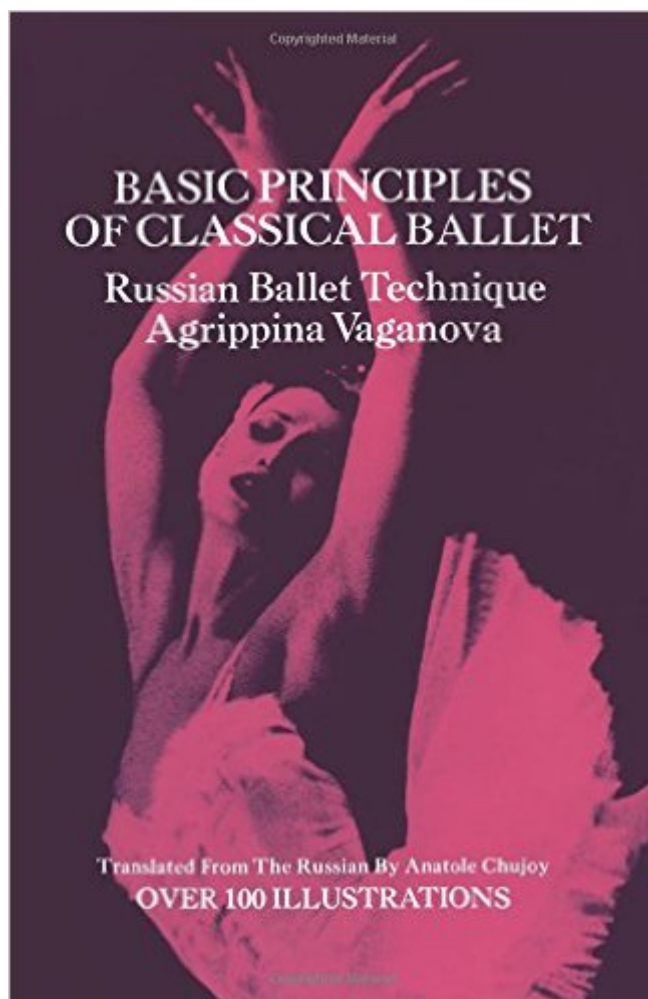


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Basic Principles Of Classical Ballet



Synopsis

Although the stars of Russian ballet Anna Pavlova and Tamara Karsavina possessed a national manner of dancing, there was no truly Russian school of dancing until the 1930s. The development of this school was largely due to Mme. Vaganova (1879–1951), not only a great dancer but also the teacher of Galina Ulanova and many others and an unsurpassed theoretician. The principles of Vaganova's system are presented in this well-known book. Mme. Vaganova's aim of creating a personal approach to the Russian dance was based on the critical assimilation of the experience of her contemporaries. Her ability to choose the best of what had been accomplished in the various ballet traditions (French, Italian, and Russian) and combine these into a unified teaching practice in itself amounted to a new school of dance. She firmly believed that the teaching process should be a planned exercise, ever changing with innovations in the dance. She sought from her pupils emotional expressiveness, strictness of form, a resolute, energetic manner of performance, and the understanding of the underlying coordination of movements. Her book discusses all basic principles of ballet, grouping movements by fundamental types. Chapters cover battements, rotary movements of the legs, the arms, poses of the classical dance, connecting and auxiliary movements, jumps, beats, point work, and turns as well as material for a sample lesson. Diagrams show clearly the exact foot, leg, arm, and body positions for the proper execution of many steps and movements. The result is a fundamental theory of dance that offers dancers, teachers, and ballet lovers information often difficult to locate in other books. 118 illustrations.

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Customer Reviews

Madame Vaganova (1879-1951) is justly considered the best teacher of classical ballet this century. Her book, first published in the West in 1946 and translated by Anatole Chujoy, deals with the intricate steps of ballet in a matter-of-fact way. The drawings, though, are plain awful, dull, uninspiring, but informative. The chapter "Construction of a lesson" ought to be compulsory reading for every teacher of dance. The order of the exercises, what faults to look out for and how to remedy them. There is great emphasis on the use of the arms, the secret that gives ballet its eloquence. If I should recommend only one single book on ballet technique, this would be the one. Every step - from the barre exercises to the most spectacular jumps and turns are described in detail, great emphasis is put upon the correct placing of the head and arm movements as aids to perfect execution. The Vaganova system is used by the Maryinski - formerly the Kirov - dancers; she was ! also honored by having the former Leningrad Choreographic School renamed the Vaganova Institute.

