder if her passing marks the passing of that audience too.

**Chapter 7 : Ballet - Core Of Culture**

*The Kirov Ballet, where one of the documentary's subjects now dances, perform Swan Lake. According to David Kinsella, the director of a groundbreaking new documentary, A Beautiful Tragedy, if I.*

**Roots of Classical Ballet** The history of ballet dates back to Italy of the 15th century when rich princes hired professional dancers to give luxurious performances that would impress their noble guests. In the 17th century choreographers of Italy, France and England strived to find a new distinct form for the new ballet and new possibilities of dance technique. There appeared bold innovators trying to free ballet from humdrum and monotony. Ballet reformer Jean-Georges Noverre was among them. He wanted ballet to become art in its highest meaning; he stated that dance was to become active, meaningful, and emotionally expressive. Russian Emperors Welcome Foreign Art Russia possessing rich national dance folklore and subjected to European cultural influences during the reign of Peter the Great turned to be fertile ground for the development of ballet theatre. From the early 18th century ballet in Russia was inculcated by Italian and French teachers. Learning foreign art the Russians brought in their specific features. Among the first ballet teachers to come to Russia was Jean Baptist Lande. His students greatly impressed Empress Anna with their performance and she got an idea to start a ballet school in Russia. The first school opened in and directed by J. By the end of the 18th century some noble art lovers initiated private theatres with their bondservants performing. The theatres of the Counts Sheremetevs in their Moscow estates Kuskovo and Ostankino were outstandingly splendid and most admired by the high society. By that time court and private ballet theatres opened both in Moscow and St. Hey-day of Russian Ballet In the 18th c. At the turn of the 19th century, however, the hey-day of Russian ballet started. Russian composers started writing music for ballet. Melodramatic ballet became the leading genre. In the first third of the 19th century Russian art attained maturity and shaped as a national school. Istomina in Eugene Onegin. Special privilege was extended to ballet among all other theatres. The authorities paid great attention to ballet development and provided it with governmental grants. The Bolshoi Theatre was opened in Both Moscow and St. The Russian Ballet blended in with the romanticism born in Western Europe. The spectacles shined with splendour, eurhythmy and topnotch artistry. Reformers and Innovators It was Russian ballet that was destined to revive ballet art in a new quality. Great role in that belonged to the French ballet master Marius Petipa who was chief choreographer for the Imperial Ballet School. He started his artistic activity following the principles of the aesthetics of romanticism which was about to play out. Petipa went on the process of enriching the dance, the process which romanticism started. His ballets set to music of Puni Tzar Kandavl and Minkus Bayaderka were based on masterfully elaborated ensembles of classical dance, where the themes of the chorus and solo dance were interwoven and contrasted. By the early 20th century Russian ballet took the leading part on the world ballet stage. The ballet master Michael Fokin renewed the contents and the form of the ballet spectacle. He created a new type of spectacle - a one act ballet driven by a through action, where the subject matter unfolded in the unity of music, choreography and scenography Chopeniana, Petrushka and Shekherezada. Gorsky also stood for integrity of ballet action, historic verisimilitude and natural plastique. The major co-authors of both the choreographers became not composers but artists. However, along with the obsolete things the reformers rejected what was good in the old ballet. Anyway, the ballet was entering the context of the artistic trends of that time. Nijinsky Holy Spring, and others and attracted famed musicians and artists to the ballet theatre. After the revolution of a lot of artistes left the country thus causing intense development of the Russian ballet in Europe. For many years keeping to the traditional Russian repertoire, those collectives at the same time assimilated the influences of the countries they worked in. Revolutionary Ballet After the revolution ballet remained being in the centre of nationwide art. In spite of the emigration of a number of leading figures of ballet theatre, the school of Russian ballet survived and put forward new performers. The pathos of movement towards new life, revolutionary themes and a wide scope for creative experiment inspired ballet masters. At the same time they made use of the experience of their forerunners. However the epoch of experiments in Russian arts was cut short in the mid 20th with the closing of some studios and campaigns in mass media calling for the return to the traditions of

