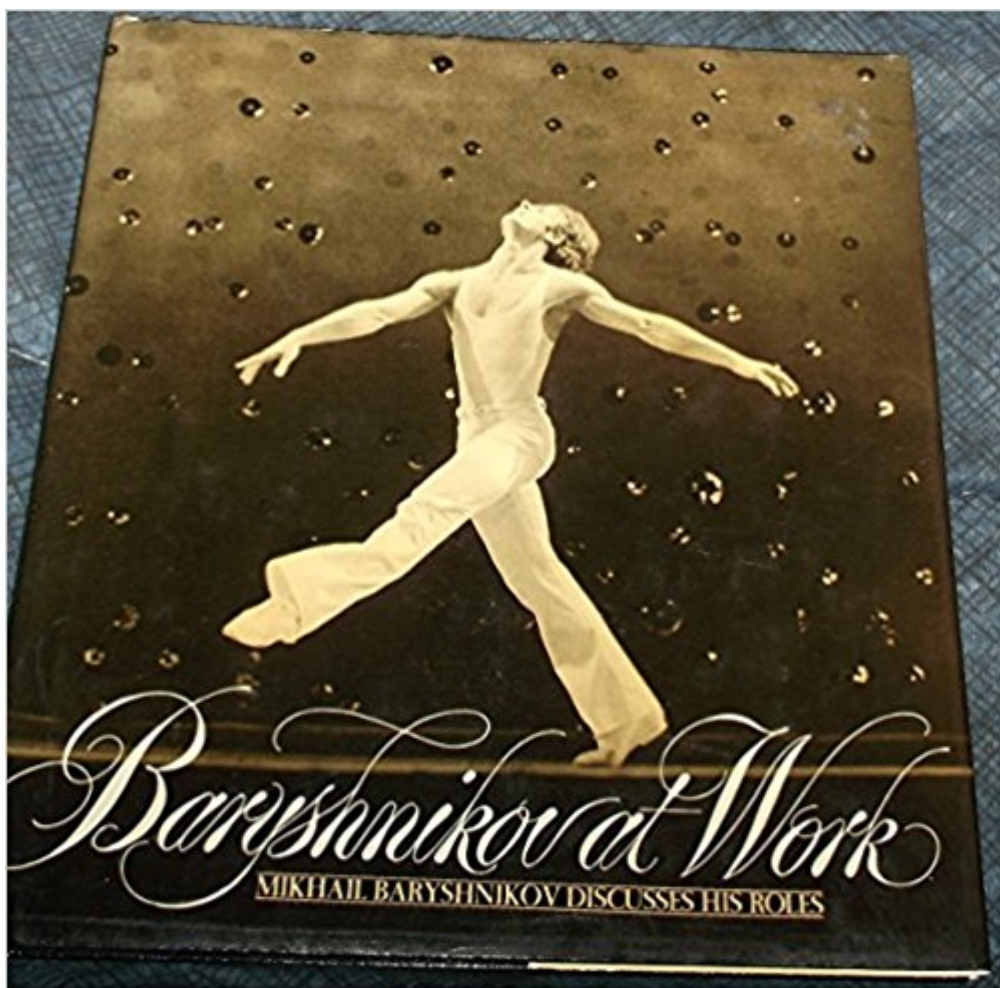


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Baryshnikov At Work: Mikhail Baryshnikov Discusses His Roles



Synopsis

A great dancer at the height of his powers here sets down his ideas and feelings about the roles he dances. In this book, Mikhail Baryshnikov discusses the first twenty-six ballets he performed when he came to the West, from the great classics... Giselle, Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty, Coppelia... to the new ballets specially created for him here. He writes of the problems, both technical and stylistic, of each role.. what he responds to in each, where its difficulties lie, which few he feels are antipathetic to his temperament. He writes of how it feels to dance Nijinsky's roles. . Petrouchka, Le Spectre de la Rose; of the rigors and rewards of Balanchine's choreography; of working with Twyla Tharp on Push Comes to Shove, with Jerome Robbins on 'Other Dances,' with Anthony Tudor on 'Shadowplay.' Baryshnikov discusses his need to extend himself by adapting to Western ideas of partnering, and by coming to grips with specifically American music, such as the Ellington score for 'Pas de Duke' and the Frank Sinatra records for 'Once More, Frank.' He explains how his performance as Albrecht in 'Giselle' .. perhaps his greatest role... developed; how he conceived it, what it means to him. He tells us how he work...in his mind, in rehearsal, in performance. And accompanying the text are Martha Swope's magnificent photographs of Baryshnikov in these 26 roles: stage photographs, rehearsal photographs, and several series of unique studio photographs, including an extraordinary record of his famous solo, 'Vestris.'

