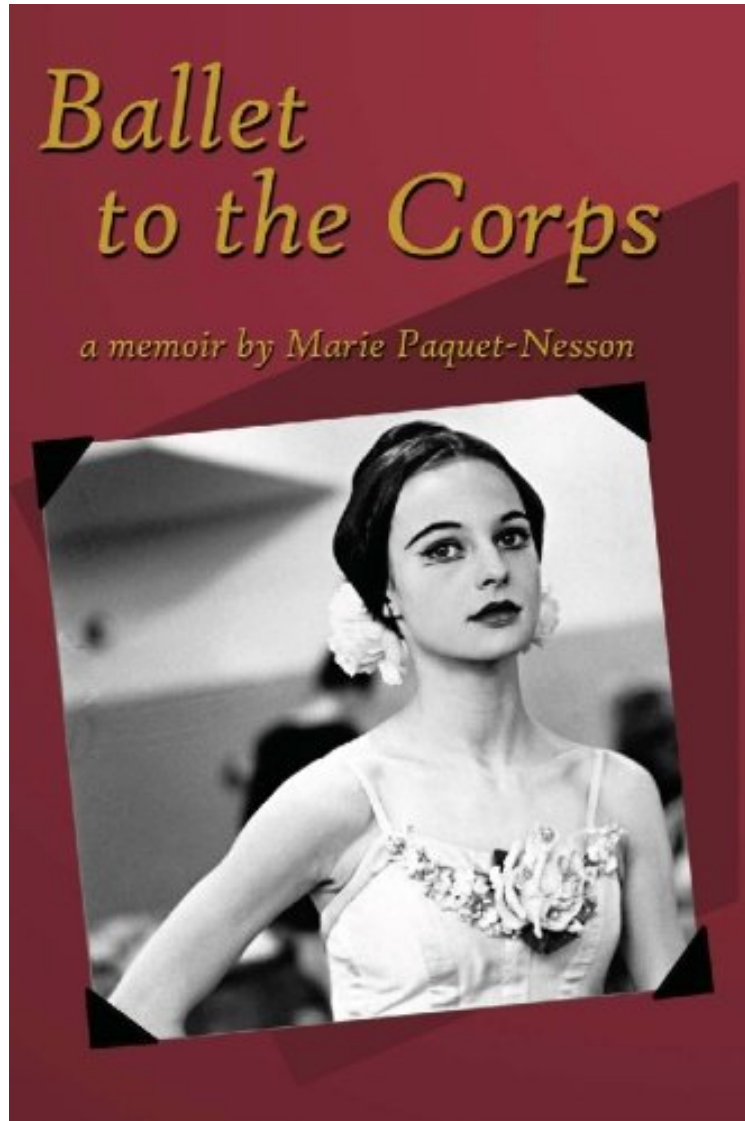


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Ballet To The Corps

Marie Paquet-Nesson

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Marie Paquet-Nesson : Ballet To The Corps before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ballet To The Corps:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. ... Marie in the Joffrey Ballet and re-experienced so many wonderful moments while reading this bookBy FinisI danced with Marie in the Joffrey Ballet and re-experienced so many wonderful moments while reading this book. Marie writes vividly and accurately and this book took me back to those exciting and challenging days of being a ballet dancer in New York in the 60'staking class in New York, performing internationally, and on those epic bus tours with endless one-night stands. Her writing flow s so smoothly and

effortlessly, I could hardly put the book down. Loved it! Bravo Marie! I hope you will continue writing. I will be the first in line to buy whatever you write. Onward, please!

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Joffrey, Gems, and Bueno Nominee

