

PAGEANT
THEATER
MAY 31 - JUNE 6

THE WHITE CROW

FRI - SAT: 4pm and 7pm / SUN: 1pm and 4pm
MON - WED: 4pm and 7pm / THU: 4pm

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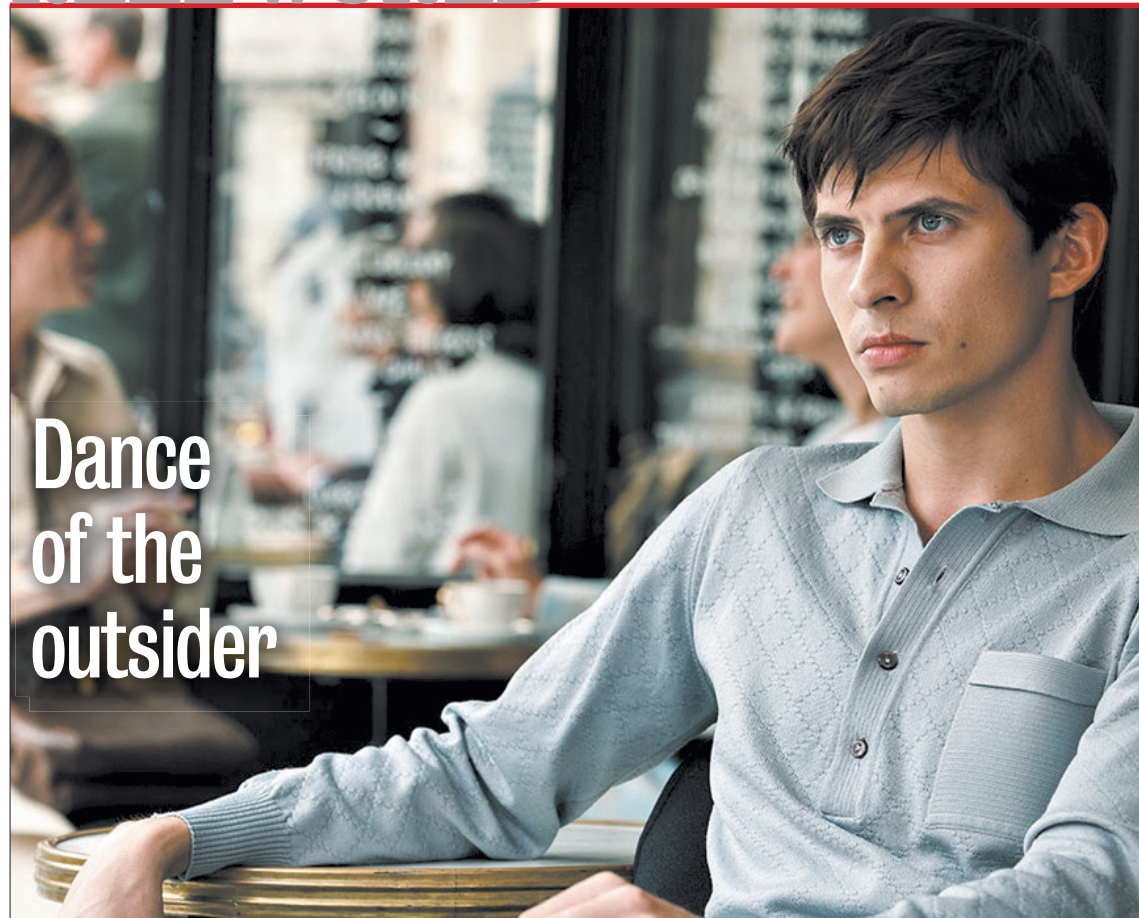
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Dance of the outsider

The early life of Russian ballet great, and defector, Rudolf Nureyev

The White Crow portrays the early years of Rudolf Nureyev, the legendary Russian ballet dancer who defected to the West in 1961. As such, it flourishes intermittently as a biopic, as a dance movie, and as a glancing slice of cross-cultural life in the Cold War era.

by
Juan-Carlos Selznick



The White Crow
Opens Friday, May 31.
Starring Oleg Ivenko, Ralph Fiennes and Adèle Exarchopoulos.
Directed by Ralph Fiennes. Pageant Theatre. Rated R.

Oleg Ivenko, a Ukrainian ballet soloist making his movie-acting debut, plays Nureyev reasonably well, but his chief value for the film as a whole is, not surprisingly, as a dancer. The strongest acting in the film turns up among supporting players in assorted pivotal stages of Nureyev's story. The script by esteemed playwright and occasional filmmaker David Hare (*Wetherby*, *The Designated Mourner*) centers on the events of 1961 when Nureyev and company are on tour in France. The portrayal of those events is interwoven with detailed flashbacks to Nureyev's childhood and to his formative stint as a ballet student in Leningrad in the 1950s.

As directed by Ralph Fiennes (who also plays a key supporting part), *The White Crow* meanders at times but maintains a steady interest even when the dramatic focus wobbles a bit. The intensity of Nureyev's artistic aspirations and individual defiance comes across

in impressive terms, but with him and others the film seems reluctant to give fuller attention to matters of psychological turmoil.

The best performance in the film comes (all too briefly) from Fiennes himself, in the role of Alexander Pushkin, Nureyev's teacher, mentor, political protector and guide. Pushkin and his wife, Xenia (Chulpan Khamatova), form a ménage a trois with the young Nureyev, and Fiennes brings a fine, lucid pathos to Pushkin's acceptance of his status, relatively speaking, as odd man out in the threesome.

Aleksey Morozov, who plays Nureyev's KGB minder, also gets a chance to show a moment or two of intriguingly mixed emotions. Adèle Exarchopoulos (*Blue Is the Warmest Color*) is a mysterious and quietly emphatic presence as the well-connected woman who facilitates Nureyev's defection in France.

And the title? A note at the start of the film tells us that "white crow (*belaya vorona*)" is a Russian idiom "used to describe a person who is unusual, extraordinary, not like others, an outsider." In the film itself, Nureyev tells a friend that "white crow" is a nickname he's had since childhood. □



Poor



Fair



Good



Very Good



Excellent