

Nureyev, Rudolf (1938-1993)

Encyclopedia Article

Nureyev, Rudolf (1938-1993)

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Contents

Nureyev, Rudolf (1938-1993) Encyclopedia Article.....	1
Contents.....	2
Nureyev, Rudolf (1938-1993).....	3

Nureyev, Rudolf (1938-1993)

The first male ballet dancer to become a superstar since Nijinsky, Rudolf Nureyev completely redefined the place of men in classical ballet. A moody, bigoted egomaniac who routinely revised ballets to give himself larger roles, Nureyev was nonetheless an electrifying performer. In 1961, while on tour in Europe, he generated spectacular publicity when he defected from the Soviet Kirov Ballet. His celebrated partnership with Margot Fonteyn, a prima ballerina with Britain's Royal Ballet who was more than twice his age and poised to retire when they began dancing together, completely revitalized her career. From 1983 to 1989, as the director of the Paris Opera Ballet, Nureyev promoted a new generation of dancers and revived the world's oldest ballet company, making it one of the finest contemporary ballet troupes. Passionately devoted to performing, he continued to dance almost until his death, from AIDS, at age 55.

Rudolf Nureyev

Further Reading:

The Royal Ballet with Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn in Romeo and Juliet. Kultur International Films.

Stuart, Otis. *Perpetual Motion: The Public and Private Lives of Rudolf Nureyev.* New York, Simon & Schuster, 1995.