

50 ORLANDO BALLET
JORDEN MORRIS | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Reflections

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

PATRONS GUIDE



Reflections:
A film of Orlando Ballet's
50 Year History

Paul Taylor's
"Company B"

Balanchine® Ballet: Serenade
Live music by Bach Festival Society of Winter Park

bach
FESTIVAL SOCIETY OF WINTER PARK

Film sponsored by



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TOTAL MEDIA
PRODUCTIONS

September 21 – 24, 2023



About Orlando Ballet

Founded in 1974, Orlando Ballet is Central Florida's only fully residential professional ballet company. Orlando Ballet produces year-round main stage productions at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts and Harriett's Orlando Ballet Centre, featuring timeless masterpieces and innovative contemporary world premieres, achieving the highest level of professionalism and artistic excellence.

Orlando Ballet promotes dance education through community enrichment programs, performance lecture demonstrations, the renowned Orlando Ballet School, and Orlando Ballet II, a second pre-professional company to train and support dancers as they approach the start of their dance careers. For information about Orlando Ballet, please visit our website at www.OrlandoBallet.org.



Reflections: A Film of Orlando Ballet's 50-Year History

Sponsored by:



We begin with the premiere of our own anniversary film that tells a story about love for the art form and the risk-taking that helped build the organization, including missteps and victories that occurred along the way.

We've collected conversations from many of the talented artists and community leaders who were involved from the beginning while we celebrate today's highly respected professional dance company.

The version to be shared during the performance, along with a longer Director's Cut, will be available for all to experience through Orlando Ballet's YouTube channel.

Reflections: A Film of Orlando Ballet's 50-Year History

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Interviewees

Cheryl Collins
Van & Bonnie Church
Katherine Fabian
Eddy Frank Fernandez
Christopher Fleming
Heather Fryxell
Dr. Matt Gay
Natasha Glos
Linda Landman Gonzales
Eliza Harwood-Watson
Charmaine Hunter
Nancy Jacobson

Jonathan Ledden
Bruce Marks
Anamarie McGinn
Jorden Morris
Vasile Petrutiu
Valerie Raskin
Lloyd Riggins
Rick Skaggs
Russell & Phyllis Sultzbach
Lizette Valarino
Lisa Thorn Vinzant
Judy Yarmuth

Paul Taylor's "Company B"

What is "Company B"?



Dancers: Charlie Mellor, Kenna Gold, Kellie Fulton & Kate Gardinier | Photo: Zavesco Photography

"Company B" is a contemporary-style ballet created to encapsulate the 1940s time period -- the joy the country felt after the Great Depression countered by the horrors of the Second World War. The production is driven by the hit songs of the time sung by the beloved Andrews Sisters. Dancers are dressed as soldiers and bobby-soxers, characterized as carefree and happy until the war creates a shift. The choreography focuses on the tumultuous dual emotions of the 1940s as a whole. Company B is a clear and memorable example of choreographer Paul Taylor's fascination with social and global issues that are part of the human experience.

This performance marks the first time Orlando Ballet has had the opportunity to perform a Paul Taylor work. Artistic Director Jorden Morris selected one of Taylor's most important ballets for its historical significance in terms of dance and its iconic stature.

Paul Taylor's "Company B"

About the Choreographer | Paul Taylor

With 147 creative pieces, Paul Taylor's creativity knew no end. While many of his works focus on the sheer beauty of movement as it relates to space, he is best known for his artistic interest in profound human issues such as war, piety, spirituality, sexuality, morality, and mortality. The New York Times characterized Taylor as "among the great war poets" an extraordinary ranking for an artist whose work is based in movement rather than the written word.



Photo courtesy of The Guardian

In 1954, Taylor assembled a small company of dancers for whom he would choreograph, but just a year later, he joined the Martha Graham Dance Company where he remained for seven seasons. He continued to choreograph performances with his own dance company. In 1959, he was invited to perform as a guest artist with New York City Ballet, where legendary choreographer George Balanchine created a solo specifically for Taylor in Episodes. Taylor's talent and reputation ultimately propelled him to the highest levels in professional dance including working with Merce Cunningham and Twyla Tharp.

He first attracted serious attention as a choreographer in 1957 with Seven New Dances, which he designed as a study in non-movement, and which famously earned a newspaper review made up of three inches of blank space. His first major success came in 1962 for modern dance entitled Aureole. After an extraordinary career as a dancer, Taylor transitioned exclusively to choreography after retiring as a dancer in 1974, a career move that enabled a flood of masterful creativity. His work grew to be recognized for its uncommon musicality and his never-ending interest in global concerns.

