

The San Francisco Ballet Center for Dance Education

Ballet 101



Ballet

SAN FRANCISCO BALLEt
HELGI TOMASSON, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Winter 2011



Lorena Feijoo and Pascal Molat
in Forsythe's *Artifact Suite*
(© Erik Tomasson)

Cover: Tiit Helimets & Nutnaree Pipit-Suksun in
Tomsson's *Seven For Eight*
(© Erik Tomasson)

Winter 2011

Dear Ballet 101 Participant,

The San Francisco Ballet Center for Dance Education welcomes you to Ballet 101! We have designed this course so that adults who are interested in learning more about dance and San Francisco Ballet can easily access the vast knowledge that resides within our Company. Ballet 101 faculty are invited to participate based on their expertise and personal experience working at SF Ballet. We are grateful to the administrative and artistic personnel who are willing and able to teach Ballet 101 sessions.

Next to attending performances, there is no better way to learn about dance as an art form than to read! To maximize your Ballet 101 experience, we suggest that you read the materials in the Ballet 101 course book in advance of each session. In addition, there is a list of added resources we encourage you to access. While reading is important, the most important key to a fulfilling Ballet 101 experience is to attend and fully participate in each session. Great effort has been made to include interactive and/or experiential learning opportunities at each meeting.

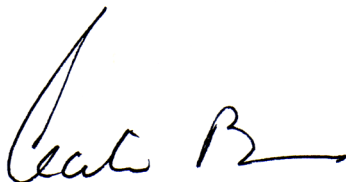
We welcome your feedback and will ask that you participate in a course evaluation at the conclusion of Ballet 101.

Thank you for your participation. We are certain your experience will be enriching and memorable.

Sincerely,



Charles McNeal
Director of Education



Cecelia Beam
Adult Education Coordinator

Ballet 101

Session 1

Monday, January 3
6-8pm

Course Introduction

Cecelia Beam, Adult Education Coordinator

Introduction to Ballet History

Claire Sheridan,, St. Mary's College

Session 2

Monday, January 10
6-8pm

Dance Technique: Basic Ballet Class

Tina LeBlanc, SF Ballet School Faculty

Nina Pinzarrone, Company Pianist

Ballet Class Debrief

Cecelia Beam with Tina LeBlanc

Session 3

Monday, January 24
6-8pm

San Francisco Ballet Trainee Coaching

Lola de Avila, Associate Director
SF Ballet School

Trainee Coaching Session and Q & A

Costume Shop Tour

Nancy Endy, Costume Production Coordinator

Session 4

Monday, January 31
6-8pm

Repertory Analysis: *Coppélia*

Mary Wood, Guest Lecturer

Bruce Sansom, Ballet Master and

Assistant to the Artistic Director

Course Evaluations

Session 5

Sunday, February 6
10am-noon
Monday, February 7
6-8pm

Opera House Tour

Dennis Hudson, Former Master Electrician

Ballet 101

FACULTY 2011

Cecelia Beam, Adult Education Coordinator

Cecelia Beam holds an M.A. in Ballet from Indiana University and has taught ballet technique and dance education classes in colleges and private schools for over 25 years. Under the auspices of the Ford Foundation, she received her early ballet training in the Bay Area, and then trained at The School of American Ballet, graduating high school from the North Carolina School of the Arts. Cecelia's performance career included both classical and original contemporary works in regional ballet companies. Since 2004, Cecelia has coordinated the San Francisco Ballet Center for Dance Education Adult Education programs including, the Pointes of View Lecture Series, Meet the Artist Interviews, the Visiting Scholar Program and Ballet 101. In addition, Cecelia has been active as a dance advocate and served as a board member of Dancers' Group, a San Francisco Bay Area dance service organization.

Lola de Avila, Associate Director Ballet School

See Lola's biography in Session 3.

Nancy Endy, Costume Production Coordinator

Nancy Endy received her B.A. in Theatrical Production from San Francisco State University in 1981. Throughout the 1980s, Nancy performed and choreographed dance in the Bay Area, making her own costumes, and, in 1989, she moved to Los Angeles where she began her career as a professional costumer. Nancy served as costume supervisor for Pasadena Playhouse and Westwood Playhouse and toured with Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca. In 1994, Nancy began working at San Francisco Ballet. She enjoys the unique challenges of designing and constructing beautiful, yet functional, costumes for dance.

Dennis Hudson, Former Master Electrician

Dennis Hudson was employed at the War Memorial Opera House for 35 years and retired as Master Electrician in 2009. Dennis participated in many remodels and upgrades of the Opera House and is very familiar with its rich history and complex structure. We are very fortunate to have Dennis return to give Ballet 101 students his unique and thorough tour of the War Memorial Opera House.

Tina LeBlanc, SF Ballet School Faculty

Tina LeBlanc trained at Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet and went on to dance with Joffrey II and The Joffrey Ballet before joining San Francisco Ballet as a principal dancer in 1992. Her repertory included leading roles in Helgi Tomasson's *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Nutcracker*, and in Tomasson/Possokhov's *Don Quixote*. Tina created roles in works by Tomasson, David Bintley, Mark Morris, and Christopher Weeldon and performed in works by George Balanchine, William Forsythe, and Jerome Robbins, among others. Her honors include two Isadora Duncan Dance Awards and the Princess Grace Statuette Award. In 2009, Tina retired from SF Ballet and joined the faculty of the SF Ballet School.

Ballet 101

FACULTY 2011, cont'd

Nina Vacketta Pinzarrone, Company Pianist

An Illinois native, Nina joined San Francisco Ballet as a company pianist in July 1992. Trained as a concert pianist, Nina was drawn into the dance world in 1973 when she began accompanying at the National Academy of Dance in Champaign, Illinois. In 1974, she moved to Toronto and joined the music staff of the National Ballet School as an accompanist and music instructor. During her 18-year tenure in Toronto, she performed as piano accompanist for both theatrical dance recitals and television specials. In addition to SF Ballet and the National Ballet School, Nina has accompanied the Dutch National Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, and others. Nina has created and taught several dance-related courses and seminars. Nina received her B.A. and M.A. degrees in piano performance from the University of Illinois, where she studied with the noted forte pianist Malcolm Bilson. Since 1998, she has released four CDs under the Dancing Notes label.

Bruce Sansom, Ballet Master and Assistant to the Artistic Director

See Bruce's biography in Session 4.

Claire Sheridan

Claire Sheridan is on the faculty at Saint Mary's College of California. She established the dance program there and is the founder of LEAP, a national Bachelor of Arts degree program specifically designed for professional dancers, including many dancers from San Francisco Ballet. Claire also has extensive international experience as a teacher and choreographer at The Saint Petersburg Conservatory (Russia), Cambridge University (England), Charles University (Prague), and at academies and colleges in Japan, Germany, Switzerland, Bosnia, and the Ukraine. Most recently she lectured on the art of classical ballet as a Visiting Professor at the Indian Institute of Science (Center for Contemporary Studies) in Bangalore, India.

Mary Wood

A native of Washington State, Mary Wood received a BFA from the University of Utah, and performed for nine years with Ballet West under the Directorship of Willam Christensen. After relocating to San Francisco in 1975, she taught children's and adult ballet technique and ballet history at the San Francisco Ballet School, pioneered the Dance in Schools program, and was the principal lecturer for community outreach efforts during the 1980's. She has moderated the Pointes of View programs since 1986 and the Meet the Artist Interviews since 1995, and continues as a guest lecturer of ballet history for Ballet 101.

Session 1



Hansuke Yamamoto in Possokhov's *Classical Symphony*
(© Erik Tomasson)

Ballet Timeline

1661 Louis XIV (Sun King) founds the Academic Royale de la Musique, later the Paris Opera Ballet.

1789 Jean Dauberval produces *La Fille Mal Gardée*, making it the oldest ballet extant in modern-day repertoire.

1828 Marie Taglioni makes her debut at the Paris Opera, dancing for the first time on pointe.

1890s Marius Petipa (1818-1910) choreographs the great classics of ballet, including *Sleeping Beauty* (1890), *Swan Lake* (1895) with Lev Ivanov, and *Raymonda* (1898).



2.

1909 Diaghilev's Ballets Russes holds its first Paris season at the Théâtre du Châtelet.

1933 Adolph Bolm, former partner of Anna Pavlova, forms the San Francisco Opera Ballet. Willam Christensen joins the Company as ballet master in 1938 and produces the first American versions of *Coppelia*, *Nutcracker*, and *Swan Lake*. Brothers Lew and Harold later join him to direct, respectively, the Company and its school.



4.

1940 Ballet Theatre (later American Ballet Theatre) gives its first season.

1948 George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein found New York City Ballet.

1954 Robert Joffrey (1930-88) founds the Robert Joffrey Theater Ballet, now Joffrey Ballet of Chicago.

1600

1653 Louis XIV dances the Sun God in *Le Ballet de la Nuit*. His teacher, Pierre Beauchamps, formalizes the terms we use in ballet vocabulary today.



1.

1700

1726-1727 Marie Camargo and her rival Marie Salle make debuts in London. Camargo shortens her skirt to show her feet, paving the way for the modern tutu.

1800

1841 *Giselle* is choreographed by Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot, starring Carlotta Grisi.



3.

1912 Vaslav Nijinsky premieres his controversial *L'Après midi d'un Faune* for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in Paris.

1900

1915 Anna Pavlova premieres *California Poppy* in San Francisco.

1938 Eugene Loring choreographs and stars in *Billy the Kid* for Lincoln Kirstein's Ballet Caravan. It is the first work created by an American choreographer to represent an American theme.

1938-1962 Denham's Ballets Russes and Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo tour America and create a national audience for dance.

1960s-1970s Defections of former Kirov Ballet stars such as Rudolf Nureyev (1938-95), who defects in 1961; Natalia Makarova, in 1971; and Mikhail Baryshnikov, in 1974, bring new excitement to classical ballet in Europe and America.



5.

1950

1978 Jiri Kylian becomes director of Nederlands Dans Theater, putting it on the international map with his landmark contemporary ballet *Sinfonietta*.

2000

2008 San Francisco Ballet celebrates its 75th anniversary as America's oldest professional ballet company.

2008

1. Louis XIV as Apollo
 2. Marius Petipa
 3. Carlotta Grisi as Giselle
 4. Lew Christensen in *Filling Station*
 © Estate of George Platt Lynes
 5. Rudolf Nureyev

History of Ballet*

The earliest precursors to ballets were lavish entertainments given in the courts of Renaissance Italy. These elaborate spectacles, which united painting, poetry, music, and dancing, took place in large halls that were used also for banquets and balls. A dance performance given in 1489 actually was performed between the courses of a banquet, and the action was closely related to the menu: For instance, the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece preceded the roast lamb. The dancers based their performance on the social dances of the day.

The Italian court ballets were further developed in France. *Le Ballet Comique de la Reine* (The Queen's Ballet Comedy), the first ballet for which a complete score survived, was performed in Paris in 1581. It was staged by Balthazar de Beaujoyeux, a violinist and dancing master at the court of Queen Catherine de Médicis. It was danced by aristocratic amateurs in a hall with the royal family on a dais at one end and spectators in galleries on three sides. Since much of the audience saw the ballet from above, the choreography emphasized the elaborate floor patterns created by lines and groups of dancers. Poetry and songs accompanied the dances.

Most French court ballets consisted of dance scenes linked by a minimum of plot. Because they were designed principally for the entertainment



Yuan Yuan Tan and Tiit Helimets in
Neumeier's *Little Mermaid*
(© Erik Tomasson)

of the aristocracy, rich costumes, scenery, and elaborate stage effects were emphasized. The proscenium stage was first adopted in France in the mid-1600s, and professional dancers made their first appearance, although they were not permitted to dance in the grand ballet that concluded the performance; this was still reserved for the king and courtiers.

The court ballet reached its peak during the reign (1643-1715) of Louis XIV, whose title the "Sun King" was derived from a role he danced in a ballet. Many of the ballets presented at his court were created by the Italian-French composer Jean Baptiste Lully and the French choreographer Pierre Beauchamp, who is said to have defined the five positions of the feet. Also during this time, the playwright Molière invented the comédie-ballet, in which danced interludes alternated with spoken scenes.

History of Ballet*

Early Professional Ballet

In 1661 Louis XIV established the Académie Royale de Danse, a professional organization for dancing masters. He himself stopped dancing in 1670, and his courtiers followed his example. By then the court ballet was already giving way to professional dancing. At first all the dancers were men, and men in masks danced women's roles. The first female dancers to perform professionally in a theater production appeared (1681) in a ballet called *Le Triomphe de l'Amour* (The Triumph of Love).

The dance technique of the period, recorded by the French ballet master Raoul Feuillet in his book *Chorégraphie* (1700), included many steps and positions recognizable today. A new theatrical form developed: the opéra-ballet, which placed equal emphasis on singing and dancing and generally consisted of a series of dances linked by a common theme. A famous opéra-ballet, by the French composer Jean Philippe Rameau, was *Les Indes galantes* (The Gallant Indies, 1735), which depicted exotic lands and peoples.

Eighteenth-century dancers were encumbered by masks, wigs or large headdresses, and heeled shoes. Women wore panniers, hoopskirts draped at the sides for fullness. Men often wore the tonnelet, a knee-length hoopskirt. The French dancer

Marie Camargo, however, shortened her skirts and adopted heelless slippers to display her sparkling jumps and beats. Her rival, Marie Sallé also broke with custom when she discarded her corset and put on Greek robes to dance in her own ballet, *Pygmalion* (1734).

During the second half of the 18th century the Paris Opéra was dominated by male dancers such as the Italian-French virtuoso Gaétan Vestris and his son Auguste Vestris, famed for his jumps and leaps. But women such as the German-born Anne Heinel, the first female dancer to do double pirouettes, also were gaining in technical proficiency.

Despite the brilliance of the French dancers, choreographers working outside Paris achieved more dramatic expression in ballet. In London the English choreographer John Weaver eliminated words and tried to convey dramatic action through dance and pantomime. In Vienna the Austrian choreographer Franz Hilverding and his Italian pupil Gasparo Angiolini experimented with dramatic themes and gestures.

The most famous 18th-century advocate of the dramatic ballet was the Frenchman Jean Georges Noverre, whose *Letters on Dancing and Ballets* (1760) influenced many choreographers both during and after his lifetime. He advised using movement that was natural and

History of Ballet*

easily understood and emphasized that all the elements of a ballet should work in harmony to express the ballet's theme. Noverre found an outlet for his ideas in Stuttgart, Germany, where he first produced his most famous ballet, *Medea and Jason* (1763).

Noverre's pupils included the Frenchman Jean Dauberval, whose ballet *La fille mal gardée* (The Ill-Guarded Girl, 1789) applied Noverre's ideas to a comic theme. Dauberval's Italian pupil Salvatore Viganó, who worked at La Scala, a theater in Milan, developed a variety of expressive pantomime performed in strict time to the music. Charles Didelot, a French student of both Noverre and Dauberval, worked mainly in London and Saint Petersburg. In Didelot's ballet *Flore et Zéphire* (1796), invisible wires helped the dancers appear to fly.

Toe dancing began to develop at about this time, although the dancers balanced on their toes only for a moment or two. Blocked toe shoes had not yet been invented, and dancers strengthened their light slippers with darning.

The Italian choreographer Carlo Blasis, a pupil of Dauberval and Viganó, recorded the dance technique of the early 19th century in his *Code of Terpsichore* (1830). He is credited with inventing the attitude, derived from a famous work by the Flemish sculptor Giambologna,

a statue of the god Mercury poised lightly on the toes of the left foot.

Romantic Ballet

The ballet *La Sylphide*, first performed in Paris in 1832, introduced the period of the romantic ballet. Marie Taglioni danced the part of the Sylphide, a supernatural creature who is loved and inadvertently destroyed by a mortal man. The choreography, created by her father, Filippo Taglioni, exploited the use of toe dancing to emphasize his daughter's otherworldly lightness and insubstantiality. *La Sylphide* inspired many changes in the ballets of the time-in theme, style, technique, and costume. Its successor, *Giselle* (1841), also contrasted the human and supernatural worlds, and in its second act the ghostly spirits called wilis wear the white tutu popularized in *La Sylphide*.

The romantic ballet was not restricted, however, to the subject of otherworldly beings. The Austrian dancer Fanny Elssler popularized a more earthy, sensuous character. Her most famous dance, the cachucha (in *Le Diable Boiteux*, 1836), was a Spanish-style solo performed with castanets, and she often performed very stylized versions of national dances.

Women dominated the romantic ballet. Although good male dancers such as the Frenchmen Jules Perrot and Arthur Saint-Léon were

*Adapted from a compilation created at Northeastern University. <http://www.ccs.neu.edu/home/yiannis/dance/history.html>

History of Ballet*

performing, they were eclipsed by ballerinas such as Taglioni, Elssler, the Italians Carlotta Grisi and Fanny Cerrito, and others.

Taglioni and Elssler danced in Russia, and Perrot and Saint-Léon created ballets there. Elssler also danced in the United States, which produced two ballerinas of its own: Augusta Maywood and Mary Ann Lee, both from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

In Paris itself, however, ballet began to decline. Poetic qualities gave way to virtuosic displays and spectacle. Male dancing was neglected. Few ballets of note were produced at the Opéra during the second half of the 19th century. An exception was *Coppélia*, choreographed by Saint-Léon in 1870, but even in it the principal male role was danced by a woman.

Denmark, however, maintained the standards of the romantic ballet. The Danish choreographer August Bournonville, who had studied in Paris, not only established a system of training but also created a large body of works, including his own version of *La Sylphide*. Many of these ballets are still performed by the Royal Danish Ballet.

Russia also preserved the integrity of the ballet during the late 19th century. A Frenchman, Marius Petipa, became the chief choreographer of the Imperial Russian Ballet. He

perfected the full-length, evening-long story ballet that combined set dances with mimed scenes. His best-known works are *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890) and *Swan Lake* (co-choreographed with the Russian Lev Ivanov), both set to commissioned scores by Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky.

20th Century

With time, Petipa's choreographic method settled into a formula. Michel Fokine called for greater expressiveness and more authenticity in choreography, scenery, and costume. He was able to realize his ideas through the Ballets Russes, a new company organized by the Russian impresario Sergei Diaghilev.

The Ballets Russes opened in Paris in 1909 and won immediate success. The male dancers, among them the Russian dancer Vaslav Nijinsky, were particularly admired because good male dancers had almost disappeared in Paris. The company presented a broad range of works, including Fokine's compactly knit one-act ballets with colorful themes from Russian or Asian folklore: *The Firebird* (1910), *Schéhérazade* (1910), and *Petrouchka* (1911). The Ballets Russes became synonymous with novelty and excitement, a reputation it maintained throughout its 20 years of existence.

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Although the most famous members of the company were Russian (among them the designers Leon Bakst and Alexandre Benois, and the composer Igor Stravinsky), Diaghilev commissioned many Western European artists and composers, such as Pablo Picasso and Maurice Ravel, to collaborate on the ballets. Diaghilev's choreographers, Fokine, Polish choreographer Branislava Nijinska, Nijinsky, Russian-born Léonide Massine, Russian-born American George Balanchine, and the Russian-born French dancer and choreographer Serge Lifar, experimented with new themes and styles of movement.

The offshoots of the Ballets Russes revitalized ballet all over the world. The Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova, who danced in its early seasons, formed her own company and toured internationally. Fokine worked with many companies, including the future American Ballet Theatre. Massine contributed to the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, a company formed after Diaghilev's death. Two former members of the Ballets Russes, the Polish-born British dancer Dame Marie Rambert and the British dancer Dame Ninette de Valois, became the founders of British ballet. Rambert's students included the British choreographers Sir Frederick Ashton, Antony Tudor, and John Cranko. De Valois founded the company that became Britain's Royal Ballet. Balanchine was invited to work in the

United States by Lincoln Kirstein, a wealthy American patron of the arts. Lifar worked at the Paris Opéra and dominated French ballet for many years.

