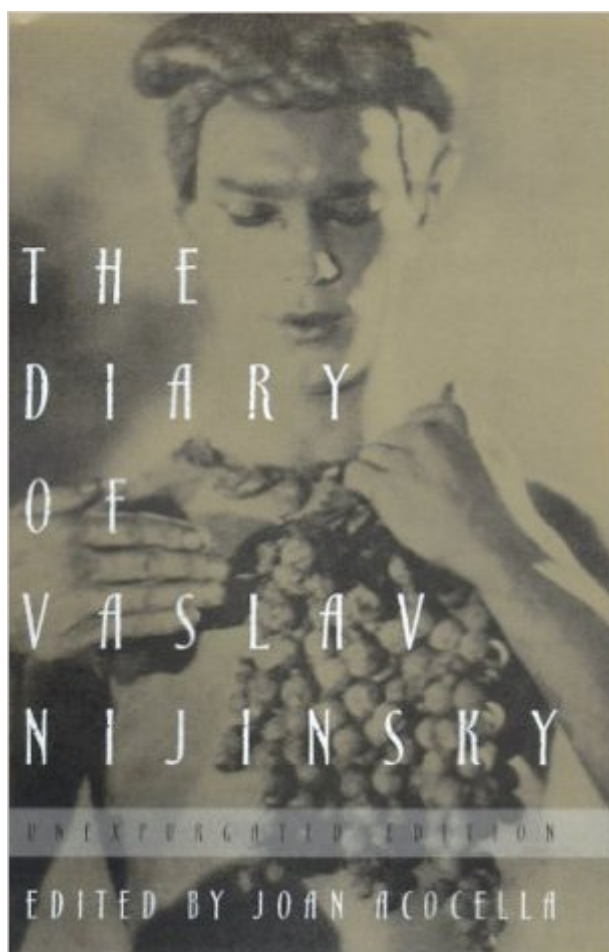


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The Diary Of Vaslav Nijinsky (Unexpurgated)



Synopsis

With an Introduction by Joan Acocella The astonishing diaries of the great dancer, at last available in their complete form. In December 1917, Vaslav Nijinsky, the most famous male dancer in the Western world, moved into a Swiss villa with his wife and three-year-old daughter and began to go mad. This diary, which he kept in four notebooks over six weeks, is the only sustained, on-the-spot written account we have by a major artist of the experience of entering psychosis. A prodigy from his youth in Russia, Nijinsky came to international fame as a principal dancer in Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. After a falling-out between the two great men--who had lived openly as lovers for some time--Nijinsky struggled to build a career on his own. When psychosis struck, he began to imagine himself as married to God, indeed as God, signing his entries "God Nijinsky." Although he lived another thirty years, he never regained his sanity. Already a classic in its earlier, bowdlerized edition, the diary now appears uncut for the first time in English, together with its previously unavailable fourth notebook. It is Nijinsky's confession and his prophecy. At the same time, it reads like a novel, portraying the terror in the Nijinsky household as the dancer plunged into madness. In her Introduction, the noted dance writer Joan Acocella explains the context of the diary and its significance in the history of modernism.

Book Information

Hardcover: 304 pages

Publisher: Farrar Straus Giroux; Uxg edition (January 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0374139210

ISBN-13: 978-0374139216

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 6.4 x 1.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (19 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #907,654 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #177 inÂ Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Dancers #7626 inÂ Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Actors & Entertainers #7914 inÂ Books > Humor & Entertainment > Movies > Biographies

Customer Reviews

1. "God said to me, 'Go home and tell your wife that you are mad'."Even if we are not ready to accept this assertion as a proof of Nijinsky's genius (i.e. him edging on God-Consciousness on his

way to full enlightenment), we should at least be able to recognise that the author obviously did not view himself as insane, but, in his own eyes, consciously pretended to be such as the only means at hand to escape the harsh chilliness and cruelty of an insensitive world, handing over all responsibilities of the non-esoteric sides of life to those who feel they know such things better.² Neither the conclusion should be that the great Master of Choreography ended his life in a miserable demise, unworthy of a great genius and a potential role-model for generations to come. On the last pages, as if to conclude the diary, Nijinsky speaks of a wonderful vision of his three years old daughter as she smiles at him: "I see what she is trying to tell me: it is not all about sadness and miserliness - there's also joy in life". Thus reminding of Tolstoy's famous formula "if you want to be joyful and happy, then just be that!". The author's life has clearly been that of struggle and constant contemplations over the world's stubbornness in its reiterated refusal to accept the artist's message of love, despite its pure simplicity. And yet now on the verge of the sunset of life it all suddenly seems to have been nothing but a temporary, though little longer than usual, unpleasant dream, the remaining fogs of which are dispersed through a simple rearrangement of attention leading one to a life in a closer company with one's God. A life the fuller utilisation of the pleasures of which are not bound by the limits of life and death.³

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