

American[®]
MASTERS



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**THIRTEEN's *American Masters* Series Presents the
National Broadcast Premiere of Acclaimed Dance
Documentary *Tanaquil Le Clercq: Afternoon of a Faun*
Friday, June 20 on PBS**

Emmy-winning filmmaker Nancy Buirski spotlights Le Clercq's ballet career, struggle with polio, and influence on George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins and dance

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Of all the great ballerinas, Tanaquil Le Clercq (1929–2000), known as “Tanny,” was surely among the most transcendent. With a body unlike any before hers, she mesmerized viewers and choreographers alike as principal dancer with the New York City Ballet, and became a muse to both her husband George Balanchine and friend Jerome Robbins. Then, at age 27 and the height of her fame, Le Clercq was paralyzed by polio; she never danced again. Emmy- and Peabody-winning filmmaker Nancy Buirski (*The Loving Story*) brings Tanny's poignant story to the screen for the first time in ***American Masters — Tanaquil Le Clercq: Afternoon of a Faun***, premiering nationally Friday, June 20, 10-11:30 p.m. on PBS (check local listings, New York metro area at 9 p.m. on THIRTEEN).

To illustrate Tanny's personality, exquisite dancing and long, racehorse physique, which became the new prototype for Balanchine's ballet dancers, the film uses photos, home movies,

kinescopes and a rare recording of her voice. ***American Masters — Tanaquil Le Clercq: Afternoon of a Faun*** also features new interviews with those who knew her, including fellow New York City Ballet dancers Jacques d'Amboise and Arthur Mitchell as well as friends Randy Bourscheidt (former president of the Alliance for the Arts), Barbara Horgan (Balanchine's long-time assistant) and Pat McBride Lousada (former dancer). These first-hand stories combined with evocative music and archival footage reveal how one woman influenced an entire art form and sparked the creative imagination and adoration of two of its most prolific, renowned creators.

"Tanny was the nexus of inspiration, beauty and invention, suddenly turned into a statistic. I wanted to treat her dramatic experience as poetry and create an intimate film that captured this mood," said writer, director and producer Nancy Buirski. "I'm thrilled Tanny will join Balanchine and Robbins — the men she inspired — as 'American Masters.'"

"I'm eager for our viewers to discover Tanny and her inspiring life story," said Michael Kantor, executive producer of ***American Masters***. "Films like Nancy's are what make the series unique. Masters are not just the names you know, but the creators, performers and industry titans who leave an indelible impact on our culture."

A DVD will be available June 24 from Kino Lorber. The documentary had its world premiere at the 51st New York Film Festival and was an official selection at the 64th Berlin International Film Festival.

Launched in 1986 by series creator Susan Lacy, ***American Masters*** has earned 26 Emmy Awards — including nine for Outstanding Non-Fiction Series since 1999 and five for Outstanding Non-Fiction Special — 12 Peabodys, an Oscar, three Grammys, two Producers Guild Awards, and many other honors. Now in its 28th season on PBS, the series is a production of [THIRTEEN](#) Productions LLC for [WNET](#). WNET is the parent company of THIRTEEN and WLIW21, New York's public television stations, and operator of NJTV. For more than 50 years, THIRTEEN has been a partner with the tri-state community, using its rich resources to inform and inspire the passionate people of New York and the world to better understand and address the issues that challenge our diverse communities.

To take ***American Masters*** beyond the television broadcast and further explore the themes, stories and personalities of masters past and present, the companion website (<http://pbs.org/americanmasters>) offers streaming video of select films, interviews, photos, outtakes, essays, and other resources. ***American Masters*** is also seen on the WORLD channel, a 24/7, full-service multicast channel featuring public television's signature nonfiction documentary, science and news programming, broadcast in nearly two-thirds of the United States.

Tanaquil Le Clercq: Afternoon of a Faun is a production of Augusta Films in association with Steeplechase films and THIRTEEN Productions LLC's ***American Masters*** for WNET. Nancy Buirski is writer, director and producer. Ric Burns is producer. Damian Rodriguez is editor. Rick Rodgers is director of photography. Martin Scorsese is project advisor. Barbara Horgan is consultant. Derek Britt, Krysanne Katsoolis and Susan Lacy are executive producers. For ***American Masters***: Michael Kantor is executive producer and Stephen Segaller is executive-in-charge.

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About WNET

As New York’s flagship public media provider and the parent company of [THIRTEEN](#) and [WLIW21](#) and operator of [NJTV](#), WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than 5 million viewers each week. WNET produces and presents such acclaimed PBS series as [Nature](#), [Great Performances](#), [American Masters](#), [PBS NewsHour Weekend](#), [Charlie Rose](#) and a range of documentaries, children’s programs, and local news and cultural offerings available on air and online. Pioneers in educational programming, WNET has created such groundbreaking series as [Get the Math](#), [Oh Noah!](#) and [Cyberchase](#) and provides tools for educators that bring compelling content to life in the classroom and at home. WNET highlights the tri-state’s unique culture and diverse communities through [NYC-ARTS](#), [Reel 13](#), [NJTV News with Mike Schneider](#) and [MetroFocus](#), the multi-platform news magazine focusing on the New York region. WNET is also a leader in connecting with viewers on emerging platforms, including the [THIRTEEN Explore iPad App](#) where users can stream PBS content for free.