

THE DIRECTOR'S VISION

"I didn't want to make a salacious 'personal life' documentary, as I truly believed that Natalia's real life revolved primarily around working on dance itself, so I felt the film needed to be a serious, grown-up look at the process of creating dance through her eyes...and feet!

The film follows Natalia for a year in her life, observing her at work on Royal Ballet productions as well as other, more contemporary dance, dance-theatre and modern ballet pieces. It centers around the creation and performance of a thrilling new modern ballet *Mother* based on a tale by Hans Christian Andersen and choreographed by Arthur Pita. We followed closely the whole process, observing them working together, and also with fellow dancer Jonathan Goddard, as they improvise and collaborate to bring this beautiful but dark fable to life.



The film also explores Natalia's rich dance history through wonderful clips and never-before granted access to her personal archive. These include her dancing as a child aged five in Moscow, through the Mikhail Lavrosky ballet school and Moscow State Academy, as well as highlights from her career at the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow, at the American Ballet Theatre in New York and at Covent Garden in London.

From there we present moments from her current life at the Royal Ballet, including rehearsals with the legendary Natalia Makarova, as Osipova took on the challenge of dancing both female roles in *La Bayadere*. We also filmed rehearsals of a new ballet by Belgium's star choreographer, the dynamic Sidi Larbi Cerkaoui, which he created in close collaboration with Natalia. My aim in all this was to fight my way into these rehearsals with two cameras and get as close to the action as possible. When Natalia crashed into me (as second cameraman) while dancing with her partner Jason, I finally realized I'd probably succeeded in getting as close to the rehearsal process as was possible to go without actually injuring the dancer!

The audience hopefully gains through the documentary a unique insight into what it takes to be a prima ballerina and highly successful soloist in many different mediums of dance. Natalia's personality and determination to succeed in whatever form of dance she undertakes shines through, and in her candor and openness we are afforded a real opportunity to understand how new works are conceived and brought to the stage.

Natalia was amazingly generous in letting us observe her dance work so closely, saying that she is so focussed on dancing that she isn't that aware of the cameras, but I am certain that it was an added pressure for her, so am deeply grateful for the unique opportunity to achieve this."

[Words by Gerry Fox]

ABOUT DANCER/BALLERINA NATALIA OSIPOVA

Natalia Osipova is a Russian ballerina currently performing as a principal dancer with The Royal Ballet in London. At the age of 18, she joined the Bolshoi Ballet as a member of the corps de ballet. After leaving the Bolshoi in 2011, she joined American Ballet Theatre as a guest dancer for their Metropolitan Opera House season. In December 2011, she joined the Mikhailovsky Ballet. On 8 April 2013, it was announced that Osipova would join The Royal Ballet as a principal dancer, having previously danced as a guest artist in *Swan Lake*. She debuted on 21 November 2013, in *Romeo and Juliet*, partnered by Carlos Acosta. She has also danced in *The Nutcracker* and *Giselle* (among countless others) with Acosta and Federico Bonelli.



Natalia Osipova and Gerry Fox

ABOUT DIRECTOR GERRY FOX

Gerry Fox is an artist and filmmaker who has won major awards throughout his career for his films about the world's leading contemporary artists including, Claes Oldenburg, Christian Boltanski, Marc Quinn, Gerhard Richter, Robert Frank, Bill Viola and most recently, Natalia Osipova. His awards include the BAFTA, The Royal Television Society Best Arts Film, The Grierson Best Arts Documentary, The Grand Prize at The Festival of Films on Art in Montreal and The Prix Italia. All these films were shown nationally in the UK on ITV's longstanding arts series, *The South Bank Show* and internationally on public and cable television, and in major film festivals and cinemas. In recent years he started making large-scale, multi-screen site specific film installation works that have received wide public attention and critical acclaim.

ABOUT STAGE RUSSIA

Stage Russia films productions performed by the most renowned theatre companies across the Russian Federation and distributes them in HD into cinemas across the globe. Recently this has been expanded to include documentary and art films relevant to Russian life and culture. For more information on the project, including past, present and future works, please visit www.stagerussia.com.