In the 1920s and 1930s, modern dance began to be developed in the United States and Germany. The American dancers Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey, the German dancer Mary Wigman, and others broke away from traditional ballet to create their own expressive movement styles and to choreograph dances that were more closely related to actual human life. Ballets also reflected this move toward realism. In 1932 the German choreographer Kurt Jooss created *The Green Table*, an antiwar ballet. Antony Tudor developed the psychological ballet, which revealed the inner being of the characters. Modern dance also eventually extended the movement vocabulary of ballet, particularly in the use of the torso and in movements done lying or sitting on the floor.

Popular dance forms also enriched the ballet. In 1944 the American choreographer Jerome Robbins created *Fancy Free*, a ballet based on the jazz-dance style that had developed in musical comedy.

The idea of pure dance also grew in popularity. In the 1930s Massine invented the symphonic ballet, which aimed to express the musical content

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of symphonies by the German composers Ludwig Van Beethoven and Johannes Brahms. Balanchine also began to create plotless ballets in which the primary motivation was movement to music. His ballet *Jewels* (1967) is considered the first evening-length ballet of this type.

Two great American ballet companies were founded in New York City in the 1940s, American Ballet Theatre and the New York City Ballet. The latter drew many of its dancers from the School of American Ballet established by Balanchine and Kirstein in 1934. Since the mid-20th century, ballet companies have been founded in many cities throughout the United States and in Canada, among them: the National Ballet of Canada, in Toronto (1951); Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, in Montréal (1952); the Pennsylvania Ballet, in Philadelphia (1963); and the Houston Ballet (1963).

Beginning in 1956, Russian ballet companies such as the Bolshoi and Kirov performed in the West for the first time. The intense dramatic feeling and technical virtuosity of the Russians made a great impact. Russian influence on ballet continues today, both through visits from Russian companies and the activities of defecting Soviet dancers such as Rudolf Nureyev, artistic director of the Paris Opéra Ballet from 1983 to 1989; Natalia Makarova; and Mikhail Baryshnikov, director of the American

Ballet Theatre, New York City, from 1980 to 1989.

Dance in general underwent an enormous upsurge in popularity beginning in the mid-1960s. Ballet began to show the influence of a younger audience, in both themes and style. The athleticism of dancing was enjoyed in much the same way as sports, and virtuosic steps were admired for their challenge and daring. Popular music such as rock and roll and jazz was used to accompany many ballets.

Today's ballet repertoire offers great variety. New ballets and reconstructions and restagings of older ballets coexist with new works created by modern-dance choreographers for ballet companies. Choreographers experiment with both new and traditional forms and styles, and dancers constantly seek to extend their technical and dramatic range. The frequent tours of ballet companies allow audiences throughout the world to experience the full spectrum of today's ballet activity.

Selected Reading and Viewing*

General Reference

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International Dictionary of Ballet, 2 vols. Martha Bresmer, ed. Detroit/London/Washington, DC: St. James Press.

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Maria Kochetkova and Frances Chung
in Possokhov's *Classical Symphony*
(© Erik Tomasson,)

Both Sides of the Mirror: The Science and Art of Ballet, 2nd ed. Anna Paskevka. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Book.

The Bournonville School: The Daily Classes. Kristen Ralov, ed. London: Dance Books.

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The Classical Ballet: Basic Technique and Terminology. Lincoln Kirstein and Muriel Stuart. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.

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Physics and the Art of Dance: Understanding Movement. Kenneth Laws. New York: Oxford University Press.

Selected Reading and Viewing, cont'd

Ballet Health

Advice for Dancers: Emotional Counsel and Practical Strategies. Linda H. Hamilton. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dance Injuries: Their Prevention and Cure, 3rd ed. Daniel D. Arnheim. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Book.

Dance Kinesiology, 2nd ed. Sally S. Fitt. New York: Shirmer Books.

The Dancer's Foot Book: A Complete Guide to Footcare and Health for People Who Dance. Terry L. Spilken. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Book.

Fit and Well: Core Concepts and Labs in Physical Fitness and Wellness, 3rd ed. Thomas D. Fahey, Paul M. Insel, and Walton T. Roth. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Inside Ballet Technique: Separating Anatomical Fact from Fiction in the Ballet Class. Valerie Grieg. London: Dance Books.

Stretch and Strengthen. Judy Alter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Ballet Profession

Dance: The Art of Production: A Guide to Auditions, Music, Costuming, Lighting, Makeup, Programming, Management, Marketing, Fundraising, 3rd ed. John Schlaich and Betty DuPont. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Books.

Dancing: The All-in-One Guide for Dancers, Teachers, and Parents, rev. ed. Ellen Jacob. Fairfield, Conn.: Variety Arts.

How to Enjoy the Ballet. Don McDonagh. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Dolphin Books.

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Ballet and Modern Dance. Susan Au. New York: Thames & Hudson.

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Era of the Russian Ballet. Natalia Roslavleva. New York: Da Capo Press.

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Time and the Dancing Image. Deborah Jowitt. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Selected Reading and Viewing, cont'd

American Periodicals

Ballet Review: balletreview.com

Dance Chronicle: informaworld.com/smpp/
title~content=t713597243

Dance Magazine: dancemagazine.com

Dance Teacher: dance-teacher.com

Journal of Dance Medicine and Science:
iadms.org

Pointe Magazine: pointemagazine.com

Internet Sources: Ballet Video/DVD Selections

Dance Horizons: dancehorizons.com Among offerings listed: The Balanchine Library (selected choreographies and The Balanchine Essays on aspects of technique), Footnotes Series (examines the greatest ballets of all time)

The Finis Jhung Ballet: Basic Ballet Series
finisjhung.com

Kultur: kultur.com Among offerings listed: *Ballet Class for Beginners* by David Howard, *The New Ballet Workout for Wellness, Renewal and Vitality* by Melissa Lowe, *Video Dictionary of Ballet* featuring Russian, French, and Cecchetti styles.

Internet Sources: Ballet Companies

The following are just a few of the many ballet companies in America.

American Ballet Theater: abt.org

Boston Ballet: bostonballet.org

Houston Ballet: houstonballet.org

Joffrey Ballet of Chicago: joffrey.com

Miami City Ballet: miamicityballet.org

New York City Ballet: nycballet.com

Oakland Ballet: oaklandballet.org

Pacific Northwest Ballet: pnb.org

San Francisco Ballet: sfballet.org

Internet Sources: Dance Libraries and Organizations

American Dance Therapy Association:
adta.org

CORPS de Ballet International, Inc.:
corps-de-ballet.org
This professional organization is dedicated to the development, exploration, and advancement of ballet in higher education.

International Association for Dance Medicine:
iadms.org

Library of Congress: catalog.loc.gov

New York Public Library: catnyp.nypl.org

Preserve, Inc.: preserve-inc.org
The website of this organization - dedicated to "assuring dance life beyond performance" - includes listings of dance libraries, archives, and collections.

Society of Dance History Scholars: sdhs.org.
The website of the Society of Dance History Scholars, an organization dedicated to promoting study, research, discussion, performance, and publication in dance history and related fields. The site includes updated information on job opportunities, conference announcements, and awards for graduate students.

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Further Dance Resources

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San Francisco Ballet at 75. Janice Ross. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2007.

Broadcast (TV)/Video/DVD - Lar Lubovitch's *Othello*, music by Eliot Goldenthal; Emil de Cou, conductor. Co-produced by KQED (San Francisco) and WNET (New York) for the PBS series *Dance in America*, aired on June 18, 2003.

Broadcast (TV)/Video/DVD) - Helgi Tomasson's *Nutcracker*, music by P.I. Tchaikovsky; Martin West, conductor. Co-produced by KQED (San Francisco) and WNET (New York) for the PBS series *Dance in America*, aired on December 18, 2008.

CD - *Debussy Rediscovered*, Emil de Cou, conductor, Arabesque Recordings, Z6734, 1999.

CD - *Handel-Schoenberg-Spohr-Elgar: works for String Quartet and Orchestra, with the Lark String Quartet*; Jean-Louis LeRoux, conductor. Arabesque Recordings, Z6723, 1998.

CD - Suite from Lar Lubovitch's *Othello*, music by Elliot Goldenthal; Emil de Cou, conductor; Varese Sarabande recording, VSD-5942, 1998.

CD - *Nutcracker*, music by Tchaikovsky; Martin West, conductor; self-produced recording, 2007.

CD - *Nutcracker*, music by Tchaikovsky; Denis de Coteau, conductor; self-produced recording by O'Brien Enterprises, OB-101, 1988.

CD - Smuin's *The Tempest*, music by Paul Chihara; Jean-Louis LeRoux, conductor. Recording by the Moss Group. 2-record set; 2-MMG-201X, 1982. Recorded April 7, 1981.

Other Online Dance Resources

sfballetblog.org

ballet.co.uk

balletalert.com

cyberdance.com

criticaldance.com

voiceofdance.com

thewinger.com

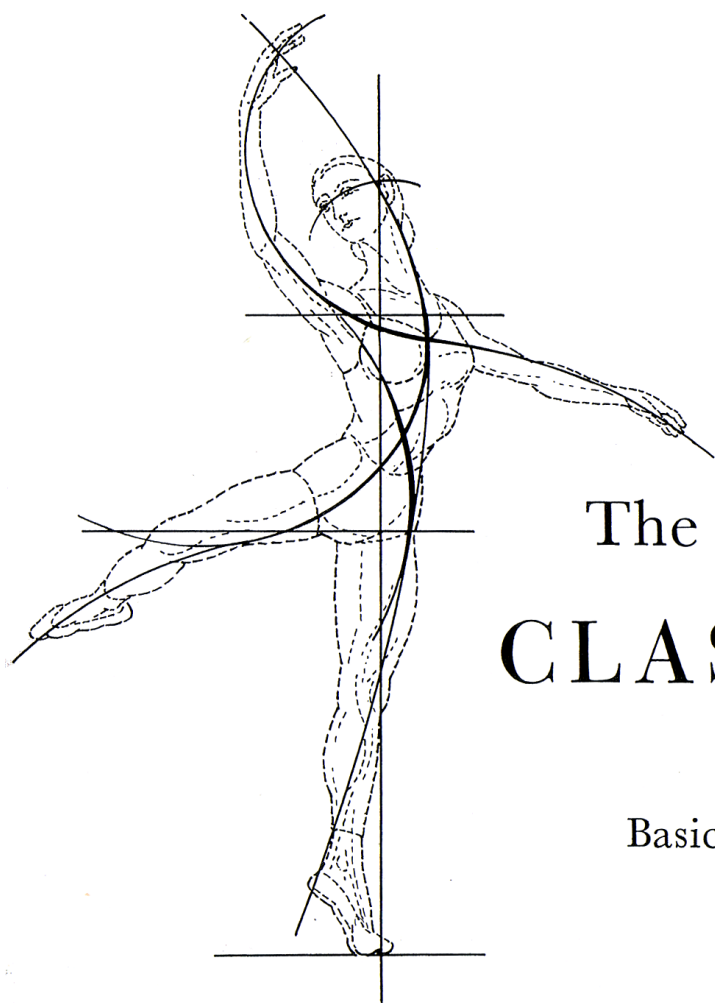
Session 2

Historical Development by Lincoln Kirstein

Descriptive Text by Muriel Stuart

Illustrations by Carlus Dyer

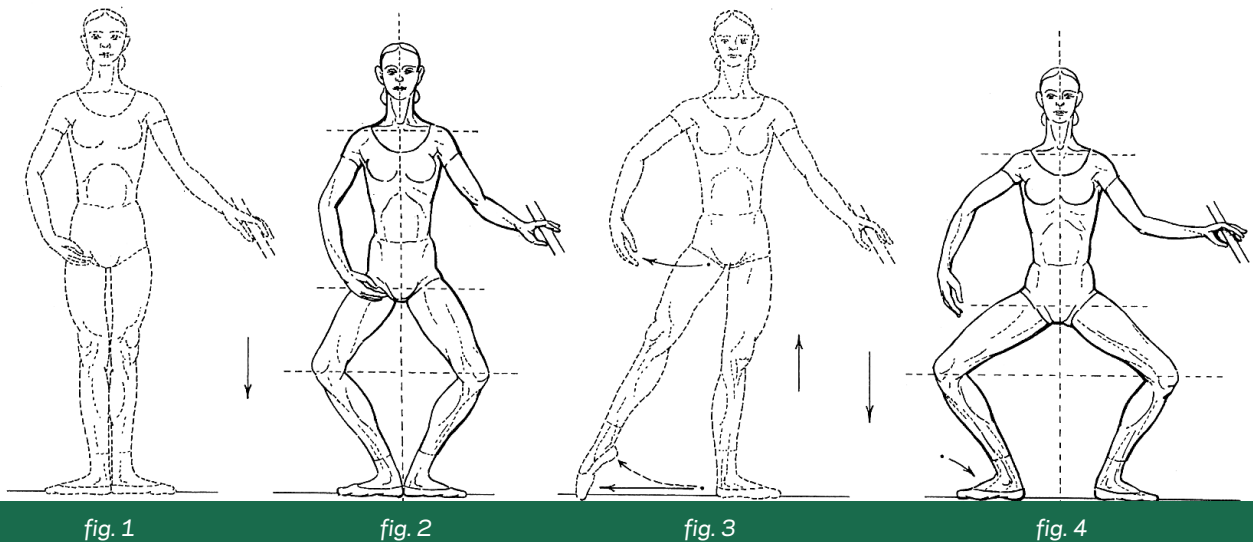
With a Preface by George Balanchine



The CLASSIC BALLET

Basic Technique and Terminology

Demi-Plié in Five Basic Positions



(Half or small bending of the knees.)

This basic exercise turns out legs and develops the tendons and muscles of thighs, calves, ankles, and feet, increasing flexibility and strength in the Achilles tendon. The spring-like action of demi-plié is essential to all jumping movements as preparation before jumping upward and upon return of feet to the floor.

EXERCISE

In 1st position: *demi-plié* is a slow, continuous bending and straightening of knees without lifting heels from floor during exercise.

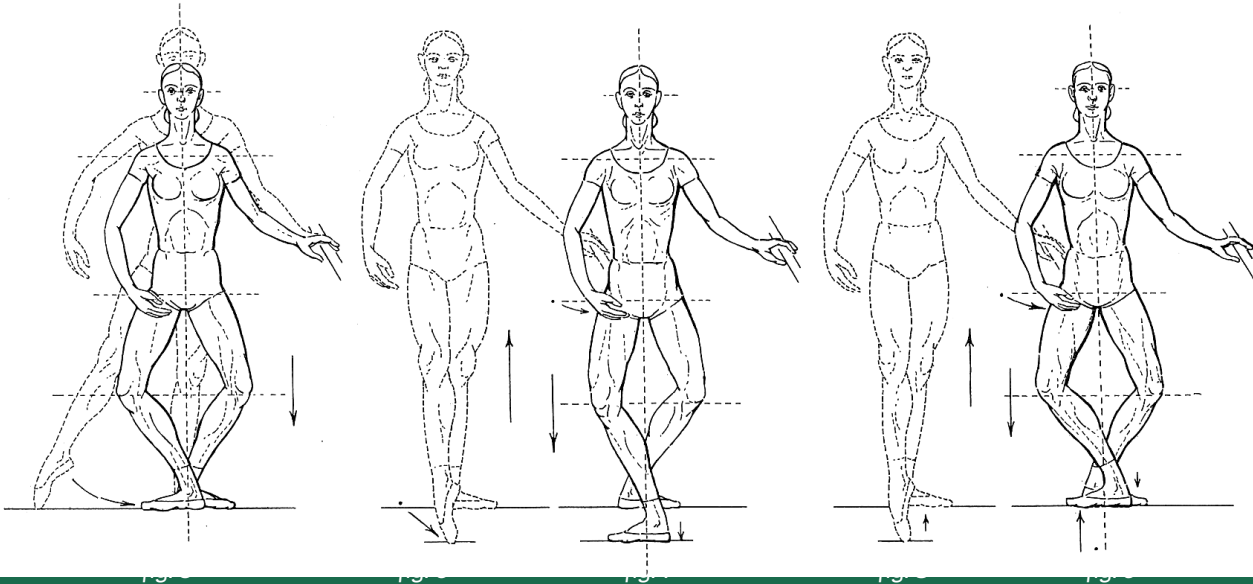
Hold torso and head erect and bend knees outward in a direct line over center of feet, straightening knees at termination of each *demi-plié* (figs. 1-2).

Execute *demi-plié* four times in all

five basic positions. Transitional movements from 1st position through the five basic positions are outlined below, demonstrating their logical development from one to the other.

Moving from 1st to 2nd position: Weight on supporting leg, slide toe of working foot on floor, heel thrust forward, in a straight line to point in 2nd position. Lower heel to floor, distributing weight equally between the feet. (Toe of working foot must keep contact with floor in moving from one position to another.) Free arm moves to side as leg slides to point. Feet are now separated by a distance of one foot (figs. 3-4).

Moving from 2nd to 3rd position: Point extended foot, shifting weight to supporting leg. Move working foot, heel thrust forward, toe on floor, in a quarter circle to point front; heel is lowered and brought forward.



In lowering heel, bring torso slightly forward to maintain balance. Move arm to side as working leg describes quarter-circle forward.

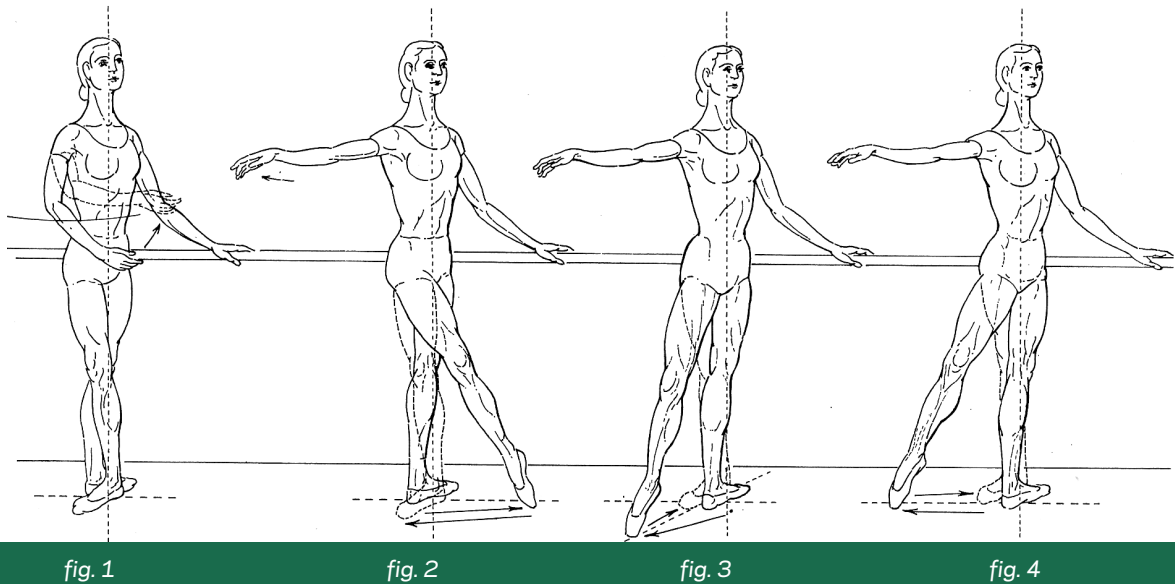
Moving from 3rd to 4th position: Keep weight on supporting leg. Slide working foot forward, heel thrust forward, toe on floor, until reaching point. Lower heel. As heel is lowered, torso is brought forward slightly to maintain balance. Move arm to side as working leg moves forward (figs. 6-7).

Moving from 4th to 5th position: Point toe of working foot, shifting weight to supporting leg. Bring foot back, toe on floor; heel brought forward directly in front of supporting foot. Move arm back to preparatory position simultaneously with working leg (figs. 8-9).

POSTURE AND MUSCULAR CONTROL

1. As body descends and knees bend there must be a slight counter-pull upward in muscles of thighs, abdomen, and buttocks. Executing *demi-plié* in 4th position, hold torso erect, slightly forward, distributing weight equally between the feet.
2. Turn knees out in direct line over feet, preventing them from bending forward. *Keep weight in center of feet, avoid pressing and rolling forward.*
3. Hold free arm down, rounded and slightly advanced from body in 1st, 3rd, and 5th positions, and down to side and slightly forward in line of vision in 2nd and 4th positions.

