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1.Introduction

Ballet is a form of dancing performed for theatre audiences. Like other dance forms, ballet may tell a story, express a mood, or simply reflect the music. But a ballet dancer's technique (way of performing) and special skills differ greatly from those of other dancers. Ballet dancers perform many movements that are unnatural for the body. But when these movements are well executed, they look natural.



Pic.1

Ballet dancers seem to ignore the law of gravity as they float through the air in long, slow leaps. They keep perfect balance while they spin like tops without becoming dizzy. During certain steps, their feet move so rapidly that the eye can hardly follow the movements. The women often dance on the tips of their toes, and the men lift them high overhead as if they were as light as feathers.

The dancers take joy in controlling their bodies, and ballet audiences share their feelings. The spectators can feel as though they are gliding and spinning with the dancers. Simply by using their bodies, ballet dancers are able to express many emotions, such as anger, fear, jealousy, joy, and sadness. The lines of the dancers' bodies form beautiful, harmonious designs. Ballet technique is called classical because it stresses this purity and harmony of design.

In addition to the dance form called ballet, an individual dance work or performance using classical ballet technique is called a ballet. Any dance work involving a group of dancers may

also be called a ballet even though it may not use classical ballet technique. For example, works of modern dance, musical comedy, and dance on television programmes may or may not include this technique, but many of them are called ballets. Classical ballet technique originally developed in France during the 1600's. Today, French words are used in all parts of the world for the various steps and positions of classical ballet.

Ballets are staged and performed by ballet companies. The artistic director of a company is in charge of staging a ballet. In some companies, he or she is also the choreographer, who arranges a ballet's dance movements and teaches them to the dancers. After a company decides to perform a ballet, the artistic director tries to produce a harmonious work of art by blending all the parts of the ballet. These parts include the dancing, music, scenery, and costumes--all based on the ballet's story or mood. A ballet can be performed without music, scenery, or costumes. But most ballets use all three parts.

The choreographer, composer, and scenery and costume designer work together as a team. But the dancing is the most important part of a ballet. The designer must plan scenery and costumes that allow the dancers space and freedom of movement.

Different ballet styles have developed in various countries. For example, the style that developed in the United States tends to be energetic and fast. Ballet in Russia is often forceful and showy, and French ballet is generally pretty and decorative. Ballet dancers travel throughout the world and adopt different features of foreign styles. As a result of these international influences, all ballet is continually being broadened and enriched.

2. Main part

2.1 The History of Ballet

It is customary to look upon the 1581 performance of the *Ballet Comique de la Royne* at the *Palais du Petit Bourbon* in Paris as the birth of ballet itself, making ballet the youngest of the major performing arts. However, since we are also interested in where ballet came from, we will look at pre-ballet dance and its development into the discipline of ballet as well as the development of ballet after 1581, including the French influence, then the Russian influence, and finally the beginning of the Twentieth Century and North America.

By looking at the development of ballet in in these different areas we hope to unravel some of the mysteries of ballet history and make the short, yet sometimes confusing history of ballet easy to understand.



Pic.2

2.2 When did Dance Start?

The point in time where people started to dance is very hazy, in fact it is more like a cloud than a point. Indeed, there are people who believe that man has danced since before sapiens was a species.

This is true in the fact that before he had the power of speech ancient man conveyed thoughts, wishes, and emotions through actions, just as we do in modern day ballets. However, for our purposes we will consider man to have started dancing when he danced for entertainment or spiritual reasons.

The first recorded dancing, by our definition, is among the ancient civilizations of the middle east and India and among the aboriginal people of the Americas, Australia, and Africa. The Hindu god Shiva, known as Nataraja, Lord of the Dance, is portrayed as a many-armed being balanced on one leg. Actual dance forms appear to have been in place in India around 6000 B.C.¹ In studying the First Dynasty of Egypt, (around 3000 B.C.), archaeologists have found reliefs showing a kind of dance or body language², and as culture in Egypt advanced, paintings were made showing musicians and dancers.³

In the Americas, Australia, and Africa the aboriginal people danced both for spiritual reasons and for entertainment. They would dance for almost everything from the potlatch to the funeral. I think they were one of the "danciest" groups of people of all time. Their dances still influence dance today. For example, there have been many ballets performed in North America based on the dance and legends of the First Nations people, the All Blacks rugby team performs a cheer based on the dance of the Aborigines of Australia, and Afro-Jazz is a recognized form of dance around the world.

