



# Vaganova Today: The Preservation of Pedagogical Tradition

*Catherine E. Pawlick*

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“An extensive and thorough compilation of numerous sources with unique insights on Vaganova and her methodology. The author has had access to several important figures in Russian ballet who knew Vaganova and/or her students. Confronting the dilemmas facing the art of classical ballet, *Vaganova Today* is a thought-provoking read.”—John White, author of *Advanced Principles in Teaching Classical Ballet*

Agrippina Vaganova (1879–1951) is revered as the visionary who first codified the Russian system of classical ballet training. The Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet, founded on impeccable technique and centuries of tradition, has a reputation for elite standards, and its graduates include Mikhail Baryshnikov, Rudolf Nureyev, Natalia Makarova, and Diana Vishneva. Yet the “Vaganova method” has come under criticism in recent years.

In this absorbing volume, Catherine Pawlick traces Vaganova’s story from her early years as a ballet student in tsarist Russia to her career as a dancer with the Mariinsky (Kirov) Ballet to her work as a pedagogue and choreographer. Pawlick then goes beyond biography to address Vaganova’s legacy today, offering the first-ever English translations of primary source materials and intriguing interviews with pedagogues and dancers from the Academy and the Mariinsky Ballet, including some who studied with Vaganova herself.

**Catherine E. Pawlick** danced with ballet companies in the United States before moving to St. Petersburg, Russia, where she lived for six years, observing classes at the Vaganova Academy and rehearsals and performances at the Mariinsky Theatre. Fluent in French and Russian, she has written on dance for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Ballet Review*, and *Dance Europe*.

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