

Acknowledgements and Note from the Author

Firstly, I would like to thank my mother to whom this book is dedicated. She passed along to me her love for both dance and figure skating. Being a performer as well as teacher of dance, she dragged me to practically every class she took at a very early age encouraging me to observe and later discuss my observations of the class; how it was taught as well as how it was received. Thus, the dance class as both life and art was developed in me very early on. It probably wasn't a coincidence that the first pair of ballet slippers she bought me were red!

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As my teaching career spans 40 years and I have studied with so many wonderful yet diverse teachers, I want the reader to know that the syllabi and methods contained in this book will most likely vary in some way other than you have been taught. Whether the interpretation is Bolshoi or Kirov, the method employed is essentially Russian in origin and intent, and yet even this has changed in the span of 40 years. My foremost desire is to make good ballet technique and all its benefits, regardless of method, accessible and understandable to the skating community around the globe. My deepest appreciation goes to the late Madame Maria Nevelska, former dancer with the Bolshoi Ballet of Moscow. Her clear, precise teaching, love for the art and expression in Classical dance and her constantly sweet spirit (even when admonishing!) was a driving inspiration in my life. I have tried to impart some of the feeling and rarefied atmosphere which surrounded me in my early years in her classes at Carnegie Hall in the lessons presented here.

I would also like to thank the late Marguerite De Anguera who worked extensively with Hanya Holm, Kurt Jooss and Agnes De Mille; for her eagle eye and relentless quest for clarity; accuracy and creating intelligent dancers ...her classes at the Hartford Conservatory in Connecticut made me always feel as though ballet were something to be grappled with and worked out on an individual as well as collective basis. She had a rare gift for encouraging discussion and critical thinking during class without ever losing the pace of the lesson. Her autobiography, "What I did to Dance," is still available through her second cousin, Phil de Anguera in Lakewood, New Jersey.

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