2.3 The Greeks and Romans

Dance came to Greece about 1400 B.C. from civilizations in Crete, which probably were influenced by the Egyptians.⁴ Although the Greeks did not contribute to the technique of dance very much, what they did do is contribute to the vocabulary of the theatre, notably the *koros*, (chorus), *orkestra*, (the round dance floor where the chorus danced), the *skene*, (the covered area behind the *orkestra*), and the *proskenenion* which was the raised platform between the *orkestra* and

the skene.⁵ This theatre layout and vocabulary formed the basis for the construction of the proscenium theatre, where ballet took form.

The Greeks also spoke of dancing in their mythology. For example, in the Ajax of Sophocles the great god Pan is spoken of as a dancing master, and Phoebus is addressed by Pindar as "the Prince of Dancers." Even Zeus has been represented "moving gracefully amid the dancing throng."⁶

The Romans treated dance in much the same way as the Greeks - it was an activity for everyone until the more "decadent days" of the empire when some individuals with high social status ceased to actively participate in the dances and became some of the first audiences.



Pic.3

2.4The Middle Ages

Here's a surprise: during the middle ages a form of dance found its way into the Church - quite different from the Church's later attitude of dance as a sin. In Seville the choirboys performed a dance before the altar on a number of occasions, and this kind of display remains a tradition to this day in many countries. In the Far East temple dances were also performed.

The peasants of the middle ages did rain dances, and the tumblers of the Middle Ages included dance pieces in their acts between tumbling sequences.



Pic.4

2.5 The Renaissance

At the end of the middle ages there was a renewed interest in Greek things. This focus on the "classic" past led to the Renaissance. It was during the Renaissance that society started to focus on the individual rather than the whole, and as a result, it was during this time that the male and female dancers became an "ideal" man and woman, as they are today.

The most prominent advancements in dance during the Renaissance occurred in the city-states in present-day Italy. There would frequently be huge pageants to celebrate such occasions as the birth of an heir or an empire-building marriage. At these events dancers were both members of the aristocracy and hired performers that were hired to perform and impress the nobility of neighboring states.

In France, when one of his knights married one of the queen's gentlewomen, King Charles VI performed in a *masque* or *morisco*, (masked performance), called *Bal des Ardents* or *Burner's Ball*. This occasion is infamous because as he was playing a Wild Man of the Forest in a big hairy costume made of flax and pitch, and at one moment when he separated himself from the other five "wild men" to talk to a duchess, a torch held by an onlooker set the other five dancers on fire. When the fire spread to the king's costume the duchess smothered it with her train. All but one of the other five dancers died from their burns.

During the 1400s there were quite a few men who are considered to be the earliest "ballet masters." We only know of the ones who wrote about dance, as the work of the others has been lost. Some of these men, Domenico da Piacenza, (or da Ferrara) and Guglielmo Ebreo, (also known as William the Jew of Pesaro), were well known as dance teachers and choreographers throughout Europe. Domenico is probably the best known ballet master of the era as he wrote down a lot of his work.

In Domenico's *De Arte Saltandi ed Choreas Ducendi*, (*On the Art of Dancing and Conducting Dances*), he chose the word *ballo* over the word *danza*, both of which mean "dance" in Italian, and the dances he choreographed became known as *baletti* or *balli*, (singular: *balletto*)⁷. Because of his word choice, Domenico is probably responsible for the word "ballet" as it is recognized and used today.

During this era costume was nothing like one would currently expect to see at the ballet. The dancers wore "contemporary" court fashions. This meant full wigs and bloomers for men, with hard shoes and heavy long-skirted gowns for the women.

The court spectacles of the day were amazing. In one performance, the cast of hundreds was directed by Raphael's father, in another, all of the scenes and stage machinery were made by Leonardo da Vinci.⁸

In 1489 at a banquet in Italy directed by Bergonzio di Botta a dance, called an "entrée," introduced each course in the meal. Some people consider this the first ballet.

In the mid 1500s there were huge shows, called *spectaculi* put on in northern Italy. They not only had dancing, but equestrian demonstrations and mock combats. It is from these shows that the word *spectacle*, used by the French to talk about a ballet, comes.

When the Italian Catherine de Medici married France's Henri duc d'Orléans French and Italian court dancing began to run together, and in her later years Catherine put on huge *spectaculi* for all sorts of events as the "Queen Mother" of France. One of the more notable ones is *Le Ballet des Polonais*, (*The Polish Ballet*), put on for some visiting Polish ambassadors in 1573.

