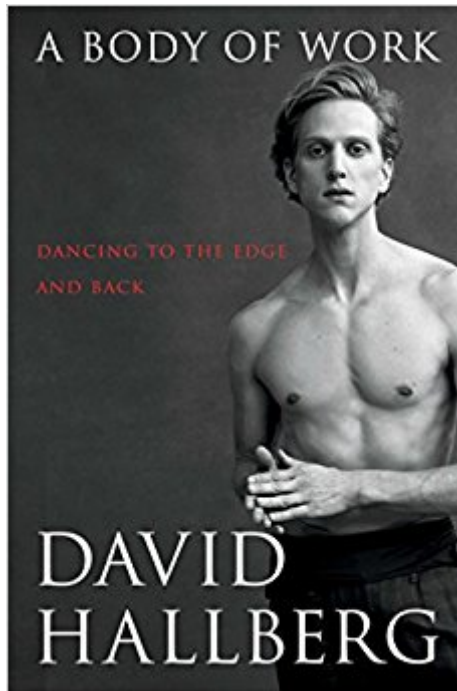




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A Body Of Work: Dancing To The Edge And Back



Synopsis

David Hallberg, the first American to join the famed Bolshoi Ballet as a principal dancer and the dazzling artist *The New York Times* described as "the foremost classical stylist of our day," presents an intimate journey through his artistic life up to the moment he returns to the stage after a devastating injury almost cost him his career. Beginning with his real-life Billy Elliot childhood "an all-American story marred by intense bullying" and culminating in his hard-won come-back, Hallberg's brave memoir dives deep into life as an artist as he wrestles with ego, pushes the limits of his body, and searches for ecstatic perfection and fulfillment as one of the world's most acclaimed ballet dancers. While rich in detail ballet fans will adore, this is a book that anyone interested in a life of creativity will love. Hallberg reflects on themes like inspiration, self-doubt, and perfectionism as he takes readers into daily class, rigorous rehearsals, and triumphant performances, searching for new interpretations of ballet's greatest roles. He reveals the loneliness he felt as a teenager leaving America to join the Paris Opera Ballet, the ambition he had to tame as a new member of American Ballet Theatre, and the reasons behind his headline-grabbing decision to be the first American to join the top rank of Bolshoi Ballet, tendered by the artistic director who would later be the victim of a vicious acid attack. Then, as Hallberg performed throughout the world at the peak of his abilities, he suffered a crippling ankle injury and unsuccessful surgery leading to an agonizing retreat from ballet and an honest reexamination of his entire life. Combining his powers of observation and memory with emotional honesty and artistic insight, Hallberg has written a great ballet memoir and an intimate portrait of an artist in all his vulnerability, passion, and wisdom.

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• (Twyla Tharp)

Born in Rapid City, South Dakota, David Hallberg began jazz and tap classes at the age of ten. He began his formal ballet training at thirteen, and in 1999 was accepted into the Paris Opera Ballet School. He joined the American Ballet Theatre in 2001 and became a principal dancer in 2006. He joined the Bolshoi Ballet as a Premier Danseur in September 2011, the first American to join the company with that title. He has performed in the world's greatest opera houses with companies including The Mariinsky Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, Teatro Colon/Buenos Aires, La Scala/Milan, The Royal Swedish Ballet, and The Australian Ballet. In 2017, Hallberg became Resident Guest Artist with the Australian Ballet. He won the Benois de la Danse Award in 2010, was a recipient of the Princess Grace Fellowship in 2002 and its Statue Award in 2014, and was given the Merging Artist Award from Americans for the Arts in 2014. He lives in New York City. *A Body of Work* is his first book.

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