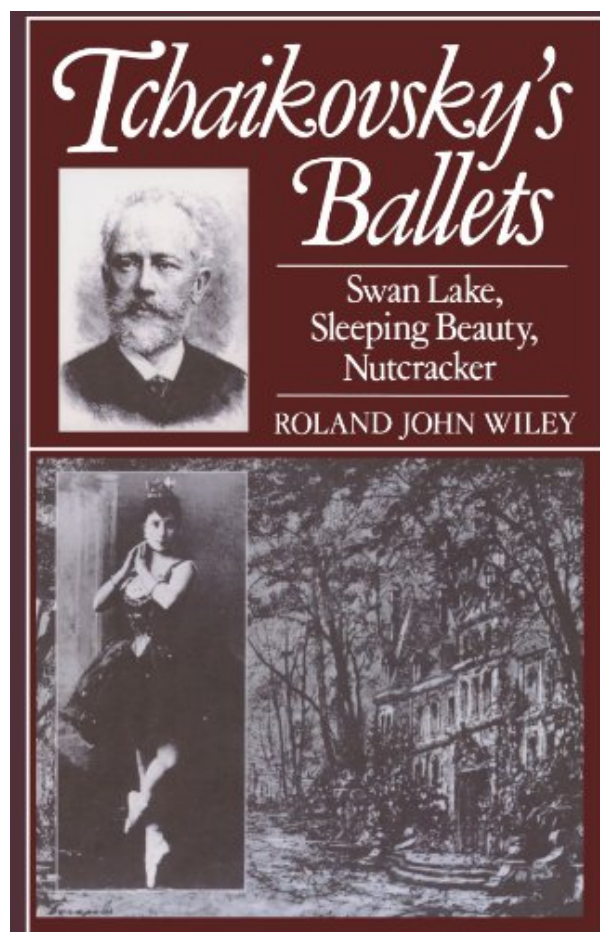


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Review

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Tchaikovsky's Ballets combines a detailed and thorough analysis of the music of Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, and Nutcracker with descriptions of the first productions of these works in Imperial Russia. A background chapter on the ballet audience, the collaboration of composer and balletmaster, and Moscow of the 1860's leads into an account of the first production of Swan Lake in 1877. A discussion of theater reforms initiated by the Director of the Imperial Theaters prepares the reader for a study of the still-famous 1890 St. Petersburg production of Sleeping Beauty. Wiley then explains how the Nutcracker, produced just two years after Sleeping Beauty, was seen in a much less favorable light than it is now. Separate chapters are devoted to the music of each ballet and translations of published libretti, choreographer's instructions to the composer, and the balletmaster's plans for Sleeping Beauty and the Nutcracker are reproduced in appendices.

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Roland John Wiley is at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

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Tchaikovsky's Ballets

By Julio Feliu

Roland John Wiley's treatise on Tchaikovsky's ballets is the most comprehensive, enlightening and informative dissertation that I have read thus far. While most analyses of the ballets focus on the choreography, Wiley's book provides a complete historical, social and political context that sheds not only new light on the ballets but Tchaikovsky's creativeness as well. Initially, I hesitated getting this book because of its price tag. Reading the book made me immediately realize that it was a must have at any price.

Moreover, I would highly recommend Wiley's 2009 book "Tchaikovsky," which is on a par with David Brown's four-volume work on Tchaikovsky. Both authors provide accurate and detailed objective analyses on both the composer and his music. Do not be put off by the price. This book on Tchaikovsky's ballets is a must have for those who love ballet and Tchaikovsky.

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wonderful, engaging

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