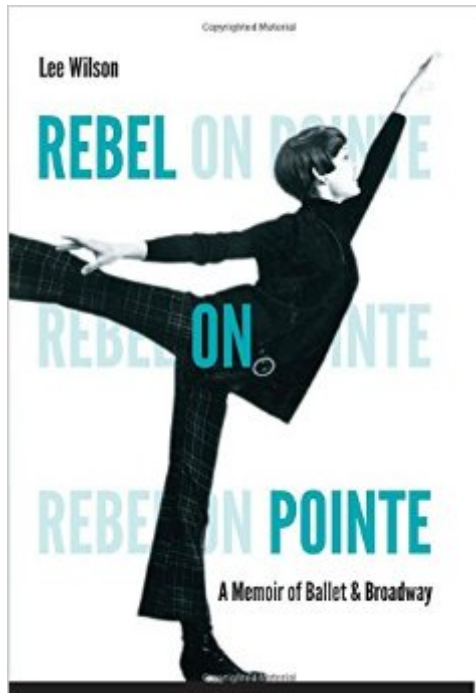


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Rebel On Pointe: A Memoir Of Ballet And Broadway



Synopsis

“Touching and beautiful; Lee Wilson is an inspiration to us all for finding a passion in life and moving beyond familial pressures and societal norms.” —Zippora Karz, former soloist, New York City Ballet “The culture of the ballet world is divulged in all its glorious detail. Wilson’s compelling account of her training and career shows the true courage and persistence this profession requires.” —Ali Duffy, founder and choreographer, Flatlands Dance Theatre “Lee brings to her writing the same keen intelligence she brought to her dancing. It is a joy to relive some of the important moments of ballet history with her and to empathize as she uses her dance career to gain the independence and freedom she perceived as lacking for women like her mother only one generation earlier.” —Maina Gielgud, former director, The Australian Ballet “In this uplifting memoir, Lee Wilson describes how she grand jeté’d from the stifling suburbia of the 1950s, a world of rigid gender roles, to the only domain where women and men were equally paid and equally respected—in grand, historic dance theaters and under the bright lights of the Broadway stage. Short, plump, pigeon-toed, and never good enough for mom, Lee Wilson dared to dream she could grow up to be a star. In 1962, fresh out of high school and a mere sixteen years old, Wilson left her country and the comforts of home to make the five-day journey across the Atlantic. She saw Europe as an attractive alternative to New York, where great American ballet companies were struggling to survive. That same year, Wilson made her professional debut in Monte Carlo in a command performance for Prince Rainier and Princess Grace. The following summer, as she danced across Europe, she thrilled to the sound of her first bravos—and never looked back. After touring Europe and dancing with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet in New York, Wilson set her sights on Broadway, where she danced in many famous shows including *Hello Dolly!* She was in the original national company of *A Chorus Line* and played Patty in the original Broadway production of *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. *Rebel on Pointe* immerses the reader in a remarkable and visionary world. It lifts the veil of myth surrounding legendary dance icons like George Balanchine, Rosella Hightower, Erik Bruhn, and Rudolf Nureyev to reveal the real men and women who have influenced and embodied the world of dance. Wilson expertly depicts how her profession—at times considered so rigid and exacting—was a leading force in the liberation of women from the prison of patriarchal post-war society. The hard-won gains and the maddening setbacks of the gender revolution are seen here through the eyes of a young dancer searching for freedom, one pas de deux at a time. “

Book Information

Hardcover: 224 pages

Publisher: University Press of Florida; First Edition edition (September 30, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0813060087

ISBN-13: 978-0813060088

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (21 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,379,776 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #297 in Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Dancers #398 in Â Books > Arts & Photography > Performing Arts > Dance > Classical #578 in Â Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Classical

Customer Reviews

When my copy of Lee Wilson's Rebel On Pointe arrived from the University Press of Florida, I eagerly opened it, sat down, and read it almost continually over a recent weekend. It is that compelling and engrossing of a memoir. Thoughtfully organized and laid out, it is very well written. Wilson has a gift for telling stories. I enjoyed how she framed them and the book within the context of the social mores of the '50s and early '60s and was more than impressed with how observant she had been as a child and teen - realizing that perhaps her only way out of being cast as a future stereotypical suburban housewife was a career in the arts, where she could in a very real sense - being her own boss. I found two passages inspirational and was amused by the story of how the Marquis de Cuevas engaged in a dramatic duel with Serge Lifar (not over love but ballets!) both characters and seemingly in character for both. "I was passionate about dance the way Dad was passionate about chemistry. I believed in dance both as a means of personal fulfillment and as a positive force in society... I believed then, as I believe now, that dance is a force for good. It unifies people of different races, creeds, and nationalities." "Ballet students thrive on corrections. It doesn't matter if they are shouted, barked, or non-verbal. Corrections are proof that the student is worth teaching, and being ignored is the student's nightmare". Â Â And of Madame Pereyaslavets's entrance - certainly one of the ballets more colorful characters and a legendary teacher: "...

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