

Title: The Russian Ballet That Stayed Home: The Work of Liubov' Blok in Early Soviet Russia
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My paper, “The Russian Ballet That Stayed Home: The Work of Liubov' Blok”, seeks to uncover the debates on the direction and meaning of ballet in early Soviet Russia by discussing the critical work of Liubov' Dmitrievna Blok. After the death of her husband, the poet Aleksandr Blok, L.D. Blok in the late 1920s till her death in the late 1930s became deeply interested in ballet history and aesthetics. The role of L.D. Blok is key to understanding the obstacles facing ballet in this period of political and aesthetic transition. With close ties to Russia's Silver Age, Blok fought against the “philistine” attempts to transform ballet into a “mass-appeal,” ideologically driven art form (the *drambalet*) at the expense of classical ballet's sacrosanct principles. Her articles, reviews, and critical work present intriguing arguments for the rehabilitation and resuscitation of ballet in the nascent Soviet Union. My paper argues for the significance of Blok's largely ignored critical achievements by locating her work within its historical context, assessing her contribution to the wider field of dance history and theory, analyzing her critical methodology and aesthetic agenda, and evaluating her influence on the evolution of classical ballet technique in Soviet Russia. Particular attention will be given to her ballet librettos and also her epistolary polemic with the theater director Sergei Radlov. These documents more vividly reveal Blok's vision for the future of Soviet ballet.