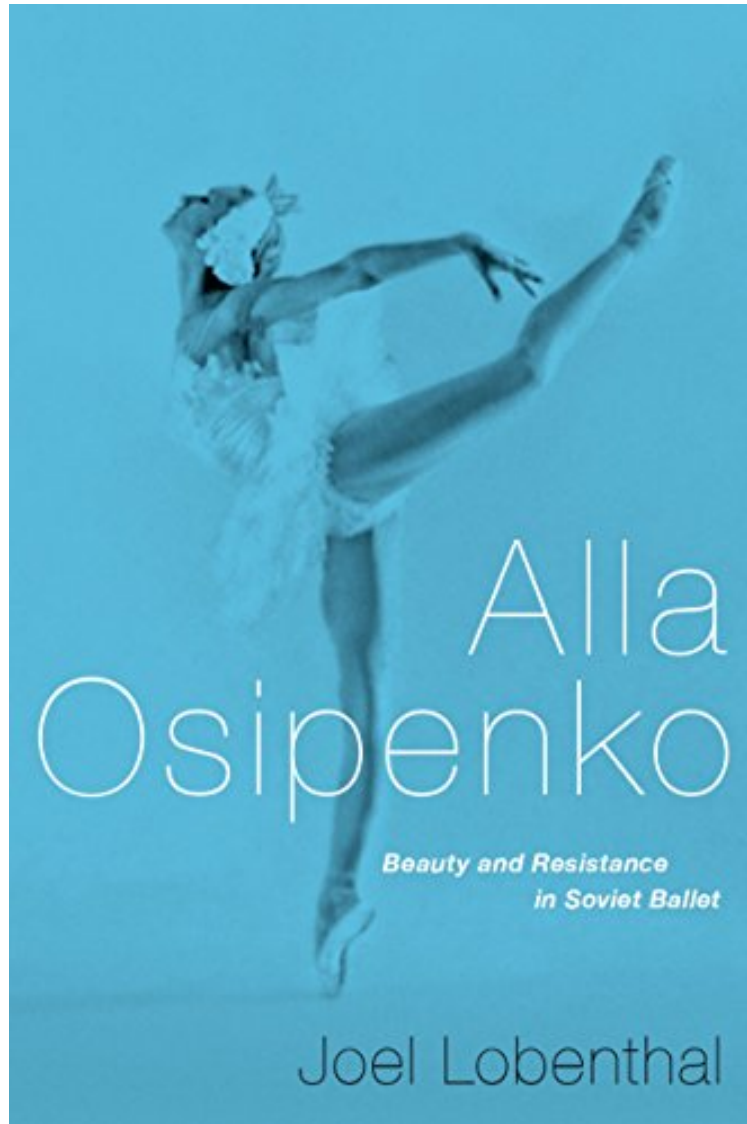


(Download free pdf) Alla Osipenko: Beauty and Resistance in Soviet Ballet

## Alla Osipenko: Beauty and Resistance in Soviet Ballet

*Joel Lobenthal*

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**Joel Lobenthal : Alla Osipenko: Beauty and Resistance in Soviet Ballet** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Alla Osipenko: Beauty and Resistance in Soviet Ballet:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good condition; no issuesBy CustomerCame in great condition! No problems.9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Gripping Ballet Bio, Exquisitely WrittenBy Natalia OliveraJoel Lobenthal's ALLA OSIPENKO: BEAUTY AND RESISTANCE IN SOVIET BALLE (Oxford Univ Press, 2016) offers one of the best-researched, most fascinating AND clearly-written insights on the Kirov Ballet and artistic life in the USSR. Osipenko, with her lean lines and beauty, was an artist and ballerina ahead of her time yet, sadly, one who was rarely selected to participate in Kirov tours to major Western capitals and never to America.

Hence, this book goes a long way toward correcting a huge knowledge gap for balletomanes. This is one of the finest books (English or Russian languages) written on late-Soviet ballet history. It reads like an autobiography, which makes sense, as Lobenthal's main resource was a series of 20 face-to-face interviews with Osipenko herself, as well as years of research in Russia. Learn about her studying under the great pedagogue Vaganova...her early triumphs in Paris...the creation of Grigorovich's *Stone Flower*...her fighting against the conservative and authoritarian forces in the theater...working with the difficult choreographer Leonid Jacobson and future luminaries Nureyev and Baryshnikov...her four marriages (and friends in between)...her eventual move to America after her dancing days, etc. In sum, this is a treasure of a book and the only English-language biography of one of the most fascinating ballerinas of the 20th Century.