Battement Tendu Simple (**stretched beating**)



Strengthens and turns out legs and feet, develops insteps.

EXERCISE [From 5th position (*fig. 1*):]

Forward (fig. 2): Extend foot of working leg, toe keeping contact with floor, heel thrust forward, to maximum point in front (4th position front). Return foot, keeping heel forward, toe on floor, to firm 5th position front, both heels pressing firmly into floor.

Sideways (fig. 3): Extend foot of working leg, toe on floor, heel thrust forward, to maximum point at side (2nd position) in direct line with heel of supporting foot. Return foot, keeping heel forward, toe on floor, to firm 5th position back, both heels pressing firmly into floor.

Backward (fig. 4): Extend foot of working leg with toe leading back, heel turned forward, toe on floor,

leg well turned out from thigh to toe, to its maximum point in back (4th position back). Return foot with heel turned forward, toe on floor, to firm 5th position back, both heels pressing firmly into floor.

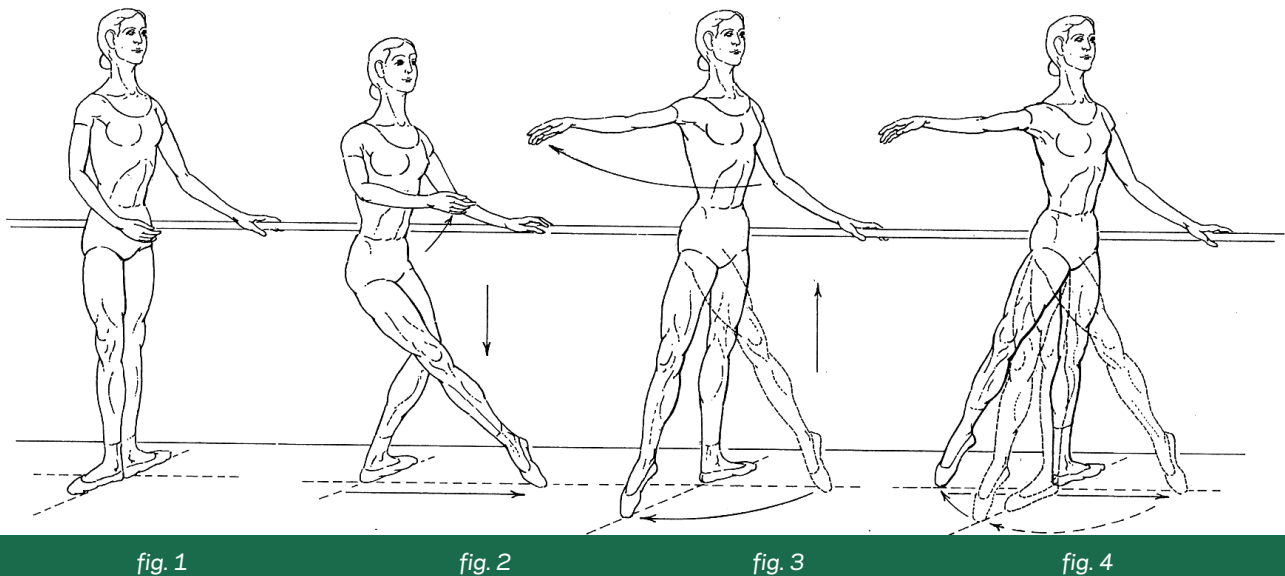
Accent movement of working foot upon return each time to 5th position.

Usually performed eight times in each direction (front, side, and back).



Frances Chung and Joan Boda in Tomasson's *Seven for Eight*
(© Erik Tomasson)

Rond de Jambe à terre



Facilitates rotary movement of legs from the hips and flexibility in ankles and insteps.

ROND DE JAMBE À TERRE EN DEHORS (outward)

Usually performed eight or sixteen times.

PREPARATION

From 1st position (*fig. 1*). Simultaneously execute *demi-plié* on supporting leg, extend working foot, toe keeping contact with floor, to point straight forward (*fig. 2*). Simultaneously straighten supporting leg and execute quarter circle to 2nd position with toe of working foot on floor (*fig. 3*).

EXERCISE: (*fig. 4*)

From 2nd position describe with pointed toe of extended leg a quarter circle to back. Move working foot

in a straight line to point forward lowering heel to floor passing through 1st position. Continue semi-circular movement with pointed toe from front to back passing each time through 1st position.

POSTURE AND MUSCULAR CONTROL

1. Hold torso erect. Weight on supporting leg throughout preparation and exercise. Keep working leg turned out, knee straight. Keep pointed toe in contact with floor throughout semi-circular movement.
2. Bring heel of straight working leg forward and lower to floor when passing each time through 1st position.
3. Accent semi-circular movement outward to back. Working leg moves continuously, toe sliding lightly over surface of floor.

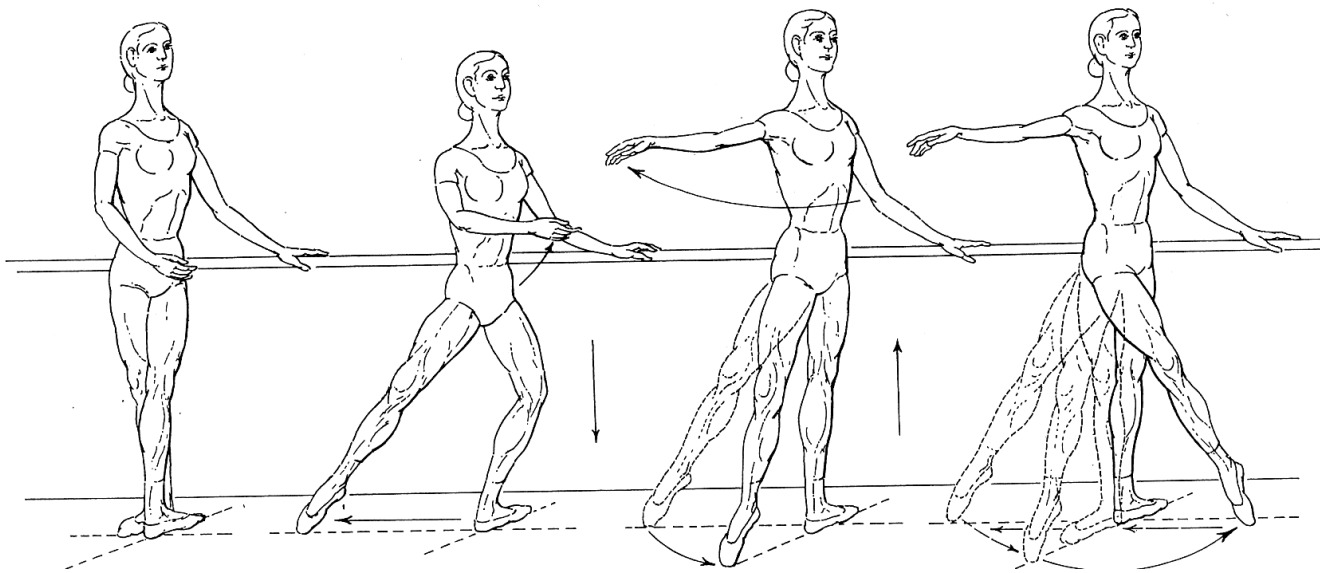


fig. 1

fig. 2

fig. 3

fig. 4

RONDE DE JAMBE À TERRE EN DEDANS (inward)

Usually performed eight or sixteen times.

PREPARATION

From 5th position (*fig. 1*). Simultaneously execute *demi-plié* on supporting leg, extend working foot, toe keeping contact with floor, to point straight back (*fig. 2*). Simultaneously straighten supporting leg and execute quarter circle to 2nd position with toe of working leg on floor (*fig. 3*).

EXERCISE: (*fig. 4*)

From 2nd position describe with pointed toe of extended leg a quarter circle to front. Move working foot in a straight line to point backward, lowering heel to floor passing through 1st position. Continue semi-circular movement with pointed toe from back to front passing each time through 1st position.

POSTURE AND MUSCULAR CONTROL

1. When extending working leg back for preparation *en dedans*, move erect torso slightly forward, hold shoulders down. Turn working leg out from thigh to toe.
2. Weight on supporting leg throughout preparation and exercise. Keep working leg turned out, knee straight. Keep pointed toe in contact with floor throughout semi-circular movement.
3. Bring heel of straight working leg forward and lower to floor when passing each time through 1st position.
4. Accent semi-circular movement *inward to front*. Working leg moves continuously, toe sliding lightly over surface of floor.

Note: Executing rond de jambe the working foot points directly in front and in back of the heel of the standing leg.

Battements Frappés (single and double)

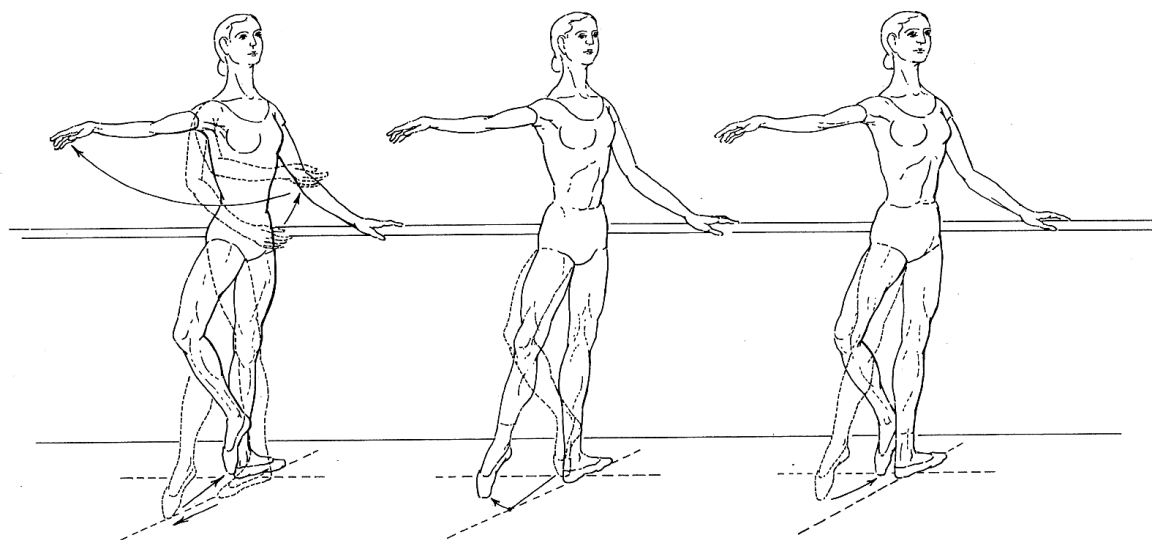


fig. 1

fig. 2

fig. 3

BATTEMENT FRAPPÉ SINGLE

From position *sur le cou-de-pied* (neck of the foot, or ankle joint)

Develops strength in legs and feet and speed in their movement.

PREPARATION

From 5th position point working foot to 2nd position and return to position *sur le cou-de-pied* front of supporting ankle (fig. 1).

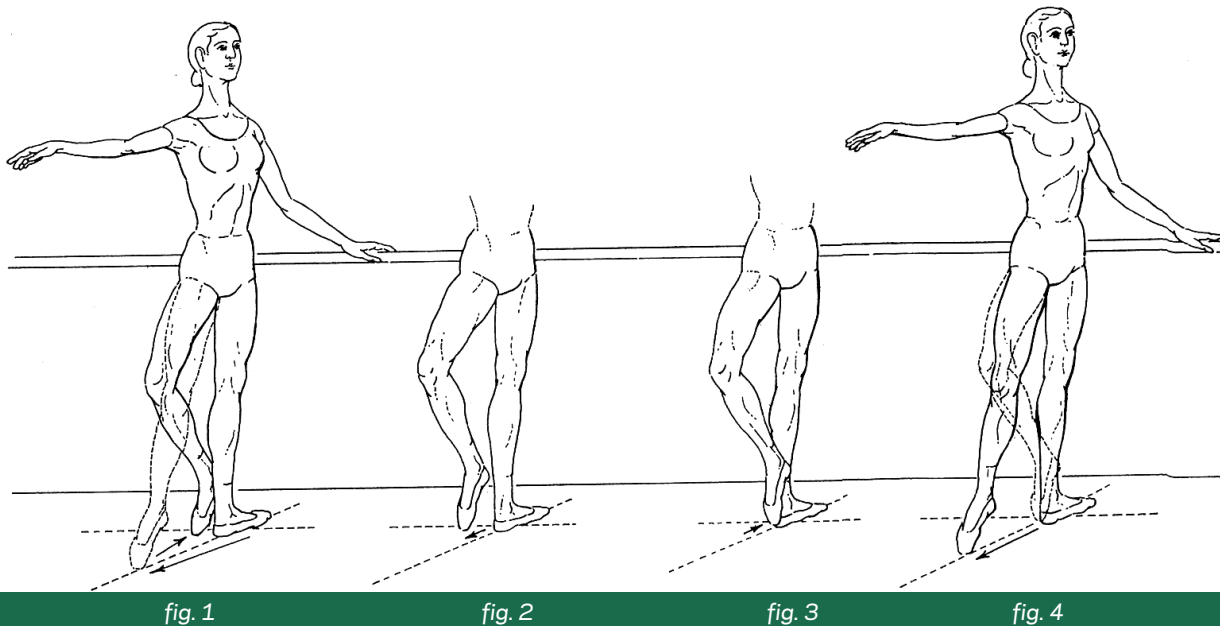
EXERCISE

Move working leg briskly sideways to maximum point. Toe strikes floor on outward movement and “ricochets” a slight distance from the surface (fig. 2). Return working foot to position

sur le cou-de-pied, back of supporting ankle. Continue movement, alternating positions *sur le cou-de-pied* front and back of supporting ankle (fig. 3). Accent movement of working leg when maximum point at side is reached.

Battement frappé may be executed with accent on the return of the working foot to position *sur le cou-de-pied* of supporting leg.

This movement is also executed forward and backward; when the leg is moving backward it is stretched to maximum from thigh to toe, in a direct line in back of the body. Usually performed twice in each direction. *Battement frappé* is also executed on the *demi-pointe (relevé)*.



BATTEMENT DOUBLE FRAPPÉ

EXERCISE

From *pointe tendue* 2nd position (fig. 1), make an additional small beating movement from position *sur le cou-de-pied* back to front (figs. 2-3), or front to back of supporting ankle before extending each time to point in second position (fig. 4). (The "beat" is a small, quick movement, foot opening slightly to side in passing from back to front or front to back of ankle.) This movement may also be executed extending working foot to point front and back.

Usually performed once to the 4th front, once to the 4th back, twice to 2nd position; this combination repeated four times and on *demi-pointes*.

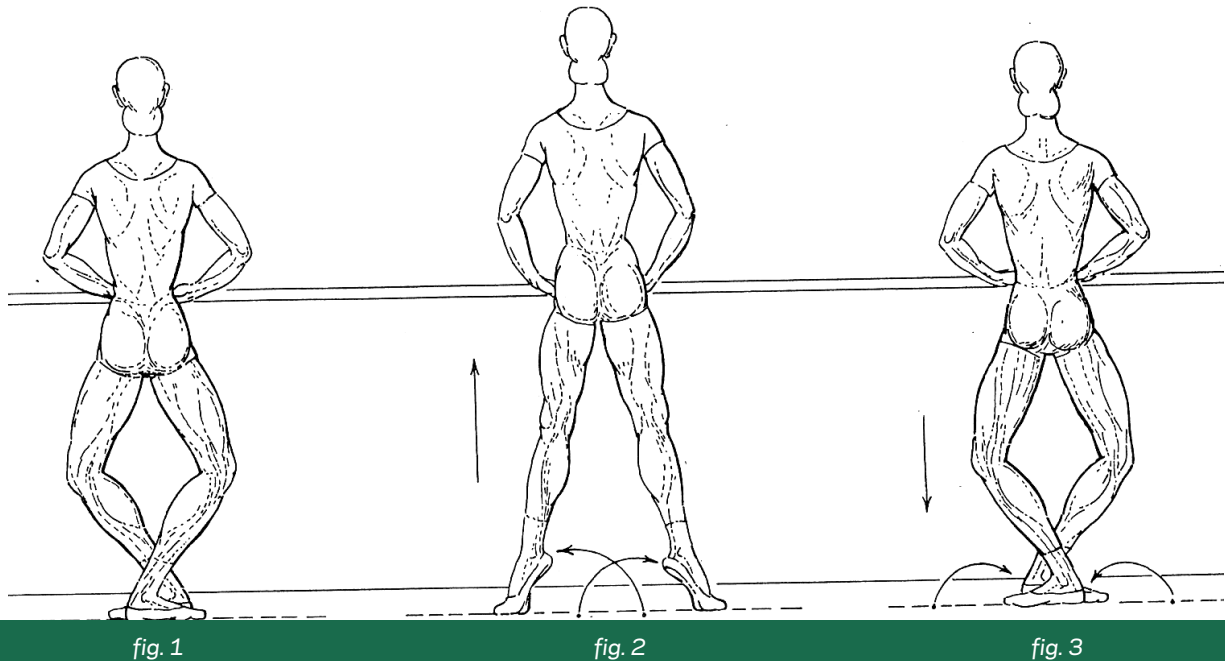
POSTURE AND MUSCULAR CONTROL

1. Weight on supporting leg, shoulders down, abdomen drawn in.
2. Position *sur le cou-de-pied front*. Bring heel well forward, foot wrapped around ankle, toe pointing down and toward back of supporting heel. Position *sur le cou-de-pied back*, bring heel forward against ankle of supporting leg, toe pointing down and away from heel (fig. 3).
3. When accenting movement outward, stretch leg to maximum from thigh to toe.
4. Keep thigh of working leg stationary, well turned outward. *Beating movement takes place from knee downwards*. When working leg is extended, straighten knee, toe fully pointed, heel forward. When returning working foot *sur le cou-de-pied*, keep knee stationary and turned outward.



Lorena Feijoo and SF Ballet corps in Balanchine's *Theme and Variations*
 (© Erik Tomasson)

Échappés (facing the bar)



Strengthens Achilles tendon, insteps, knees and thighs.

EXERCISE

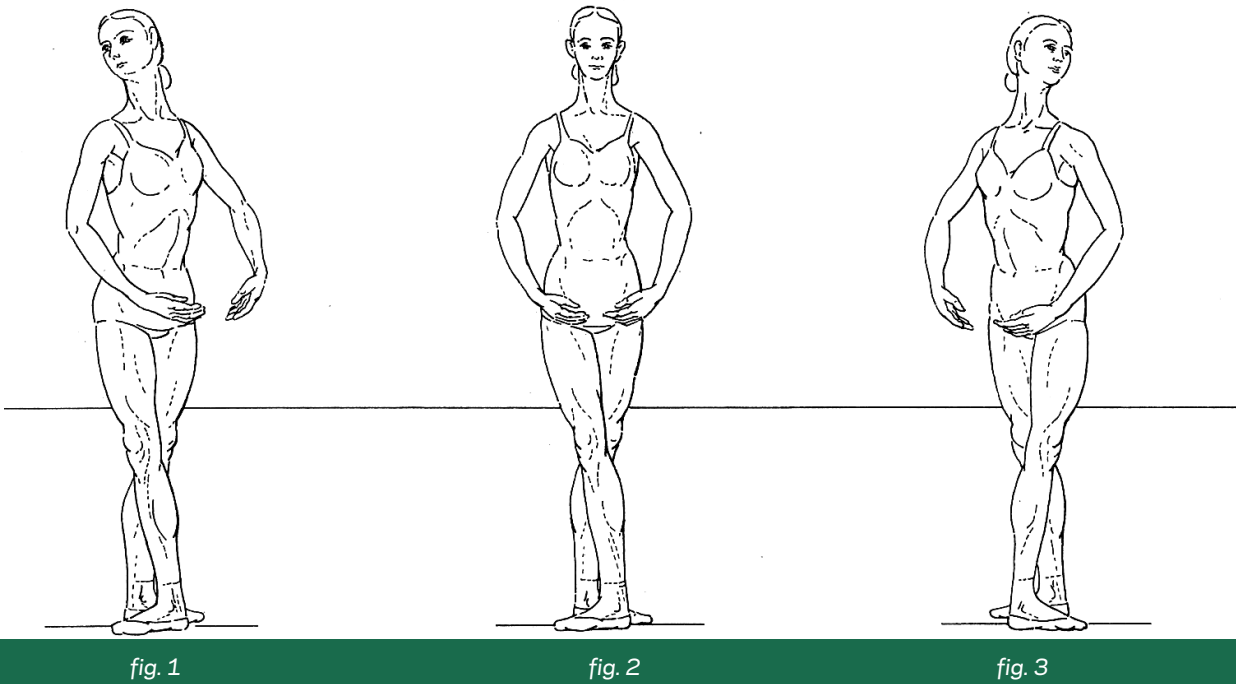
From 5th position let foot front, execute *demi-plié* (fig. 1), energetically slide both feet outward to 2nd position on to *demi-pointes* (fig. 2). Return to *demi-plié* in 5th position left foot back (fig. 3). Repeat exercise alternating position of feet in 5th position.

