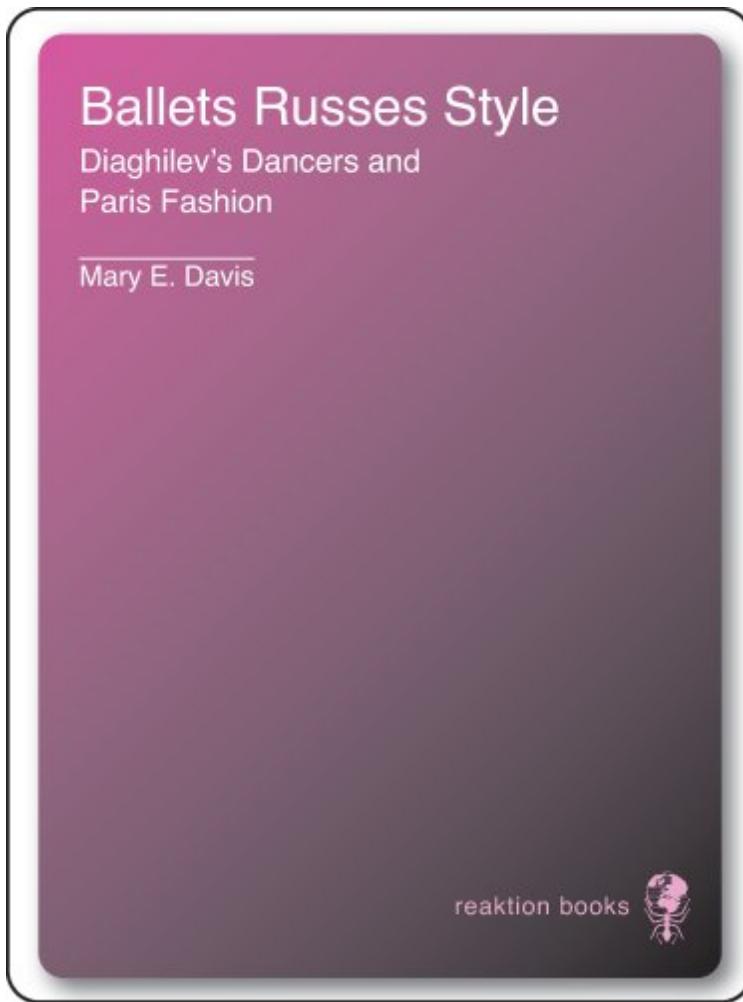


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Ballets Russes Style: Diaghilev's Dancers and Paris Fashion

Mary E. Davis

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In the decades between its debut performance in Paris in 1909 and the death of impresario Sergei Diaghilev in 1929, the Ballets Russes was an unrivalled sensation not only in France but in London, New York and the other cities it toured. Attention has often been centred on the links between Diaghilev's troupe and modernist art and music, but there has been surprisingly little written concerning the Ballets' role in tastemaking and trendsetting. *Ballets Russes Style* reveals for the first time the full extent of the ensemble's influence on haute couture. The Ballets Russes' seasons were an exciting laboratory for ambitious cultural experiments, often grounded in the aesthetic confrontation of those great designers, artists and composers who travelled with the troupe from St Petersburg — Leaute;on Bakst, Alexandre Benois and Igor Stravinsky among them — and Paris's avant-garde, which included Picasso, Satie, Matisse, Debussy and Ravel. The ensemble brought the stage and everyday life into creative contact with each other, most noticeably in the world of fashion. In its heyday, the Ballets Russes was a potent force in defining Paris Style, bringing the work of great designers such as Jeanne Paquin and Coco Chanel to the stage, and creating sensibilities that resonated in the collections of couturiers from Paul Poiret to Yves Saint Laurent and beyond. Beautifully illustrated and drawing on unpublished images and memorabilia, this book illuminates the ways in which innovations by the Ballets Russes in dance, music, sets and costume both mirrored and invigorated contemporary culture.

"The historian Mary E. Davis's *Ballets Russes Style: Diaghilev's Dancers and Paris Fashion* traces the costumes' influence, from Paul Poiret's 1910s harem pants and togas to Karl Lagerfeld's 2009 collection with Russian models wearing Cossack boots." (Eve M. Kahn *New York Times*)null (Heather Vaughan Wornthrough.com)ldquo;A wonderful descriptive account of the Ballets Russes from its inception to its demise, emphasizing the relation of the company and its development to the fashion and arts world. Written with great clarity it explores these relationships in detail. Most informative and insightful.rdq; (Elizabeth Wilson)ldquo;Davis's vantage point offers intriguing insights into the broader cultural impact of Diaghilev's enterprise. Her book is a welcome addition to recent scholarship on the Ballets Russes and its enduring allure.rdq; (Times Higher Education)ldquo;The lsquo;legendary commandrsquo; of the Ballets Russes impresario was simply: lsquo;Astonish me!rsquo; A century on from its Paris debut, Diaghilev's dancers continue to do that in this handsome book . . . Mary E. Davis conveys the electric excitement from a collection of talentsdash;music by Stravinsky, sets by Picasso, costumes by Bakstmdash;that has never been equaled.rdq; (Independent)About the AuthorMary E. Davis is professor of musicology at Case Western Reserve University. She is the author of *Classic Chic: Music, Fashion, and Modernism* and *Erik Satie*, the latter also published by Reaktion Books.