



# Diaghilev's Ballets Russes

*Lynn Garafola*

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In the history of twentieth-century ballet, no company has had so profound and far-reaching an influence as the Ballets Russes. Under the direction of impresario extraordinaire Serge Diaghilev (1872–1929), the Ballets Russes radically transformed the nature of ballet—its subject matter, movement idiom, choreographic style, stage space, music, scenic design, costume, even the dancer's physical appearance. From 1909 to 1929, it nurtured some of the greatest choreographers in dance history—Fokine, Nijinsky, Massine, and Balanchine—and created such classics as *Les Sylphides*, *Firebird*, *Petrouchka*, *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, *Les Noces*, and *Apollo*. Diaghilev brought together some of the leading artists of his time, including composers Stravinsky, Debussy, and Prokofiev; artists Picasso, Braque, and Matisse, and poets Hoffmansthal and Cocteau. *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* is the most authoritative history of the company ever written and the first to examine it as a totality—its art, enterprise, and audience. Combining social and cultural history with illuminating discussions of dance, drama, music, art, economics, and public reception, Lynn Garafola paints an extraordinary portrait of the company that shaped ballet into what it is today.

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