

# PREMIER DANSEUR OF RUSSIAN BALLET TO VISIT NEW ORLEANS

Waslav Nijinsky Comes Nov. 30 for Three Days at  
French Opera House in Dual Capacity of Premier  
and Artistic Director of Famous Organization.

Waslav Nijinsky, premier danseur of the Serge de Diaghileff Ballet Russe, which, by arrangement with the Metropolitan Opera Company, of New York, opens for an engagement at the French Opera House beginning November 30, December 1 and 2, is acknowledged to be the greatest male dancer now alive. Nijinsky was scheduled to appear with the ballet last year on its limited tour, but because of his internment in Austria, where he was held a prisoner of war, until United States Ambassador Penfield secured his release, he was unable to join the troupe until the last few weeks of his closing engagement at the Metropolitan Opera House. This year he will accompany the ballet on its tour to fifty cities throughout America in the dual capacity of premier danseur and artistic director.

Nijinsky was born in 1889 in Kiev, Russia. Both his father and mother had been members of the Imperial Ballet School in Warsaw, and, as is the custom in Russia, his parents decided that their children should also be dancers. So, at the age of ten, he entered the Imperial School, which by that time had been transferred to Petrograd. He remained there nine years, although he obtained a diploma after seven years training. He stayed the full length of time—nine years is proscribed by the regulations—in order to be graduated in the usual way. As he says, he did not wish to be considered a child prodigy, believing that artistic maturity comes only with years.

At the age of eleven, while at school, he made his first public appearance in Petrograd at the Royal Palace Theater on the Czarina's birthday. He was called to the box of her majesty, and she presented him with a package of bouquets. During his subsequent years at school he danced several times before the court and received gifts from the czar. His first public appearance in the regular theater was in the opera "Don Juan" by Mozart, a spectacle which is usually omitted in other countries. Later he joined the Serge de Diaghileff Ballet Russe and appeared in all the principal capitals of Europe. After his graduation from the Imperial School of Ballet at Petrograd and after Isadora Duncan's first performance in Russia had opened Fokine's eyes to the possibilities of a ballet renaissance, Nijinsky was the leading dancer to accept participation in the new movement, and he made his first appearance in "Les Sylphides" in 1908-09.

No one who achieves distinction as an artist has much history outside of his own studio. So there is little to say about Nijinsky except that he has always been identified with the Oriental and the exotic and has been ever the center of a controversy as to whether decadence or higher civilization was exemplified by the expression of his art. Unlike many ultra-moderns, he has a perfect mastery of his technique, and is able to play tag with the established use of the ankles, wrists and neck. He can take such tremendous jumps that some one has said of him in "Scheherazade," "You can see all of Nijinsky over the heads of every one else in the harem." He has the power to project his personality as strongly as his body.

He has composed some ballets, including the famous "L'Après Midi d'une Faune," which is the result of his ardent studies in ceramics, as he has always had a passion for archaic decoration. In addition he is this year performing in two new ballets of his own conception, "Till Tulenspiegel," and "Mephisto Valse."

Off the stage Nijinsky is in no way conspicuous, being an average-sized man with bronze-brownish hair, and a Slavic countenance. He was paying a visit at his father-in-law's home in Budapest that

he was caught and interned by the military authorities, owing to the outbreak of the present war.

Nijinsky is wrapped up in his art. He never tires of emphasizing that his conception of a part is inspired, and that it is a spiritual conception founded on a mental impression.

"Every movement which I make upon the stage" he recently said, to an interviewer, "commencing with the posture of my little finger on my left hand, is the result of mental study. I have studied sculpture, painting, music, poetry, tragedy, and have taken as my special province the works of Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci, which portray strength and grace at the same time.

"If you look at a sculpture by Michael Angelo and Da Vinci, you can almost see the movements which a dancer should perform in order to portray force and beauty. You can see the strength and the grace. This has to be mentally dissected and taken again from my brain. It is transferred into my own body and thrown across the footlights to the public.

"In the same way that an actor portrays a role and studies certain movements incidental to certain phrasings, the dancer must study all of his movements beforehand, but in a much more detailed form, because having no words to utter and having only movements with which to portray all the emotions, these movements have to be worked out in more detail and at the same time along broad enough lines for the audience to understand. He is like a great conductor such as Toscanini, when he conducts an opera like "Tristan and Isolde" which embraces all the emotions human beings experience, worked out in great detail, and at the same time co-ordinated into great lines."