

The New Criterion

Dance

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Vaults & waters: the Kirov at City Center

by [Laura Jacobs](#)

On the Kirov Ballet in Manhattan.

When the Kirov Ballet came to New York in 2002, it pulled into the Met like the greatest show on earth. The company brought a this-is-how-it's-done *Don Quixote* and a *Swan Lake* with the lovely, dusty sheen of old velvet in stone castles. Its *La Bayadère*, like *The Sleeping Beauty* brought here in 1999, was an experiment in history retrieved, a ballet rebuilt from notated texts, and though not wholly satisfying as a work of art, it was a restoration with many fascinations. And then there were three splendid performances of George Balanchine's *Jewels*, which arrived with a newly designed set, still minimalist, but less the static parure that was the design for decades at New York City Ballet and more a swirling star shower from above, as if the vaults of heaven had opened.

When I think of the Kirov, I think of vaults. It's not just the rich history of this company, which ...

Laura Jacobs's *Landscape with Moving Figures* is available from Dance & Movement Press. She has been the dance critic for *The New Criterion* since 1994. Before that she wrote about dance for *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Ballet Review*, and *Boston Phoenix*. Jacobs is a contributing editor at *Vanity Fair*, where she writes about fashion as well as performing arts. From 1987 to 1994, Jacobs was editor in chief of *Stagebill*, the national program magazine. In this position she edited and wrote articles on opera, music, theater, and dance. Jacobs has written two books on fashion (*Beauty and the Beene*, Abrams, 1999; and *The Art of Haute Couture*, Abbeville Press, 1995). Her first novel, *Women About Town*, was published by Viking in May 2002.

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