
Anna Pavlova

A WOMAN IN HISTORY BY EMILY ISAACSON



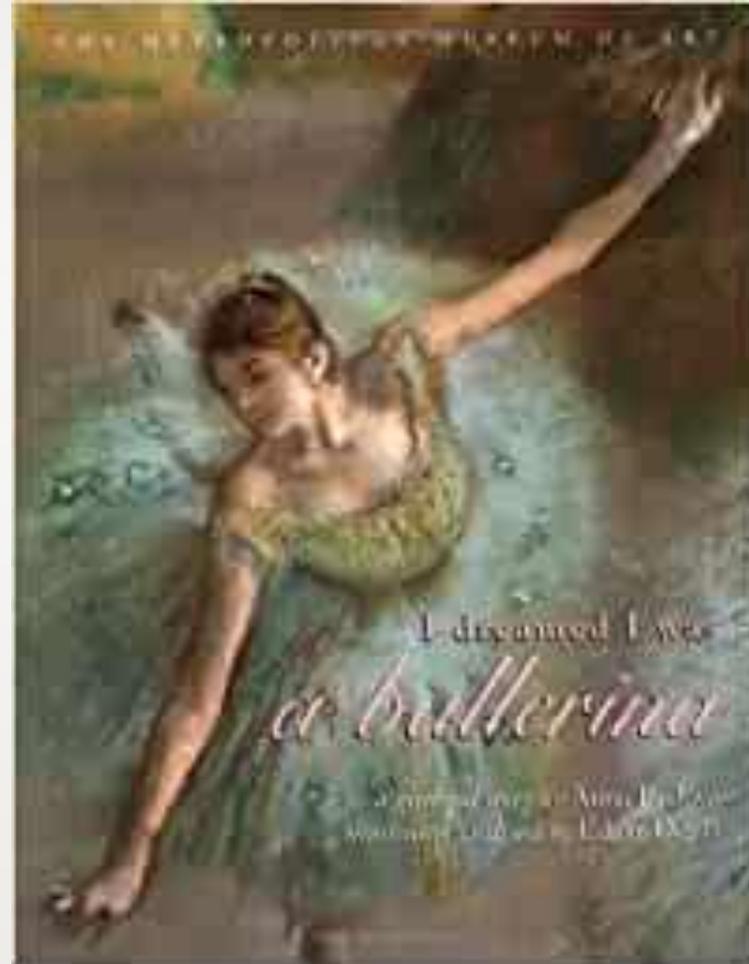
Why Was She Famous?

- Anna Pavlova was one of the most brilliant and celebrated ballerinas of her time.
- Quote: “No one can arrive from being talented alone, work transforms talent into genius.”
- Pavlova is known for creating a solution for extremely arched feet; one that became the precursor of the modern toe shoe. For her own dancing, she added a piece of hard leather on the soles to strengthen the shoes, adding support and flattening the box of the shoe. Although some saw this as "cheating" in the era, it was because they thought, for a real ballerina, her feet, not her shoes, must hold her weight en pointe. Nonetheless, her idea caught on as it made as pointe work less painful and easier for curved feet.



Anna's formative Years

- Anna Pavlova was born February 12, 1881, in Saint Petersburg, Russia
- Her mother was a laundress, and lived alone with her in a small flat. She first took her to the ballet when she was a child.
- It was a performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*.
- A children's book illustrated by Degas tells the story of her first ballet experience, how lavish it was, and how it shaped her. It is written by the author herself.



Anna's Audition

- Anna Pavlova did her first audition, for the Imperial Ballet School, when she was nine. Her age, and what was considered her "sickly" appearance, caused her to be rejected.
- In 1891, at age 10, she was accepted. Her first performance was Marius Petipa's *Un conte de fées* (A Fairy Tale).



Years of Training in Classical Ballet

- Anna Pavlova trained in classical ballet although it was difficult. Classical ballet did not come easily to her. Her feet were curved, or considered “severely arched,” she had thin ankles, long limbs and her physical features were not the small, compact body favoured for the ballerinas of her time. Fellow ballet students taunted her by calling her “The broom” and “La petite sauvage.”
- Pavlova determinedly trained to perfect her technique. She would repeat and repeat to learn even one step.



Anna Pavlova Trained under Virtuosos

- Enrico Cecchetti trained Pavlova in classical ballet, and was considered the greatest ballet virtuoso of the time and founder of the Cecchetti method. This very influential ballet technique is used to this day. In 1898, She also trained under Ekaterina Vazem, who was former Prima ballerina of the Saint Petersburg Imperial Theatre.
- She graduated from the principal company of the Imperial Ballet School in 1899 at 18, where she had performed many roles. She entered the Imperial Ballet a rank ahead of corps de ballet as a coryphée. She made her official début as a professional dancer at the Mariinsky Theatre in Pavel Gerdt's *Les Dryades prétendues* (The False Dryads). Her talented performance drew praise from the critics of the day.



