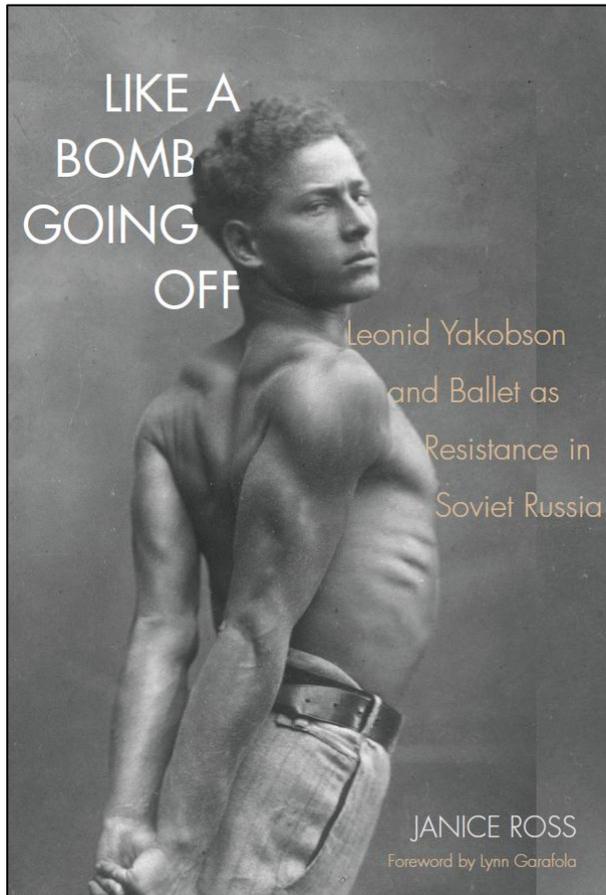


## ***Politics and Ballet Pedagogy in the USSR***

**Professor Janice Ross (Stanford University)**

Guest Lecture at Royal Academy of Dance, London  
Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2015 at 6 pm – Cormani Studio



Janice Ross's talk, which includes rare archival videos and images from her research in Russia, Israel and the U.S., traces how the ballets of Leonid Yakobson (1904-1975), the leading experimental voice in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Soviet ballet, challenged authorities at the same time as they invigorated the classical repertoire. Offering a daring alternative to socialist realist art his ballets for the dancers of the Kirov and Bolshoi opened new vistas for the young Russian stars like Mikhail Baryshnikov and Natalia Makarova. Yakobson questioned the form and content of ballet while repositioning its social relevance and retaining early twentieth-century movement innovations, such as turned-in and parallel foot positions, oddly angled lifts, and floor work, all of which challenged Soviet ballet orthodoxies. Since the fall of the USSR these same ballets have ironically become revered by Russian ballet teachers today for the students in the Vaganova Academy in St.Petersburg and are featured as essential parts of the training of Russian dancers.

Janice Ross, Professor, Theatre and Performance Studies Department, at Stanford University, is author of *Like a Bomb Going Off: Leonid Yakobson and Ballet as Resistance in Soviet Russia*, (Yale University Press January 2015). Her books include; *Anna Halprin: Experience as Dance*, (2007), *San Francisco Ballet at 75* (2007) and *Moving Lessons: Margaret H'Doubler and The Beginning of Dance in American Education*, (2001). Her awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship, Fulbright Scholar Fellowship, Stanford Humanities Center Fellowships, Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture Fellowship and the Djerassi Resident Artists Program. For 10 years she was staff dance critic for *The Oakland Tribune* and for 20 years the SF contributing editor to *Dance Magazine*. She is past president of both the international Society of Dance History Scholars and the Dance Critics Association.