

DANCE INTERNATIONAL

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Cover Picture

The Ballet Boys

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The Heart and Soul of Russian ballet classics

Moscow City Ballet return by popular demand for an extended tour until the end of March with tickets now on sale at venues across the UK. Their high quality performances are ideal for school group bookings. Following a triumphant Silver Anniversary tour last year with sell out performances and rave reviews, the ballet company's eagerly anticipated return gets under way at Bromley on Monday 3 November, touring its renowned dramatic and entertaining programme of Russian classics including Giselle, Swan Lake, Romeo & Juliet and The Nutcracker in all their traditional glory.

Moscow City Ballet's repertoire combines artistry, technique, narrative and live music to provide breath-taking productions of 'big story' Russian dance. In the past few years the company has expanded due to increased demand for appearances in Eastern Europe and internationally. Moscow City Ballet and Moscow City Ballet Europe rank among Russia's most successful and extensive touring ballet companies. This year both MCB and MCB Europe will be performing in the UK featuring Moscow's finest young dancers derived from the country's iconic choreographic schools. Patricia Murray-Bett of PMB Presentations said, "The demand for Moscow City Ballet to perform in more cities has been phenomenal, this will certainly be our biggest tour to date. I think audiences truly appreciate the athleticism and skill of the young dancers; as well as being technically impeccable, they act and immerse themselves in their roles. It all combines to create a really wonderful piece of entertainment and we're trying to reach as many people as possible."



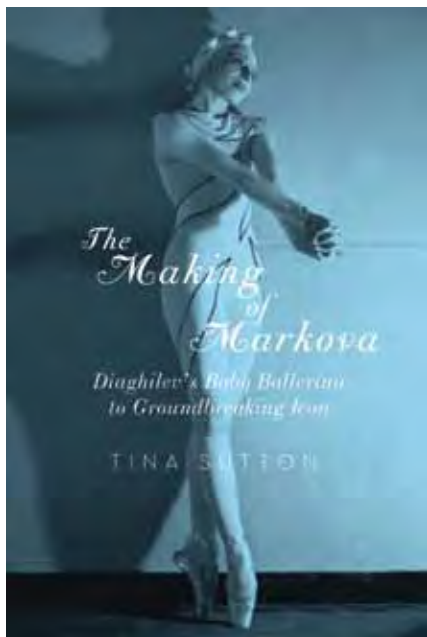
Founded in 1988 by Victor Smirnov-Golovanov, who sadly died in 2013 after a long battle with cancer, Moscow City Ballet remains in the safe hands of his devoted wife the Artistic Director Ludmila Neroubashchenko, who has been leading the ballet company for the last few years. Ludmila has remained faithful to Victor's unique choreography and production which has entertained and fascinated audiences of all ages world-wide. Ludmila said, "Last season was emotional and daunting with it being our first UK tour since Victor died and the company's 25th Anniversary, but the audiences were amazing and supportive. We're thrilled they want us back so soon; demand has been so great for this season that we're bringing more dancers, more staging and more costumes, which will allow us the flexibility to over-lap on some of the tour dates and yet still provide the unique Moscow City Ballet Russian dance experience."

Photo MCB Giselle



The Making of Markova

One of the finest exponents of Giselle was the first English ballerina to dance it Dame Alicia Markova. Born Alice Marks in a small flat in Finsbury Park Alicia Markova became Britain's first home grown ballerina. I first met her when I was a ballet pupil on one of her inspirational visits to our school. She always felt that passing on the knowledge of the dancer was expected and she was a gifted teacher. Her life and career have already been well documented so I was surprised that a new book about her should be published. The Making of Markova - Diaghilev's Baby Ballerina to Groundbreaking Icon however covers new ground as author Tina Sutton uncovered Markova's personal papers and belongings at Boston University's Gotlieb Centre.



Her life is laid bare in the archives and Tina Sutton brings it to life and in the context of the time in this well presented book published by Pegasus. From a humble background Markova appealed to both the first night glitterati and everyday people. Sometimes overlooked today, she was a real pioneer of British ballet and firmly believed in ballet for everyone, not just an elite. An inspirational figure she overcome poverty, sexism, anti-Semitism, and not being thought "pretty" enough to succeed. In bringing some of the treasures of this archive to light Tina Sutton has done a great service to the dance community. The Making of Markova is not a book just for the dance historian or ballet student but written in a easy style with many photos in the 670 pages making it a handsome work for everyone with an interest in ballet and indeed people.