Usually performed eight or sixteen times.

POSTURE AND MUSCULAR CONTROL

1. Executing *demi-plié*, hold torso and head erect, shoulders down, distribute weight equally between both feet in firm 5th position, heels remaining on floor.
2. Sliding on to *demi-pointes* in 2nd position, simultaneously tighten buttocks, thighs, and knees, draw abdomen in, hold shoulders down. Turn legs outward, bring heels forward.
3. Upon each return of feet to 5th position, lower heels to floor *lightly and quickly* before repeating each *plié*, preparatory to sliding on to *demi-pointes* in 2nd position (*échappé*).

Épaulement (croisé-effacé, basic positions in the center)



Position of the shoulders in relation to head and legs is an established rule of the classic dance. The two fundamental positions are croisé and effacé. These positions are in contrast to the center figure facing straight forward, en face (fig. 2).

ÉPAULEMENT CROISÉ (5th position)

Croisé right foot front, right shoulder forward, head inclining right, body at slightly oblique angle, facing front. Arms held down and rounded, slightly advanced from body (preparatory position) (fig. 1).

Croisé left foot front, left shoulder forward, head inclining left (fig. 3).

Épaulement (croisé-effacé, basic positions in the center)

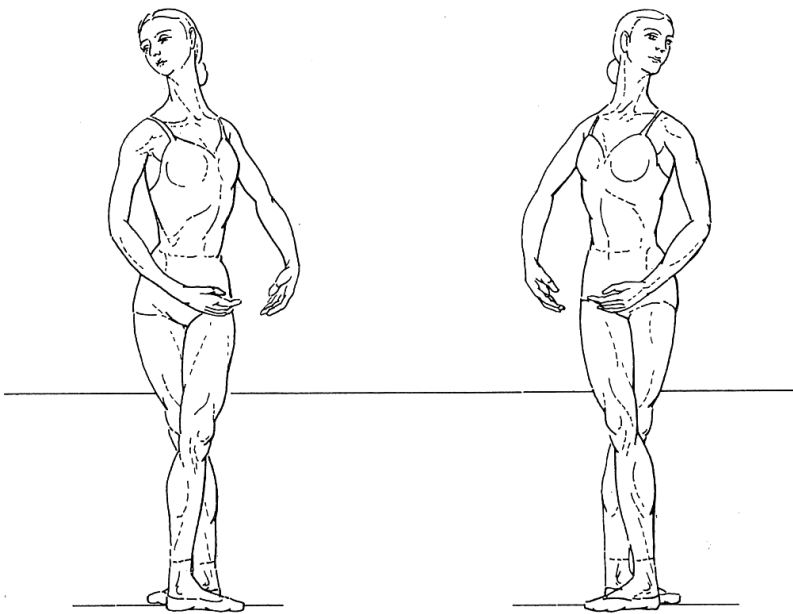


fig. 4

fig. 5

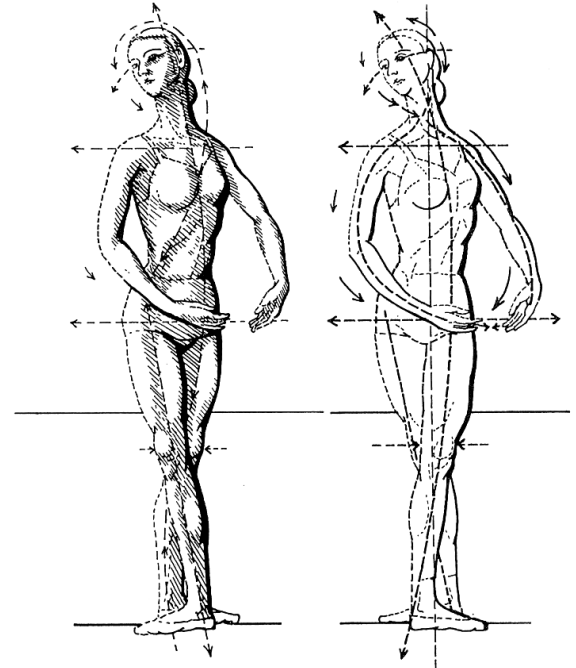


fig. 6

ÉPAULEMENT ÉFFACÉ (5th position)

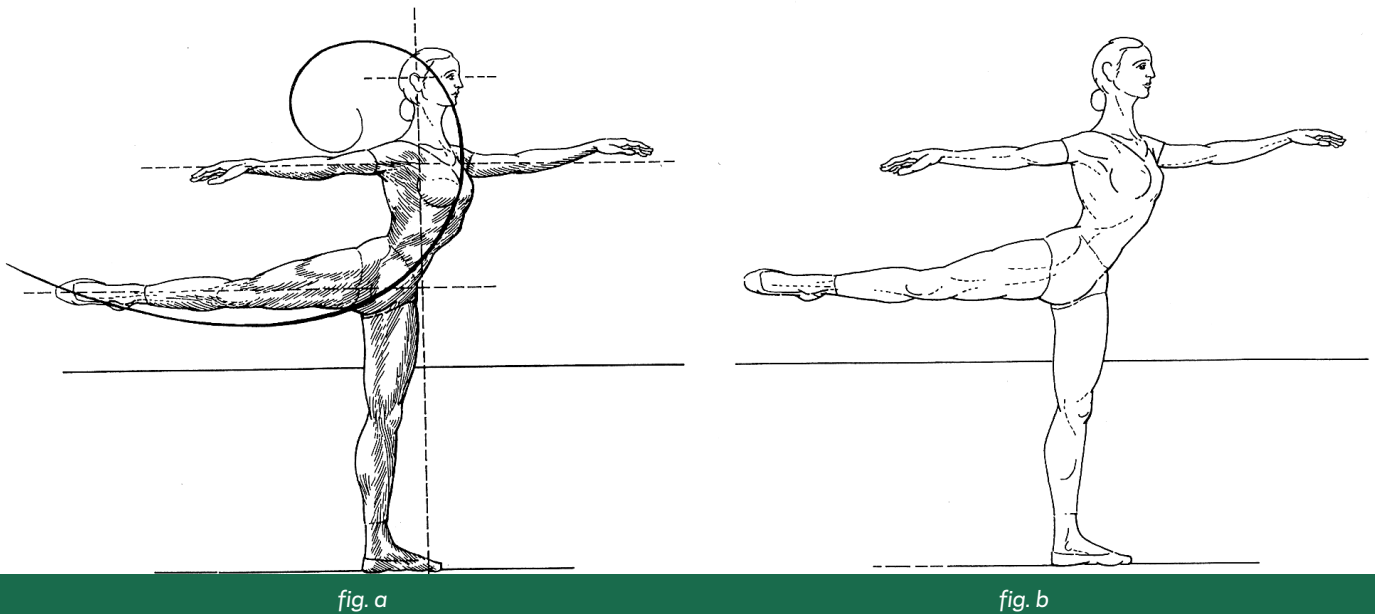
Effacé left foot front, right shoulder forward, head inclining to right (fig. 4).

Effacé right foot front, left shoulder forward, head inclining left, body at slightly oblique angle, facing front. Arms held down and rounded, slightly advanced from body (fig. 5).

POSTURE AND MUSCULAR CONTROL

Hold torso erect, draw abdomen in, and tighten buttocks to facilitate stability and balance; turn out legs from thighs to feet. Hold shoulders down, lift diaphragm, hold arms rounded and free from strain. Relax neck.

Arabesques (Cecchetti Method)*



All these positions can be executed with the heel of the supporting foot on the ground, plié, on demi-pointe (relevé) and by the danseuse on pointe.

1ST ARABESQUE (fig. b)

Standing on left leg, with right leg extended straight back in the air 90 degrees, hold torso forward from the waist with back well arched, hips and shoulders in one line, facing forward, shoulders held down. Head faces extended left arm. Right arm is extended back parallel with and above right leg.

**(Numbers according to the Cecchetti system)*

Arabesques (Cecchetti Method)

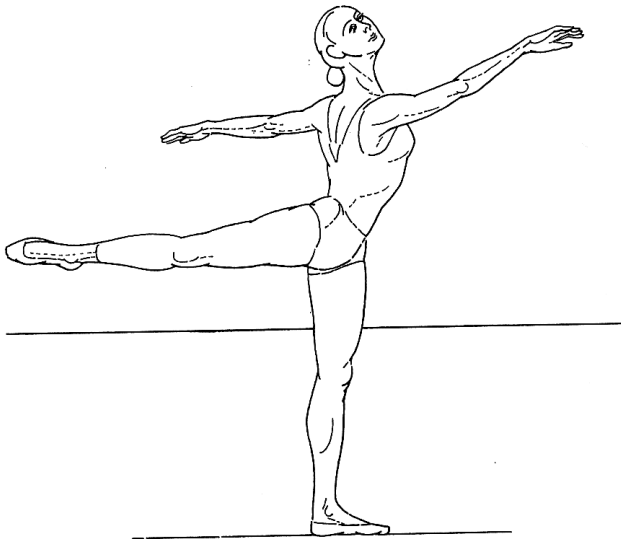


fig. c

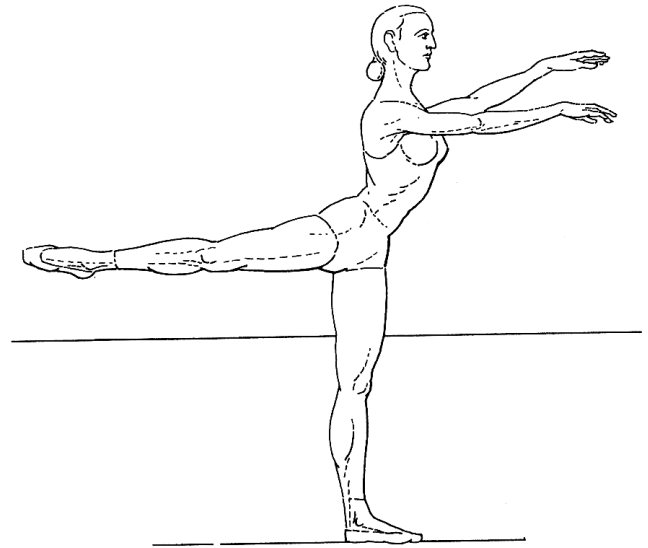


fig. d

2ND ARABESQUE (*Croisée*) (fig. c)

Standing on left leg, right leg extended straight back in the air at 90 degrees, incline torso forward, back well arched, shoulders held down, right shoulder forward, inclining head to the right. The left arm is extended behind the body, right arm extended forward, palms held downward.

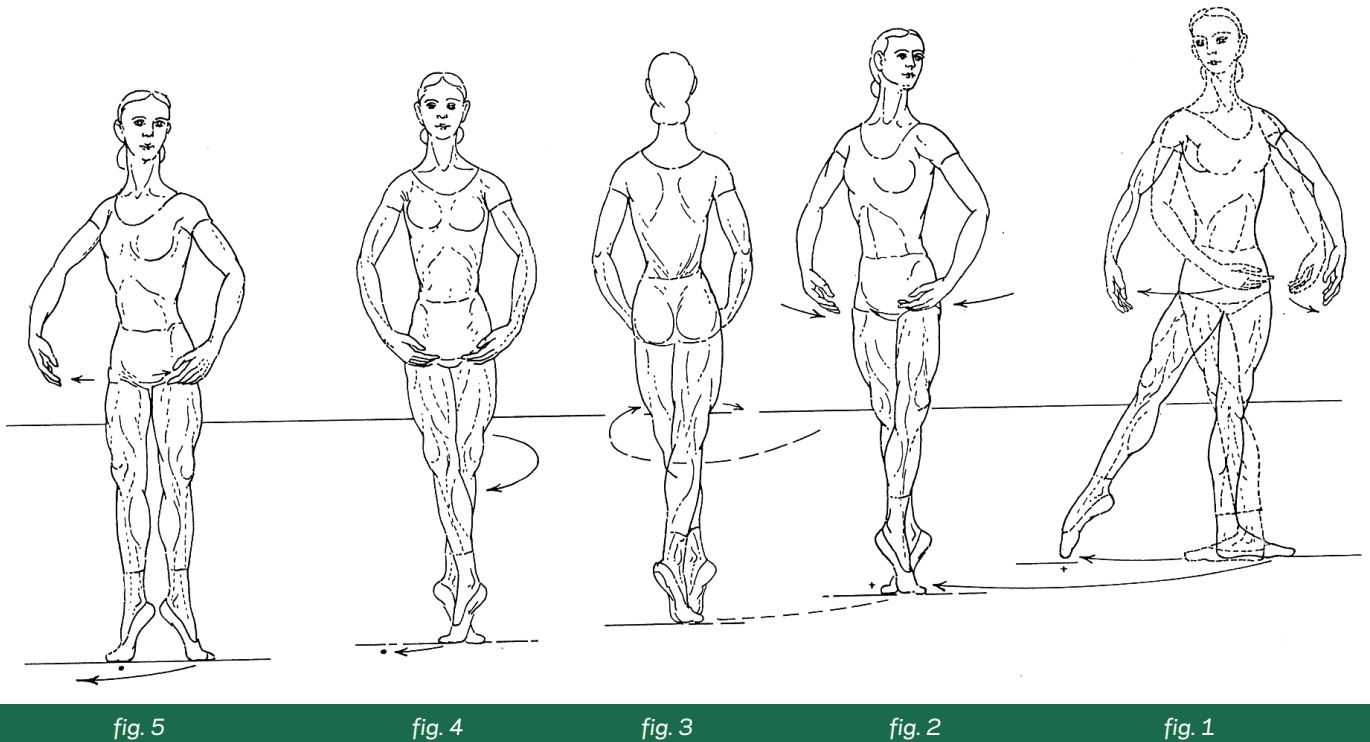
3rd ARABESQUE (fig. d)

Standing on left leg, with right leg extended straight back in the air at 90 degrees, incline torso forward, back well arched, hips and shoulders in one line, facing forward, head in profile. Extend both arms forward, palms held downward, left arm slightly higher.



Kristin Long in Tomasson's *Seven for Eight*
(© Erik Tomasson)

Tours Chaînés Déboulés (*en dedans*)*



Fast turns executed on demi-pointes or pointes, straight across the room, diagonally or in a circle.

EXERCISE

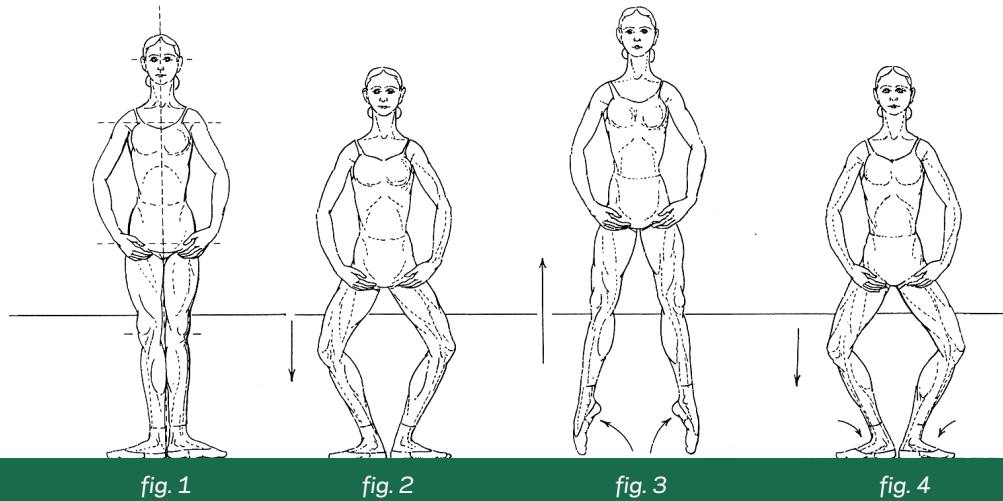
From 5th position right front: step diagonally forward and turn on right *demi-pointe* to right, opening arms a short distance to the sides (*fig. 1*). Continue turning by stepping on left *demi-pointe* in front of right, bring arms together in 1st position (*figs. 2, 3*). To continue movement, thrust right leg forward each time in line of direction (*fig. 4*).

POSTURE AND MUSCULAR CONTROL

1. Hold torso erect and slightly forward from the waist line, shoulders and hips in line, stepping each time on to right *demi-pointe*.
2. In shifting from right to left foot on *demi-pointes*, keep feet together, legs turned out from thigh to heel. Open and close arms to a lesser degree as speed of turn increases.

*According to Cecchetti, petits tours.

Temps Levé*



Temps levé is executed from 2nd and 4th positions, each series of jumps completed by straightening knees.

Jumping from both feet on to both feet.

PREPARATION

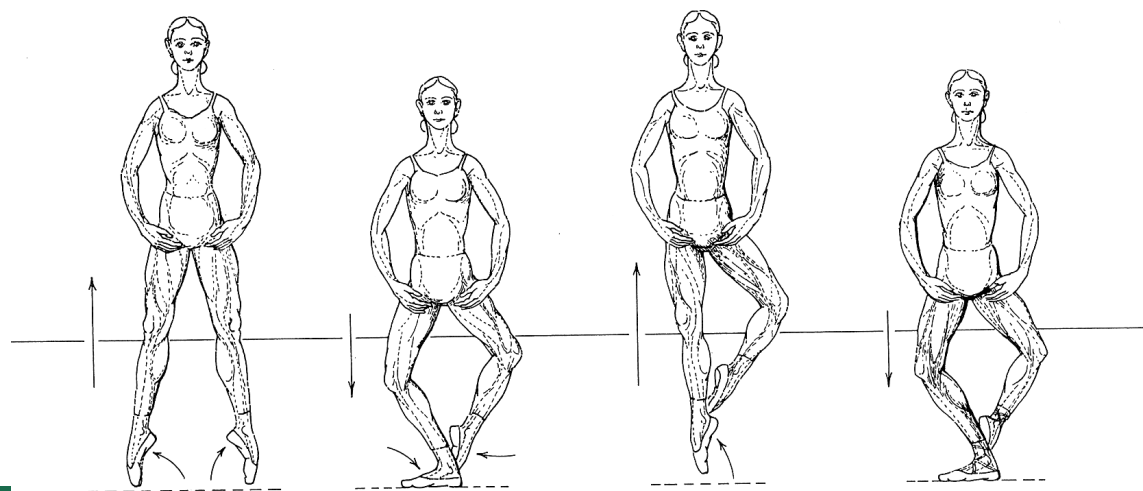
Standing in 1st position, arms in preparatory position throughout movement (fig. 1).

EXERCISE

Execute demi-plié (fig. 2), jump upward straightening both legs, toes pointed to maximum in the air in 1st position (fig. 3). Descending to floor, toes reach the ground first before lowering heels in 1st position demi-plié (fig. 4).

According to Cecchetti, small springs in 1st position.