Anna Pavlova performed the Dying Swan 4,000 times during her lifetime.



The Dragonfly

- Anna Pavlova did some of her own choreography. She choreographed The Dragonfly, a short ballet solo. The music was by Fritz Kreisler. Pavlova wore a gossamer gown with large dragonfly wings fixed to the back for the performance.



Video of the ballet
Dying Swan danced
by Anna Pavlova.

It was choreographed
in 1905 to the music of
Camille Saint-Saens
The Swan.



Pavlova at Home

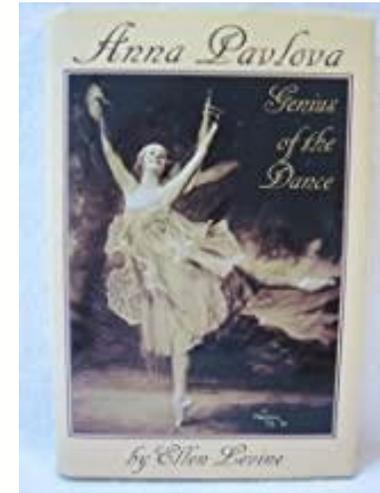
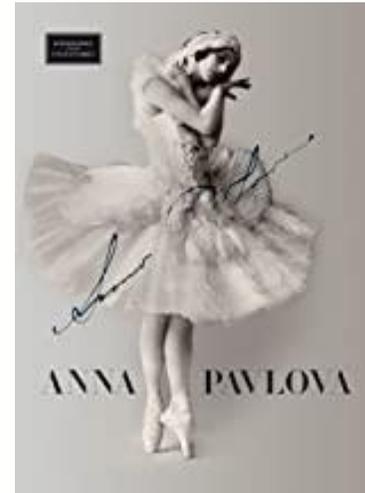
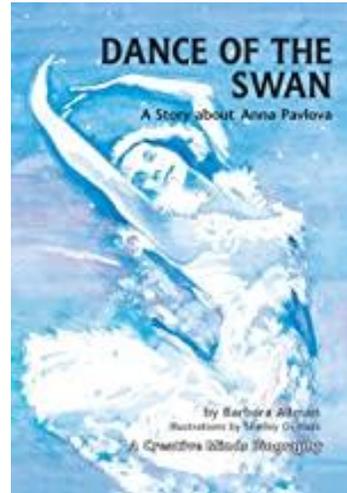
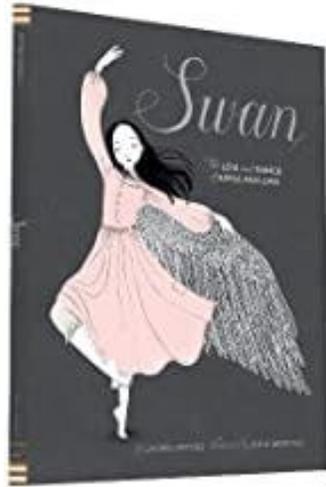
- In 1912, Pavlova moved from Russia to London, England, and bought the Ivy House on North End Road, Golders Green. She spent most of her life here. There was an ornamental lake with her swans, including a swan named Jack, as well as a Siamese cat and dogs that she kept as pets. The film *Anna Pavlova* features the Ivy House.



Pavlova Married Secretly in 1914

- Pavlova married her manager Victor Dandr  secretly in 1914, he asserted in his biography of the dancer in 1932. It was titled *Anna Pavlova: In Art & Life* (Dandre 1932). They met in 1904. He died on February 5, 1944 and was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium and his ashes placed below those of Anna.
- He wrote of Pavlova's many charity dance performances and charitable efforts to support Russian orphans in post-World War I Paris "...who were in danger of finding themselves literally in the street. They were already suffering terrible privations and it seemed as though there would soon be no means whatever to carry on their education."

