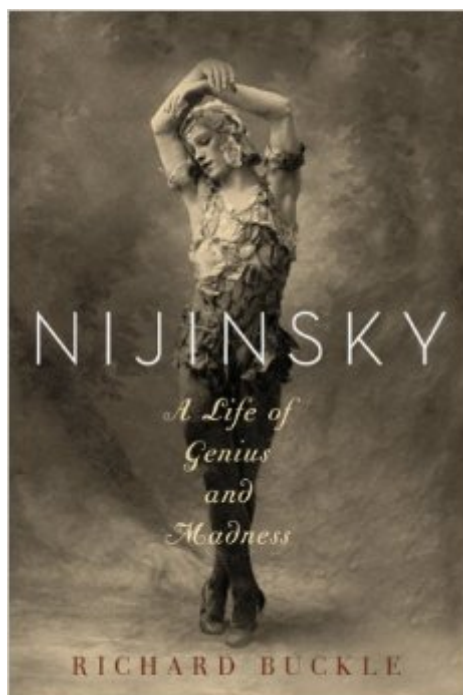


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Nijinsky: A Life Of Genius And Madness



Synopsis

The intoxicating story of one of the greatest dancers in the history of ballet and the paradox of his profound genius and descent into madness. Vaslav Nijinsky stands alone as a dancer, interpretive artist, and choreographic pioneer. His breathtaking performances with the Ballet Russe took Western Europe by storm, and his avant-garde choreography for *The Afternoon of the Faun* and *Rite of Spring* caused riots in the streets. Both are now regarded as the foundation of modern dance. Through his liaison with the great impresario Diaghilev, he worked with the artistic elite of the time—Benois, Bakst, Debussy, Fokine, Karsavina, Pavlova, Stravinsky—and lived in an atmosphere of perpetual hysteria, glamour, and intrigue. When he married a Hungarian aristocrat, Diaghilev abruptly dismissed him from the Ballet Russe. Five years later, he was declared insane. The fabulous career of the greatest dancer who ever lived was over. Drawing on personal conversations with countless people who knew and worked with Nijinsky, including his sister and famed choreographer Bronislava Nijinska, Richard Buckle has written the definitive biography of Nijinsky, now back in print for the first time in more than forty years. 36 pages of black & white photographs

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Customer Reviews

Interesting read about a rich era in the history of dance. Unfortunately the Kindle version is missing almost all the many, many photos that are listed in the table of contents. Very disappointing and the advertising for the Kindle version should have stated this up front.

This book is not just about Nijinsky, it is about the whole cast of characters that surrounded and affected Nijinsky while he was dancing with Diaghilev's Ballet Russe. Mr. Buckle paints some wonderful scenes of the interaction between Nijinsky and Diaghilev, Diaghilev and his patrons, Diaghilev and all the movers and shakers he worked with (anyone who was anyone in theatre, art and music at that time), and the Ballet Russe in Paris between 1909 and 1929. (His description of the riots some of the dances caused were really fun!) I loved the anecdotes and stories, and the soap opera-ish back stage goings-on he describes. If you own only one book on this period of dance history, this would be the one to have

I wanted to read about Nijinsky's life, especially his relationship with Diaghilev and his battle with schizophrenia. Instead, I read a adriotly written account of the early days of Ballets Russes. Buckle's descriptions of scenery, costumes and ballet are as vivid as they are erudite. I learned so much. With such characters as Mata Hari, Isadora Duncan, Stravinsky and Ravel, one would expect some tawdry details of the artists who shared the stage with the great Nijinsky. Nothing doing! Even the love affair between Nijinsky and Diaghilev is left to innuendo and subscript. I have since ordered Nijinsky's diary, hoping to quench my thirst for more about the artist and less about the art.

I absolutely could not put this book down. If you love ballet, but have no knowledge or if you have knowledge, read this. He was a fascinated, beyond talented human being. What I wouldn't give to have seen him perform. Yes. He was flawed, but aren't we all at some point. Peace

Anyone who loves ballet will be interested in this history of a great dancer. His long, sad endurance of madness is a tragedy that always moves one. What a loss, not to have film of his performances. What a joy and revelation it would be to see him dancing the first Specter of the Rose. It is also interesting to learn about his sister, herself a noted dancer and then an esteemed teacher. Not to forget the marvelous Karsavina as well as all the other treasures of that era. So I recommend this book to anyone curious about the Ballets Russes in those hectic, precarious days when it was shepherded into existence by the inspired and dogged, one of a kind, balletomane and impresario, Sergei Diaghilev.

Nijinsky begins in an engaging way with the tale of his mother taking him to audition with the Bolshoi. However, as it progresses, it gets rather bogged down with the various personalities and the

performances and loses something of the personal--the man and his developing self. However, I need to read more and will have a better review with more time.

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