Temps Levé



Jumping from both feet on to one foot.

PREPARATION

1st position, arms in preparatory position (fig. 4).

EXERCISE

Execute *demi-plié*, jump upward, straightening both legs, toes pointed to maximum in the air in 1st position (fig. 5); right foot descends to floor *demi-plié*, left foot pointing *sur le cou-de-pied* behind right ankle (fig. 6).

Jumping from one foot on to one foot (fig. 6).

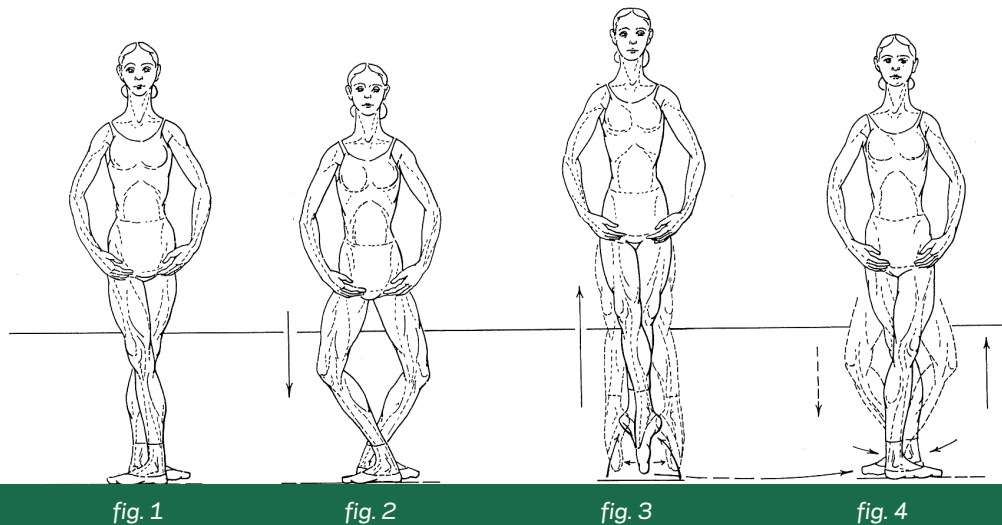
EXERCISE

Jump upward from right foot *demi-plié*, straightening right leg from thigh to toe in the air (fig. 7), left foot pointing *sur le coup-de-pied* behind right ankle; right foot descends to floor *demi-plié*, left foot pointing *sur le cou-de-pied* behind right ankle (fig. 8).

POSTURE AND MUSCULAR CONTROL

1. Standing in 1st position, hold torso erect, shoulders down, both arms in preparatory position, softly rounded from shoulders to fingertips, neck and arms completely free from strain, legs turned outward from thighs to heels.
2. Heels remain on floor when executing *demi-pliés* preparatory to jumping.
3. Jumping upward, both feet push away from floor, legs stretched to maximum from thighs to toes in the air.
4. Descending to floor, slight muscular tension in buttocks and thighs effects a light and soft descent to floor *demi-plié* (toes reach floor before heels).

Petit Changement de Pieds



PREPARATION

5th position right foot front, arms in preparatory position.

EXERCISE

Execute *demi-plié*, distributing weight equally between the feet (*fig. 2*); jump upward, straightening both legs from thighs to toes, 5th position in the air (*fig. 3*); descending to floor, feet change position, toes strike the floor first before lowering heels in 5th position *demi-plié* left foot front (*fig. 4*).

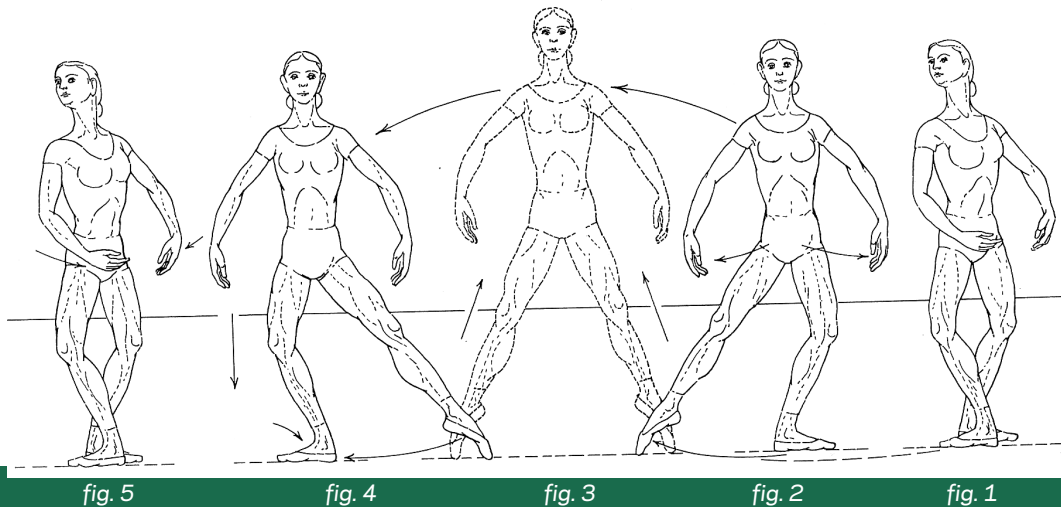
Changement de pieds may be executed with the toes barely leaving

the floor. *Grand changement de pieds*, as the name implies, is executed in the same manner with a higher jump upward into the air.

POSTURE AND MUSCULAR CONTROL

1. Executing *demi-plié*, hold torso erect, draw abdomen in.
2. Jumping, feet push away from the floor, legs are stretched to maximum from thighs to pointed toes.
3. Descending to floor, slight muscular tension in buttocks and thighs effects a light and soft descent to floor 5th position *demi-plié* (toes reach floor before heels).

Glissade (without change of feet)*



(Without change of feet moving to right.* This is a gliding movement with accent in demi-plié in 5th position, usually preceding jumps and leaps.

PREPARATION

5th position right foot front, right shoulder forward, arms in preparatory position (fig. 1).

EXERCISE

(a) Execute *demi-plié* sliding right foot on floor until reaching 2nd position, toe fully pointed, opening arms a short distance to the sides (fig. 2);

(b) Push away from floor with left foot, momentarily straightening knees, and transfer weight of body on to right foot *demi-plié*; stretch left leg to maximum, pointing toe on floor 2nd position (fig. 3);

(c) Slide foot back to 5th position *demi-plié*, returning arms to preparatory position (figs. 4, 5).

Glissade may be executed in the reverse direction, or alternating feet each time in *demi-plié* 5th position, i.e., left front left shoulder forward, right front right shoulder forward**. It may also be executed in all directions and *en tournant*.

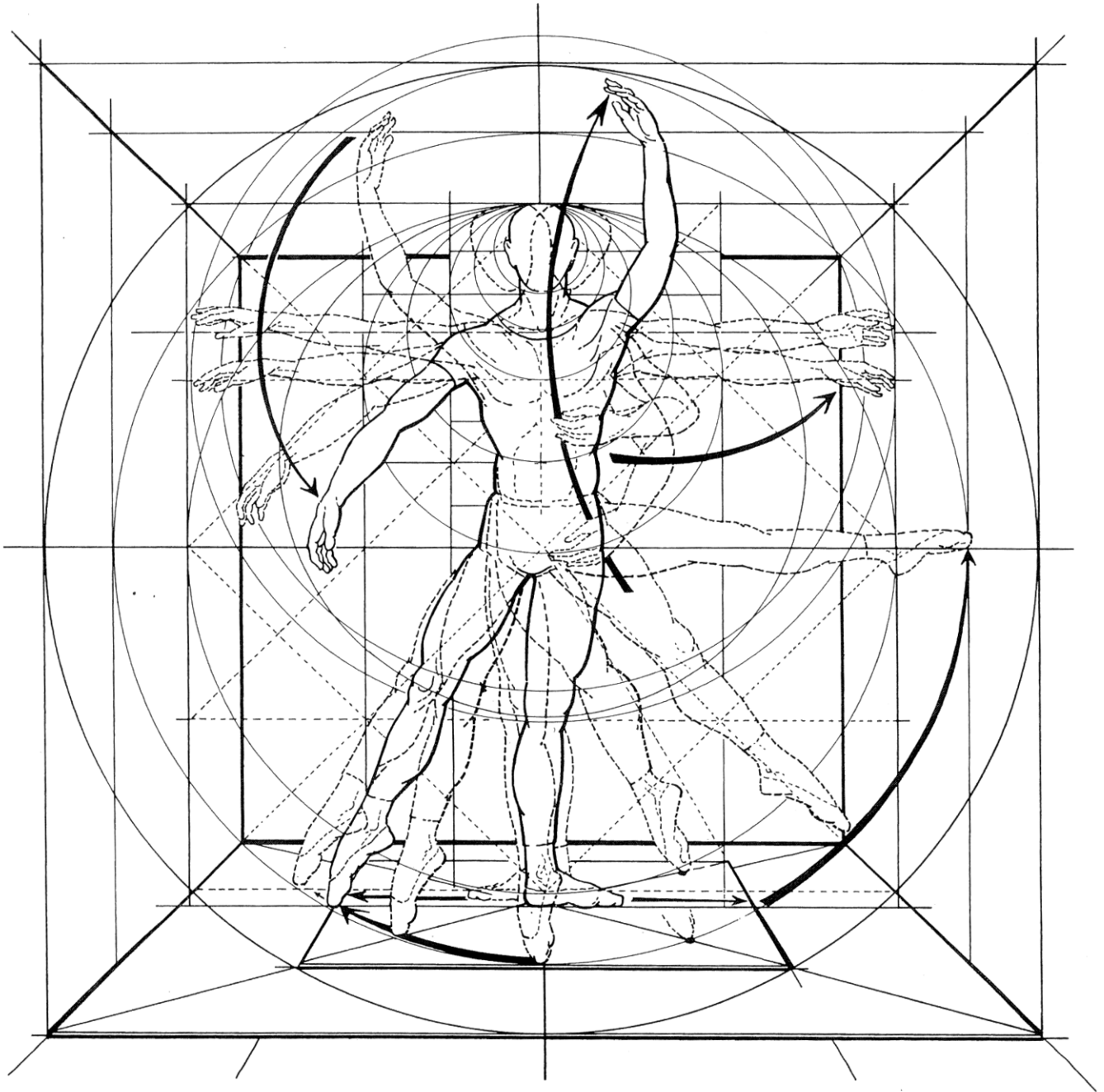
POSTURE AND MUSCULAR CONTROL

1. At moment of transition from left foot to right, both legs are stretched to maximum from thighs to pointed toes, just off the ground.

2. When executing *demi-plié* in 5th position there must be a slight counter-pull upward; both heels on the ground.

* According to Cecchetti, glissade devant

** According to Cecchetti, glissade changee.



Space Module of the Arms and Legs I (front view)

A Brief History of Pointe Dancing*

While there is little agreement among dance historians about the precise date and location of the first performance on pointe by a ballerina, there is no doubt that the introduction of dancing *sur les pointes* had a profound effect on ballet technique. The ability to rise to the tips of her toes afforded the ballerina the opportunity for virtuosity on a new plane. With the appearance of pointe shoes, the female dancers' technique expanded, enabling her to create the illusion of incredible lightness and to project an increased sense of daring.

Although dancers may have risen on their toes since ancient times, the first documented performances on pointe appear to have taken place in England and France between 1815 and 1830, 240 years after Catherine de Médicis commissioned the first ballet in 1581. During the intervening years, a number of developments in the evolution of the female dancer's technique paved the way for the appearance of pointe dancing.

When King Louis XIV of France ordered the founding of the Royal Academy of Dance in 1661, the dancers initially performed on ballroom floors. When they were raised up on a stage, the audience had a different view of them and their feet became more important. As the stages grew larger, choreographers



Frances Chung and Daniel Deivison-Oliveira in
Possokhov's *Classical Symphony*
(© Erik Tomasson)

became more concerned with sideways movement and created the concept of turned-out legs. The height of the proscenium inspired a new movement vocabulary of elevated steps.

Men dressed as women took the female roles until 1681, when four young ladies danced in a ballet for the first time. These early ballerinas wore shoes with heels, constricted bodices, voluminous skirts, unwieldy headpieces, and enveloping shawls. Their costumes both reflected and dictated the nature of their technique, which was limited to gracefully executed sliding, walking, and running in intricate floor patterns.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, dance technique

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A Brief History of Pointe Dancing

experienced rapid development and the dancer's dress was adjusted to accommodate these new physical demands. In 1726, Marie Camargo made her debut at the Paris Opera Ballet and introduced the *entrechat*. To display these rapid changes of her feet from fifth position front to back and front again, she had to wear a shorter skirt. While initially she danced in the commonly accepted heeled shoes worn by her contemporaries, she soon abandoned them for a flatter shoe that provided an improved springboard for her complicated jumps. Camargo also devised an undergarment to wear beneath her petticoats, from which tights later evolved.

In 1734, Marie Sallé, a French dancer and rival of Camargo's, appeared at the Drury Lane Theatre in London, performing a dance called *Pygmalion* for the first time. She replaced her usually cumbersome style of costume



Marie Sallé

with a simple muslin dress that followed the lines of her body and wore her hair flowing loosely down her back instead of binding it up in an ornate headpiece.

The French Revolution swept away the remains of unwieldy costuming, and dancers began to appear in *maillots*, tights named after a costumer at the Paris Opéra. Flat ballet slippers tied with ribbons became standard footwear. These short-soled slippers with pleats under the toes were developed in response to the need for a more flexible shoe. The new slippers facilitated the fully extended pointing of the foot as well as jumps and turns. They were the foundation upon which the first pointe shoes were built.

During the Revolution, many dancers and choreographers left the Paris Opéra to perform in England and other parts of Europe. One of these emigrants was Charles Didelot, who had introduced the concept of a flying machine in a production at Lyons in 1794. Didelot's contraption enabled dancers to stand briefly on their toes before being whisked upward, creating the illusion of lightness as they portrayed the ethereal, unreal characters in classical ballets.

Didelot's flying machine was enthusiastically received in London in 1796. As theatrical dancing evolved, women had become more athletic, and the audience adored watching

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them perform such feats as sailing across the stage aided by hidden wires. When the dancers landed on their toes, their fans cheered with delight. This favorable response encouraged choreographers to seek ways for their stars to linger in an elevated position.

During the early 1800s, ballerinas were schooled in an increasingly challenging technical vocabulary including multiple pirouettes, and jumps and leaps. The attempt to dance on pointe without support of wires was a logical extension of this growing emphasis on technical skill. Dancers discovered that by rising higher and higher on half pointe, they were able to balance on the ends of their fully stretched toes.

A print of ballerina Maria del Caro dated 1804 shows her nearly on the tips of her toes. On the basis of reviews and prints, Genèvieve Gosselin, who died at the peak of her career in 1818, is thought to have danced on pointe in a production of Didelot's *Flore et Zephyre* in 1815. Prints dated 1821 have been found showing Fanny Bias in the role of Flore, and she appears to be on pointe.

The Russian ballet-master Adam Flushkovshy declared that he had seen Avdotia Istomina dancing on the "very tip of her toe" in St. Petersburg in the years between 1816 and 1820. On the London stage, an unfortunate dancer named

Mademoiselle Julia is reported to have lost her balance while standing on pointe in 1827 and fell to a chorus of critical scorn.

These earliest appearances on pointe probably involved little more than briefly held poses on the tips of the toes to give an illusion of weightlessness. They represented isolated tours de force and were not yet part of the fabric of dance technique.

In 1832, Marie Taglioni appeared on pointe in the first performance of *La Sylphide*. Her performance not only ushered in the Romantic Age, but introduced the use of pointe dancing as an essential choreographic element. Romantic ballet as represented by *La Sylphide* did not evolve in isolation, however, but rather as one aspect of a movement that involved every form of art in the



Marie Taglioni

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early nineteenth century. It was part of a revolt against the eighteenth-century tradition of stressing classic perfection over feeling and meaning.

Ballet was an art form ruled by such traditional conventions when Taglioni demonstrated that pointe shoes could be used as an aesthetic element, to convey a sense of character that was essentially Romantic. She used pointe to bring a new poetic quality to ballet that was consistent with stylistic developments in scene design and dance music.

While there are no films or notations of Taglioni's performance, dance historian Walter Terry suggests that Auguste Bournonville's choreography of *La Sylphide* was probably very similar to the original Taglioni version. There are no extended pointe segments, but relevés on both feet, arabesques, attitudes and bourées were probably performed on pointe. The elements of technique that could be executed on pointe were obviously limited by the nature of early pointe shoes. However narrow her technique, Taglioni's opening-night performances in *La Sylphide* caused one member of her audience to write, "Hers is a totally new style of dancing, graceful beyond all comparison, wonderful lightness, an absence of all violent effort. She seems to float and bound like a sylph across the stage."¹

Pointe shoes similar to those worn by Taglioni in the 1800s have been



Yuan Yuan Tan and Tiit Helimets
in Tomasson's *Giselle*
(© Erik Tomasson)

preserved by private collectors. Her cobbler was Janssen of Paris, and several pairs of shoes bearing his stamp can be seen in the Haydn Museum in Eisenstadt, Austria. Upon examination they appear to be nothing more than soft satin slippers, heavily darned at the tip. They had no box to protect the toe and featured a flexible leather sole that supported the foot. Darning along the sides and over the toe kept the slippers in shape. They were essentially a one-sized tube of satin and leather that bound and squeezed the toes into a uniformly narrow pointe that had little relevance to the shape of the wearer's foot.

In order to work in such soft shoes, early pointe dancers probably stuffed the toes for added protection. Stitched ribbons and starch were the only other primitive attempts at reinforcement, leaving the dancers to rely on the strength of their feet and ankles. Wearing these slippers, a cloudlike costume, and wings, Taglioni created the image of the

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ballerina as a vision of perfection. Her performance pulled together the elements of a style that had been evolving for decades and quickly spread to England, Italy, Denmark, Germany, Russia, and the United States.

In 1832, Amalia Brugnoli danced on pointe in London, causing a critic to observe that her staccato work on the tops of her toes was unequaled by anything except Paganini's bow. Pauline Montessu performed a slow turn on pointe in 1833, and Angelica Saint-Romain astonished the public by performing "capriccios" on the tips of her toes.

Three other great Romantic ballerinas made their debuts following Taglioni's triumph—Fanny Elssler in 1833, Carlotta Grisi in 1836, and Fanny Cerrito in 1840. Fanny Elssler was particularly skilled in pointe technique. When she visited the United States, it was said that her admirers drank champagne from her slippers. A similar myth claims that some of Taglioni's Russian fans bought a pair of her shoes for three hundred rubles, cooked them, and had them for supper.

Ballerinas influenced by the theories of Italian dance master Carlo Blasis again expanded the technique with exuberant new physical pyrotechnics in the late 1800s. For example, Pierina Legnani introduced thirty-two *fouettés* in a performance of *Swan Lake* in 1892. Dancing on pointe

became a means of expressing fire and strength as well as fantasy. This expanded technical vocabulary gave the ballerina a supremacy over the male dancer, which lasted until Nijinsky took Paris by storm in 1909.

Inspired by the facts of dancers like Legnani, the Russians invited Enrico Cecchetti to teach them the Italian technique, which they subsequently combined with elements of their own technique and French technique into what we now know as the Russian style. In addition to Italian technique, the Russians also embraced Italian pointe shoes. The shoes worn by Legnani were less pointed than the shoes worn by Taglioni and had a flatter, sturdier base. They also had stronger soles and a box that was molded with more substantial layers of fabric.

Pointe shoes created by the Italian shoemaker Nicolini were imported to Russia for use by the Russian Imperial Ballet until shipments were suspended during the Russian Revolution. These shoes had no nails and were lined with white kid leather. Since only their tips were stiffened or blocked, they were soundless on stage. Russian dancers used various techniques to stiffen the toes such as cutting up old pasteboard suitcases for support.