Then in 1581 Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx staged the *Ballet Comique de la Royne* for Queen Louise of France. This traditional "first" ballet is said to have had an audience of ten thousand and have lasted from 10 P.M. until 3 A.M. At this point ballet included more than dance; it was called *ballet-comique* because it included elements of speech and drama, (comique means drama - not comedy as we may think), and this is also why it lasted so long.

Also in 1581 Fabritio Caroso published *Il Ballarino*, a technical guide to ballet of the time. This held Italy's place in the world as a major dance centre.

As ballet advanced and became more dance and less speaking over the next fifty years it stopped being something that was only offered in court and was offered to paying audiences. Also during this time, the nobility, including King Louis XIII, performed in roles ranging from the hero to the lowest scum in the ballet, lending prestige to the portrayal of evil parts.



Pic.5

2.6 Louis XIV and the French Influence

When Louis XIV was crowned his interest in dancing was strongly supported and encouraged by Italian-born Cardinal Mazarin, (formerly Mazarini), who assiste Louis XIV. The young king made his ballet debut as a boy, but it was in 1653 as a teenager that he accomplished his most memorable feat as a dancer. He performed a series of dances in *Le Ballet de la Nuit* and for his final piece he appeared as Apollo, god of the sun. Wearing a fancy golden Roman-cut corselet and a kilt of golden rays he came to be known as the Sun King.

Cardinal Mazarin promoted Italian influences in the French spectacle. The ballet master he imported from Italy was Giovanni Battista Lulli, who was rechristened Jean Baptiste Lully for work in France. Lully became one of the king's favorite dancers and rivaled the king as the best dancer in France.

In 1661 Louis established the Académie Royale de Danse in a room of the Louvre, the world's first ballet school. Also in 1661 he attended a party put on by the finance minister to show off his new home in the country. The entertainment was Molière's ballet *Les Fâcheux* which pleased the king to no end, although he thought that the finance minister was a treasonous servant. As it

turned out, the finance minister was arrested, and the ballet master, the home's architect, and the gardener were hired by the king.

At court, Molière and Lully collaborated, with Molière choreographing and Lully composing the music for ballets. Pierre Beauchamps, another ballet master, also worked with them choreographing interludes in the dramatic parts. Beauchamps eventually was named "superintendent of the king's ballets" in the dance school that Louis established in 1661 and is now one of the most famous of the "fathers" of ballet. It is Beauchamps who has been given credit for standardizing the five foot positions of ballet, (first through fifth positions).

In 1669 Louis, (still Louis XIV), established the Académie Royale de Musique for Lully to run. Then, in 1670 the king, past his physical prime, retired from dancing, allowing other, better dancers to take lead roles.

In 1672 Lully established a dance academy within the Académie Royale de Musique. This dance company survives today as the ballet of the Paris Opera - the world's oldest continuously running ballet company.

Lully's seriousness towards the study of dance led to the development of professional dancers as opposed to courtiers who could dance. Up until 1681 ballet was performed almost exclusively by men. Then, in 1681 Lully staged *Le Triomphe de l'Amour*, featuring Mademoiselle de Lafontaine, (1665-1738), one of four ballerinas in the production; we do not know who the other three ballerinas were. Since this time, Lafontaine has been hailed as the "Queen of Dance."

In 1687 Lully died from an injury he received by accidentally stabbing his foot with his time marking stick. At this time, ballet was normally performed in the same productions as opera, a theatrical form known as *opéra-ballet*. The music academy that Lully had run set the standard in the *opéra-ballet*, which people attended as much, if not more, for the dancing as for the music, and the composer of one *opéra-ballet*, *L'Europe Galante*, (1697), suggested making the *opéra-ballet* more popular by lengthening the dances and shortening the skirts of the now common female dancers.

In 1700 *Chorégraphie, ou l'art de décrire la danse* was published by Raoul Auger Feuillet. This book wrote down both conventions of stage and ballroom dancing and attempted to create a dance notation similar to music. Although this notation was never finalized and standardized, it is the system that is still in use today as no other system has been developed. The word *chorégraphie* gives us the English word choreography and is derived from the greek *khorea*, (to dance), and *graphein*, (to write). By 1700 many of the words and movements common in today's ballet were already in use, including *jeté*, *sissonne*, *chassé*, *entrechat*, *pirouette*, and *cabriole*.