Alla Osipenko is the gripping story of one of history's greatest ballerinas, a courageous rebel who paid the price for speaking truth to the Soviet State. She studied with Agrippina Vaganova, the most revered and influential of all Russian ballet instructors, and in 1950, she joined the Mariinsky (then-Kirov) Ballet, where her lines, shapes, and movements both exemplified the venerable traditions of Russian ballet and propelled those traditions forward into uncharted and experimental realms. She was the first of her generation of Kirov stars to enchant the West when she danced in Paris in 1956. But dancing for the establishment had its downsides, and Osipenko's sharp tongue and marked independence, as well as her almost-reckless flouting of Soviet rules for personal and political conduct, soon found her all but quarantined in Russia. An internationally acclaimed ballerina at the height of her career, she found that she would now have to prevail in the face of every attempt by the Soviet state and the Kirov administration to humble her. In *Alla Osipenko*, acclaimed dance writer Joel Lobenthal tells Osipenko's story for the first time in English, drawing on 40 interviews with the prima ballerina, and tracing her life from Classical darling to avant-garde rebel. Throughout the book, Osipenko talks frankly and freely in a way that few Russians of her generation have allowed themselves to. Her voice rises above the incidents as unhesitating and graceful as her legendary adagios. Candid, irreverent, and, above all, independent -- Osipenko and her story open a window into a fascinating and little-discussed world.

"The subject of the book *Alla Osipenko: Beauty and Resistance in Soviet Ballet* by Joel Lobenthal is the history of ballet. A ballerina born with a physique perfect for classical ballet, Osipenko strove with entire artistic passion toward new discovery inside classical ballet. She criticized the system of classical dance created by her teacher Agrippina Vaganova, who is known as the 'Queen of the Variation.' But ironically, Alla Osipenko's name is very well known inside the professional ballet world as the 'Queen of Adagio.'" -- Nina Danilova, author of *Eight Female Classical Ballet Variations* "This is a marvelous book about the legendary Russian ballerina, Alla Osipenko, who defied the repressive Soviet regime with the power of her art and ultimately won. An absorbing and gratifying read! Great gift for Russian ballet lovers!" -- Alexander Poznansky, Yale University "Joel Lobenthal's account of Alla Osipenko's life and thoughts is a wonderfully intimate history of one of the greatest ballerinas of the 20th Century. He provides an unparalleled view into her personal world not only as a Kirov dancer but also as a Soviet citizen, who suffered and benefitted from a regime that valued ballet but not individuality. Lobenthal has written a book that does justice to his subject. It dances and pirouettes from topic to topic, while at the same time telling a compelling history of success and setbacks, of beauty and its adversaries, and of a life in the limelight from Stalin to Putin." -- Julian Fergusson, author of *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* "[A] must-read for ballet historians, documenting the trials and tribulations of the life of one of the Kirov Ballet's most important ballerinas...what a story [Lobenthal] tells, and what a valuable insight he gives us into the tragic life of a true star and a true artist." -- *Dance Europe* "Alla Osipenko: Beauty and Resistance in Soviet Ballet is a thoroughly researched, expertly crafted biography, full of care, endearment and attention...Academic yet accessible, the book tells a compelling and engaging story - the true story of a celebrated ballerina's distinct journey onstage and off." -- Heather Desaulniers *Dance Commentary* "[T]he ballet world outside the walls of Osipenko's home theater deserves to know more about the story behind the legend. Joel Lobenthal's book conveys exactly this...As any well-narrated biography, this book is a page-turner...we must be grateful to the author for the unique opportunity to look at the life of the legendary ballerina through her own eyes." -- *The Russian* About the Author Joel Lobenthal is Associate Editor of *Ballet*. He is the author of *Tallulah! The Life and Times of a Leading Lady* and co-author with Elena Tchernichova of *Dancing on Water: A Life in Ballet from the Kirov to the ABT*.