THE
GEORGE BALANCHINE
FOUNDATION

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News

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ALICIA ALONSO TO TAPE VIDEO SERIES FOR THE GEORGE BALANCHINE FOUNDATION INTERPRETERS ARCHIVE

World-famed Cuban ballerina to coach and discuss excerpts from Balanchine's *Theme and Variations* with Paloma Herrera and Angel Corella, Principal Dancers of American Ballet Theatre

NEW YORK CITY--Alicia Alonso, General Director of the Ballet Nacional de Cuba and one of the outstanding ballerinas of our era, will coach and analyze the leading roles in Balanchine's brilliant masterwork, *Theme and Variations*, for the Interpreters Archive of The George Balanchine Foundation. Taping will commence January 29 in the rehearsal studios of the New York City Center of Music and Drama, 130 West 56th Street (between 6th & 7th Avenues).

At the time of its premiere, *Theme* was greeted as, ". . .the great master's greatest work to date. In all her repertoire (with the exception perhaps of *Giselle*), Alicia Alonso has no part that makes greater demands on her technique and style. . . and none that she dances more brilliantly." (Anatole Chujoy, Dance News)

Mme. Alonso will work with American Ballet Theatre Principal Paloma Herrera and Angel Corella, who have performed the work to great acclaim. Josefina Mendez, former ballerina and now principal Ballet Mistress

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for the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, will coordinate the coaching sessions in collaboration with Balanchine scholar Nancy Reynolds, who is Director of Research for the Foundation. The tapes will become part of The George Balanchine Foundation Video Archives, a series in which great dancers of the past, who worked directly with Balanchine on the creation of important roles, coach dancers of today.

Doris Hering, Senior Editor at Dance Magazine and a noted critic and writer, will interview Mme. Alonso about the experience of working with Balanchine and about technical and expressive matters related to performing the ballet. She recently commented, "In the autumn of 1947, American Ballet Theatre (then Ballet Theatre) commissioned George Balanchine to create a new work. Modestly entitled *Theme and Variations* (set to Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky's **Theme and Variations from Suite No. 3 in G**), it turned out to be a sparkling evocation of the 19th-century Imperial style. It also presented Alicia Alonso and Igor Youskevitch with two of the most elegant and challenging roles of their careers."

Conceived and directed by Ms. Reynolds, the Archives were initiated in 1994 with a grant of $1.5 million from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, used to establish the Nancy Remick Reynolds Endowment for The George Balanchine Foundation. They include 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,

Marie-Jeanne and Todd Bolender.

Master tapes have been donated to the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and, through a program administered by Dance Heritage Coalition, copies are being made available to research libraries worldwide. Funding for the project is provided by income generated by the endowment and by private donors and foundations.

Of the upcoming sessions, Ms. Reynolds said, "To work with Alicia Alonso is an honor and a privilege. Ever since the first performance of *Theme and Variations,* ballerinas everywhere have marveled (and despaired) at the technical prowess and speed demanded by the role. It will be fascinating to discover from Mme. Alonso how Mr. Balanchine worked with her to make such dancing possible."

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EDITORS NOTE: Photography available upon request. Under the U.S. management of ICM Artists Ltd., the Ballet Nacional de Cuba is making its first New York appearance in 19 years. Presenting a rare version of *Cinderella,* choreographed by Pedro Consuegra to music of Johann Strauss II, the company will perform at City Center January 27- February 1.

ALICIA ALONSO, General Director of the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, is a legend in the dance world. Born in Havana, she began her dance studies in 1931 at the Ballet School of the Sociedad Pro Arte Musical and later came to the United States where she continued her training. In 1940, two years after her professional debut, she joined American Ballet Theater (ABT) and from that moment on embarked on a brilliant career, working with such important choreographers as George Balanchine, Leonide Massine, Bronislava Nijinska, Antony Tudor, Jerome Robbins and Agnes de Mille.

In 1943, after several months spent recuperating from a serious eye operation, she danced her first *Giselle*, a role in which she quickly became preeminent and which later formed the cornerstone of her spectacular partnership with Igor Youskevitch. Mme. Alonso excelled in lyrical, virtuoso and dramatic roles, including *Les Sylphides, Apollo, Lilac Garden, Fall River Legend* and *Undertow*, as well as the classics.

