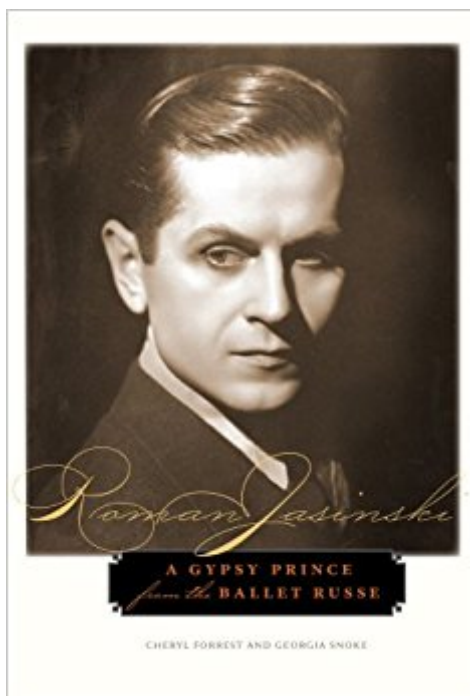


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Roman Jasinski: A Gypsy Prince From The Ballet Russe



Synopsis

Roman Jasinski was one of the great stars of the fabled Ballet Russe. This memoir, gleaned from hours of interviews with Cheryl Forrest, recounts his life story from his beginnings as a young professional who danced for one meal a day to his glory days in Europe, Australia, South America, and the United States. He partnered the greatest ballerinas of the era and worked with the greatest choreographers. Jasinski was, in fact, the lead male dancer in George Balanchine's first company, and the two remained great friends and associates throughout their long lives. Jasinski's memoirs are candid but never cruel, and are placed within the context of world events: Warsaw during World War I; Paris in the twenties and thirties; Berlin during the rise of the Nazis; Spain during the run-up to its Civil War; and Europe, Australia and South America during the chaos of World War II. Roman Jasinski's career spanned the globe. He provides intimate glimpses into the flawed but fabulous people behind Ballet's glamorous façade, and also narrates a love story between Jasinski, the internationally-acclaimed star, and a teenaged corps de ballet dancer who would become one of Oklahoma's five famed Indian Ballerinas. Jasinski's memoir, hailed as the ultimate immigrant success story, contrasts the good life in America with the incredible poverty he left behind, and demonstrates that hard work, courage, compassion, and gratitude are life's true gifts.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

[Jasinski's] life story lives on in this remarkable study of a fascinating career....one of the most informative and readable studies of the Ballets Russes written to date. --Leland Windreich, Ballet-Dance Magazine
This handsomely produced book is another of the personal but valuable records of the fast diminishing coterie of dancers who so significantly contributed to the American

love of ballet....Perhaps the strongest impression this biography conveys is how an abiding focus, personal honesty and devotion to an art form can lead not only to achievement but also to gratification and personal happiness. --Renee Renouf, Ballet.Co. MagazineInformative, charming and direct. A labor of love - written with respect and great affection for the man and his art. --Mary Margaret Holt; Director, University of Oklahoma School of Dance

Cheryl Forrest, a former dancer and past president of Tulsa Ballet, holds degrees from the University of Tulsa and the University of Oklahoma. She received the Governor's Arts Award for Community Service in 2004 for her role in coordinating the economic development efforts of the Governor's Office and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce with the international debut of Tulsa Ballet. She began researching the life of Roman Jasinski while dancing with the company and continued that research while residing in New York. After returning to Tulsa, she conducted the series of interviews with him upon which this book is based. Georgia Snoke has spent more than half of her life in or around Tulsa Ballet. She was in the very first Tulsa Ballet performance and continued to dance with that company after college. A longtime teacher of ballet and character dance, she has trained two generations of Nutcracker children, as well as serving on the Board of Directors -- most recently as president. In real life, after garnering undergraduate and graduate degrees, she worked as Women's Editor for Tulsa's CBS affiliate, KOTV, and as a weekly columnist for the Tulsa Tribune. For sheer joy Georgia continues to perform cameo roles with the professional Tulsa Ballet whenever a woman of a certain age is required - an honor she shares with Cheryl.

I was that kid in shorts. That kid back in the sixties the first all Boys Ballet Class. Seemed more like calisthenics. It was not a question of being good or bad we just did it, because we were asked by him.Mr Jasinski would pick up Little Roman and I, from school in the old Studebaker convertible and on the front seat would be bowls of Ice cream and maybe a brownie. We would eat and Mr. Jasinski would drive us to class. we wouldn't talk much. I remember "The Firebird" as the first Ballet I ever performed in. I was a Koski-biliboski I think? I think that's what he called us. From there the memories flood out into a pool of heart felt honor. The honor it was to have been taught, coached, cajoled, pushed, and patted on the back. Fredrick Franklin said I was a wonderful Cavalier in Nutcracker and My Spanish Dance he wanted to know where I learned to hold myself like a real flamenco dancer. Mr Jasinski and Miss Larkin introduced me to so many Ballet russe stars and corps de Ballet members. I could never understand why so many different names were they the same company just a different way to say it? After reading this book I understand now the

differences and why. I want to thank the writers for such a gift to the world of Ballet. Respectfully submitted John W. Ashton Tulsa school of ballet Tulsa Civic Ballet Le Ballet Juvenesse American Cincinnati Ballet

Jasha was so modest that hardly anyone knew his complete story until this book was published. I would recommend it to every dancer for the inspiration and work this man was and did.

Great read for all lovers of ballet, whether you know much about its history or not. All that's necessary to enjoy this novel is the love of a great story. Jasinski's personal narrative combined with the authors' extensive research of the era keeps the pages effortlessly turning. His sense of humor and warmth of spirit shine through with each of his bizarre adventures. The reader feels like a fly on the wall experiencing iconic moments in 20th Century European history, while traveling through its unique landscapes and meeting some of its great characters. For Tulsans who know of the Jasinkis and Tulsa Ballet, this is a must read to get a glimpse into the man who brought one of the cities greatest assets to life. Bravo!

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