In 1713 the Paris opera established its own dance school, which taught a technique based on Feuillet's writings. Two years after this, in 1715, King Louis XIV died.

In 1725 *The Dancing Master* was published by Pierre Rameau, (1674-1748), a former dance master for the queen of Spain. In his book Rameau formally documented the five foot positions for the first time. At this time French dance concentrated on well-mannered lordly elegance where Italian dance was full of acrobatic virtuosity. Also, in France the dance sections of the *opéra-ballet* continued the story, whereas in Italy they were simply dances put in to give the audience a break from the singing.

In 1735 Rameau put on an *opéra-ballet* called *Les Indes Galantes*, based on a theme of four romances in different exotic locations. In this production the dancers were definitely doing ballet, as the ballroom and ballet dance forms were now recognized as separate, and it was recognized that turning out the legs had become much more important in ballet, although it was still desirable in ballroom dancing. Now, ballet requires almost flat turnout and in ballroom turnout is not really necessary at all.

Some prominent male dancers of the time were Michel Blondy, (1677-1747), and Claude Balon, (1676-1739), who may have inspired the term *ballon* for light jumps. Women were still in the shadow of men at this time, because they started dancing later and they had to wear huge heavy costumes. Some of the leading female dancers were Marie-Thérèse de Subligny, (1666-1735), and Franoise Prévost, (1680-1741). These two ladies became known as France's Queen of Dance as they reached their primes, and they danced with the likes of Blondy and Balon. Prévost made her claim to fame by choreographing a solo called *Les caractères de la Danse* depicting several romances - in which she played both parts. Two of her pupils, Marie Sallé, (1701-1756), and Marie-Anne de Cupis de Carmargo, (1710-1770), performed this piece.

Sallé became famous for her incredible ability to portray character. Because of this she transformed her teacher's solo into a duet, allowing her to interact dramatically with her partner. Carmargo, or La Carmargo as she was known, pursued pure dance. In the solo, she concentrated on the jumps and developed the "beating" steps, or *batterie*. Both La Carmargo and Sallé contributed to shortening the ballerina's dress by performing in shorter skirts, (the were just barely above the ankle). In their shorter skirts, the ballerinas had to wear *calçons de précaution*, ("precautionary "), so that the audience would not see anything inappropriate.

In 1739 Barbara Campanini, (1721-1799), came to Paris from Italy and became well known as "La Barbarina." Where La Carmargo could do an excellent *entrechat-quatre*, a jump in which the legs cross each other, or "beat", twice, La Barbarina could do an *entrechat-huit*, a jump with four beats.



Pic.6

2.7 1740 to Pre-Romantic

In 1738 the Russian Monarchy established the St. Petersburg school - the world's second oldest ballet academy.

After about 1735 England started paying a lot more attention to ballet. It was during this time that the English dance master John Weaver, (1673-1760), created ballet d'action - ballet with no spoken words. The entire story was portrayed through dance and pantomime. His most ambitious project was *The Loves of Mars and Venus*, which starred Louis Dupré, John Weaver and Hester Santlow, (1690-1773), England's first ballerina. Although well received, *The Loves of Mars and Venus* was forgotten and Weaver did not get the credit he deserved. In fact, ballet d'action would probably have died with Weaver if the Italian Gaspero Angiolili, (1731-1803), and the French-Swiss Jean Georges Noverre, (1727-1810), had not pursued the ballet d'action on their own.

Because of the huge costumes worn by the ballet dancers of the day, it was hard for them to dance, and because they wore leather masks, it was hard for them to act. Noverre pushed to change the traditional costume of ballet dancers and in 1763 staged *Jason and Medea* maskless. With the facial expressions of the dancers visible the "vividly expressive show" sometimes was shocking for the audience.

One of the ballerinas of the time, Maria-Madeleine de Crespé, (1760-1796), is an important part of ballet history because she and her husband Jean Dauberval, (1742-1803), staged one of the first ballets to deal with middle class people in Bordeaux in 1789. *Le Ballet de la Paille*, (The Ballet of the Straw), was about a mother trying to arrange a profitable marriage for her daughter. This ballet is now known as *La Fille Mal Gardée*.

