



Vera Volkova: A Biography

Alexander Meinertz

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Vera Volkova was central to the European ballet world for almost four decades as advisor, friend and, above all, teacher to iconic figures from dancers Margot Fonteyn, Erik Bruhn and Rudolf Nureyev to choreographers Sir Frederick Ashton and John Neumeier. Having inspired British ballet in its early years with her profound understanding of classical ballet, she revived and transformed the moribund Royal Danish ballet, working with that company for almost 25 years.

Invitations to teach in the U.S.A, Canada, Australia and South Africa further extended her influence. But, enigmatic, self-effacing and intensely private, her life remained a well-kept secret. Now this biography, hugely praised on its first publication in Danish, reveals Volkova's life and legacy.

Brought up in Imperial St Petersburg, Volkova was one of the students upon whom Agrippina Vaganova developed her famous system. She was the chosen protégée of the controversial Russian philosopher and critic Akim Volynsky whose ideals she carried with her when she fled to the West, escaping the horrors of the Russian Revolution and the struggle to survive in its aftermath. This dramatic account of Volkova's extraordinary life includes her escape to Shanghai, an unusual marriage and a great love.

Combining the first account of that life with a detailed examination of Volkova's teaching methods, this biography will be compelling and illuminating for both interested and expert readers.

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