Russian culture of the 19th century. However, despite successful expansion of ballet the monopoly of a single trend in ballet theatre resulted in cultivated sameness. Many types of spectacles were left aside, in particular one act spectacles, among them symphonic ballets and those without plot. Dance forms and dance language got much poorer as only classical dance was staged with rare use of folk motives. Any quests beyond drama ballet were announced formalistic. The early s saw the crisis of the officially supported drama ballet. However the traditions of performing artistry were alive. A number of to-be great dancers came on stage in those years, such as Maya Plisetskaya, R. Back to the World Stage The turning point came in the late s with the appearance of a new generation of choreographers. Among the first were Leningrad ballet masters Y. Belski who based their ballets on musical and dance dramaturgy that conveyed the spectacle meaning through dance. Forgotten genres were revived, such as one act ballet, ballet-poster, satirical ballet, ballet symphony and choreographic miniature. The s saw a growing number of tours of big and small opera and ballet companies abroad. Some artists and ballet masters started working abroad, staging spectacles and even heading ballet troupes in Europe and America among them Nureyev, Makarova, Baryshnikov, Grigorovich, Vinogradov, Plisetskaya, Vasilyev, etc. Russian ballet dancers work in many foreign ballet troupes these days. First independent ballet troupes appeared in the s under the guidance of Yakobson, Kasatkina and Vasilyev, and B. New alternative forms of choreography go on developing nowadays.

**Chapter 8 : Russian ballet :: Theatre and Cinema :: Culture & Arts :: Russia-InfoCentre**

*Ballet companies have to survive, dancers have to pursue their careers, and they do so by adding artificial sweeteners to the high arts in an attempt to make them palatable.*

Films about dancers, though, are a bridge to new audiences: *The Red Shoes* dazzled audiences in the Golden Age of cinema; *The Turning Point* introduced a real ballet family and backstage life and films like *Step Up* mixed ballet and jazz with hip-hop. *Center Stage*’s a coming-of-age story that mixes teenagers, romance, and the challenges of ballet’ featured several leads from American Ballet Theatre. Stiefel had a starring role as the hot-shot, rebel choreographer. Julie Kent was an icy superstar, and Sascha Radetsky was a charming up-and-comer. Gillian Murphy and Sean Stewart danced in the film as well. For the ballet-horror flick *Black Swan*, Lane danced as the body double for the central character, played by Natalie Portman, a successful ballerina struggling against mental demons. In the bigger ballets, the music is a driving force in your emotion. Bloody toes are featured in plenty of close-ups. Rivalries, though, are minor compared to the dark, twisted flair found in *Flesh and Bone*, a miniseries, which though it is not a film was shot so cinematically that it was more than a television show. The drama, about a talented but troubled runaway with an overly attentive brother, lasted only one season. That, however, was enough to launch the acting career of former ABT Principal Irina Dvorovento, who played an outrageously sinister Russian prima ballerina. Though the film is more of a spy flick than a ballet movie, it opens with Lawrence as a Bolshoi-style ballerina who is felled by a horrendous onstage injury and then goes to a super-creepy spy school. For the body double work, Boylston danced a version of *The Firebird* choreographed for the film by Justin Peck. I tried to make it authoritative. But still, the actor had to train for nearly four months and learn to dance the entire sequence. In the final scene, Boylston is clearly visible as herself, wearing a beautiful wide tutu and dancing a pas de deux as Aurora from *The Sleeping Beauty*. The opera house is actually located in Budapest, but within the film, the setting is Russia. Which in a way connected Boylston back to a dance film that captured her imagination when she was little: *The Children of Theatre Street*, a documentary that illuminated the inside world of the Vaganova Academy, associated with the Mariinsky, or then Kirov Ballet, in St. Showing film audiences what ballet looks like at the highest level has been known to spark interest and ticket sales, as it did after *Black Swan*. Principal Dancer Misty Copeland has the lead dance role, and judging from the preview, the magic of a little ballet will go a long way. Pia Catton is a writer and editor covering the performing arts. Follow her on Instagram [DanceDriven](#)

**Chapter 9 : ECU Libraries Catalog**

*Inside, more walls have been torn down to open up views, give the ROH shop more space and make the whole sequence feel a little less like trespassing into an icy palace of high culture.*