At this time the French revolution began and prompted Dauberval to stay in Bordeaux. While there he taught the Italian born and trained Salvatore Viganò, (1769-1821), and his wife. As well

as being a ballet dancer, Viganò was an acclaimed poet, musician, and actor. His theatrical genius was said to be on a level with Shakespeare's and Beethoven wrote his only ballet score, *The Creatures of Prometheus*, for him. From drawings of Viganò and his wife we see that with the French revolution came a fashion revolution in ballet. Viganò's costumes were much lighter and his wife wore light flowing dresses with a cut similar to the French Empire line, and both dancers wore soft flexible footwear!

2.8Pre-Romantic Era

As ballet entered the nineteenth century it entered a transitional phase, the pre-romantic phase. During the pre-romantic era male dancers reached their peak. One of Viganò's students, Carlo Blasis, (1797-1878), taught the next generation of dancers to advance well beyond the previous generation, and he published his work in manuals in Italy, then in England describing the finer points of ballet. For example, he named the attitude.

It was during the pre-romantic era that ballerinas first started dancing on the very tips of their toes, or en pointe. The earliest record of ladies dancing en pointe is a lithograph of Fanny Bias en pointe in 1821, and it is possible that Geneviève Gosselin was en pointe in 1815. However, the lady who is traditionally credited with being the first dancer to dance en pointe is the Italian Marie Taglioni, (1804-1884), and we know that she was en pointe when she was eighteen years old.

In 1832 Marie Taglioni's father choreographed a ballet for her to perform. This was *La Sylphide*, one of the first major ballets that is still performed today. In *La Sylphide* Taglioni wore a bell shaped dress with a fitted and boned bodice. This became the platform on which the Romantic tutu was built fifty years later.



Pic.7

2.9 Romantic Era

The Romantic age more or less began with the staging of *Giselle, ou Les Wilis* at the Paris Opera in 1841, with music composed by Adolphe Adam, who worked closely with the ballet masters, Coralli and Jules Perrot, (1810-1892). The role of Giselle was played by a new ballerina from Italy, Carlotta Grisi, (1819-1899).

With the reasonably new skill of dancing en pointe improving, the ladies ruled the Romantic era, with very few men making a mark on ballet during this time. Some of the men who did make a mark were Jules Perrot, who choreographed the ballet *Pas de Quatre*, Arthur Saint Léon, (1821-1870), who not only was an excellent dancer but also was an excellent violinist, and Lucien Petipa, (1815-1898), whose skills as a virtuoso partner were well sought after.

In Russia and Denmark, however, men advanced alongside women, as the ballet in those countries was still supported by the court of the royalty. The Dane who made one of the biggest marks on ballet was Auguste Bournonville. After training in Denmark and Paris, then dancing with the ballet of the Paris Opera, Bournonville returned to Denmark. Once there he produced his own version of *La Sylphide* in 1836, with new choreography and new music and sixteen year old Lucille Grahn as the sylph.

During the Romantic era, the Russians got on the "ballet bandwagon" in a big way. And like the French had centuries before they imported much of the talent. The Russians, however, imported dancers from France, not Italy. Sometimes homegrown Russian stars also performed for the audiences in St. Petersburg. One of the more notable female dancers was Maria Danilov, who performed very well on pointe, is remembered as "Russia's Taglioni," and died at the age of seventeen in 1810. *Giselle* was first performed in Russia one year after its premiere in Paris with Elena Andreyanova, (1819-1857), as Giselle. She danced opposite Christian Johnasson, (1817-1903), and Marius Petipa, (Lucien's Brother), two of the largest figures in Russian ballet.

2.10 Petipa and the Russian Ballet

Marius Petipa was still a leading dancer with the St. Petersburg ballet in 1862 when he created his first multi-act ballet for the tsar's imperial theatre, *The Pharaoh's Daughter*, an incredible fantasy that included such Egyptian happenings as mummies awakening and poisonous snakes, much like an Indiana Jones movie. This ballet led to other ballets and eventually to what the world considers Classical Ballet.

In 1869 Petipa took over the position of Ballet Master in Chief to the Imperial Tsar. In his role of leadership Petipa created many multi- and single-act ballets for presentation on the imperial stages of Russia. In 1869 he went to Moscow and created Don Quixote for the ballet of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. Then in 1877 he created La Bayadère for the Bolshoi Theatre in St. Petersburg, (There was a Bolshoi in both Moscow and in St. Petersburg - the word Bolshoi meaning "big").

In earlier years Petipa had choreographed the dances of les wilis in the second act of Giselle while acting as an assistant to Perrot and this form of female corps dancing representing shadows or spirits became known as ballet blanc and is common to Giselle, La Bayadère, and many other ballets.