Several documentary films, including Dancemaker and Creative Domain tell Taylor's remarkable story. In addition to his dance and choreography work, Taylor authored his autobiography Private Domain, as well as a Wall Street Journal Essay entitled, Why I Make Dances, along with a collection of essays called Facts and Fancies published in 2013, just five years before his death. An award-winning choreographer and dancer, the prodigious Taylor became a revered professional in the dance world and legendary work continues to inspire new generations of artists through the Paul Taylor Dance Company.

Paul Taylor's "Company B"

Pointes of Interest

Commissioned by
The Kennedy Center and Houston Ballet,
Paul Taylor's dynamic "Company B",
premiered June 20th 1991 at the Kennedy
Center and is choreographed to the beloved
boogie woogie bugle sounds of the
Andrews Sisters 1940s music group.



Dancers: Kate Gardinier & David West
Photo: Zavesco Photography

- As one of the world's greatest choreographers, Paul Taylor became interested in dance while attending Syracuse University on a swimming scholarship. He was also studying painting; he had never danced.
- His remarkable talent took him to New York City where his unique abilities and movement caught the attention of the world's most renowned choreographers including George Balanchine and Martha Graham. He eventually rose to share their echelon status in dance.
- Taylor's rise came from innovation and "instinctive talent" in contemporary dance.
- During an interview in his later years, Taylor compared his being a dancer to feeling like a "flame," adding that he just "loved to move."

Paul Taylor's "Company B"

CREDITS

Opus Number: 96

Music

Songs sung by the Andrews Sisters

Costumes

Santo Loquasto

Lighting

Jennifer Tipton

Date First Performed

June 20, 1991



Balanchine® Ballet: *Serenade*

What is *Serenade*?



Live Music by
The Bach Festival Society
of Winter Park



Choreographed by George Balanchine, *Serenade*, premiered in March 1935 at the Adelphi Theatre in New York choreographed to Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings* in C, Op. 48.

Russian-born George Balanchine's universally beloved *Serenade* offers an elegant display of highly structured movement fostered by the choreographer's renowned musicality. *Serenade*, which began an experimental choreographic venture for Balanchine, today stands as one of his most profound works and does so in quiet simplicity and elegance. When performed, *Serenade* includes 28 dancers, each gently draped in blue romantic tutus who perform four unique movements before a minimalistic backdrop of blue. There is no plot, but instead, the dancers lead the audience from the ballet's gorgeous beginning to its exquisite end with their technique married to the music and movement.

Balanchine's experimental mindset at the time, inspired his clever incorporation of rehearsal elements into the ballet, including a dancer's late arrival, another's fall, and even the gesture of one dancer trying to block the sun from her eyes – which became a most recognizable visual moment as the curtain goes up.

Characters in this ballet are not named, but they have presence and identity; Waltz Girl, Russian, and Dark Angel – roles that were originally to be performed by one dancer only until Balanchine changed his mind and split the role into three, creating more memorable moments such as when the Waltz Girl unfurls her hair.

It is Balanchine's devotion to Tchaikovsky and his own preference for precision and graceful movement that protects *Serenade* as a ballet that thrives visually and emotionally.

Balanchine® Ballet: *Serenade*

About the Choreographer | George Balanchine

Born in 1904, Balanchine moved to the United States in 1933. He began his unprecedented ballet career in early childhood as a dancer with Russia's State Theatre of Opera and Ballet. By age nine, he was dancing for the Imperial Ballet School. His work in choreography started in 1925 when he served several dance companies until ultimately being invited to start his own dance company in America with Lincoln Kirstein, an American writer and artist. Together, Kirstein and Balanchine established the School of American Ballet in 1934. Together they went on to establish New York City Ballet in 1948.

As one of the 20th century's most influential choreographers, Balanchine's repertoire is large with more than 400 ballets, including choreography he created for film, opera, revues, and musicals. His work was often characterized as eccentric, dramatic, and contemporary. Around the world today, performing the works of Balanchine translates to skill and prestige.