I first received a copy of this book when I was 9 years old...it was recommended by one of my first ballet teachers. I loved looking at the illustrations, and discovering the spelling of terms that I was learning in class. I loved looking at the more advanced steps and their complexity. I still have that copy 20 years later. Now, I use it as a wonderful reference for teaching, and recommend it to my students. A valueable book that every dancer should have!

Because my own dance education was rather inconsistent (spent time under teachers who each used Cecchetti, Vaganova, Balanchine, and Neumeier methods), i ordered this book to help me once i myself began to teach. After reading it, i will forever be a Vaganova fan. Her method is, well, methodical. Very detailed, well-thought out and well-planned. It's easy to see why she was so successful. My first struggle was that some of the names of steps she uses are now archaic, so i had to do some research to figure out what she was talking about! I also found this book more helpful when combined with another book, called The Perfect Pointe System, which was developed by a dance physiotherapist in Australia named Lisa Howell. Vaganova's way of teaching artistry is excellent, but i found it necessary to incorporate more modern/scientific ideas about how to use the muscles safely and effectively, which is where Lisa Howell's book came in. I also bought this book together with 100 Lessons in Classical Ballet, which showed how to fit Vaganova's thoughts into an actual lesson. Put together, i definitely learned more from reading these three books than from all my years of "dance education" combined!

As a student dancer I usually like to brush up on things that I wish I could at school or on the bus. It's a great book emphasising on Russian Technique and basic steps. For eight bucks it was one of the most cheapest ballet books I have boughten. It goes straight into the positions of the feet. It tells you of what are the correct ways and what are the incorrect ways. It gives little drawings of a ballet practicing the step. If you can remember those little diagrams of the silloutte of feet for ballroom dancing, most of the diagrams are like that. In the drawings when a leg is suppose to switch or the body, little lines are drawn and it is almost impossible not to understand what the steps are drawn out to be. The only thing I wish was more of introduction to pointe. There are only a chapter dedicated to pointe work, clear and understandable on how to develop strength with echapes and releves. Even in the diagrams they give you Russian and French and Italian for some to show you the possible difference. This is a very detailed book, the only problem you would have if you didn't live in the ballet world at all. If your looking for an introduction I suggest the Royal Academy Ballet Book, but if you know your ballet terminology and learning how this manual will save you steps, get it. It helped me understand really what I was suppose to do. Visually you don't learn everything but it breaks it down perfectly to really know what your doing physically than visually.

Agrippina Vaganova is legendary in the world of Russian ballet and, in fact, the Russian style of ballet is usually called the Vaganova style(the term "school" is usually used instead of style). The reader should keep in mind that this is a classic and not a modern tutorial; nevertheless, it is so well written that it is still useful to today's students. In these pages we can learn many little tips not found elsewhere. The book is amazingly complete, despite its small size. The book will be most appreciated by the more mature sudents of ballet. This classic is ALWAYS included in any serious ballet library!

I am thoroughly enjoying this book. I read it before class, in particular, I read about the things I will be doing in that class so that I am well prepared. I often read it during a relaxing stretch. If there's anything in particular that I want to learn it's great because of the very descriptive language. I only wish it had a glossary of terms with a picture/diagram next to it, so that if you're in a hurry you won't have to read through a whole paragraph. The russian to english translation in some places are a bit iffy, which causes some vagueness and ambiguity in it when trying to understand it. But as whole, it is a very good read. To sum it up:PROS:- very descriptive- good diagrams- easy to read and to understandCONS:- a few areas of vagueness due to the russian to english translation (a very minor con)ADVICE:- I suggest you use this book along side with 100 Lessons in Classical Ballet: The

Eight-Year Program of Leningrad's Vaganova Choreographic School (Vera S. Kostrovitskaya).- Highlight particular words or phrases that help you understand the particular term, so that later if/when you're in a hurry you can just flick through the book to find what you need.

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