Also in 1877 a ballet so popular its name and image represents classical ballet premiered in Moscow. Swan Lake, set to Tchaikovsky's first ballet score was the first of the "Big Three" of Russian Ballet. Originally set by Austrian Wenzel Reisinger, (1827-1892), Swan Lake has been reworked by many people including Joseph Hansen, (1842-1907), and then again by Petipa in 1895.

During the 1880s Petipa restaged in Russia two ballets that had been very successful in Paris. The first was Giselle which he had been involved in the first time, and the second was Saint-Léon's Coppélia, (originally presented in 1870). Interestingly enough, it was the music to Coppélia which inspired Tchaikovsky to write music for the ballet. With Petipa as the chief ballet master, many more Russian born and trained ballerinas danced on the imperial stages at this time than did at the beginning of Russian ballet. Now the Russians are known the world over as ballet dancers of extreme quality.

In 1890 the Italian ballerina Carlotta Brianza, (1867-1930), was chosen by Petipa to dance the title role in a new ballet called *Spyashchaya Krasavitsa* in Russian, *La belle au Bois Dormant* by the Francophile Russian Court, and The Sleeping Beauty in English. With music by Tchaikovsky composed "to spec" for Petipa, this ballet is the second of the Russian "Big Three" and is one of the great classical ballet masterpieces.

Then, continuing on their roll of success, in 1892 Petipa, Tchaikovsky, designer Ivan Vsevolozhsky, and assistant ballet master Lev Ivanov, (1834-1901), created The Nutcracker. This third of the Russian "Big Three" was based on a sweetened French retelling of the story by E.T.A. Hoffman. The Nutcracker has enjoyed huge popularity in hundreds of different versions as a "Christmas ballet."

In 1895 Petipa restaged Swan Lake including major choreographic additions. One of these was as the thirty two fouetté turns in the coda of the pas de deux from the ballroom scene.

In 1898 Petipa choreographed his last ballet with any staying power. *Raymonda* is a three-act ballet with music by Alexander Glazunov. Similar in style to the three Tchaikovsky ballets *Raymonda* is very difficult to follow because it showcases an impressive variety of dancing more than it portrays its plot line.

As the new century began, people started to get tired of Petipa's ideas and principles of ballet and looked for fresh ideas. By now the Russian ballet had surpassed the French ballet and many Russian dancers had become international stars. Probably the most notable ballerina of this time was Anna Pavlova, (1881-1931), who is known for dancing *The Dying Swan*.

In 1907 Mikhail Fokine, (1880-1942), started to push the rules of costume in the imperial theatre. He felt that the "open parasol" look that all of the ladies wore was getting boring and pornographic, so with his Greek style ballet, *Eunice*, he made it look like the dancers were in bare feet, (to have bare feet or legs was against the rules of the imperial theatre), by having toes painted on the dancers' shoes. He also chose to use serious music, rather than dance music.

In 1909 Sergei, (or Serge), Diaghilev, (1872-1929), created the Ballets Russes. This dance company started with strong Russian Character works. However, *Le Pavillon d'Armide* was the first ballet to be shown and it had a strong French influence. One of the dancers who performed in *Le Pavillon d'Armide* in both St. Petersburg and Paris was Vaslav Nijinsky, (1889-1950), who is known as one of the better jumpers of all time. Also presented in Paris by the Ballets Russes was a ballet formerly known as *Chopiniana*, because all of its music was by Chopin, but rechristened *Les Sylphides*, (different from *La Sylphide* but given a similar name because the Paris audience had recently seen *La Sylphide*), for the French public. Over the next several years, the Ballets Russes performed many ballets that have since become famous including



Scheherazade, (1910), *Firebird*, (1910), and *Petroucha*, (1911).

Pic.8

One of the performers in Petroucha, playing a pantomime part because he was far past his dancing prime, was Enrico Cecchetti, (1850-1928). Cecchetti had also been known for dancing the roles of the wicked fairy Carabosse and of the Bluebird in Petipa's 1890 *The Sleeping Beauty* and later became famous as the creator of the Cecchetti method of teaching ballet.

In 1913, Nijinsky created a new ballet called *Le Sacre du Printemps*, or *The Rite of Spring*. This ballet, set to Stravinsky's score of the same name actually had the audience fighting it was so dark in its mood.

