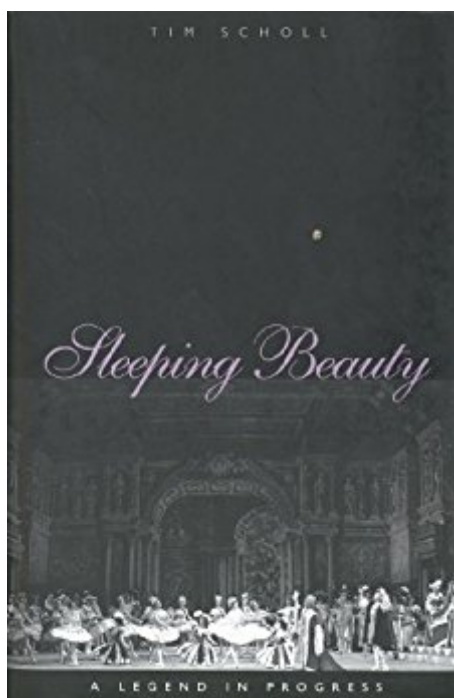


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# "Sleeping Beauty," A Legend In Progress



## Synopsis

In 1999 the Maryinsky (formerly Kirov) Ballet and Theater in St. Petersburg re-created its 1890 production of Sleeping Beauty. The revival showed the classic work in its original sets and costumes and restored pantomime and choreography that had been eliminated over the past century. Nevertheless, the work proved unexpectedly controversial, with many Russian dance professionals and historians denouncing it. In order to understand how a historically informed performance could be ridiculed by those responsible for writing the history of Russian and Soviet ballet, Tim Scholl discusses the tradition, ideology, and popular legend that have shaped the development of Sleeping Beauty. In the process he provides a history of Russian and Soviet ballet during the twentieth century. A fascinating slice of cultural history, the book will appeal not only to dance historians but also to those interested in the arts and cultural policies of the Soviet and post-Soviet periods.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

First off, if you pick this book up, you need to love the ballet Sleeping Beauty and what Russian

ballet brings to the table for the genre. It focuses on the 1999 reproduction of the 1890 work of Sleeping Beauty by the Maryinsky (formerly Kirov) Ballet and Theater. The 1999 version was faithful to the 1890 work and sparked much dialogue within the ballet public. As the author states on page 131: "If the 1890 production of Sleeping Beauty was meant to awake, like Aurora, from a long sleep in 1999, the revival seemed more like Giselle emerging from the grave to some: the production returned to haunt members of a St. Petersburg ballet public that loved to reminisce about 1890 but actually preferred that the past remain there. Like all reconstructions, the 1890/1999 production of Sleeping Beauty occupied a strange half-life: it was neither a truly radical nor a genuinely conservative gesture." The author delves into this unique translation that did its best to recreate what was performed in 1890 by interweaving history, politics, and art. This is a ballet that has been performed and interpreted by many. The 1890 version is the first production of this famous ballet. As the years went on and choreographers and dancers interpreted the ballet, the original production's staging, dancing and art faded into the background. Tim Scholl allows you to revisit the past and compare it to today as his rhetoric searches for the "authentic" Sleeping Beauty. As one person mentioned in the book after viewing the reproduction of the 1890 Sleeping Beauty at the Met--it changed the way they forever would view the ballet. The author includes fascinating reviews of the original ballet. One of my favorites was from the Theater Echo (page 176): "A new ballet!...An occasion in the ballet anthill!...As always, there are many who like it and many who don't! On one hand: lovely, delightful. And on the other: dissatisfaction and spiteful whispering with crooked smiles on the lips. Ummmyeah! The costumes really are good! The sets, very nice, but what's the sense of it? They didn't skimp, but with money you can make any sort of set you want!...There's no plot and no dancing!" Sounds like with the reproduction that this review is apropos today.

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