

THE  
GEORGE BALANCHINE  
FOUNDATION



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News

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**MARIA TALLCHIEF TAPES VIDEO SERIES FOR GEORGE BALANCHINE  
FOUNDATION: COACHING OF *FIREBIRD, APOLLO, AND SWAN LAKE*  
RECORDED WITH DANCERS FROM FORT WORTH DALLAS BALLET**

**Company principals Maria Terezia Balogh, Todd Edson and Maria Thomas  
featured in sessions**

**NEW YORK CITY--**Maria Tallchief, early star of the New York City Ballet and a 1996 recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors, awarded for lifetime contribution to the nation's culture, has coached further excerpts from her Balanchine repertory for the cameras of the *Interpreters Archive* of The George Balanchine Foundation, located in New York City. Taping took place the weekend of May 31, 1997, at the studios of Fort Worth Dallas Ballet, Green Oaks Road, Fort Worth.

Initiated in 1994 by the Balanchine Foundation's Director of Research Nancy Reynolds, the *Interpreters Archive* already includes several tapes of Ms. Tallchief discussing and demonstrating her great Balanchine roles, as well as programs devoted to Dame Alicia Markova, Frederic Franklin, Patricia

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Wilde and Marie-Jeanne. The Archive, conceived and directed by Ms. Reynolds, captures major performers who worked with Balanchine, teaching and discussing their roles with dancers of today.

Ms. Tallchief, working with dancers from Fort Worth Dallas Ballet, explicated the variation and pas de deux from *Firebird*, the ballet that brought her to stardom in 1949, as well as Terpsichore's variation and the Terpsichore-Apollo pas de deux from *Apollo*. Choreographed in 1928, during Balanchine's Diaghilev period, *Apollo* (originally *Apollon Musagète*) is the oldest of his ballets in current repertory. Ms. Tallchief also coached the "white" pas de deux from *Swan Lake*, as arranged for her by Balanchine in his one-act version for New York City Ballet in 1951.

Paul Mejia, Artistic Director of Fort Worth Dallas Ballet, who previously worked with Ms. Tallchief when both were co-directors of Chicago City Ballet, commented, "The documentation of the teaching of a ballet from the original performer to the next generation is of great importance in preserving the integrity of the work."

Ms. Tallchief set the choreography on principal dancers Maria Thomas and Maria Terezia Balogh, former students and protégés from Chicago, and Todd Edson. Michael Clark also participated.

Nancy Goldner, former dance critic of the Philadelphia Inquirer, who conducted interview segments with Ms. Tallchief, remarked, "By tapping the experience of such glorious artists as Maria Tallchief, this archival project insures that Balanchine's choreographic intentions survive, so that future audiences and dancers better understand his work."

Balanchine's conception and creation of *Firebird* established a new standard in American classical dancing. Maria Tallchief was the standard bearer, acclaimed for her technical brilliance, the cleanness of her movements, her daring, and aplomb. She was described by Dancing Times critic Lillian Moore as dancing the role of the Firebird "like a flame."

Ms. Tallchief first danced the role of Terpsichore in *Apollo* (considered Balanchine's earliest neoclassical masterpiece) in 1947 in Paris, where she was the first American in 100 years to perform on the stage of the Paris Opera.

When she repeated her performance with the New York City Ballet, critic Doris Hering wrote in Dance Magazine, "...never have we seen Maria Tallchief perform so resplendently. A new aura of mystery seems to have penetrated her dancing, without in the least distorting her impeccable musicality."

In the hallowed role of the Swan Queen, Ms. Tallchief was praised by Robert Sabin in Musical America, who wrote, "Tallchief danced...with such birdlike loveliness and fabulous technical ease that the sheer beauty of her performance was intoxicating."

Reflecting on the importance of the *Interpreters Archive* in capturing the recollections of dancers, Ms. Tallchief said, "I highly commend Nancy Reynolds for what she's doing to preserve Balanchine's choreography and I'm so pleased she has stepped forward to do it." Edited master tapes of previous sessions were presented this spring to the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, and copies will soon be available to research collections in libraries around the world through Dance Heritage Coalition. The project is funded by income generated by the Nancy Remick Reynolds Endowment for The George Balanchine Foundation, established by Ms. Reynolds in 1994 with a grant of \$1.5 million, and by private donors and foundations.

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## Tallchief/Fort Worth Dallas Ballet bios - June 12, 1997

MARIA TALLCHIEF began dance training in Los Angeles with Ernest Belcher (father of Marge Champion) and continued her studies under the exacting tutelage of Bronislava Nijinska. She entered the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1942 and was soon given solo roles by Balanchine and other choreographers. With New York City Ballet and its predecessor company Ballet Society, Ms. Tallchief created the ballerina roles in many of Balanchine's most important works, including: *Orpheus*, *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *Scotch Symphony*, *Pas de Dix* and *Allegro Brillante*. It was Balanchine's *Firebird* that established the reputation of the new company (New York City Ballet) and became Ms. Tallchief's signature role. Ms. Tallchief also danced with American Ballet Theatre and other troupes. From 1974 to 1987, she directed her own companies, Chicago Lyric Opera Ballet and Chicago City Ballet.

Last year, Ms. Tallchief was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame, and was a 1996 Kennedy Center Honoree. Her autobiography, *Maria Tallchief: America's Prima Ballerina* (with Larry Kaplan), was published this spring by Henry Holt.