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Customer Reviews

A great dancer at the height of his powers here sets down his ideas and feelings about the roles he dances. In this book, Mikhail Baryshnikov discusses the first twenty-six ballets he performed when he came to the West, from the great classics... Giselle, Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty,

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I am an artist, and I bought this to replace the one that I already had. I have used it to study muscles and lines of a dancer. What better way than to study Mikhail. But this time, I began to read the words. It added to my reference.

Misha is brilliant in motion but still frames really reveal power and grace.

In Baryshnikov's own words, he gives the reader an excellent idea, from a dancer's point of view, of what is involved in dancing his most popular productions. Very interesting to read.

Great photos, insights, memories of seeing him in person. The book itself was in great shape. Glad I got it.

Beautiful pictures

One of the great dancers of the twentieth century, and perhaps of all time, Mikhail Baryshnikov's work is captured briefly but magnificently in this volume. Unfortunately, I never got the opportunity to see Baryshnikov in a live performance, but only on videos and DVDs. Even in this limited format however, Baryshnikov is brilliant, and a major reason for his superb technique is his attitude. Another dancer could perhaps execute his movements, but Baryshnikov comes across like

someone who knows why he is dancing, and not just following the choreography. He creates the impression that he is feeling every movement, and he is celebrating himself to the fullest extent through every execution of such movement. How fortunate we are that Baryshnikov agreed to tell us his opinions on the works covered in the book. That gives a special insight into his attitudes and general philosophy of dance. Baryshnikov gave credit to his teacher, the great Alexander Pushkin, for teaching him that on stage one must be free, and not just carrying through the techniques learned in class. "Classical technique", he says, "is like any language: it can be correctly spoken in many voices." And it is refreshing to read that Baryshnikov believed that dancing ability is the result of discipline and hard work, that a dancer is (self) made, not born. Baryshnikov gives detailed remarks on the works Giselle, La Bayadere, Don Quixote, Coppelia, Theme and Variations, Les Patineurs, La Fille Mal Gardee, La Sylphide, Le Corsaire, Vestris, Medea, Shadowplay, Spectre de la Rose, Le Pavillon d'Armide, Swan Lake, Romeo and Juliet, Awakening, Hamlet Connotations, Push Comes To Shove, Other Dances, Pas de Duke, Sleeping Beauty, Petrouchka, Le Sacre du Printemps, Once More Frank, and my all time favorite Le Jeune Homme Et La Mort. The photography is all black and white, and superbly done. One can breathe a sigh of relief that the Soviet government did not choose to eliminate ballet as being too "bourgeois" when it took over in 1917. Baryshnikov and other Russian ballet greats would not have come about if this had been the case. And in addition, the Soviets would have taken away the absolute prerequisite for all healthy civilizations: the dance.

A wonderful book that sadly is out of print. Ballet, like professional sports demands youth, strength, agility, and Baryshnikov was the superstar in his time. This book is loaded with photos that capture the beauty, grace, and skill of a man who admired Fred Astaire. And like Astaire, spent countless hours practicing and perfecting their art. Who can forget probably the best ever rendition of the "Nutcracker" with Gelsey Kirkland, and the scenes are wonderfully captured here. I've never lent this book out to anyone cause I knew I'd never get it back. This is a treasure if you can find it.

Baryshnikov is a stunning dancer! This lovely hardcover book pays tribute to his work in Ballet and his own words about each Ballet that he performed! This one was published in 1978 and there are wonderful black and white pictures of him incredible roles. For those of you who have seen Mikhail on the stage, you will be transported back to that night you first saw him in action. Enjoy!

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