

"CHARLATAN: A MEMOIR OF SERGEI DIAGHILEV AND THE BALLETS RUSSES"  
Radio Review on WQXR, the radio station of The New York Times, NYC

THE WORLD OF DANCE WITH FRANCIS MASON

It isn't often that a play is all about ballet, but the one-man show called *Charlatan: A Memoir of Sergei Diaghilev* that Tony Tanner has brought to the New York International Fringe Festival dramatizes the creativity of the impresario of the Ballets Russes in spellbinding detail.

This Diaghilev of Tony Tanner's is witty and sometimes wise and makes the 20-year triumph of his Ballets Russes completely comprehensible. And that's the story on *THE WORLD OF DANCE*. This is Francis Mason. aired August 17, 1997

— Mr. Tanner's

vivid descriptions beautifully capture Paris ballet premieres and famous artists. (The actor is awfully good on explanations — and demonstrations — of Nijinsky's athletic feats.) The paradox here is that a great showman must be overshadowed by the great art he promotes. As Mr. Tanner makes clear, Diaghilev is a genius on the sidelines.

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Tanner's knowledge of the subject is keen and his take on it interesting (Nijinsky was "a peasant with the vulgarity combed

out of him"; Léonide Massine had adorable ears; Chanel and Misia Sert appeared at Diaghilev's deathbed in white "like two very chic angels").

he creates a compelling character — acerb, witty, self-pitying, stoic, reverent before beauty. When he describes *Specter of the Rose*, *Petrouchka*, the mad shuffling Nijinsky, the past lights up.

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