PAUL MEJIA is celebrating his 10th anniversary as Artistic Director of Fort Worth Dallas Ballet this season. During his prior nine seasons, Mr. Mejia has added 32 works to the company's repertoire, including 15 world premieres and 16 Fort Worth premieres of his own ballets. Among the most critically acclaimed are his full-length productions of *The Nutcracker* and *Cinderella*. Other works include 11 Fort Worth premiere stagings of ballets by George Balanchine and Peter Martins, as well as 12 revivals of Balanchine and Bournonville works. Fort Worth Dallas Ballet currently has the largest active Balanchine repertoire of any ballet company its size.

Dedicated to Balanchine's artistic vision, Mr. Mejia has choreographed ballets to display the versatility of the company with such dramatic works as *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Tempest*, and such neoclassical ballets as *Serenade in A* and *For Five*. In 1993, Fort Worth Ballet expanded to become Fort Worth Dallas Ballet, performing regularly throughout Texas and touring nationally and internationally. Since 1989, renowned ballerina Suzanne Farrell has been Artistic Advisor for the Balanchine Repertoire.

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MARIA TEREZIA BALOGH came to Fort Worth Ballet in 1987 from Chicago City Ballet, where she danced under the direction of Paul Mejia and Maria Tallchief. During the past season she has performed leading roles in *Apollo*, *Cafe Victoria*, *Swan Lake Act II*, *La Valse*, and as the Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker*. Her distinctive, lithe physique has given her appearances in Paul Mejia's starkly modern settings of Stravinsky and Webern an unusual individuality.

MICHAEL CLARK joined Fort Worth Dallas Ballet in 1995 after dancing with Southern Ballet Theatre in Florida. Since his arrival, he has danced leading roles in *Concerto Barocco*, *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, and *Saraste*.

TODD EDSON, described as the company's "most visible and reliable leading male dancer," joined the Fort Worth Ballet in 1984. During his tenure he has performed many roles, including the Prince in Paul Mejia's *Cinderella* and Cavalier in *The Nutcracker*. He has also danced most of the company's Balanchine repertory, including *Apollo*, to critical acclaim.

MARIA THOMAS received her early training in Chicago under Maria Tallchief and later joined Chicago City Ballet, where she worked with Paul Mejia from 1981 to 1987. Known for her dramatic interpretations, Ms. Thomas has performed leading roles in many ballets, including *Tzigane*, *Eight by Adler* and *Cinderella*.

NANCY GOLDNER, a free-lance dance critic, began watching the New York City Ballet in 1949 and started writing about the company twenty years later in *Dance News*. She has since written dance criticism for *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Nation*, *Saturday Review*, and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, among other publications, and has lectured on dance history at various universities. In addition, she participated in a previous Balanchine Foundation archival video project, which featured Patricia Wilde, and is an editor of the multivolume International Encyclopedia of Dance, to be published by Oxford University Press in 1997.

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THE GEORGE BALANCHINE FOUNDATION was established in 1983 as an educational foundation to further the work and aesthetic of George Balanchine. With the help of the Nancy Remick Reynolds Endowment, announced in October, 1994, the Foundation has embarked on an ambitious program to retrieve Balanchine choreography no longer in current repertory and to document the reminiscences of dancers who worked directly with him in the creation of his ballets.

In February 1995, the Balanchine Foundation's Archive of Lost Choreography centered on English prima ballerina Dame Alicia Markova, then 84, who recreated her solo from Balanchine's Song of the Nightingale. Videotaping took place in London, where Dame Alicia coached a young graduate of the Royal Ballet School. Maria Tallchief's contributions to the Interpreters Archive have included taped coaching sessions on: Firebird (Berceuse), Pas de Dix, Scotch Symphony, The Four Temperaments and The Nutcracker.

Marie-Jeanne has participated in coaching sessions devoted to Apollo, Ballet Imperial and the Russian Dance from Serenade. Last spring, Patricia Wilde coached and analyzed her virtuoso roles in Square Dance and Raymonda Variations.

Under the direction of Frederic Franklin, Robert Lindgren and Sonja Tyven, the Foundation has begun the recovery of early versions of Balanchine's Mozartiana. Mr. Franklin, assisted by Maria Tallchief and Vida Brown, has also restaged for camera two pas de deux from the early version of Le Baiser de la Fée.

The Balanchine Foundation is producer of *The Balanchine Essays*, a nine-part video series examining Balanchine's approach to classical ballet technique. "Arabesque," "Passé and Attitude," and "Port de Bras and Epaulement" are now in commercial release (Nonesuch Dance Collection, "The Balanchine Library," distributed in the U.S. by WarnerVision Entertainment). In collaboration with the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library, the Foundation has added piano soundtracks to selected silent films.

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This spring, The George Balanchine Foundation Video Archive was inaugurated with a donation to the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts of edited master tapes from the Interpreters Archive and the Archive of Lost Choreography. Copies of the collection will be disseminated to libraries worldwide by Dance Heritage Coalition.

NANCY REYNOLDS danced with the New York City Ballet during the years that George Balanchine was choreographing some of his most important and popular works, including Agon, Episodes, Liebeslieder Walzer, and Stars and Stripes. Later, with a degree from Columbia University, she began a new career as an editor and author. Her first book, Repertory in Review: Forty Years of the New York City Ballet (1977), received the De la Torre Bueno prize. Dance Classics was cited by the New York Public Library as recommended reading for teenagers in 1992. Ms. Reynolds collaborated on several projects with Lincoln Kirstein, co-founder with Balanchine of the New York City Ballet. She is presently Director of Research for The George Balanchine Foundation and an editor of the multivolume International Encyclopedia of Dance, to be published by Oxford University Press in 1997. She is also writing a history of theatrical dance in the 20th century for Yale University Press.