

BALLERINA

A Documentary Film by
Bertrand Norman

77 Minutes, Color, 2006
Digital Betacam, 4:3, Stereo
English Narration, Russian dialogue w/English Subtitles

An Adesif Productions / Les Films du Tamarin co-production



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BALLERINA

In the grand tradition of the Ballet Russes comes Bertrand Normand's portrait of five Russian ballerinas from the Mariinski Theatre, formerly known as the Kirov. Behind any great ballerina lies the discipline and rigour that comes from decades of training and practice; and Russia's pre-eminent dancers - superstars such as Nijinsky, Baryshnikov and Pavlova - established the reputation of Russian dancers as the best in the world. The dancers profiled in *Ballerina* are uniquely individual - tough, insightful and exceptionally talented; onstage they reveal no hint of the sweat, pain and hard work of the rehearsal studio. From Swan Lake to Romeo and Juliet, from the backstage studio to performing on stages around the world, *Ballerina* captures the sublime beauty of ballet, in all its resplendent glory.

The classic ballerina exercises an art that is becoming rare, a profession as demanding that it is not well known. She fascinates because her fate seems so fragile. But there is a country where she still shines as resplendently as ever, Russia. Land of absolutes, the cult of beauty, wideness and nostalgia, also the land of a forgotten femininity: Russia is the land of the ballerina *par excellence*.

Director Bertrand Normand, director and lover of ballet, has for a long while been impressed by the singularity the Russian Ballerinas. He went to St Petersburg looking for what makes these dancers unique. Through his personal research, he has found a new vision of classical ballet, its world and the power it exercises on the audience.

BALLERINA is about going through the curtain which separates the audience from the artist on stage. Norman's quest has taken him to the Mariinski Theatre, formerly called Kirov. This theatre has seen centuries of the world's finest choreographers and interpreters. There Norman meets Alina, Ulyana, Evgenia, Svetlana and Diana, who are the principal personalities of the film. Women with very different characters, young dancers beginning their careers or world famous stars, they illustrate together the steps and fundamental issues of a ballerina's life. Norman followed and filmed them over a period of months, onstage, during rehearsals and at home. He found for each one of them a challenge for the future. Whether it is the beginner leaving school to begin a new career, the injured star who must make her come back, the rising star leaving her theatre to blossom somewhere else, they embody the many different aspects of the Ballerina.

The story of a ballerina is the story of a permanent metamorphosis. Whether it is at different moments of her career or at different moments of the day, from the young girl suffering at rehearsals or the one who shines with grace on stage, or the one who goes back to a common social life, the ballerina changes constantly and her beauty appears in this transformation.

Though the art of ballet is to appear graceful and light, this is the product of exhausting and painful work for the dancers. Watching these artists, ballet becomes more than mere aesthetics, it conveys to the audience deep emotions. The artist can transcend the repertoire to create something new, never seen before. That's what happens when stars like Diana Vishneva, Svetlana Zakharova, and maybe even more Ulyana Lopatkina, are dancing.

But it is while filming young dancers like Alina Somova ou Evgenia Obraztsova evolving and growing that the director can show the viewer the mystery of the metamorphosis that characterizes the life and art of the "ballerina".

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHY – BERTRAND NORMAN

Bertrand Normand was born in 1972. Before devoting himself to film, he studied management at EAP, l'Ecole Europeenne des Affaires, in Paris, Oxford and Berlin. After a year and a half he left for the Philippines to do his military service as audio-visual attaché to the Ambassador of France.

At age 25, he attended the Vancouver Film School in Canada where he directed his first films. When he returned to France, he studied at the Studio Jack Garfein.

Normand has directed two short films, LE GENIE DE L'ASPIRATEUR and L'ILLUSION, in which he held one of the main roles, and AMOROUSLY, as well as three documentaries, MENTEURS, THAMANYA, UN ESPOIR POUR LA BIRMANIE, and BALLERINA, which was shot in Canada, Burma and Russia.

He's currently working on a new documentary on the historical reconstructions of the Napoleonic era in Russia, SOLDATS DE L'EMPEREUR, and is beginning work on a new short film, LA VOIX. Additionally, he has written two feature length film scripts.

Normand occasionally works on films other than his own. He was the Production Assistant on Ildiko Enyedi's SIMON LE MAGE, and second team director and artistic advisor on Cedric Klapisch's LES POUPEES RUSSES.