The last major production of the Ballets Russes in Paris was in 1921 and 1922, when Diaghilev restaged Petipa's 1890 version of *The Sleeping Beauty*. The four month run of the show did not recoup the financial outlay of the show, and as a result it was dubbed a failure. However, *The Sleeping Beauty* rekindled the European audience's interest in the evening-length ballet.

One young dancer and choreographer with the Ballets Russes was Georgi Melitonovitch Balanchivadze, (1904-1983), whose name was later Frenchified to George Balanchine. He choreographed several works for the Ballets Russes, the most famous of which being *Apollon Musagète* in 1928, which has become a classic of the neo-classical ballets. *Apollon Musagète*, which later became *Apollo*, is a one-act ballet with a Greek look to it. After Diaghilev died Balanchine left the Ballets Russes and set out on his own for a while before ending up directing the dance company Ballets 1933. When that company folded he was invited to come to America by Lincoln Kirstein, (1907-1995). Kirstein knew almost nothing about ballet, and Balanchine knew almost nothing about America, (except that it produced women like Ginger Rogers), and decided to take the offer and establish ballet in America. At this time Kirstein started his wish list of ballets he wanted to see in America; leading the list was *Pocahontas*.

In 1934 Balanchine established the School of American Ballet, which gave its first performance, a new piece called *Serenade* that same year.

2.11 Ballet in Britain

Since Weaver's productions in the early eighteenth century, England was a place where foreign ballet dancers performed, not a place where ballet was developed, until 1920 when Édouard Espinosa, (1871-1950), and Philip Richardson founded the Association of Operatic Dancing, (which became known as the Royal Academy of Dancing in 1936). And in 1922 a group of followers of Enrico Cecchetti, called the Cecchetti Society appeared in England; this is the group responsible for the creation of the current Cecchetti dance syllabus.

In 1926 Ninette de Valois, (1898-) opened the Academy of Choreographic Art, which eventually became the Royal Ballet. It was at this time that Frederick Ashton surfaced as the "most English

of English" choreographers. His first ballet, *Tragedy of Fashion*, or *The Scarlet Scissors* appeared in 1926. It was Ashton who first staged *Cinderella* outside of the Iron Curtain. Starting in 1934 ballets such as *Giselle*, *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Sleeping Beauty* appeared in Britain, although they started off quite differently than they looked in St. Petersburg, Moscow, or Paris. Another very influential British ballet figure is Margot Fonteyn. Where Ashton made his mark as a choreographer, Fonteyn made hers as a dancer and became the focus of world attention for almost thirty years. A world-renowned dancer she was recognized by H.R.H. Queen Elizabeth II with the title Dame Margot Fonteyn. Her name is still recognized even by those outside of the dance world. In 1956, H.R.H. Queen Elizabeth II gave de Valois's ballet school and companies the title "Royal" and they became the Royal Ballet of England.

2.12 The Russian Revolution and Nureyev

In 1961, just as Fonteyn was about to retire, the world spotlight moved to the Russian Rudolf Nureyev, (1938-1993). After starting late at the ballet academy in Leningrad, Nureyev made Soviet cultural news for his "impassioned and powerful dancing" and was also noted by the security police as paying far too much attention to the west.

After the Russian Revolution ballet was saved by Anatoli Lunacharsky, the first ever People's Commissar for Enlightenment when he stated that art "creates human types and situations, which we live on from century to century and which are real to millions of people." After Lunacharsky, the Commissars allowed ballet as long as it was light and uplifting.

During the 1930s in Leningrad a ballerina made artistic director of the former Imperial Ballet, Agrippina Vaganova, (1879-1951), started to make her mark. It was in 1935 that the ballet became the Kirov Ballet. During her time as artistic director Vaganova had to deal with state regulations and do such things as change the ending of *Swan Lake* from tragic to uplifting. By the time the Kirov Ballet began to tour the west, Vaganova had died, however, we know her methods through her book, *Fundamentals of the Classic Dance*, and once it was translated into English it became a "bible" of dance. In 1951, five years after her death, the Soviet government named the Leningrad Choreographic Institute after her.

After Nureyev graduated from the Kirov academy he danced with the Kirov ballet, and made news around the world as the "next Nijinsky." However, when the Kirov began to organize a Paris and London tour, his offstage disregard for Soviet ideals almost kept him from going on the

tour. Then, when he was the government recalled him to the Soviet Union in the middle of the tour, he instead sought political asylum in France.