In 1948 in Havana, she founded the Ballet Alicia Alonso, renamed the Ballet Nacional de Cuba in 1955, and has continued to inspire and guide new generations of Cuban dancers. Alicia Alonso has been given numerous awards in Cuba, as well as in many other countries, and most recently was honored by ABT on the 50th anniversary of *Theme and Variations.*

PALOMA HERRERA was born in Buenos Aires and began her ballet studies with Olga Ferri at age seven. As a young dancer, she was first prize winner at several major competitions in South America, and, at the age of 11, studied at the Minsk Ballet School in Russia before returning to Buenos Aires to dance the role of Cupid in *Don Quixote* at the Teatro Colón.

Miss Herrera was a Finalist at the Fourteenth International Ballet

Competition in Varna, Bulgaria, in 1990. After the competition, she was invited by Natalia Makarova to take class with the English National Ballet in London and by Hector Zaraspe to continue her studies at the School of American Ballet, New York. After just six months, Miss Herrera was selected to dance the leading role in *Raymonda Variations* at SAB's annual workshop performance. She joined American Ballet Theatre as a member of the corps de ballet in June, 1991, was promoted to Soloist in June, 1993, and to Principal Dancer in March, 1995.

Miss Herrera's roles with the Company include Polyhymnia in *Apollo*, Gamzatti and Nikiya in *La Bayadère*, the title role in *Cinderella*, Swanilda in *Coppélia*, Kitri in *Don Quixote*, Valencienne in *The Merry Widow*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Princess Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake*, the Waltz in *Les Sylphides*, the *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux*, and leading roles in *Americans We, Ballet Imperial, Paquita, Stepping Stones, Symphonie Concertante*, and *Theme and Variations*. She created leading roles in *How Near Heaven* and *Cruel World*.

ANGEL CORELLA was born in Madrid and began his ballet studies in Colmenar Viejo, later studying in Madrid with Victor Ullate and Karemia Moreno. In May, 1991, Mr. Corella won First Prize in the National Ballet Competition of Spain. In December, 1994, he won the Grand Prix and Gold Medal at the Concours International de Danse de Paris, dancing the pas de deux from *Don Quixote* and *Le Corsaire*.

Mr. Corella joined American Ballet Theatre as a Soloist in April, 1995 and was appointed a Principal Dancer in August, 1996. His repertoire with ABT includes Solor in *La Bayadère* (The Kingdom of the Shades), the Prince and the Jester in *Cinderella*, Franz in *Coppélia*, the pas de deux from *Le*

Corsaire, Basil in *Don Quixote,* a sailor in *Fancy Free,* Camille in *The Merrry Widow,* Cassio in *Othello,* Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet,* and leading roles in *Americans We, Ballet Imperial, A Brahms Symphony, The Leaves Are Fading, S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Stepping Stones,* the *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux, Theme and Variations,* and *Variations on 'America'.* Mr. Corella has performed at a Gala in London in the presence of Queen Elizabeth II and Princess Margaret, and at the 1996 Kennedy Center Honors. He is scheduled to dance his first Albrecht in *Giselle* this February.

DORIS HERING is currently a Senior Editor of Dance Magazine. She was the founding Executive Director of the National Association for Regional Ballet and before that was Associate Editor and Principal Critic of Dance.

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 1998. 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 create and disseminate Archives on videotape that would circulate to research facilities worldwide.

The aim of the Archives is two-fold: To gain new insight into Balanchine's choreography--and perhaps shed light on his creative process--through a close analysis of a specific work by those on whom the work was created or with whom he worked closely to prepare the role (The Interpreters Archive); and to retrieve Balanchine choreography no longer in current repertory (The Archive of Lost Choreography).

In February 1995, videotaping took place in London where English prima ballerina Dame Alicia Markova, then 84, recreated her solo from Balanchine's *Song of the Nightingale* on a young graduate of the Royal Ballet School. Maria Tallchief's contributions have included taped coaching sessons on: *Firebird, Pas de Dix, Scotch Symphony, The Four Temperaments* and *The Nutcracker.*

Marie-Jeanne has participated in coaching sessons devoted to *Apollo, Ballet Imperial* and the Russian Dance from *Serenade.* In spring 1996, 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 began 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.* Last fall, Todd Bolender discussed and demonstrated his seminal

role, the *Phlegmatic* variation from *The Four Temperaments.*

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.

Last spring, The George Balanchine Foundation Video Archive was inaugurated with a donation of edited master tapes to the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Copies of the collection will be distributed to libraries by Dance Heritage Coalition.

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