By the time of the great neoclassical ballets of Petipa and Ivanov, pointe work in the Russian ballet had become a series of intricate steps

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performed entirely on the toes. When *Sleeping Beauty* premiered in 1890, the dancers performing the fairy variations wore pointe shoes with a blocked toe made of newspaper and floured paste, which was reinforced by a light cardboard insole stretching between the tips of the toes and the instep.

As pointe dancing spread, variations in technique began to emerge. For instance, while the Italians tended to rise to pointe with a sprightly spring, the Russians rolled smoothly. The French rise was a cross between a spring and a roll.

In spite of the fact that her shoes weighed only one-half ounce more than the unblocked shoes of Taglioni's day, Anna Pavlova added a new dimension to pointe dancing in her portrayal of *The Dying Swan*. She was constantly on pointe in *bouffée*, a feat which had previously been thought impossible. Pavlova was rumored to have a secret process for preparing her slippers; after having a student break them in, she ripped out the cardboard and the fabric and leather liners and replaced them with a mysterious inner sole of her own design. She was reported to wear shoes with very wide platforms which afforded her superior balance. However, she supposedly took special care to have the platforms touched up in photographs to look narrower and more delicate, creating the illusion that she balanced on "nothing."



Anna Pavlova & Vaslav Nijinsky in
Fokine's *Pavilion d'Armide*
Photo by Charles Gershel

The ballets created by Michael Fokine, Léonide Massine, and George Balanchine for the Ballet Russes under the direction of Sergey Diaghilev between 1909 and 1929 brought pointe dancing into the twentieth century. For the first time, the ballet audience saw ballerinas performing backward *bouffées*, slow balances, and traveling relevés in *arabesque* on pointe.

These advances were followed by further feats of skill performed on pointe by the "baby ballerinas" of the New Ballet Russe in 1932. Teenage ballerinas Irina Baronova and Tamara Toumanova performed sixty-four *fouettés* on pointe, six unsupported *pirouettes*, and extended balances to the delight of cheering audiences. The company re-choreographed the classics to incorporate these new "tricks" on pointe.

In the 1920s, one of the most popular stars on Broadway was Marilyn Miller,

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a toe dancer. Harriet Hoctor, another Broadway favorite in the 1920s and 1930s, stunned audiences at the Hippodrome in London by tapping up and down an escalator on her toes in shoes supported by steel shanks. Other Hoctor tricks included executing a backbend while doing *bouffées* on pointe, zooming through a circle of *piqué* turns at breakneck speed, and tapping out the meter of Edgar Allan Poe's poem *The Raven* with the tips of her shoes. Other revue dancers wore steel reinforcements to allow them to perform the Charleston on pointe.

In this "trick" pointe dancing tradition, Gloria Gilbert used ball bearings in the platforms of her shoes to allow her to turn at a dizzying rate while performing backbends. Toe-tap became a national craze as entrants in local amateur nights performed such feats as tapping on toe and playing the trumpet at the same time. A "shoe-biz" approach to pointe continued to spill over into the classical realm during the 1950s, when audiences expected ballerinas to do such tricks as sustaining attitude on pointe for an extended time period while the conductor had the orchestra play the same phrase over and over, waiting for the choreography to resume.

During the Second World War, shoes were often in short supply due to the upheaval throughout Europe. Alexandra Danilova recalls trying to extend the life of her shoes by

darning them and coating them with a kind of shellac used to make straw hats stiff. Other dancers speak of strengthening their feet to be able to stand on pointe without shoes in order to dance in footwear that had been reduced to shreds.

By mid-century, pointe shoe boxes had become considerably harder in order to accommodate the technical demands on the dancer's foot. In the process of creating harder shoes, however, shoemakers produced pointe shoes with little flexibility, making it difficult for the dancer to have a sense of contact with the floor.

The continuing evolution of contemporary ballet technique led pointe shoe manufacturers to nonstop experimentation in succeeding decades. The result has been a wide range of pointe shoe designs from extremely strong to ultralight, in a variety of styles and shapes that enable dancers to jump higher, move more quickly, and accomplish increasingly difficult pointe technique utilized by choreographers such as George Balanchine. A typical pair of contemporary pointe shoes weighs about four ounces more than those worn in 1932.

Custom-constructed shoes ordered by various companies reflect the demands of their dominant choreographic styles. New York City Ballet dancers tend to "pounce" on their pointes, jumping rather than

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rolling up. Therefore they may be more dependent on their shoes for support than dancers whose main concern is creating the illusion that a pointe shoe is an extension of the foot.

Balanchine once said that if no pointe existed, he would not be a choreographer. Walter Terry quotes Balanchine as explaining,

Ballet is artificial. It is like poetry, it is invented. Where words fail, poetry can succeed and the same is true of ballet: something you cannot explain can be expressed on pointe. You can't tell a story on pointe but it can, when imaginatively used, give you an extra feeling similar to modulations in music or color intensities in light. In this sense, the pointe, even if it cannot tell a story, communicates drama. A ballerina on pointe is the maximum in dance. ²

But what about the future of pointe dancing post-Balanchine and in the twenty-first century? While pointe dancing is sure to live on in the "museum" works of the past such as *Swan Lake* and *Giselle*, questions have been raised about the relevance to newly created works, since both choreography and the tools of the dance tend to change as the culture does.

Writing in 1986, dance critic Clive Barnes observed that the influence of modern choreography on classical ballet companies was tending to

diminish the significance of the pointe shoe in new repertory. He suggested that toe dancing may be perceived as an unnatural movement, and "there is actually an aesthetic against pointe work now, just as the cultural climate favored pointe work in the age of Romanticism." ³ Barnes wondered if pointe was an organic part of the ballet technique or only a technical aid. However, recent works by such choreographers as Peter Martins, Clark Tippet, and Twyla Tharp for the New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre have clearly demonstrated that the dimension of pointe is still very much alive at the end of the twentieth century and that contemporary ballet artists are indeed integrating pointe into their creative work.

1. Trucco, Terry, "To The Pointe", *Ballet News*, vol. 3 (March 1982), p.21.
2. Terry, Walter, *On Pointe*. (New York: Dodd Mead, 1962), p.100.
3. Barnes, Clive, "Barnes on ..." *Ballet News*, vol. 7 (February 1986), p. 39.

For more information on the Romantic period see Guest, Ivor. *The Romantic Ballet in England* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Press 1966) and Guest, Ivor. *The Romantic Ballet in Paris* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Press 1972) and refer to the Bibliography.



Kristin Long and Katita Waldo in Forsythe's *Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude*
(© Erik Tomasson)

Conversations on Pointe

After the various theories about dancing on pointe have been debated and the facts relating to pointe shoes have been clearly defined, the true nature of the experience of dancing on pointe remains elusive. A deeper understanding of the relationship between a ballerina and her blocked satin slippers can only be gained by listening to dancers speak about their shoes.

As we traveled around the country gathering information for this book, we spent many hours talking to dancers about pointe shoes. They have shared their professional secrets about selecting shoes, preparing them, and working in them. Perhaps more importantly, they have revealed how they feel about these unique instruments that are so much a part of their ability to create magic on stage. Inclosing, we would like to share some of these conversations. What follows is a series of reflections on pointe by some great contemporary dancers.

Cynthia Harvey

Cynthia Harvey, principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre and guest artist with the Royal Ballet, used to wear Capezio Nicolinis, but has now changes to Freed's "W" maker. Her custom-made shoe is cut down very slightly on the heel and sides. She feels that a long vamp makes her foot appear longer and contributes to an overall longer line. Her right and left shoes are made in different widths since the size of each foot varies slightly.

In her quest for the lightest, most flexible shoe possible, Harvey looks for a design that gives her both freedom and control. To this end, she requests that the shoemaker take out the last two nails in the shank

and also cut off the back half of the shank. She likes a soft vamp that makes rolling off pointe more fluid and prefers that the tips of her shoes be flat rather than curved. She has found that using less glue makes the shoe lighter and also keeps the tip from making too much noise. She orders soft tips and vamps so her shoes will break in quickly. Her only complaint about soft shoes is that they wear out extremely fast and she always seems to be preparing a new pair. Harvey wistfully confessed that "I love a light, soft shoe so much that I wish I could wear a sock with a hard tip."

Harvey uses a small amount of lamb's wool inside shoes to even out her toes since her big toe is shorter than her second toe. She does not cut her drawstrings on a new pair of shoes until she has danced in them for a while, allowing them to mold to her feet before tying the drawstrings and tucking them in. She sews elastic on the back of the heel of each shoe as close to the ribbons as possible.

Harvey favors Swedish ribbons, which she removes from worn shoes, washes, and uses over and over again. She likes them because they can be tied into a flat knot, which doesn't hurt the tendon of the ankle. If she has to do a lot of jumping, she sews about one inch of elastic onto her ribbons so that it is adjacent to her Achilles tendon.

Before she goes on stage, for added

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security she stitches through the ends of the ribbons that need to be tucked in. Before she started doing this, she was constantly checking her ribbons in the wings and often discovered that they had popped out by the time she was taking her bow. She sews them with waxed dental floss because it is stronger than thread and the wax makes the needle easy to thread. Harvey explained she is not one of those dancers who changes her shoes every time she makes an entrance. Since she sews her ribbons in place, it would be difficult to change quickly enough.

New shoes, Harvey says, make her feel out of contact with the floor. In *Sleeping Beauty* and *Don Quixote*, she wears the same pair of shoes in acts 1 and 2; in *Swan Lake* she sometimes wears the same pair of shoes for the entire ballet. However, she often changes into harder shoes on both feet for fouettes, or she may only change her left shoe, which is her pirouette foot. She explains that “no matter what I do, my feet are always killing me by the fourth act.”

Harvey was especially concerned about breaking in her shoes to eliminate noise when she was dancing on the wood stage at Covent Garden. When she dances on a slip-resistant marley or a linoleum floor, some of the noise is muffled. However, before dancing on a wood floor, she bangs her shoes against a wall or a floor to get the noise out the day before she wears them. If

her shoes need more softening, she puts them on and puts her foot into the sink where she puts water on the outside of the vamp, being careful not to let the tips get wet.

Harvey does not cut the satin off the tips of her shoes because the shellac she applies on the inside penetrates to the outside and makes the surface harder. To discourage slipping, she uses a rasp to score the soles of the shoes for added friction. She also uses an Exacto knife to shave the edges of the sole but advises caution since the knife can easily slip in the process. She recalled dancing for the president of the United States at Ford’s Theater and being confronted with a slippery floor that has been painted with the presidential seal. At the suggestion of David Howard, she put rubber cement around the edge of the soles of the shoes and on the pleats. Although she picked up a lot of dust and trash on her shoes, she was able to perform.

Darci Kistler

Darci Kistler, principal dancer with the New York City Ballet, which she joined at the age of fifteen, wears Freeds, size 6/5 XX. Her maker is “V” although she used maker “J” until his retirement five years ago. It took her a long time to find the right shoe, and she still finds that her foot is constantly changing. She feels the right fit is difficult to achieve because the shape of her foot is influenced by the way she is working. Her solution

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has been to find a shoe that fits the basic structure of the foot.

Kistler has a problem with shoes because her feet are wide, but her toes are long and thin. A shoe that provides the needed width for her feet leaves too much room around the toes and tends to “swim.” Consequently, she orders shoes with a flat platform rather than a broad one. In order to make the box narrower for her, Freed uses their old wooden lasts which are narrower than the new plastic ones. Her actual width is between X and XX.

Kistler found the type of shank that works for her through trial and error. While she does not want too much of a shank, she still likes support and therefore needs something moldable. She tried leather and found it a little too thick and a little too loose, so she switched to a cardboard shank, which is working quite well. Kistler feels that demanding too many changes in a shoe increases the probability that a shoemaker will make mistakes with an order. She feels that it is unfair to place too many demands on the makers.

She never wears shoes for a performance until they have been broken in. She wears them on class and rehearsal first. Before wearing them, she applied Fabulon Finish twice since she likes the toe very hard and the rest soft. She puts water on the heel to stretch the shoes out, breaks the shank, and

stands on the box to flatten it. To avoid slipping, she cuts the satin off the tip and uses a large carpenter’s file to rough up the sole.

Although wearing soft shoes results in bruised toenails, Kistler takes the risk to get the feeling she is seeking. She wants the shoes “Not to feel like a shoe.” However, she usually does not dance in a pair of shoes until they are completely worn out but instead places them on a shelf or over her dressing room light so they rehardens. By the end of the season, she had accumulated about forty pairs of shoes. Then she re-wears them. She finds that they harden slightly with age. She used to wear out a pair of shoes then start on another, but she always felt panicky about how long they would last and whether they would be exactly right in time for an important performance. Now she wears about four pairs of new shoes a day – a pair for each rehearsal and for class – so she has a variety of pairs to choose from for each performance. She puts the shoes that she particularly likes in a separate pile.

Kistler does not alternate her shoes because her feet are very different from one another and she works her right foot differently from her left. She sews elastic to her Freed ribbons so they give around her tendons, and she sews extra-wide elastic to the outside of her heel so she will not irritate her foot. Currently she spends about an hour sewing each pair of shoes she wears and is planning to

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buy a sewing machine to cut down on the time involved.

When tying her shoes, she takes the ribbon on the outside around the ankle first, followed by the inside ribbon. Then she ties the ribbon in a knot and tucks them in. When she is dancing in a romantic character ballet, she is always more careful with the knot. "Anything with a character and a story has to be preserved. I want nothing to kill that. The worst that could happen, for me, is to have a ribbon come out. It shows a lack of my own preparation, and forethought. I've never had a ribbon come out or an elastic break."

Kistler wears lamb's wool since her toes sweat a lot, which makes it impractical for her to wear paper towels and toilet paper inside her shoes since sweat makes the paper wrinkle up and causes blisters. New York City Ballet dancers do not pancake their shoes because Balanchine disliked the look. He wanted the shoes to be the shoe - he liked to look at the feet.

Kistler insists that she loves pointe shoes and frequently wears them around her apartment. She has even worn them onto the street. Once, while she was taking class, someone took her street shoes from the dressing room and she had to go home in her pointe shoes. When she went out on the street, she did a sous-sus and waved for a taxi.

Alessandra Ferri

Alessandra Ferri, a principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre and Mikhail Baryshnikov in the film *Dancers*, wears Freed's in XXX width. They are custom made for her with a high vamp and a square pointe. To break her shoes in, Ferri mashes the vamp with her hands. She also bends the shanks back and forth until the nail comes out. While many dancers remove the nail with a pair of pliers, she prefers to do it manually because the shank becomes more flexible in the process. If she is planning to wear a pair of shoes in performance, she also pounds the bottom of the pointes with a hammer or bangs them on the floor to take out the noise.

Ferri does not need elastic around her ankles because she secures each shoe with a piece of elasticized fabric that is large enough to cover her entire foot; she inserts the elasticized fabric into her shoe and hand-sews it in place. This not only holds the shoe on securely, but also keeps it from gaping unattractively. The color of the elastic blends with the tights, and the ribbons cover the point where the elastic ends and the tights begin. Ferri prefers Swedish ribbons which blend perfectly with her tights. Since her elastic is so secure, she usually does not bother with ribbons for class, but always uses them on stage.

Ferri thinks that wearing pointe shoes extremely tight is a dangerous practice since it can stop the calf

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muscles from working properly and inhibits the foot's contact with the floor. She explained that the foot should be wide on the floor, and it should work as freely as the hands do. She believes that the dancer should not feel her balance is altered by the shape of her shoe. Because of her concern with feeling contact with the floor, Ferri wears no cushion or padding inside her shoes.

When she is performing an evening-long ballet, she wears a different pair of shoes for each act. When making films, she changes shoes more often because the close-ups require clean shoes for every shot. One advantage to this constant changing is that she can select soft or hard shoes most appropriate to each sequence of steps in the film. On stage she has to wear the same shoes throughout an act, regardless of the specific challenges of each variation. She mentioned that it took two weeks to film act 2 of *Giselle* in *Dancers* and that many pairs of shoes were used in the process.

Cheryl Yeager

Cheryl Yeager, a principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre, wears custom-made Freed's. A number of years ago she discovered Freed's "Y" maker made shoes exactly suited to her needs, but after several years of providing her with shoes custom-made for her feet, the "Y" maker retired. However, he agreed to go on making shoes for her and several



(© Erik Tomasson)

other dancers in American Ballet Theatre. When he finally decided to retire completely, Yeager visited the Freed factory with the hope of finding another shoemaker to duplicate the quality of the "Y" maker's shoes. She took with her three pairs of old shoes she had particularly liked for three different reasons. Yeager's concern about finding a new shoemaker indicates the importance of pointe shoes to dancers who are at the top of their profession and under incredible performance pressures.

When performing *Don Quixote*, Yeager uses a different pair of shoes for each act. The first and second acts require soft shoes; the third act requires hard shoes because of the final pas de deux and the fouettes. The soft shoes afford more contact with the floor and allow her to softly roll through her foot, offering more control for delicate balances. Although both the first and second acts of *Don Quixote* require soft shoes, Yeager changes between acts because she wears a pair out by the time she is through performing act 1.

When breaking in a new pair of shoes, Yeager first takes the nail out of the

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heel of the shoe. She then shellacs the toe, cuts the satin off the tip to prevent slipping, and then steps on the box to smash and flatten it. She has a big heel bone, so she does not need elastic around her ankle to hold the shoe on. She also scrapes the sole of the shoe so it is not too slick. She is especially fond of Swedish ribbon that blends perfectly with her tights. She uses a little resin to hold the ends of the ribbons securely.

Martine van Hamel

Martine van Hamel, a principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre, likes to wear a very hard pointe shoe. For this reason she prefers to wear Schachtners, the Austrian shoe know for its supportive qualities. Van Hamel does nothing to break her shoes in. Since Schachtners are so hard, she also refrains from trying to hammer out the noise. She simply sews on ribbon and elastic and begins to dance.

Van Hamel observed that even custom-made shoes vary slightly from pair to pair, and she feels that these variations can have an immense influence on the caliber of the performance. The slightest irregularity in a shoe can throw a dancer off balance after she has been carefully “tuned” muscle by muscle.

Dawn Caccamo

Dawn Caccamo, who danced with ABT II for two and a half years

before becoming a principal dancer with the Joffrey Ballet, wears Capezio Contemporas. For a while she alternated between Freed's and Capezios. Now she has her Contemporas custom-made with half shanks and the sides cut down to there is not too much heel. She orders a C width at the toe and a B width at the heel. She also has her drawstrings tie on the side because when she tied them on the front, her foot used to get a big bump from a bulky bow. She wears the mesh tights that are a company requirement, and in her shoes she wears the cut-off end of socks.

Caccamo breaks her shoes in by wetting them round the toe. She also bends the toes up to give the shoe more flexibility when she rolls through demi-pointe. She says the box is like a brick when she first gets a pair of shoes and she cannot manipulate it with her foot unless she performs this bending operation. If a box is especially hard, she asks her husband to work on it since he has more strength in his hands. She also steps on the box to flatten it out. To prevent slippage, she scores the bottoms of her soles just before performance and she cuts the satin off the tips.

Although Caccamo throws her shoes out when they get too soft, she actually get a lot of wear out of each pair because many of her roles do not require hard shoes. She wears a new pair of shoes for a ballet that

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requires a hard pair and then recycles them for ballets such as *Parade* or *Monotones* where she rarely goes up on pointe. She is more comfortable in soft shoes and does not like to dance in brand new shoes.

Caccamo finds that pancaking her shoes makes them for formfitting and comfortable. She wets a sponge and applied the pancake the way she would on her face. The wetness makes the material softer. The company carries its own floor which smudges the shoes with black marks. The marks are hidden with pancake or powder if the shoes are used a second time.

Lorraine Graves

Lorraine Graves joined the Dance Theater of Harlem in 1978, and in September 1980 she became ballet mistress during the season when the company's repertoire offered few parts suited for her six-foot height. Graves wears both Capezios and Freed's, but considers herself a "Capezio girl" at heart. As a beginner she started with Selvas, but after six months moved on to Capezio Nicolinis. She wore Ultimos in college and switched to Contemporas when she was hired by the company. She experimented with Gambas, but did not find them well suited to her feet. In 1983 she began special ordering Contemporas with a half shank. She also specified a particular shoemaker and asked to have the sides cut down. Although not much modification is

possible on the box of a Capezio, she requests a V-shaped box to flatter her foot. She also has the drawstring placed on the side rather than the front of the shoe.

