



Swan: The Life and Dance of Anna Pavlova

By Laurel Snyder



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"Spare, poetic words sit as lightly as snowflakes."--Wall Street Journal



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"An enchanting glimpse of a dancer whose name has come to be synonymous with her most famous role."--School Library Journal, starred review

One night, young Anna's mother takes her to the ballet, and everything is changed. So begins the journey of a girl who will one day grow up to be the most famous prima ballerina of all time, inspiring legions of dancers after her: the brave, the generous, the transcendently gifted Anna Pavlova. *Swan: The Life and Dance of Anna Pavlova* is a heartbreakingly beautiful picture book biography perfect for aspiring ballerinas of all ages.



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Swan: The Life and Dance of Anna Pavlova By Laurel Snyder Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #47293 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 2015-08-18
- Released on: 2015-08-18
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 12.38" h x .50" w x 9.38" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 52 pages

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 1-4—This tall, graceful picture book captures the artistic spirit, if not the entire biography, of one of the world's prima ballerinas. Pavlova's humble beginnings and early life in 19th-century tsarist Russia are merely hinted at, though spelled out more fully in an appended author's note. The spare, lyrical text instead offers imagery that is more poetic than concrete. For example, when the curtain rises on Pavlova: "She steps onto the stage alone.../and sprouts white wings, a swan./She weaves the notes, the very air/into a story.../Anna is a bird in flight,/a whim of wind and water./Quiet feathers in a big loud world./Anna is the swan." Morstad's artwork—done in ink, gouache, graphite, pencil, and crayon—is stylized and understated, with backdrops that suggest stage sets more than landscapes or domestic scenes. On nearly every page, the lithe and lovely figure of Pavlova appears, usually in motion, always the embodiment of beauty and grace. Even her illness and death are presented in a dramatic, theatrical manner—fitting somehow for someone who lived and breathed the stage. **VERDICT** An enchanting glimpse of a dancer whose name has come to be synonymous with her most famous role.—Luann Toth, School Library Journal

Review

"In her day, Pavlova traveled the world to bring ballet to new audiences, and today this inspiring entry point brings her to new, even aspiring fans." -San Francisco Chronicle

"With beautiful, graceful illustrations and poetic text, this book captures the spirit and charm of one of history's prima ballerinas."--Parents Press

Cool Mom Picks' 10 Most Empowering Books for Girls

"Young ballet lovers will be smitten with the story."--Kirkus Reviews

"The words feel like a poem, and the artwork is outstanding. It is a seriously beautiful book."--Design Mom

"Exquisite."-The Horn Book Magazine

"Elegantly captures the meaning of Anna Pavlova's extraordinary life...inspiring."--The San Francisco Chronicle

"Captures Pavlova's essence beautifully."-Booklist

"As graceful in both visual and written line as the dancer it portrays, it is unrelenting in its depiction of work, inspiration and generosity."--Esme Codell, The Planet Esme Plan

"An enchanting glimpse of a dancer whose name has come to be synonymous with her most famous role."--School Library Journal, starred review

"A tender, delicate recounting."-Publishers Weekly

"A masterpiece."--How Does She?

About the Author

Laurel Snyder is the author of picture books, novels, and several collections of poetry. A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, she grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, where she studied ballet at the Peabody Preparatory, Caryl Maxwell Ballet, and the Cultural Arts Institute. She now lives in Atlanta, Georgia, where she continues to dance, but mostly in her kitchen.

Julie Morstad is an award-winning artist who divides her creative energy between drawing, illustration, animation, and design. She lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Users Review

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