

Theatre-Opera-Ballet and Classical Music Small group tours

Reading List

Ballet in Western Culture: A History of Its Origins and Evolution

by Carol Lee

This volume is a history of the development of ballet designed for dance history courses. The discussion moves from the origins of dance through the middle ages onto the beginnings of ballet, to Renaissance spectacle in Italy, and the beginnings of ballet in France.

Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet

by Jennifer Homans

For more than four hundred years, the art of ballet has stood at the center of Western civilization. Its traditions serve as a record of our past. Lavishly illustrated and beautifully told, *Apollo's Angels*—the first cultural history of ballet ever written—is a groundbreaking work. From ballet's origins in the Renaissance and the codification of its basic steps and positions under France's Louis XIV (himself an avid dancer), the art form wound its way through the courts of Europe, from Paris and Milan to Vienna and St. Petersburg. In the twentieth century, émigré dancers taught their art to a generation in the United States and in Western Europe, setting off a new and radical transformation of dance. Jennifer Homans, a historian, critic, and former professional ballerina, wields a knowledge of dance born of dedicated practice. Her admiration and love for the ballet, as *Entertainment Weekly* notes, brings "a dancer's grace and sure-footed agility to the page."

When Ballet Became French: Modern Ballet and the Cultural Politics of France, 1909-1939

by Ilyana Karthas

For centuries before the 1789 revolution, ballet was a source of great cultural pride for France, but by the twentieth century the art form had deteriorated along with France's international standing. It was not until Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes found success in Paris during the first decade of the new century that France embraced the opportunity to restore ballet to its former glory and transform it into a hallmark of the nation. In *When Ballet Became French*, Ilyana Karthas explores the revitalization of ballet and its crucial significance to French culture during a period of momentous transnational cultural exchange and shifting attitudes towards gender and the body. Uniting the disciplines of cultural history, gender and women's studies, aesthetics, and dance history, Karthas examines the ways in which discussions of ballet intersect with French concerns about the nation, modernity, and gender identities, demonstrating how ballet served as an important tool for France's project of national renewal. Relating ballet commentary to themes of transnationalism, nationalism, aesthetics, gender, and body politics, she examines the process by which critics, artists, and intellectuals turned ballet back into a symbol of French culture. The first book to study the correlation between ballet and French nationalism, *When Ballet Became French* demonstrates how dance can transform a nation's cultural and political history.
