



Daria Pavlenko

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Daria Pavlenko was born in Moscow on November 19, 1978. Following the example of her older sister, she went training at the Vaganova Academy in then Leningrad. She completed the full eight-year course with Olga Iskanderova and, for the last three years, with Yelena Yevteyeva. Upon graduation in June 1996, Daria Pavlenko joined the Mariinsky (Kirov) Ballet as a member of the corps de ballet.

Daria Pavlenko's career followed a more traditional path than is common in the Mariinsky Ballet, where stars are now often made overnight. In her case the daily corps de ballet work preceded the more prominent assignments. In her second season at the Kirov she began to prepare her first soloist roles, mainly under the guidance of Gabriella Komleva, one of the most distinguished ballerinas of the previous generation. In 1998 Pavlenko danced Maria in Zakharov's dram-ballet *Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, the Lilac Fairy in the old Konstantin Sergeyev production of *The Sleeping Beauty*, and Gamzatti in *La Bayadère*. At the end of that year she was also cast in Alexei Ratmansky's challenging *Middle Duet* with Islom Baimuradov. In April 1999 Pavlenko was selected to dance the 3rd Act of *The Sleeping Beauty* in the Gala evening dedicated to her repetiteur Gabriella Komleva.

In her fourth season Daria Pavlenko, now a soloist, made her debut as Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake* and danced the second ballerina role in *Rubies*. During the large-scale Summer engagement in London's Covent Garden in June 2000, she particularly distinguished herself by accepting and learning the lead in Balanchine's *Diamonds* in less than a day. By also learning *Emeralds* later that year, Pavlenko became one of the very few ballerinas who tackles with equal success the principal parts in all three sections of *Jewels*, a rare feat that perfectly illustrates her versatility.

Pavlenko's range was even more revealed by some remarkable debuts during her fifth and sixth seasons at the Kirov. In August 2001 she danced her first *Giselle*, followed by Grigorovich's *The Legend of Love* in November, the Siren in Balanchine's *Prodigal Son* in December of that year, and *Raymonda* in January 2002.

During the second Mariinsky International Ballet Festival in March 2002, she danced the Siren to Paris Opera Ballet guest star Nicolas Le Riche's *Prodigal Son*.

In April 2002 Daria Pavlenko received a special jury award at the Golden Mask Festival (Moscow) for her performance as the Snow Queen in Simonov's *Nutcracker* and in June 2002 she was awarded the Baltika Prize "Hope" (St. Petersburg). In September 2006 she received the Positano Award "Leonid Massine" (Italy).

In October 2003 Pavlenko was invited to guest with the Royal Ballet at London's Covent Garden, dancing the role of Nikiya in Natalia Makarova's production of *La Bayadère*. Her partner was Roberto Bolle. In October 2006 she danced the title role in Maki Asami's staging of *Raymonda* with the New National Theatre Ballet in Tokyo.

Daria Pavlenko has been touring worldwide with the Mariinsky Ballet. Among her dancing partners are Danila Korsuntsev, Viktor Baranov, Igor Zelensky, Igor Kolb, Andrei Merkuriev, Alexander Kurkov, and Leonid Sarafanov. Her partners from outside the Mariinsky include Roberto Bolle (La Scala), Nicolas Le Riche (POB), Ethan Stiefel (ABT), and Nikolai Tsiskaridze (Bolshoi). In her fifth season at the Kirov she started working again with her teacher from the Vaganova Academy, Yelena Yevteyeva. In February 2004 Daria Pavlenko was promoted to principal dancer.