



Wilde Times: Patricia Wilde, George Balanchine, and the Rise of New York City Ballet

Joel Lobenthal

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At eighty-seven, Patricia Wilde remains a grande dame of the ballet world. As a young star she toured America in the company of the Ballet Russe. In her heyday in the 1950s and '60s, she was a first-generation member and principal dancer of New York City Ballet during the uniquely dramatic Balanchine era—the golden age of the company and its hugely gifted, influential, exploitative, and dictatorial director. In *Wilde Times*, Joel Lobenthal brings the world of Wilde and Balanchine, of Tanaquil Le Clercq, Diana Adams, Suzanne Farrell, Maria Tallchief, and many others thrillingly to life. With unfettered access to Wilde and her family, friends, and colleagues, Lobenthal takes the reader backstage to some of the greatest ballet triumphs of the modern era—and some of the greatest tragedies. Through it all Patricia Wilde emerges as a figure of towering strength, grace, and grit.

Wilde Times is the first biography of this seminal figure in American dance, written with the cooperation of the star, but wide-ranging in its use of sources to tell the full and intertwining stories of the development of Wilde, of Balanchine, and of American national ballet at its peak in the twentieth century.

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