

American
MASTERS



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American Masters ***American Ballet Theatre: A History***

Premieres nationwide Friday, May 15, 2015 at 9 p.m. on PBS (check local listings)

Film Interviewees and Featured Dances

Film Interviewees (in alphabetical order)

Alicia Alonso, dancer, ABT (1940-1960)

Clive Barnes, dance critic, *The New York Times* (1965-1977); now deceased

Mikhail Baryshnikov, principal dancer (1974-1978) & artistic director (1980-1989), ABT (archival)

Lucia Chase, founding member & co-director (1945-1980), ABT; now deceased (archival)

Misty Copeland, dancer, ABT (2001-present); third African-American female soloist and first in two decades at ABT

Herman Cornejo, dancer, ABT (1999-present)

Agnes de Mille, choreographer, charter member, ABT; now deceased (archival)

Frederic Franklin, stager & guest artist, ABT (1997-2012); dancer; co-founder, Slavenska-Franklin Ballet; founding director, National Ballet of Washington, D.C.; now deceased

Marcelo Gomes, dancer, ABT (1997-present)

Jennifer Homans, author, *Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet*; founder and director, The Center for Ballet and the Arts at New York University

Susan Jaffe, dancer (1980-2002) & ballet master (2010-2012), ABT; co-founder, Princeton Dance & Theatre Studio; dean of dance, University of North Carolina School of the Arts

Julie Kent, dancer, ABT (1985-present); retiring in 2015

Anna Kisselgoff, dance critic, *The New York Times* (1968-2005)

Ruth Ann Koesun, dancer, ABT (1946-1969)

Irina Kolpakova, ballet mistress, ABT (1990-present)

Clinton Lockett, dancer (1992-2002) & ballet master (2006-present), ABT

Natalia Makarova, dancer, ABT & The Royal Ballet (archival)

Kevin McKenzie, artistic director (1992-present) & dancer (1979-1991), ABT

Gillian Murphy, dancer, ABT (1996-present)

Alexei Ratmansky, artist in residence, ABT (2009-present); artistic director, Bolshoi Ballet

Donald Saddler, founding member & dancer, ABT (1940-1947); choreographer; theatre director; now deceased

Lupe Serrano, dancer, ABT (1953-1971)

Hee Seo, dancer, ABT (2005-present)

Antony Tudor, choreographer; associate director (1974-1980) & choreographer emeritus (1980-1987), ABT; now deceased (archival)

Featured Dances Filmed for the Documentary (in alphabetical order)

Dark Elegies

Choreographer – Antony Tudor

Performers – Julie Kent, Michele Wiles, Paloma Herrera and Isaac Stappas

Significance – Brought to Ballet Theatre in its inaugural season, Antony Tudor's *Dark Elegies* broke new ground with its stark portrayal of a community in mourning. Often called the artistic conscious of ABT, Tudor is a cornerstone of the company and has been represented in every one of its seasons.

Everything Doesn't Happen at Once

Choreographer – Benjamin Millepied

Performer – Daniil Simkin

Significance – Created for American Ballet Theatre in 2009, this new work set to music by David Lang premiered at Avery Fischer Hall at Lincoln Center and signaled a look to the future of ballet and ABT's desire to forge the way.

Fancy Free

Choreographer – Jerome Robbins

Performers – Ethan Stiefel, Jose Manuel Carreno, Herman Cornejo, Stella Abrera, and Gillian Murphy

Significance – The first ballet by iconic American choreographer Jerome Robbins, *Fancy Free* became a sensation in 1944 and has remained a calling card for American Ballet Theatre, showcasing the virtuoso talent and spirit of the company.

Firebird

Choreographer – Alexei Ratmansky

Performers – Misty Copeland and Herman Cornejo

Significance – Inspired by a love of the score by Stravinsky, ABT artist in residence Alexei Ratmansky created his version of *Firebird* for the company in 2012. With tour de force performances from its three leading Firebirds – Isabella Boylston, Misty Copeland and Natalia Osipova – they brought Ratmansky's modern vision of this classic work to life.

Pillar of Fire

Choreographer – Antony Tudor

Performers – Gillian Murphy and Marcelo Gomes

Significance – In 1942, the first work Antony Tudor created in the United States established him as a premiere choreographer for ABT and expanded the vocabulary of ballet to include uniquely psychological themes expressed through the body.

Rodeo

Choreographer – Agnes de Mille

Performers – Xiomara Reyes, Sascha Radetsky, Kelley Boyd, and Jared Matthews

Significance – Originally created for The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, this quintessentially American work came to Ballet Theatre in 1950 where they took it on tour in Europe and have been featuring it ever since. As a choreographer, Agnes de Mille was pivotal in the formation and development of ABT, creating a specifically American vernacular that helped establish the United States as a new and important force in the international ballet community.

Romeo and Juliet

Choreographer – Kenneth MacMillan

Performers – Hee Seo and Cory Stearns

Significance – Sir Kenneth MacMillan's masterful interpretation of Shakespeare's enduring romantic tragedy has become one of ABT's signature productions. Against a sumptuous setting in Renaissance Italy, MacMillan weaves a dance tapestry rich in character nuance and sensuality. With Sergei Prokofiev's instantly recognizable score, this ballet underscores the lyric beauty and passion of this beloved work.

Le Spectre de la Rose

Choreographer – Michel Fokine

Performer – Herman Cornejo

Significance – Originally danced by Nijinsky, Herman Cornejo was nominated for the prestigious Benois de la Danse for his portrayal of The Rose in 2005. Created in 1911, Michel Fokine's choreography was noteworthy at the time for its unusual combination of virtuosity and femininity for the male dancer.

Swan Lake

Choreographer – Kevin McKenzie

Performers – Isabella Boylston, Gillian Murphy and Hee Seo

Significance – Arguably the most instantly recognizable ballet, *Swan Lake* is central to ABT's repertory and marks their continued commitment to stage full-length classical works in tandem with new work and eclectic triple bills.

Theme and Variations

Choreographer – George Balanchine

Performers – Isabella Boylston and Cory Stearns

Significance – Made for Ballet Theatre by George Balanchine in 1947 for Alicia Alonso and Igor Youskevitch, it pushed the physical boundaries of what was being asked of dancers of the time. A nod to 19th century classicism, it also harkens back to the etiquette of royal courts that serve as the structure for all ballet technique.

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