By Elizabeth Milligan Marie Paquette-Nesson's new memoir, *Ballet to the Corps* glitters like a necklace of fine gems, its string and clasp being the prestigious Joffrey Ballet. The gems engage and entertain immediately by drawing us into a period of history (1950s through today) and a fascinating tapestry of stories commencing with the early days of the Joffrey, not so very long after Russian-born choreographer George Balanchine brought serious ballet to the United States (1933). The story of the Joffrey Ballet begins with an idea in New York that is quickly followed with a six-person ensemble of dancers touring the United States in a station wagon pulling a U-Haul trailer. In those early days, the "station wagon days", the dancers might arrive at the theatre for a performance in a small town and find splashed across the marquis, "Gidget goes to the Beach starring Annette Funicello" followed by "Today: Sunday Matinee 2:00, Robert Joffrey Theater Ballet". The gems of Ballet are the diversity and depth of its stories and their narration. Sometimes the reader feels as if he or she is inside the author's head while she is performing on stage or critiquing from the wings; sometimes, as if the author is relaxing in front of the fireplace in a nearby wing chair; and sometimes, as if the author is being discussed in a newspaper story. In Ballet, chapters are devoted to the many command performances ranging from JFK's White House to palaces of the Middle and Far East and the fabled Muskovy Theater in Moscow - a performance followed with thirty-four curtain calls. Other gems are the backdrops for the actual performances - logistics involved in touring, compromises in production values, current events, a wealthy benefactor, and political personalities. Personal chronicling of the Joffrey Ballet's evolution as well as beautiful black and white photographs run throughout the memoir. I was totally impressed that some of the very same rigorous discipline required of successful ballet dancers transferred so elegantly to the memoir. The discipline was evident not only in Ballet's structure, but also in what wasn't included, i.e., personal invective - an unfortunate element in some memoirs. One of my favorite passages refers to the shoulders of dancers. The author declares that few if any ballet dancers of the 1950s or 1960s would be employed today as a dancer: "Today - all dancers seem to have slim, perfectly proportioned, and extraordinarily flexible bodies along with strong and impressive techniques." In addition, Paquette-Nesson also observes in today's dance "artistry in abundance". In Ballet, Paquette-Nesson states that she and her peers stood on the shoulders of dancers who preceded them and were appreciative of the support. In turn, she hopes that dancers today will know they can stand on the shoulders of her generation and are similarly appreciative "... in spite of [our] occasional errant foot and much more modest technique." Today, the Joffrey Ballet Company lives on in Chicago and Bob Joffrey's memory lives in the hearts and minds of all who knew him. Hopefully, Ballet will not only ignite memories but also engage new audiences - admirers of disciplined artistry and inspirational stories. Paquette-Nesson dedicated her memoir to her parents and to Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino, the co-founders of the prestigious Joffrey Ballet. Toward the end of Ballet, the author says about Joffrey, her mentor and great friend, "... It had been two decades since I had reconnected with memories of Terpsichore. And once remembered, her grace sat and continues to sit strongly in my soul. It is to Bob that I owe that grace." The great respect and dedication Joffrey fostered among his company are legendary and are the core of Ballet: the gems on the necklace shine so brilliantly because of them.

Note: After thirteen years living and working as a professional ballet dancer, a career that included performing with the Radio City Ballet Corps, the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, the Robert Joffrey Ballet, and the American Ballet Theatre, Paquette-Nesson retired from dancing and proceeded to teach ballet for more than twenty-five years. Today, she resides in Cambridge, MA.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A Captivating Book!

By Felix Smith Marie has written a fascinating memoir, characteristic of the way in which she performed. The narrative aspect sparkles with entertainment, drama, suspense, and joyful fun! Historical events in her international experiences are also of great interest, an unexpected addition to this extraordinary book. "A joy to read and instructive" summarizes the reasons for adding "Ballet To The Corps" to anyone's library.

Elisabeth Carroll Smith, American Ballet Theatre, Robert Joffrey, Harkness Ballet Companies, Associate Professor in Dance, Skidmore College

This wry memoir written from the distinctive point of view of a corps de ballet and demi solo dancer invites the reader to experience the extraordinariness of an ordinary dancer's life. Performing during the mid 1950s through the 1960s the author's career encompassed the early introduction of American ballet to audiences around the world. While with the Robert Joffrey Ballet she danced in Kabul, Afghanistan, in Tehran for the Shah of Iran, and in the Soviet Union where, on November 22, 1963, the company mourned so far from home. She danced both on freshly waxed, slippery auditorium stages and at the foot of the Acropolis. She feared for her job by having upstaged two of The Metropolitan Opera stars and feared for her life while teetering across a catwalk high above an opera house stage. Written primarily for all those who have ever harbored ballet dreams, there is a bonus for those also interested in a personal history of the fledgling Robert Joffrey Ballet.

About the Author Marie Paquette-Nesson's thirteen year professional ballet career began with a three-week replacement job with the Radio City Music Hall Ballet Corps. She went on to dance with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, The Robert Joffrey Ballet, and the American Ballet Theatre. She taught for over 25 years in the Boston area and now

resides in Cambridge, Massachusetts.