After defecting, Nureyev danced with Margot Fonteyn as a partner with many companies around the world, including the National Ballet of Canada and the Australian Ballet, becoming known with Fonteyn as "Rudi and Margot." Unfortunately for Nureyev, his hoped for association with Balanchine never materialized.

2.13 America

Thanks to Balanchine, ballet came to America. However, very little of America realized this, the popular misconception was that ballet came from Russia. To counter this Lincoln Kirstein published an essay called "Blast at Ballet" in which he tried to correct this misconception. While Kirstein and Balanchine were trying to come up with a stable ballet company, while still running their school, there were other companies in the works.

Richard Pleasant, (1906-1961), a ballet company manager, teamed up with Lucia Chase, (1897-1986), to form the Ballet Theatre. This company is still running today as one of the most prestigious companies on the continent, the American Ballet Theatre. Antony Tudor, an English dancer and choreographer came over and started working with the Ballet Theatre. Probably the most famous piece he choreographed was *Fancy Free*, about sailors in New York City. Balanchine also restaged several pieces for the Ballet Theatre.

In 1946 Balanchine and Kirstein formed the Ballet Society. Because the costumes for the premier performance were very constricting, they were discarded and the dancers danced in what could be called rehearsal costumes. This look became common in Balanchine's ballets and allowed for the audience to see the full dance. The Ballet Society caught the attention of the director of New York City's City Centre Theatre who invited the Ballet Society to work alongside the New York City Opera in the Theatre. This was the beginning of the New York City Ballet. With ballerina Maria Tallchief, (1925-), and Jerome Robbins, who both came from the Ballet Theatre, the New York City Ballet, (NYCB), got underway with productions of *Firebird*, (1949), and *Swan Lake*, (1951). At this time the Ballet Theatre, (BT), was on shaky organizational ground and several of its dancers and Tudor came from the BT and signed with the NYCB.

When the BT, (known since 1956 as the American Ballet Theatre or ABT), became more stable again Tudor and some of the dancers returned to it, but some remained with the NYCB. From here the two companies went their different ways. The NYCB presented entirely new pieces or reconditioned old ones, where the ABT presented a balance of classics and contemporary ballets.

The ABT also counted on big names like Eric Bruhn, (1928-1986), and Rudolf Nureyev to bring in audiences.

It should also be mentioned that George Balanchine is responsible for the "Balanchine body" image of ballet dancers as extremely slim. This image has led to many eating disorders in ballerinas and ballerina hopefuls. Balanchine's historical contribution to ballet in America was enormous, as was his influence, which continues. At this point we can leave "history" and go into the present with ballet firmly established in Europe and the Americas and starting to make great leaps and bounds in the rest of the world.

3. Conclusion

Today most countries have at least one ballet company and school. Famous schools include the Russian schools of the Kirov Ballet Company in St. Petersburg and the Bolshoi Ballet Company in Moscow; the School of American Ballet in New York City; the Royal Ballet School in London; and the Rambert School of Ballet, also in London.

Ballet classes are held for both professional dancers and beginners. Professional dancers must perform various technical exercises throughout their career to keep in practice. They usually take a daily class in a dance studio and a warm-up class before each performance. Some professional dancers like to practise alone, but most prefer to work with other dancers under the watchful eye of an instructor

Classical ballet technique is based on a position of the legs called the turnout. For the turnout, dancers rotate the legs in the hip socket as far to the side as possible. The feet are in a straight line, with the heels together and the toes pointed away from the body. A perfect turnout is difficult because it is an unnatural position in which the thighbones are rotated sideways. But ballet dancers must work hard to achieve their maximum turnout, which varies from dancer to dancer. The legs can be moved more freely from the turned-out position than from a natural one. When lifted and bent, the turned-out leg helps the dancer to spin. The turned-out feet give a firm base for starting a jump. The turnout also gives a pleasing line to the design formed by the body. Today, backdrops and realistic scenery are used chiefly for traditional ballets. Set designers for most new ballets prefer to suggest a ballet's mood or scene with simple objects. They might use a

piece of sculpture or folds of colourful cloth. In this way, they create a ballet's atmosphere without crowding the stage.

4. Tables and Pictures

1. Le Ballet Comique de la Reine
2. The History of Ballet
3. The Greeks and Romans
4. The Middle Ages
5. The Renaissance
6. Anastasiy Volochkova
7. Pre-Romantic Era
8. Petipa and the Russian Ballet

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