To break in her shoes, Graves squeezes the box in a door. Then she wets the top and sides with water, making sure it does not touch the tip, which she wants to remain hard. Sometimes she steps on the box to mash it flat. She would never perform in a pair of brand new Capezios. When she gets them exactly the way she likes them, she sets them aside to become performance shoes. For *Giselle* she prefers soft, quiet shoes, although she uses strong shoes for the bourrees at the beginning of the second act.

All the dancers in the company go to extremes to avoid noisy shoes, which are a particular dislike to Artistic Director Arthur Mitchell. Many either paint alcohol on the underside of the shoes or hammer the bottoms of the pleats. Graves sometimes glues the suede tip to her Capezios to absorb the noise. She has also discovered that the suede tips used on the German Woessner shoes can be purchased separately for fifty cents a pair.

Recently, she began experimenting with Freed's and had found that their lightness makes it unnecessary to break them in. Graves can simply put them on and begin to dance. However, since she thinks she can break a

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(© Erik Tomasson)

Frees, Graves finds Capezios more consistent in quality. She pulled three pairs of pointe shoes from her bag and pointed out a deep ridge in the tip of a Freed, which she said she could never wear on her pirouette foot. The shoe's mate also had a smaller imperfection. Graves felt she could never perform in a pair of shoes of uneven construction.

While Graves goes through a pair of Freeds a day, she can wear one pair of Capezios a week on a five-week tour. She uses separate shoes for class and rehearsal. She always takes an entire class on pointe. If her feet are really hurting, she will wear soft shoes, but feels that wearing pointe shoes in class better prepares her for performances. She uses Gamba hardner to prolong the life of her shoes. The company orders it by the case, and the dancers buy it from the company. A bottle tends to be extremely long lasting.

She occasionally wears a small piece of lamb's wool in her shoes, but normally wears nothing. She went

through a paper towel and toilet paper stage, but likes to feel the floor as much as possible.

She sews her ribbons on so that the shiny side is next to her foot because it makes a tighter knot and does not pick up so much light. While most people wrap the outside ribbon around their ankles first, she starts with the inside one. Then the knot ends up at the top and is easier to hide inside the ribbons. Although she used to sew her ribbons on at the seam of the shoe, she finds that sewing them farther back works better with a narrow heel. She uses elastic at the heel as well.

At Arthur Mitchell's request, the women in the company wear their own flesh tones in tights and shoes to continue the line of the leg. Rather than wearing pink tights and shoes, each woman is matched with tights and then dues her shoes accordingly. Graves wears "golden tan." White company members do not wear pink but are assigned a light shade of flesh tone.

Janie Parker

Janie Parker, a principal dancer with the Houston Ballet, wears custom-made Freed pointe shoes, which are shipped fifty at a time and usually take three to four months to arrive. When Parker went to London to "meet her maker," she discovered upon her arrival at the Freed factory that he had quit making pointe shoes to

Conversations on Pointe

become a car mechanic. As a result, she changes from maker "J" to maker "Spade." The adjustment process was somewhat lengthy as it took some time for her new maker to master the look, shape and feel of her shoe.

Parker usually spends about two hours working on a pair of shoes before she wears them. If the shoes arrive with problems, she feels it is her responsibility to make them work since returning them to the factory would leave her without shoes for rehearsals and performances. An example of problems she has encountered with her shoes involves the tip of the shank. In one shipment of custom-made Freed's, she found that the tips hit much too high on the point of her shoes, causing her big toe to painfully press up against the top of the shoe. She also adjusts her shoes to accommodate the width of her feet. She wears a 6/5 XX on her left foot and a 5½-4½ XX on her right foot.

Parker's shoes also tend to push her back when she stands on pointe. As she explained, "You want your toes to be in the plum line - you want to be straight up on your toes so they are under you. If the shank under your toes hits too high, your toes will be thrown forward and the midpart of your foot will be back. So you'll obviously be standing back on your shoe." Her solution to the problem is to wet the shoe and insert a wooden last, which her husband carved for her. She then bangs the shoes on a

hard, raised ridge above the dressing room shower stall. First she bangs the pleats, then the tip of the shoe. After this banging, she finds that her toes are underneath her leg when she wears the shoe. However, she frequently goes further and removed the shank. Then, in an effort to make the shoe flatter, she scrapes any large wads of glue that were under the shank and carves the shank to be flatter, whittling it with a Swiss Army knife. She then returns the shank to the shoe. Parker prefers performing this "surgery" on her shoes to ordering a special shank. Her goal is to avoid rolling on the tip of the shoe, and the routine she has developed allows her to accomplish that.

Parker also darns her shoes in a most unusual way. Rather than darning to keep the shoes from wearing out, she does it to create an extended platform for her shoe. She finds that darning helps the shoe hold its shape and also corrects any deformities in platform construction. To demonstrate the effectiveness of her method, she stood one of her shoes on pointe on a table and released her hand. The shoe stood on pointe by itself!

Parker discovered this technique when she was wearing Capezios earlier in her career. She noticed that she would develop holes under the pleats of the toes long before the rest of the shoe wore out. Because her Capezios has a rounded tip, she had a difficult time standing straight

Conversations on Pointe

in them. In fact she described the sensation of working in them as “dancing on a ball-point pen.” Since she rolled forward, she would pull back slightly on purpose, wearing out the pleats. To remedy this, she haunted the wardrobe room, picking up little bits of elastic and scraps of seam binding. Then she placed the shoe on pointe on a flat surface and looked at it from eye level. She determined how much alteration would be needed to completely square the tip off into right angles and proceeded to sew on her scraps to accomplish this shape. If she found a corner that slanted down, she filled it in by layering little bits and pieces until it was level. With her scrap additions, she found that she was straight up and down on her foot and her shoes stopped wearing out behind the pleats.

Parker displayed two small “good bags” full of scrap fabric from company costumes as well as a full range of sizes and widths of elastic. When she darns her shoes, she uses button and carpet thread that is coarser than regular thread and whips the scraps into the shoes with a satin-type stitch. Since pink button and carpet thread is hard to find, she often settles for white.

In recent years she has perfected another darning technique which involves using drawstrings from old shoes instead of fabric scraps. It requires sewing several layers of drawstrings around the shoe in an

oval or rectangular pattern to try to achieve a completely flat tip. The drawstrings are sewn where the shoe starts to round off. This stabilizes the platform and helps to hold its shape. While old pointe shoe drawstrings work well, the thicker drawstrings from men’s ballet slippers are even better since they do not tend to flatten out as quickly.

To break her shoes in for a hard-shoe role such as those she dances in *Swan Lake* or *Sleeping Beauty*, she wears them to pointe class and also to a rehearsal of the ballet in which she plans to use them. For a soft-shoe role, she wears a pair of shoes to a week of rehearsals. However, if they are not completely dry, she will not wear them to avoid getting creases in the little toe. If she wants soft shoes for a role but still needs support, she applies Future Floor Finish to the shoes.

Parker tends to wear her shoes for a longer time than many dancers find possible. She will often wear a pair of shoes in the first act of *Sleeping Beauty* one night and then use them in act 3 for the next performance. After they have been through these two acts, she might then wear them in the second act, where she prefers soft shoes.

Parker favors narrow ribbons and feels that wider ribbons look like bandages. She wears elastic around her ankles to keep the heel of her shoe on. She wears crew socks

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inside her shoes for rehearsal and a “little something around her toes” for performances.

She pancakes her shoes with Pancake Natural #1, which is right for her skin color and matches her tights. Dancers with darker skin colors use deeper shades since their legs show through their pink tights. Parker also dyes her tights a combination of three colors, which she believes gives her legs a more defined, beautiful look under strong stage lights. She uses RIT dye, combining one or two drops of rose pink, three drops of tangerine, and five drops of golden yellow. She fills up a small sink with water and dye and colors two or three pairs of tights at a time. The tights come out the color of Freed shoes and blend with the Natural #1 pancake.

Parker has sustained many injuries to her feet. Her feet, which have beautiful high insteps, are marred by long insidious-looking scars. Early in her career she tended to ignore her injuries and often did not even take time to ice them. She remembers herself as young, ambitious, and unwilling to stop for anything.

Anneli Alhanko

Anneli Alhanko, principal dancer with the Royal Swedish Ballet, is widely praised for her beautiful feet. She was the first Swedish ballerina invited to dance with the Bolshoi. Alhanko wears Freed's in a size 5 but has recently been experimenting with

Gamba Turning Pointe in a size 4 $\frac{3}{4}$. Since her Freed's become soft quite quickly, she decided to explore the possibility of wearing Gambas as well. She has found the two types of shoes to be quite different in terms of balance and makes certain technique adjustments needed when she changes from one to another. She says the Gamba shoes require her to “push” more. She goes to London periodically for fittings.

Alhanko has a high instep which has caused her to have some problems with her Achilles tendon. To counteract these problems, she does a regimen of special stretching exercises.

She uses either cotton or paper in her shoes and explained that most Swedish dancers use cotton rather than lamb's wool. She darns her shoes and shellacs the insides. She also adds several nails to the insole of her Freed's.

Alhanko finds that the raked stage of the Opera House where her company performs is a special challenge and stresses the importance of rehearsing on a raked surface if possible.

Notes

1. Janice Barringer went in quest of the Swedish ribbon favored by many American dancers while she was interviewing in Stockholm. She discovered that the so-called Swedish ribbon is actually made in France. It is quite thin and has a dull finish. Dancers with the Royal Swedish Ballet company explained that it had been introduced there at the insistence of Erik Bruhn.



San Francisco Ballet School
(© Erik Tomasson)

about

San Francisco Ballet School

San Francisco Ballet and the San Francisco Ballet School were both established in 1933 as a single institution by Gaetano Merola, founding director of San Francisco Opera. Merola recognized the need for a thriving academy that would train dancers to appear in opera productions.

San Francisco became the only city in the country, other than New York, to claim a ballet school as an auxiliary to an established opera company. Adolph Bolm was appointed director and ballet master for the Company, which occasionally presented all-dance programs. But San Francisco Ballet truly began to take shape as an independent entity when Willam Christensen became Company ballet master. Two years later he appointed his brother, Harold, director of the School.

In 1942, Willam and Harold Christensen bought the School from San Francisco Opera, which could no longer provide financial support to the ballet operation. As a result, the San Francisco Ballet Guild was formed in order to maintain the Company as an independent performing unit. Willam Christensen was named artistic director of San Francisco Ballet, and Harold continued on as director of the School.

Harold, like his brothers Willam and Lew, the three men most responsible for guiding the Company and the School for some forty-five years, was American trained. He was the preeminent educator among the brothers who directed the development of ballet in the Western United States for an entire generation. Under Harold's guidance, the School evolved into one of the country's finest classical academies. Scholarship programs were initiated and the faculty grew to

include numerous prominent classical ballet teachers. Harold directed the School for 35 years, developing many dancers who went on to careers with San Francisco Ballet and other prestigious companies.

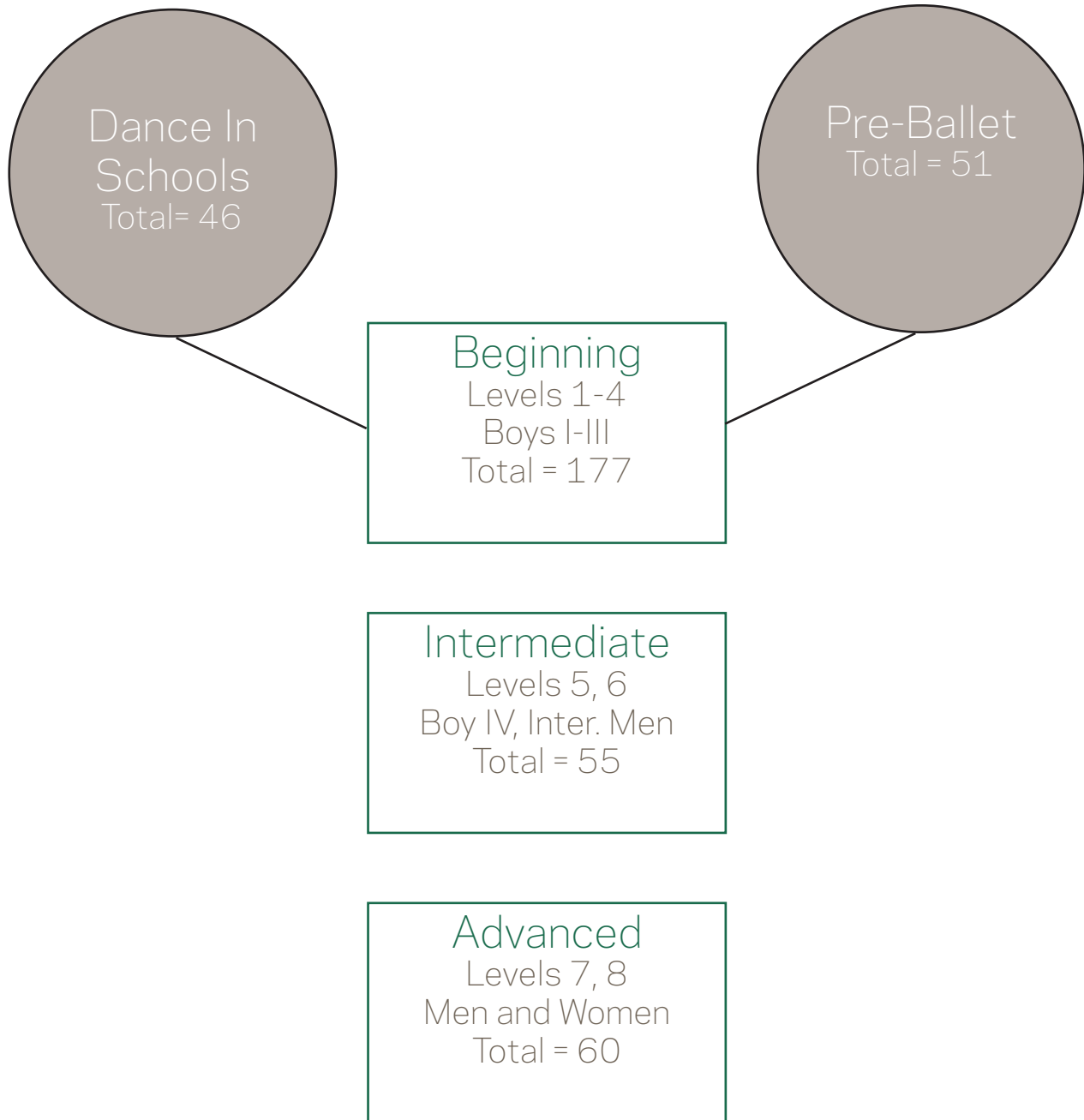
When Harold retired in 1975, Richard Cammack became the new director of the School. Cammack oversaw the School's move into its current state-of-the-art facility in 1983. Helgi Tomasson assumed leadership of the School after becoming artistic director of San Francisco Ballet in 1985. In 1986, Tomasson invited former San Francisco Ballet ballerina Nancy Johnson to head the School, a role she held until 1993, when he appointed Lola de Avila to the School's newly established position of associate director. De Avila left the position in 1999 at which time Gloria Govrin was appointed the School's associate director. In July 2006, de Avila returned to the position of associate director.

Today, the School boasts a distinguished international staff, headed by Associate Director Lola de Avila, a Trainee Program for advanced-level students, a dedicated student residence, and an extensive scholarship program. Of the current Company, over 40 percent of the dancers received all or part of their training at the School, and many San Francisco Ballet School students have gone on to dance with professional companies nationally and internationally.

Now, more than 75 years after its founding, San Francisco Ballet has, indeed, achieved Gaetano Merola's original goal of elevating San Francisco to a "high position in the realm of dance." In 2008 San Francisco Ballet School celebrated its 75th anniversary along with the Company.

2010-2011 School Year Enrollment

Total enrollment= 389*
Total Girls = 301, Total Boys = 88



* As of October 29, 2010



about

The Center for Dance Education

As a vital cultural contributor to our community, the San Francisco Ballet Center for Dance Education (CDE) has programs that reach wide audiences from diverse populations throughout the Bay Area; approximately 35,000 people benefit from these programs each year. Though the Center for Dance Education is fairly new, there is a long history of established free programs administered by SF Ballet.

The highly popular pre-performance discussion program, known as **Meet the Artist** Interviews, spotlight the specific SF Ballet repertory program to be performed that afternoon/evening. These informative talks feature Company dancers, guest artists, choreographers, and conductors in conversation with a moderator. Meet the Artist Interviews last 30 minutes and take place in the War Memorial Opera House one hour before the performance on select evenings and Sunday matinees, as well as opening nights of all repertory programs. They are free to all ticket holders.

Dance scholar and educator Mary Wood, along with other guests, hosts the **Pointes of View** lecture series, salon-style interviews with SF Ballet dancers, guest artists, choreographers, musicians, and designers. These hour-long informative discussions give attendees an in-depth look into the specific SF Ballet repertory program to be performed that evening. These programs are free and open to the public and due to popular demand have relocated to the Green Room

of the Veterans Building of the War Memorial Opera House.

The San Francisco Ballet Center for Dance Education is also proud to offer new and expanding programs that serve children, youth, and families throughout the Bay Area, providing important avenues of access, education, and opportunities in dance.

SF Ballet offers two **Community Matinee** performances of selections from the current repertory season. These matinees feature special educational behind-the-scenes lecture demonstrations. All Community Matinee performances are held at the War Memorial Opera House. Discount tickets are offered to students and seniors, serving approximately 6,000 school-aged children, teachers, and seniors annually.

Family Connections is a program that brings dance workshops and lectures to venues such as the San Francisco Public Library Main Branch and the Asian Art Museum. This program gives children and their parents a shared experience of dance and, when available, free tickets to see the SF Ballet in performance at the War Memorial Opera House are provided to participants.

The **Dance in Schools and Communities** (DISC) program is SF Ballet's most long-standing outreach program. This celebrated program reaches nearly 3,700 elementary school children each year, with 10-week dance residencies in 37 elementary

about

The Center for Dance Education

schools in the San Francisco Unified School District. DISC is a multicultural dance and music program celebrating the historical, traditional, and folkloric dance traditions of diverse cultures. DISC provides all participants complimentary tickets to SF Ballet Community Matinees. Annually, DISC awards approximately 50 students with full one-year scholarships to the prestigious SF Ballet School.

Select DISC students are also given the opportunity to participate in the annual **Performance Project**. During this multi-week program, children experience the process of creating and performing a dance/musical presentation. Performances take place at various venues throughout San Francisco.

Ballet 101 is a class for adults who are curious about the art of ballet and the world of dance. This adult education course is designed to give participants a hands-on, interactive learning experience. The program harnesses the talent and experience of SF Ballet employees and faculty who staff this program. The course consists of a series of lectures and experiential activities that build on the course's previous teachings.

The **Community Circle Dance Camp** is a week-long summer day camp that provides instruction in dance, music, and art for children from all over San Francisco. Targeted toward inner-city youth, the camp is based in the Tenderloin neighborhood and is offered free of charge for children of low-income families. A wide variety of classes are offered to students, ranging from hip hop and salsa, to circus arts and visual arts, providing children a well rounded experience in arts education.

Online Educational Resources are designed to educate and excite users about SF Ballet and dance in general. Downloadable study guides enhance the theater-going experience for students attending Community Matinees, with tailored information, specific to the ballets being performed. Study Guides include articles, stories, music clips, and links to online resources. Visit sfballet.org to access these resources.

The Visiting Scholar Program brings nationally known scholars to SF Ballet to lecture on a variety of topics that are meant to educate and inspire balletomanes of all levels and ages.