A film by
Bertrand Normand

Voice over
Alain Ghazal

Camera
Bertrand Normand
Franck Laniel
Isabelle Saunois
Edward Oleschak
Igor Yurov
Alexandre Filipov
Frédéric Podetti
Dominique Collin
Thierry Maisonnave

Editing
Antonela Bevenja

Sound editing
Sandrine Henchoz

Mixing
Raoul Fruhauf

Additional sound
Victor Smirnov
Cyril Moisson

Online editing
Fanny Piquet

Color timing
Arnaud Sentenac

Special effects
Thierry Maisonnave

Production coordinator
Igor Moyceyev

Production managers
Diane Baker
Edward Oleschak

Produced by
Frédéric Podetti
Yann Brolli

Production assistants
Laurence Milon
Antonio de Oliveira
Francesca van der Stay

Production secretaries
Cindy Engoulevant
Betina Chokroun
Marion Moretto

Translations
Nadia Riquarto-Lvoff
Inna Yasman
Nelly Rosso
Elisabeth Kulazenkova
Daria Moudrolioubova
Valentin Nassonov
Anna Skochilenko
Larissa Onoprienko
Inna Andreeva
Kristina Spitz

With the participation of :

Mariinsky Theatre

Valery Gergiev
General and Artistic Director

Makhar Vaziev
Director of the Ballet Company

Ulyana Lopatkina
Diana Vishneva
Prima ballerinas

Evgenia Obraztsova
Alina Somova
Coryphees

Andrian Fadeyev
Igor Zelensky
Principal dancers

The ballet company and the orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre

Ballet masters and teachers
Olga Chenchikova
Galina Kekisheva
Olga Moiseyeva
Gennady Seliutsky

Vaganova Ballet Academy

Altynay Asylmuratova
Artistic Director

Ludmila Safronova
Teacher

The students of the Vaganova Ballet Academy

And

Svetlana Zakharova
Prima ballerina of the Bolshoi Theatre

Manuel Legris
Principal dancer of the Paris National Opera

Cédric Klapisch

Pierre Lacotte

Special thanks to

Diane Baker
Catherine Barré
Eric Haenel
Cédric Klapisch
Brigitte Lefèvre
Olga Mchanskaya
Edward Oleschak
Nadia Riquarto-Lvoff
Anne Salmon

Frédéric Mitterrand
David Richard
Louis David Delahaie
(TV5 Monde)

Linda Ortholan
(Cityzen TV)

Thanks to

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Jean-Bernard Cahours d'Aspry

Rachel Daniels
Sergey Danilian
Vera Dorofeyeva
Isabelle Fokine
Elena Goncharova
Yury Grigorovich
Mikhail Lavrovsky
Jaqueline Lebrun
Brigitte Lefèvre
Bruno Lévy
Judith Lionnet

Seamas Mc Swiney
Arif Melikov
Alisa Meves
Leonid Nadirov

Françoise Normand
Jean-Michel Normand
Vera Obolenski

Adam Peck
Marian Peck
Yugana Pfatseyeva
Inès Piovesan
Galina Pogojeva
Jacques Royer

Sonia Schoonejans
Maria Seguinél
Julia Siegern Korn

René Sirvin
Gustavo Solis Moya
Galina Solovieva
Ellen Sorrin

Janine Stanlowa
Julia Telepina
Oksana Tokranova
Sergey Vikharev
Olga Volkova
Sonya Yadchenko
Anton Yakovlev
Tatiana Yermolayeva
Victoria Yevdokimova

The French Institute of Saint-Petersburg
Saint-Nicholas Cathedral

Judi Morr
Timothy Dunn
(OCPAC)

Valentina Ivanova
Elena Tarasova
(RAO)

Alys Holden
(Kodak Theatre)

Lisa Lukovsky
(Renaissance Hotel of Los Angeles)

Extracts from

Paquita
Choreography : Marius Petipa
Music : Ludwig Minkus
Conductor : Valery Ovsyanikov

Swan Lake
Choreography : Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov
Music : Pyotr Tchaikovsky
Conductor : Boris Gruzin, Mikhail Sinkevitch

La Bayadère
Choreography : Marius Petipa
Restaged by Sergey Vikharev
Music : Ludwig Minkus
Conductor : Mikhail Sinkevitch

Rubies
Choreography : George Balanchine
© The George Balanchine Trust
Music : Capriccio for keyboard and orchestra, Igor Stravinsky
Conductor : Mikhail Agrest

Diamonds
Choreography : George Balanchine
© The George Balanchine Trust
Music : 3rd symphony, Pyotr Tchaikovsky
Conductor : Mikhail Agrest

Schéhérazade
Choreography : Mikhail Fokine
Restaged by Isabelle Fokine and Andris Liepa
© The Fokine Estate Archive
Music : Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov
Conductor : Mikhail Agrest

Romeo and Juliet
Choreography : Leonid Lavrovsky
Music : Sergey Prokofiev
Conductor : Pavel Bubelnikov

The legend of love
Choreography : Yury Grigorovitch
Music : Arif Melikov
Conductor : Boris Gruzin, Vag Papyan

1st symphony « Winter Dream », Pyotr Tchaikovsky
Swan Lake, Pyotr Tchaikovsky

Archive footage
Filmofond Lenfilm Studio

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A l'Unisson

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