

THE
GEORGE BALANCHINE
FOUNDATION



New York State Theater, 20 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, New York 10023

News

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212-302-7475 September 3, 1997

**TODD BOLENDER TO TAPE VIDEO SERIES FOR GEORGE BALANCHINE
FOUNDATION: COACHING OF *THE FOUR TEMPERAMENTS* WITH
NEW YORK CITY BALLET PRINCIPAL ALBERT EVANS TO BE FEATURED**

NEW YORK CITY--Todd Bolender, long-time Principal Dancer with the New York City Ballet, will coach and analyze his role in Balanchine's masterpiece, *The Four Temperaments*, for the cameras of The George Balanchine Foundation's Interpreters Archive. Taping will take place on September 15, 1997, at the Rose Building, Lincoln Center, New York.

Mr. Bolender will work with New York City Ballet Principal Dancer Albert Evans, whose repertory includes the *Phlegmatic* variation, created for Mr. Bolender by Balanchine in 1946. The taping is part of an ongoing project, initiated in 1994 by The Balanchine Foundation's Director of Research Nancy Reynolds, which captures major performers who worked with Balanchine, as they teach and discuss their roles with dancers of today.

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Ms. Reynolds will coordinate the project with dance critic Robert Greskovic, who will conduct interview segments with Mr. Bolender. Commenting on the upcoming session, Mr. Greskovic said, "After nearly 25 years of watching the beauties of *The Four Temperaments* and pondering its mysteries, it will be a special pleasure to watch Todd Bolender explore *Phlegmatic*, that fascinating riddle of a role."

The Four Temperaments, with its stimulating and completely novel dance vocabulary, has long been recognized as an artistic turning point in Balanchine's development, and has remained one of his most popular ballets with dancers and audiences alike. At its premiere in 1946, it was described by Edwin Denby as, "packed close with intricate but boldly powerful dance invention...an impersonal drama that appears to be witty, cruel, desperate and unconsoling." For Arlene Croce, writing in The New Yorker 30 years later, it was still, "a messianic work, which conveys to this day the sense of a brilliant and bold new undertaking."

Reflecting on the process of preserving Balanchine's choreography, Ms. Reynolds commented, "We are indeed fortunate to have the creator of such a seminal role eager to explore it with a dancer of today who also knows it intimately." The Interpreters Archive includes several tapes of Maria Tallchief discussing and demonstrating her great Balanchine roles, as well as programs devoted to Dame Alicia Markova, Frederic Franklin, Patricia Wilde and Marie-Jeanne. 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.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Photographs available upon request ###

TODD BOLENDER, intending to be a modern dancer, studied with Hanya Holm before enrolling at Balanchine's School of American Ballet in 1936. In 1938, while dancing in Lincoln Kirstein's Ballet Caravan, he created the role of *Alias* in the original production of Eugene Loring's *Billy the Kid*; then toured with Balanchine and American Ballet Caravan in South America in 1941. Balanchine choreographed the ever-enigmatic *Phlegmatic* variation in *The Four Temperaments* for Mr. Bolender in 1946, which was presented at the inaugural performance of Ballet Society. Later, at New York City Ballet, Mr. Bolender created a major role in Balanchine's *Agon*, as well as leading parts in several works by Jerome Robbins, including *Pied Piper*, *Fanfare*, and *The Concert* -- roles that capitalized on his unusual movement style and deft comic sense. After retiring from performing, Mr. Bolender directed companies in Cologne, Frankfurt, and Istanbul, and from 1981, the State Ballet of Missouri in Kansas City. He became Director Emeritus of that company in 1996. Throughout his career, he has also been active as a choreographer.

ALBERT EVANS joined the New York City Ballet in 1988 and was immediately given leading roles in two American Music Festival ballets: William Forsythe's *Behind the China Dogs* and Eliot Feld's *The Unanswered Question*. Since becoming Principal Dancer in 1995, he has performed in a wide variety of Balanchine ballets, including *The Four Temperaments*, *Agon*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Stravinsky Violin Concerto*. As Puck, Jennie Schulman wrote in Backstage, "[he] carried me completely out of this world. ...He managed to give the illusion of flight, and with his impeccable sense of timing in mime, he was completely the highly spirited immortal." Mr. Evans's repertory also includes works by Jerome Robbins and Peter

Martins, as well as several roles created for him in Diamond Project ballets. In Kevin O'Day's *Open Strings*, "Evans cooled the eye with liquid moves," according to Mae G. Banner in The Saratogian.

ROBERT GRESKOVIC is a teacher of dance aesthetics and history, as well as a free-lance writer and dance critic. He has been writing about dance since 1973, when he published an article about dancers in the New York City Ballet for Ballet Review. He is also the author of the forthcoming Ballet 101, to be published by Hyperion.

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.

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*, *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.

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.

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