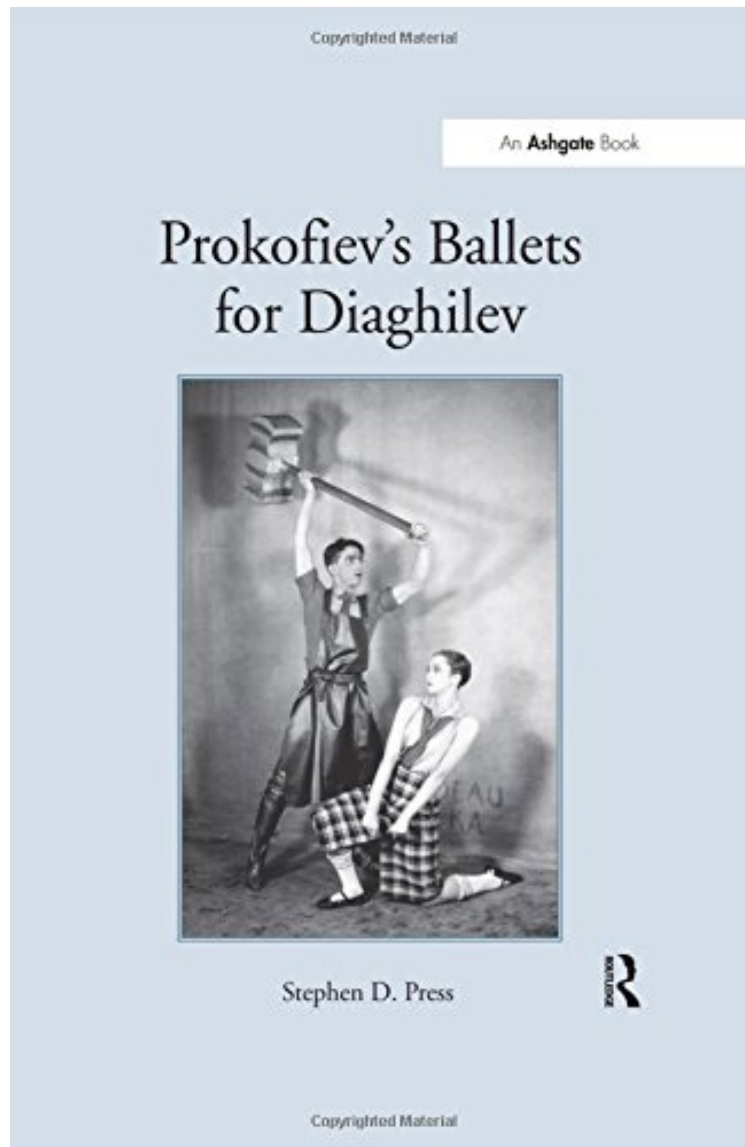


(Pdf free) Prokofiev's Ballets for Diaghilev

Prokofiev's Ballets for Diaghilev

Stephen D. Press

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Stephen D. Press : Prokofiev's Ballets for Diaghilev before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Prokofiev's Ballets for Diaghilev:

Ballet impresario Sergey Pavlovich Diaghilev and composer Sergey Sergeyeovich Prokofiev are eminent figures in twentieth-century cultural history, yet this is the first detailed account of their fifteen-year collaboration. The

beginning was not trouble-free, but despite two false starts (*Ala i Lolli* and the first version of its successor, *Chout*) Diaghilev maintained his confidence in the composer. With his guidance and encouragement Prokofiev established his mature balletic style. After some years of estrangement during which Prokofiev wrote for choreographer Boris Romanov and conductor/publisher Serge Koussevitsky, Diaghilev came to the composer's rescue at a low point in his Western career. The impresario encouraged Prokofiev's turn towards 'a new simplicity' and offered him a great opportunity for career renewal with a topical ballet on Soviet life (*Le Pas d'acier*). Even as late as 1928-29 Diaghilev compelled Prokofiev to achieve new heights of expressivity in his characterizations (*L'Enfant prodigue*). Although Western scholars have investigated Prokofiev's operas, piano works, and symphonies, little attention has been paid to his early ballets written for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Despite Prokofiev's devotion to opera, it was his ballets for Diaghilev as much as his concertos and solo piano works that earned his renown in Western Europe in the 1920s. Stephen D. Press discusses the genesis of each ballet, including the important contributions of the scenic designers (Mikhail Larionov, Georgy Yakulov and Georges Rouault) and the choreographer/dancers (Lionel Massine, Serge Lifar and George Balanchine), and the special relationship between the ballets' progenitors.

'... Recommended.' Choice 'Musicologist rarely write about ballet, and not very often about Prokofiev, so Stephen Press's volume on Prokofiev's ballets for Diaghilev is doubly welcome, closing a serious gap in the study of 20th-century music and culture. Another virtue of the book is that it is the first large-scale project to incorporate material from Prokofiev's diaries, which have only recently been published, in Russian... Press's book deserves to be recommended to all who have a love for Prokofiev's music, or who are interested in Diaghilev's enterprises. The book's solid scholarship will satisfy academic readers, but the style is also welcoming to a much wider readership.' *Dance Gazette* 'The more absorbed in the book I became, the more fascinating it was... The author[s] meticulous research for this volume should induce the reader to consider much more closely the Prokofiev ballets that are largely forgotten and usually glossed over...' *Dancing Times* '... the first half of the book is full of scintillating accounts of the relationships of the artistic factions that thrived during the post-war ear in Paris... Press zeroes into the musical issues of the three ballets in the second half of his study, offering examples from the scores and comparisons to materials by other composers. The reader who has enjoyed so far his intriguing account of the collaboration will find additional anecdotal material in these pages to keep him reading.' *Ballet/Dance* 'The strength of his book resides in the music details: Press offers one of the most nimble discussions of Prokofiev's harmonic and rhythmic language that I have yet encountered.' *Slavic* 'Those interested in dance history have much to learn here, as Press draws on Russian sources only recently made available, such as the composer's diary from 1907 to 1933...' *Dance Now* '... the first book-length study in any language of the composer's early work in ballet. As such, the new volume is a long overdue and much welcomed contribution to Prokofiev scholarship... engagingly written... Prokofiev's Ballets for Diaghilev is a landmark publication that fills a significant void in Prokofiev scholarship.' *Notes* 'There is rich material here for both the more straightforward dance historian and the musicologist...this is a valuable addition to the bookshelf on Prokofiev and on the Ballets Russes.' *Dance Chronicle* '... Press provides fascinating insights into each man's unique style... Press has done English-language readers a great service in translating passages from the diary as well as other relevant documents and correspondence.' *Dance Research Journal* 'Stephen Press provides [...] a long overdue exploration of all four of Prokofiev's ballets for Diaghilev... this book is rich with fascinating subtext... [an] excellent and engaging study.' *The Russian* '... Press's impressive monograph represents a very readable and intelligent account of Prokofiev's lesser-known ballets and is highly recommended.' *Slavic and East European Journal* About the Author Stephen D. Press received a PhD in Musicology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1998. He is currently Assistant Professor of Music History at Illinois Wesleyan University.