

Letter to the Editor

Review of Wiley's *A Century of Russian Ballet*

I would like to correct an error in my review of Roland John Wiley's *A Century of Russian Ballet* (*DRJ* 23/2, Fall 1991). In that review I noted that Joan Lawson had translated Petipa's libretto for *The Sleeping Beauty*. Actually, what she translated were Petipa's instructions to Tchaikovsky regarding that ballet. My confusion resulted from a multiplicity of translated (and untranslated) publications. They are as follows:

1. Lawson's translation in *The Dancing Times* of London in 1942-43. She states that these were the final notes sent to Tchaikovsky, dated 10 July 1889. They exist (or existed) in a hand-sewn book of twelve pages. The prologue was written in red ink and there were pencilled remarks in the margins. The original was in French.

2. Petipa's instructions to Tchaikovsky for that ballet, translated from *Marius Petipa: Materialy, vospominaniya, stat'i* (Iskustvo, Leningrad, 1971). This is in Wiley's *Tchaikovsky's Ballets* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1985). Wiley does not give the date, but his

source gives it as 21 January 1889.

3. The French "programme" for the ballet, including Petipa's statement that he finished writing it on 5 July 1889. This text appears to be the source of Lawson's translation. Wiley states that his document is preserved in the Petipa archive of the Bakhrushin Museum in Moscow and that it was written in black ink, with the musical instructions written in red. In French in *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*, where there is no notice of the Lawson translation.

4. *The Sleeping Beauty*, translated from the first edition of its libretto, St. Petersburg, 1890. Also in *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*.

5. Libretto of the ballet by Ivan Alexandrovich Vsevolozhsky. This is translated by Wiley in *A Century of Russian Ballet*. It was "Permitted by the Censor. St. Petersburg, 30 December 1889." There are two parts, the first of which reads like a house program, giving credits, scenes, and casts. The second part tells the story and is almost—but not quite—identical with #4. For example, the opening of scene 4. In *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*:

When the clouds disperse a room

appears where Princess *Aurora* is seen on a large bed beneath a canopy; the King and Queen are sleeping opposite her in two armchairs; the court ladies, cavaliers, and pages sleep standing up, leaning against one another and making up sleeping groups.

In *A Century*:

When the clouds disperse, the room is visible; Princess *Aurora* is sleeping on a large canopied bed. The king and queen are sleeping opposite her in two armchairs; courtly ladies, cavaliers, and pages are asleep standing up, leaning against one another and forming groupings of sleepers.

I wrote in *DRJ* that Wiley's translation differed little from Lawson's. I should have written that it differed a little from his own, done five years earlier. I think Petipa should be blamed for my confusion.

Selma Jeanne Cohen
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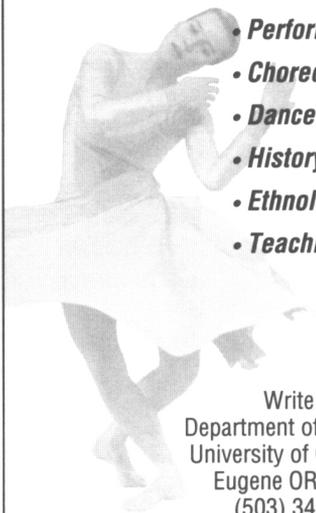
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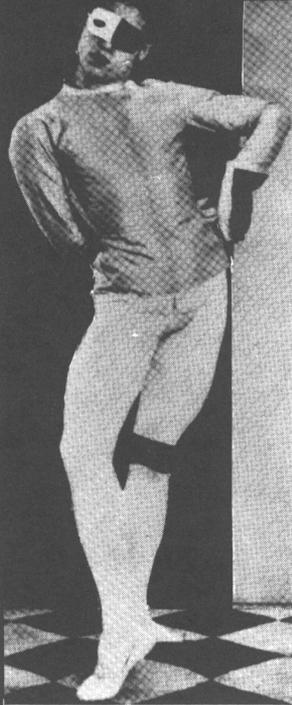


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