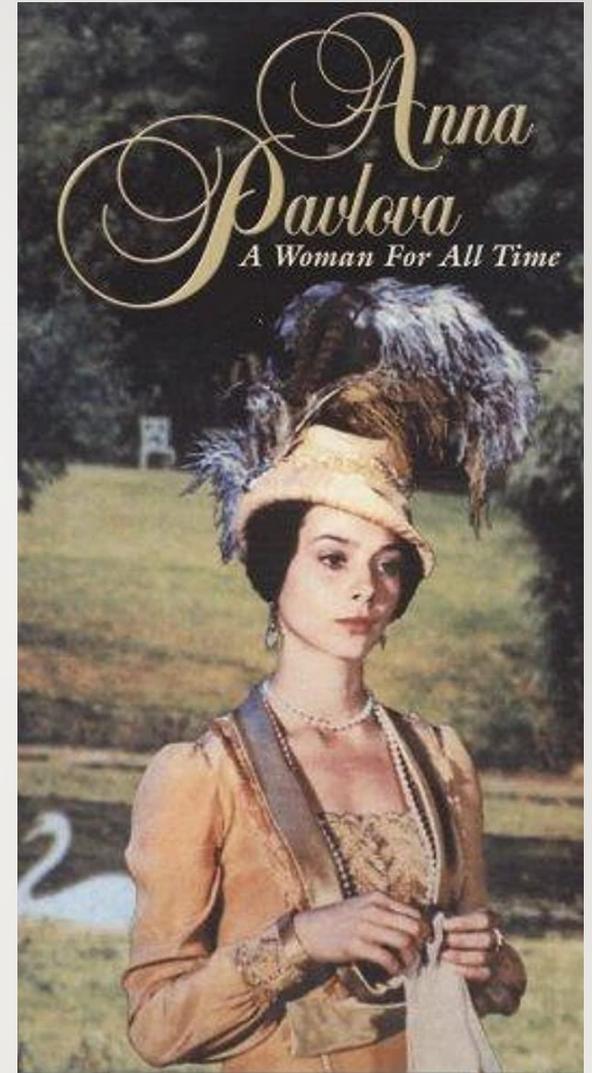
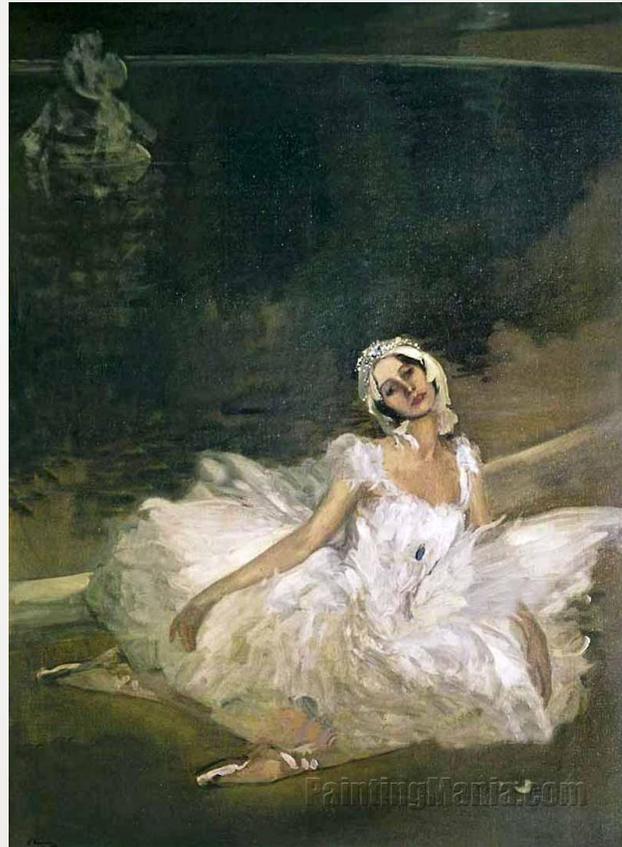




Books About Anna Pavlova

Anna Pavlova's Fame

- There were paintings made of her during her life, including this one in 1911, by Sir John Lavery.
- There was a TV series made of her in 1983.



Pavlova's Last Words . . .

- Pavlova became very ill while travelling from Paris, and worsened on her arrival in The Hague. She sent to Paris for her personal physician, Dr Zalewski to attend her. The doctor said she had pneumonia and required an operation. She was informed that she would never dance again as a result of the operation. In response, she stated "If I can't dance, then I'd rather be dead." At the time of her death, her last words were, "Get my 'Swan' costume ready." In accordance with old ballet tradition, the show went on as scheduled on the next day she was to perform, only now a single spotlight circled the empty stage in the place she would have been.



Memorials to Pavlova

- Five memorials exist to Pavlova in London:
- 1. A contemporary sculpture by Tom Merrifield of Pavlova as the Dragonfly in the grounds of Ivy House
- 2. A sculpture by Scot George Henry Paulin in the middle of the Ivy House pond.
- 3. A blue plaque on the front of Ivy House.
- 4. A statuette sitting with the urn that holds her ashes in Golders Green Crematorium.
- 5. The gilded statue atop the Victoria Palace Theatre. (When the Victoria Palace Theatre in London, England, opened in 1911, a gilded statue of Pavlova had been installed above the cupola of the theatre.)
- There is also a Commemorative coin in her honour.