This is an affordable Christmas treat at £12.99 and I have two copies to give away to a lucky reader! Just send your details to me at competitions@gavinroebuck.com before 27th November 2014 and the first two selected at random win.

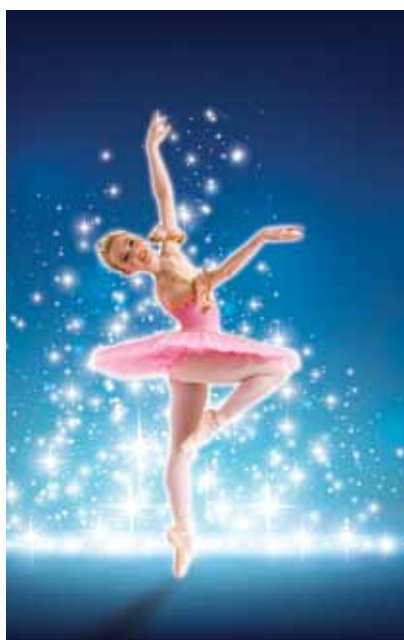
Ballet Boys

Now also available as a DVD this inspiring film introduces us to three different young friends who are passionate about ballet. As the boys near the end of high school they must decide if they have the commitment and talent for a professional career in dance.

Friendships develop as the three compete for a place at the National Academy of Arts in Oslo and one auditions for a place at the Royal Ballet School in London.



Vienna Festival Ballet



Vienna Festival Ballet celebrate their 34th anniversary with a UK tour from September to December 2014 bringing one of the most famous of the Tchaikovsky great classics *The Nutcracker*. This seasonal delight promises to be an enchanting treat for ballet fans and interested observers alike. VFB have talented dancers including graduates from the Royal Ballet School, British, Australian and Italian soloists, and guest stars from Vienna and South Africa. It was the celebrated Austrian dancer Peter Mallek who founded the company, which he now directs, after his illustrious career as a dancer of international renown. The performances also offer an ideal opportunity to introduce children to the art and skills of ballet so are ideal for a group booking.

Photo: VFB The Nutcracker

Poppea

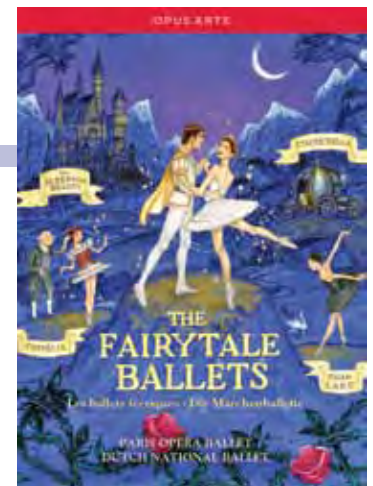


Gauthier Dance is the dance ensemble of Theaterhaus Stuttgart with 14 uniquely talented dancers under the direction of the choreographer, dancer and musician Eric Gauthier. Founded in October 2007 the company has rapidly cut a niche for itself. Gauthier Dance's trademark is ambitious choreography characterised by their humour, originality and technical virtuosity. For this production choreographer Christian Spuck was inspired by the story of the marriage of the Roman emperor Nero and Poppea Sabina. This DVD and Blue-ray disc is on the Euroarts label.

To win a copy of the DVD send your details marked Poppea to competitions@gavinroebuck.com by the 27 Nov 2014 and the first one selected a random wins.

The Fairytale Ballets

This box set of four magical ballets from Opus Arte would make a delightful gift. Peter Wright's *The Sleeping Beauty* from Dutch National Ballet with Sofiane Sylve and from the Paris Opéra Ballet – the worlds oldest ballet company - *Cinderella* in Nureyev's production with the lovely Agnés Letseu, *Coppélia* staged by Patrice Bart with Dorothée Gilbert and Nureyev's production of *Swan Lake* with Agnés Letseu and José Martinez. These are four acclaimed productions of some of the greatest ballets.



Perfection is a Killer



Photo: The Royal Ballet's expressive and audience engaging Steven McRae as The Mad Hatter in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, on over Christmas at Covent Garden. Photographic Credit: © ROH / Johan Persson

For some elite dancers the pursuit of technical perfection, sometimes at the behest of modern choreographers, is killing artistry. Teachers in ballet companies and ballet schools can in part also be responsible for this with their deadly over emphasis on technique and flexibility. Some dancers now seem to only engage with their public on social media, while on stage they are empty of real expression.