Photo courtesy of Pacific Northwest Ballet

Balanchine® Ballet: *Serenade*

Pointes of Interest

Ballet companies must “audition” and be approved or “certified” in order to perform Balanchine’s *Serenade*. This season’s performance marks the second time for Orlando Ballet, meaning the demanding skill level and high standards required for approval to perform this prestigious ballet were met not only in the 2017/2018 season, but now in 2023/2024 50th Anniversary season as well.

- George Balanchine’s *Serenade* was the first original work he created after coming to America. It was first performed as an experimental dance at the White Plains, New York estate of banker Felix Warburg on June 10, 1934, by students from New York City Ballet’s school, School of American Ballet.
- Every movement in this ballet is intentional and precise, including dancers’ falls, late entrances, or ordinary gestures – based on actual events and activities that occurred and which Balanchine used choreographically.
- Particular attention should be paid to how all 28 dancers hold their hands as well as how they position their arms. At the beginning of the ballet, they are seen holding their hands up and to the side, creating a specific movement Balanchine included after one of his original dance students held her hand in such a way to block the sun from her eyes during a rehearsal.
- *Serenade* is not only a cornerstone of Balanchine’s repertoire, but it was also his first full-length ballet to open in the U.S. While its first performance was put on by the School of American Ballet with Balanchine’s students in June 1934, the first professional company to perform the piece, the American Ballet, did so the following spring in March 1935. It was an instant institution in the ballet community.
- Balanchine’s affection for Tchaikovsky was well known. The choreographer once explained, “In everything that I did to Tchaikovsky’s music,” he told an interviewer, “I sensed his help. It wasn’t a real conversation. But when I was working and saw that something was coming of it, I felt that it was Tchaikovsky who had helped me.”



Photo Courtesy of New York City Ballet

Balanchine® Ballet: *Serenade*

CREDITS

Music

Serenade for Strings in C, Op. 48 (1880)

Premiere

March 1, 1935, American Ballet, Adelphi Theater, New York

Original Cast

Leda Anchutina, Holly Howard, Elise Reiman, Elena de Rivas, Sylvia Giselle (Gisella Caccialanza), Helen Leitch, Annabelle Lyon, Kathryn Mulloyny, Heidi Vosseler, Charles Laskey, Ruthanna Boris

Costumes

Jean Lurçat (1935); Candido Portinari for American Ballet Caravan (1941); uncredited (1948); Karinska (1952)

Set

Original scenery by Gaston Longchamp; performed without décor from 1941

Lighting

Jean Rosenthal (1948); Ronald Bates (1964); Mark Stanley (current production)

Run Time: 32 Minutes



Preparing to See the Ballet

What to watch for:

- Watch the athleticism of the dancers: their balance, fluidity, and strength. Look for how their costumes are designed to allow and highlight their movements.
- Sometimes choreography tells a story through arm movements, much like sign language does. What sorts of 'signs' do you see that help tell the story?
- Look at the distance between dancers on stage at certain points in the dance. Do they seem close or distant? Does it seem like their characters are working together or creating opposition to each other?
- Look at the costumes. What information do they convey about the characters?

Preparing to See the Ballet

What to listen for:

- As the music begins, listen for the mood of the piece. Think about what sorts of movements might go along with this mood. When the dancers enter, think about how their movements match (or contrast) what you imagined. Are the dancers moving to the music in an obvious way or in a way that juxtaposes the score?
- How would you describe this music in words? What clues in the music do you think the choreographer picked up on when designing this dance? Like all live performances, each ballet performance only happens once. It is a combination of the performers on stage and the audiences in front of them that make up each unique performance. For this reason, it is in the audience's best interest to be visibly and audibly attentive and appreciative – the better the audience, the better the performance on stage will be.
- During the performance: Enjoy the ballet! As part of the audience, your attendance is as essential to the ballet performance as the dancers themselves. It is very important to arrive on time or even early for the performance in order to allow enough time to settle in and focus on the show.
- Concentration: Always sit still and watch in a quiet, concentrated way. This supports the dancers so that they can do their best work on stage.
- Quiet: Auditoriums are designed to carry sound so that the performers can be heard, which also means that any sound in the audience can be heard by dancers and other audience members. Checking your phone disrupts the performance for everyone, so always ensure that phones and other electronic devices are turned off during the performance.
- Respect: By watching quietly and attentively, you show respect for the dancers. The dancers show respect for you (the audience) and for the art of dance by doing their very best work.
- Appreciation: Tell performers you enjoyed the show by clapping at the end of a particular dance (when there is a pause in the music) and at the end of the performance.