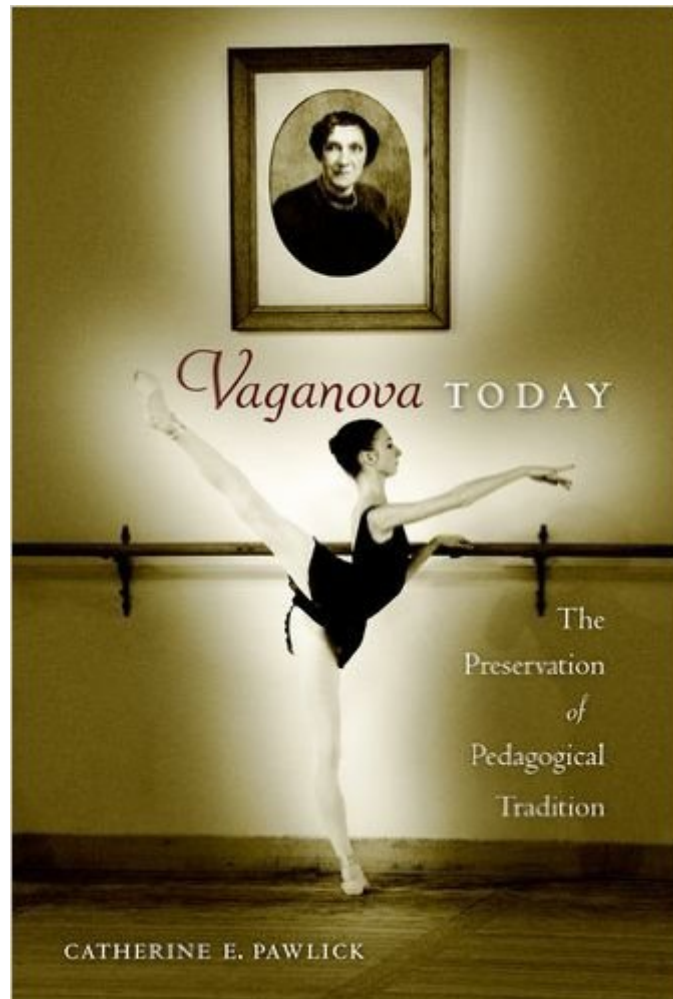


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Vaganova Today: The Preservation Of Pedagogical Tradition



Synopsis

An extensive and thorough compilation of numerous sources with unique insights on Vaganova and her methodology. The author has had access to several important figures in Russian ballet who knew Vaganova and/or her students. Confronting the dilemmas facing the art of classical ballet, *Vaganova Today* is a thought-provoking read. — John White, author of *Advanced Principles in Teaching Classical Ballet*

Agrippina Vaganova (1879–1951) is revered as the visionary who first codified the Russian system of classical ballet training. The Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet, founded on impeccable technique and centuries of tradition, has a reputation for elite standards, and its graduates include Mikhail Baryshnikov, Rudolf Nureyev, Natalia Makarova, and Diana Vishneva. Yet the Vaganova method has come under criticism in recent years.

In this absorbing volume, Catherine Pawlick traces Vaganova's story from her early years as a ballet student in tsarist Russia to her career as a dancer with the Mariinsky (Kirov) Ballet to her work as a pedagogue and choreographer. Pawlick then goes beyond biography to address Vaganova's legacy today, offering the first-ever English translations of primary source materials and intriguing interviews with pedagogues and dancers from the Academy and the Mariinsky Ballet, including some who studied with Vaganova herself. — Catherine E. Pawlick

Pawlick danced with ballet companies in the United States before moving to St. Petersburg, Russia, where she lived for six years, observing classes at the Vaganova Academy and rehearsals and performances at the Mariinsky Theatre. Fluent in French and Russian, she has written on dance for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Ballet Review*, and *Dance Europe*.

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Customer Reviews

I finished reading Vaganova last night. Ms. Pawlick did a great job. I was especially impressed with and interested in the main part of the book where she uncovers such a rich, detailed expression of what the pedagogues think about the status of teaching today compared to the past and the philosophical underpinnings beneath their opinions. Really good work on her part....and to have the opportunity to actually talk to these people and get first-hand impressions from them is invaluable! I guess all those months of camping out in the Mariinsky hallways really paid off. I've always been a fan of ballet and, although I would like to think of myself as fairly well informed about it, I had to admit after reading the book that I fall into that category of audience member that really needs to be better educated about what I'm seeing in order to get the full value of the experience. I loved that part of the book where this is discussed. Loved the references throughout the years about the differences between ballet, sports and circus! So very well put and important not to forget. "How you lift your leg is more important than how high it goes" is SO true. Reading the book also took me someplace else I wasn't expecting. Something the author hasn't started to experience yet...but getting older is a real adventure. I still remember my first impressions and introductions to classical ballet. I was still a teenager when I saw Maya Plisetskaya dance and in my mind's eye she's still as she was then. I about fell off my chair when reading Vaganova Today led me to realize she's now in her 80s! How could that be? Where did the time go? But then, I seem not to notice that I'm pushing 70!!!

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