There can be too much emphasis on high extensions, pyrotechnics, and the polished execution of steps from the waist down. Rather than circus tricks performers could lift the spirits of their public and make the difference between the audience as mere spectators to almost impossible feats, by sharing the love of moving to music. Warming humanity and artistry and, if it is a narrative ballet, engagement with the characters, rather than super-human tricks is what makes ballet a fulfilling art rather than a sport.

Flexibility is a tool in dancing not the end product. While technique gives freedom striving for technical perfection is limiting. As teachers we could spend ages trying to get a pupil to do a perfect single pirouette but this denies them the chance to try a double. Perfection is elusive. Of course we should seek to improve technique but it isn't everything and some elite dancers risk boring their public, the most serious crime for any performer, if they lack engagement with the quality of the movements.

For the recreational pupil striving for perfection in ballet can make it dull and is unachievable. Joy of movement and discovering new steps even if not well performed all help to retain them in classes and also get a greater appreciation of the range of dance vocabulary.

Theatrical dance is surely about communication so if the dancer is primarily focused on technical virtuosity and polish during a performance it's real purpose can be lost. Individuality in a soloist is more interesting and, like having a fascinating conversation, should evoke a response in the viewer that is more than awe at technique. Technique is the craftsman's tool that gives freedom of expression. Whatever level you teach at, do please keep classical ballet alive and meaningful.

Peter Pan

Over the holiday period you can escape to Neverland with Northern Ballet in Leeds and the boy who never grew up. Join Wendy, John, and Michael as they soar into the night sky with Peter, to a magical land of mermaids and fairy dust, where children can fly and adventures happen every day. But beware – danger is just around the corner; Captain Hook and the pirates are looking for revenge and Peter Pan is top of their list.

Northern Ballet and choreographer David Nixon brings you a production complete with pirates, fairies, wild animals and death defying feats of flying!



Ashley Dixon as Peter and Pippa Moore as Wendy in Northern Ballet's Peter Pan. Photo Alastair Muir.

Giselle

Natalia Osipova is one of the finest ballerinas today. Her performance earlier in the year at Covent Garden in Peter Wright's production for the Royal Ballet was an astonishing interpretation both in terms of technique and artistry. A special moment was as she floated through the air in Act 11 like ethereal gossamer. Fortunately this outstanding performance has been recorded on DVD in High Definition with Carlos Acosta as Albrecht on the Opus Arte label reference OA 1144D. Readers will be delighted to know that I have one copy to give away so just send me your details marked Giselle DVD to competitions@gavinroebuck.com by the 27 Nov 2014 and the first one selected a random wins.



Nureyev's production of The Nutcracker

If you can't get to a theatre to see this Christmas classic you might be tempted to buy this DVD of the Wiener Staatsoper in this 1985 version of the Tchaikovsky ballet choreographed by Rudolf Nureyev on the Unitel Classica label. This fine ballet company has Ludmila Konovalova as Clara and Vladimir Shishov as the Prince.



A Night to Remember

Brendan Cole, star of Strictly Come Dancing, announces a brand new show for 2015. A Night To Remember promises that Brendan and his cast of dancers, musicians and singers will present a dazzling spectacle.

Across 48 shows in three months - and straight off the back of season 12 of Strictly - Brendan will showcase his expertise in an odyssey of music and dance, once again blending exquisite choreography with his own unique charisma in a bold, sensational show. There's new music, new costumes and new banter to keep audiences entertained throughout, as Brendan leads his cast through a diverse selection of styles and numbers, each of them exhilarating, mesmerising and above all, memorable.

Night to Remember follows from the boundless success of his previous tours. French Dancing With The Stars champion Fauve Hautot returns, as does Germany's Patrick Helm who has been working as assistant to the artistic director on Strictly Come



Dancing, as well as professional ballroom and Latin dance instructor Crystal Main. Brendan's cast will be extended even further with more exciting names to be announced. Loaded with all the ballroom magic and Latin excitement that one could ask for, A Night To Remember certainly won't be forgotten by anyone in attendance and is already poised to be one of 2015's must-see shows.

Seasonal good wishes to all



Photo of gorgeous tutus suitable for pupils who want to be a Sugar Plum Fairy or a snow flake available from Costume Creations.



The first to play the Sugar Plum Fairy in the Nutcracker was Antonietta Dell'Era in St Petersburg in 1892 for which she received five curtain calls.