Visiting Scholars:

- 2011 Doug Fullington, *Dance Historian*
- 2010 Professor Richard Tarushkin
- 2009 Professor Janice Ross
- 2008 Professor Jennifer Fisher
- 2007 Professor Lynn Garafola
- 2006 Professor Deborah Jowitt

Session 3



Neumeier's *The Little Mermaid*
(© Erik Tomasson)

about San Francisco Ballet



San Francisco Ballet Company Class
(© Erik Tomasson)

San Francisco Ballet, the oldest professional ballet company in America, has emerged as a world-class arts organization since it was founded as the San Francisco Opera Ballet in 1933. Initially, its primary purpose was to train dancers to appear in lavish, full-length opera productions.

Willam Christensen arrived in 1938 and choreographed the Company's first full-length production, *Coppélia*, the following year. In 1940, he staged the first American full-length production of *Swan Lake*. On Christmas Eve 1944, Christensen launched a national holiday tradition with the American premiere of *Nutcracker*, the first complete version of the ballet ever staged in the United States.

In 1942, the Company became a totally separate entity from the opera and was renamed San Francisco Ballet. Willam Christensen was artistic director, and his brother Harold was appointed director of the San Francisco Ballet School, a position he retained for 33 years. A third brother, Lew Christensen, America's first premier danseur, joined Willam as co-director in 1951, and took over the Company the following year. Under Lew's direction, the Company made its East Coast debut at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in 1956 and toured 11 Asian nations the following year, marking the first performances of an American ballet company in the Far East.

In 1972, after performing in various San Francisco theaters, the Company settled permanently in the War Memorial Opera House for its annual residency. The following year, Michael Smuin was appointed associate artistic director and celebrated his new partnership with Lew Christensen by collaborating on a full-length production of *Cinderella*. In 1976, Smuin's *Romeo and Juliet* became the first full-length ballet and the first performance by a West Coast company to be shown on the PBS television series *Dance in America*. In 1981, Smuin's *The Tempest*—the first ballet ever broadcast live from the War Memorial Opera House—was nominated for three Emmy Awards (Willa Kim received the award for Outstanding

Costume Design). Three years later, Smuin received an Emmy Award for Choreography for the Dance in America national broadcast of *A Song for Dead Warriors*.

In 1974, San Francisco Ballet faced bankruptcy, but its supporters and the community responded with an extraordinary grassroots effort called "Save Our Ballet," which successfully brought the Company back from the brink. That same year, Dr. Richard E. LeBlond, Jr. was appointed president and general manager of the San Francisco Ballet Association. He developed the first long-range plan for an American dance company, and in 18 months San Francisco Ballet was in the black financially.

Helgi Tomasson's arrival as artistic director in July 1985 marked the beginning of a new era for San Francisco Ballet. Like Lew Christensen, Tomasson was, for many years, a leading dancer for the most important ballet choreographer of the 20th century, George Balanchine.

Less than two years after Tomasson's arrival, San Francisco Ballet unveiled its fourth production of *Nutcracker* in December 1986. Tomasson has since staged acclaimed full-length productions of many classics, including *Swan Lake* (1988, 2009); *The Sleeping Beauty* (1990); *Romeo & Juliet* (1994); *Giselle* (1999); *Don Quixote*, co-staged with former Principal Dancer and current Choreographer in Residence Yuri Possokhov (2003); and *Nutcracker* (2004).

In 1991, San Francisco Ballet performed in New York City for the first time in 26 years, returning in 1993, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006, and 2008. Following the initial tour, The New York Times proclaimed, "Mr. Tomasson has accomplished the unprecedented: He has pulled a so-called regional company into the national ranks, and he has done so by honing the dancers into a classical style of astonishing verve and purity. San Francisco Ballet under Helgi Tomasson's leadership is one of the

spectacular success stories of the arts in America.”

In May 1995, San Francisco Ballet hosted 12 ballet companies from around the world for UNited We Dance: An International Festival, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter, which took place in the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center in San Francisco. Never before had a dance event brought together over 150 international artists for two weeks of creative exchange and inspiration.

San Francisco Ballet continues to enrich and expand its repertory and presents approximately 100 performances annually. The Company’s vast repertory includes works by Sir Frederick Ashton, George Balanchine, August Bournonville, Christopher Bruce, Val Caniparoli, Lew Christensen, Nacho Duato, Flemming Flindt, William Forsythe, James Kudelka, Jirí Kylián, Lar Lubovitch, Wayne McGregor, Agnes de Mille, Sir Kenneth MacMillan, Hans van Manen, Peter Martins, Mark Morris, Rudolf Nureyev, Marius Petipa, Roland Petit, Jerome Robbins, Paul Taylor, Antony Tudor, and Christopher Wheeldon.

In recent years, the Company’s touring program has become increasingly ambitious. In fall 2008, as part of its year-long 75th anniversary celebration, San Francisco Ballet embarked on a critically acclaimed four-city American Tour with engagements at Chicago’s Harris Theater for Music and Dance, New York City Center, Southern California’s Orange County Performing Arts Center, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.

San Francisco Ballet has also enjoyed frequent overseas tours, including engagements at prestigious venues such as the famed Opéra de Paris-Palais Garnier in Paris (2001); London’s Sadler’s Wells Theatre (1999, 2004) and the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden (2002); Athens’ Megaron Theatre (2002) Herod Atticus Amphitheatre (2004); Tivoli in Copenhagen (1998, 2010), and the Edinburgh International Festival at the Edinburgh Playhouse (2003).

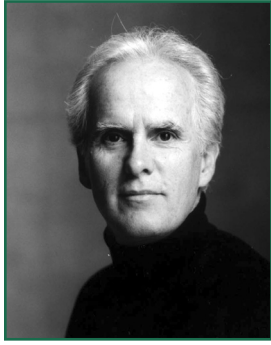
Notably, on the second day of the Company’s London engagement in 2004, Sadler’s Wells’ box office experienced the second-highest single sales day in its history. Of the engagement, David Dougill of The Sunday Times wrote, “Helgi Tomasson’s outstanding artistic direction...has transformed a regional American troupe into one of the world’s top ballet companies.”

In 2005, the Company returned to Paris, participating in a three-week inaugural engagement at Les étés de la danse de Paris, a new outdoor dance festival. In fall 2009, San Francisco Ballet made its first trip to the People’s Republic of China, performing Tomasson’s 1988 production of *Swan Lake*, as well as a mixed-repertory program, in Shanghai and Beijing.

In 2004, San Francisco Ballet was the first American ballet company to present the evening-length *Sylvia*, with all-new choreography by Mark Morris. The Company also performed a two-week Centennial Celebration to honor the 100th anniversary of the birth of Master Choreographer George Balanchine. In December 2004, San Francisco Ballet debuted Tomasson’s critically acclaimed new production of *Nutcracker*, hailed by The New York Times as “...striking, elegant and beautiful.” In 2005, Tomasson was awarded the prestigious Lew Christensen Medal in honor of his 20th anniversary as artistic director of San Francisco Ballet, and that same year, the Company won its first Laurence Olivier Award, for its 2004 fall season at Sadler’s Wells Theatre. In 2006, in a readers’ poll conducted by Dance Europe magazine, San Francisco Ballet was the first non-European company to be voted “Company of the Year” by the publication. In 2008, San Francisco Ballet was one of the recipients of the Jerome Robbins Award for excellence in dance.

2008 marked the Company’s 75th Anniversary Season and highlights included the revival of former San Francisco Ballet Director Lew Christensen’s *Filling Station*, one of the oldest American folk ballets; an all-Robbins Program, commemorating the 10th anniversary of the master choreographer’s death; the San Francisco Ballet premiere of *West Side Story Suite*; a tribute to San Francisco Ballet from three international companies (Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo, The National Ballet of Canada, and New York City Ballet); and a New Works Festival of 10 world premieres by 10 of the dance world’s most diverse and acclaimed choreographers including Julia Adam, Val Caniparoli, Jorma Elo, Margaret Jenkins, James Kudelka, Mark Morris, Yuri Possokhov, Paul Taylor, Stanton Welch, and Christopher Wheeldon. Other anniversary initiatives included a commemorative book, *San Francisco Ballet at Seventy-Five*; special exhibitions; an alumni reunion weekend; and the broadcast of Tomasson’s *Nutcracker* in December 2008 on *Great Performances’ Dance in America* series on PBS, produced in partnership with KQED Public Television in San Francisco. In January 2010, the Ballet’s Opening Night Gala, Silver Celebration, honored Tomasson’s 25 years as artistic director of San Francisco Ballet.

The San Francisco Ballet School, overseen by Tomasson, attracts students from around the world, training approximately 350 annually. In addition to filling the ranks of San Francisco Ballet, graduates have gone on to join distinguished ballet companies throughout the world.



© David Martinez

Helgi Tomasson Artistic Director & Choreographer

biography

Helgi Tomasson has held the position of artistic director for San Francisco Ballet since July 1985. Since then, the Company has evolved from a respected regional troupe to an international company praised for its broad repertory, dancers of uncommon range and skill, and a vision that continually sets the standard for the international dance world.

San Francisco Ballet is dancing better than it has at any point in its history. As a choreographer, teacher, and coach, Tomasson has fostered an uncompromising classicism that has become the bedrock of the Company's training. The dancers are energized and inspired by this rigorous training and continue to rise to new heights with each passing year.

Born in Reykjavik, Iceland, Tomasson began his early ballet training there with an Icelandic teacher and then joined the National Theatre's affiliated school, which was led by Danish instructors Erik and Lisa Bidsted. At 15, the emerging dancer began his professional career with the celebrated Pantomime Theatre in Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens. Two years later, Jerome Robbins met Tomasson and, impressed by his dancing, arranged a scholarship for him to study at the School of American Ballet in New York City. Soon after, Tomasson began his professional career with The Joffrey Ballet and two years later joined The Harkness Ballet. Over the next six years, he became one of the company's most celebrated principal dancers.

In 1969, Tomasson entered the First International Ballet Competition in Moscow as a United States representative and returned with the Silver Medal (the Gold Medal was awarded to Mikhail Baryshnikov). The following year, Tomasson joined New York City Ballet as a principal dancer and over the course of his career became one of the finest classical dancers of his era. He was one of the foremost interpreters of George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins, and both men created several roles expressly for him. In 1982, Tomasson choreographed his first ballet for the School of American Ballet Workshop, which elicited encouragement from Balanchine to continue choreographing.

Tomasson accepted the invitation from San Francisco Ballet to become artistic director of America's oldest professional ballet company in 1985, drawing to a close a glorious performing career. Since assuming this role with the Company, Tomasson has choreographed over 40 ballets, including stunning full-length productions of *Don Quixote* (co-staged by Yuri Possokhov), *Giselle*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and two productions of *Swan Lake* (1988 and 2009). His intricate and varied works, such as *7 for Eight*, *Chi-Lin*, *Concerto Grosso*, *The Fifth Season*, *Handel—a Celebration*, *Meistens Mozart*, *Nanna's Lied*, and *Sonata*, showcase the unique qualities of individual dancers. Tomasson's *Prism*, which debuted in 2000 at New York City Ballet, received rave reviews and was deemed a "triumph" by *The New York Times*. In 2004, his new production of *Nutcracker*, created in collaboration with an internationally recognized design team, debuted to enthusiastic critic

Helgi Tomasson

biography

and audience response. *The New York Times* proclaimed, "This is a *Nutcracker* on a grand scale...striking, elegant and beautiful." On December 17, 2008, Tomasson's *Nutcracker* was broadcast nationally on Great Performances on PBS, in partnership with KQED Public Television in San Francisco.

The strong classical base instilled by Tomasson enables the dancers to effortlessly navigate a myriad of styles by a range of internationally distinguished choreographers. Those invited by Tomasson to create works on the Company have included David Bintley, Val Caniparoli, William Forsythe, James Kudelka, Lar Lubovitch, Mark Morris, Paul Taylor, Stanton Welch, and Christopher Wheeldon. Tomasson has also continued to expand San Francisco Ballet's repertory through acquiring works by renowned choreographers such as Sir Frederick Ashton, George Balanchine, August Bournonville, Hans van Manen, Wayne McGregor, Agnes de Mille, Nacho Duato, Flemming Flindt, Roland Petit, Jerome Robbins, and Antony Tudor, among others. Tomasson's own works have been performed by New York City Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, Houston Ballet, Alberta Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, Ballet Estable del Teatro Colón, and Asami Maki Ballet. In Denmark, Tomasson's 1993 staging of *The Sleeping Beauty* was the most lavish production ever produced in the Royal Danish Ballet's history and was filmed for Danish public television in April 1995.

Under Tomasson's direction, San Francisco Ballet has toured the world, receiving praise for its purity and verve. Engagements in New York City (1991, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2008), London (1999, 2001, 2004), Copenhagen (1998, 2010), and Paris (1989, 1994, 2001, 2005) are among the highlights of the Company's history. For the Company's 2004 London engagement, San Francisco Ballet won the prestigious Laurence Olivier Award, its first, in the category of Outstanding Achievement in Dance. Of the tour, *The Guardian* (UK) noted, "As director

of San Francisco Ballet, Helgi Tomasson has started to acquire an aura of infallibility, his expertise in laying down repertory, and in balancing great evenings of dance, is held in envy by the rest of the profession."

Tomasson's vision, commitment, and dedication to the art of classical dance were demonstrated when he conceived UNited We Dance: An International Festival, produced in San Francisco in May 1995. Created to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter, it included 12 international companies of the highest caliber that Tomasson had invited to present new works created by native choreographers. Never before had a dance event brought together over 150 artists for an unprecedented two weeks of creative exchange and inspiration. In spring 2008, as part of its yearlong 75th anniversary celebration, San Francisco Ballet presented a New Works Festival of 10 world premieres by 10 of the dance world's most diverse and acclaimed choreographers. The festival was called "ambitious and unprecedented" by *The Washington Post* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* hailed it as a "daring onslaught of fresh work... this is what the ballet world needs now."

Tomasson's achievements have garnered him numerous awards and honors, and he has participated as a judge for ballet competitions in Italy, Russia, France, Finland, and Japan. During the 1970s in his homeland of Iceland, he was named a Knight of the Order of the Falcon for his achievements as a dancer. In June 1990, Tomasson was named Commander of the Order of the Falcon by Ólafur Ragnar Grimsson, the president of Iceland, for his continuous achievements in the arts. In 1989, he received Dance Bay Area's Isadora Duncan Award for his outstanding choreography of *Swan Lake*. In recognition of his artistic excellence, Tomasson received the Golden Plate Award from the American Academy of Achievement in 1992. That same year, he received the Dance Magazine Award in recognition of his contributions to the dance world. In 1995,

Helgi Tomasson

biography

Tomasson joined the Artistic Advisory Board of The Ballet Theatre in Prague, directed by Jana Kurová. Also in 1995, Tomasson was honored with the Cultural Award of The American-Scandinavian Foundation. In 1996, he was presented with a Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, from Dominican College of San Rafael, in recognition of his value as a role model, his extraordinary career, and his community-service accomplishments. That same year, he was awarded the Isadora Duncan Special Award for UNited We Dance: An International Festival.

Currently, Tomasson serves on the Board of Directors of the School of American Ballet and the Artistic Committee for the New York Choreographic Institute, and has served as a member of the National Endowment for the Arts Dance Advisory Panel. In May 2001, Tomasson was granted the rank of Officier in the French Order of Arts and Letters, established in 1957 to recognize those who have contributed significantly to furthering the arts in France and throughout the world. Hugues Gall, then director of the Opéra National de Paris, presented the award in a ceremony attended by Grimsson, following San Francisco Ballet's triumphant opening at the Palais Garnier. In spring 2002, the Board of Trustees of New York's Juilliard School unanimously voted to bestow an honorary doctoral degree upon Tomasson, as one of five doctorates given annually in different artistic disciplines. Other recipients include playwright Edward Albee and actor and comedian Bill Cosby. In 2005, Tomasson was awarded the prestigious Lew Christensen Medal in honor of his 20th anniversary as

artistic director of San Francisco Ballet. In spring 2007, Tomasson won a sustained achievement award from the Isadora Duncan Dance Awards, also in recognition of his 20 years as artistic director. In May of the same year, during a tour to Iceland's Reykjavik Arts Festival, Grimsson awarded Tomasson the Grand Cross Star of the Order of the Falcon, the country's most prestigious honor. In 2008, he was awarded the Commonwealth Club of California's Distinguished Citizen Award. In January 2010, the Company's Opening Night Gala, Silver Celebration, honored Tomasson's remarkable achievements to date.

In addition to his role as artistic director and principal choreographer of the Company, Tomasson is the director of the San Francisco Ballet School. For Tomasson, the School is central to the life and development of the Company. Just as he expects the finest dancing and most meticulous attention to detail from his dancers, he demands the highest standards for training the students in the School.

Tomasson lives in San Francisco with his wife, Marlene, who was dancing with The Joffrey Ballet when they met. They have two sons, Erik and Kris.



© David Allen

Lola de Avila
Associate Director
San Francisco Ballet School

biography

Lola de Avila was trained in Zaragoza, Spain, by her mother Maria de Avila, and went on to study in Cannes; Cologne, Germany; and Paris with teachers such as Anton Dolin, Nora Kiss, Leon Woizkowski, Victor Gsovsky, and Rosella Hightower. At the early age of 15, she made her soloist debut in the Claude Giraud Ballet, and throughout her stage career she performed a wide variety of repertory, including *Corrida*, *La Sylphide*, *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Raymonda*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and Lifar's *Suite en Blanc*, with partners that included Rudolf Nureyev and Erik Bruhn. As a dancer, de Avila performed with a number of companies including the Royal Chamber Ballet of Spain, Ballet of Madrid, and Teatro De La Zarzuela.

In 1978, de Avila was named director of the School of Victor Ullate. In 1980, she became involved with the National Classical Ballet (part of the Ministry of Culture), helping to restage choreography as well as teach in the school. In 1983, she helped form the Ballet of Zaragoza, and a year later was appointed assistant director of the National Ballet of Spain. Two years later, she was appointed head director of the School of the National Ballet of Spain, and of Maria de Avila Ballet School.

De Avila first taught at the San Francisco Ballet School for two weeks in 1990 as

part of The E.L. Wiegand Master Guest Teacher Program. The following years, she returned for a full-semester residency, again sponsored by the E. L. Wiegand Foundation. In fall 1992, de Avila accepted Artistic Director Helgi Tomasson's invitation to serve as associate director for the San Francisco Ballet School, a position she held until September 1999.

After returning to Europe, de Avila became director of the Maria de Avila Ballet School in Zaragoza. During this period, she continued to collaborate with San Francisco Ballet, coaching Company members in various works, including Paquita for San Francisco Ballet's 1991 Opening Night Gala, Tomasson's *Giselle*, and *Swan Lake*, as well as Tomasson/Possokhov's *Don Quixote*. At the same time, she worked with other companies including Boston Ballet and Houston Ballet. From 2000-2002, she was resident ballet mistress at Ballet de Genève. In 2004, she restored *Les Sylphides* for Maggio Fiorentino and in January 2005, the company premiered her production of *Giselle* at the Teatro Comunale di Firenze. In summer 2006, following the departure of former SF Ballet School Associate Director Gloria Govrin, de Avila was appointed associate director of the school.

about

San Francisco Ballet Orchestra



San Francisco Ballet Orchestra
(© Marty Sohl)

San Francisco Ballet, the oldest professional ballet company in America, was also one of the first dance companies to have its own permanent body of musicians. In October 1975, the San Francisco Performing Arts Orchestra was founded to serve as the Ballet's official orchestra, and in 1983, the group's name was changed to San Francisco Ballet Orchestra.

In the preceding years, a pickup orchestra made up largely of San Francisco Symphony members had served San Francisco Ballet. Later, the Oakland Symphony served in this capacity, but an expanded schedule and additional concert dates made commitment to San Francisco Ballet increasingly difficult. Today, the ensemble enjoys the distinction of being one of three major orchestras in one city, along with the San Francisco Symphony and the San Francisco Opera—a rarity in this country.

In the 1970s, an ever-expanding repertory of new works required the dedication and talent of a permanent ensemble. Ballet management, including Co-Directors Lew Christensen and Michael Smuin, along with then-Music Conductor Denis de Coteau and Alex Horvath (violinist and eventual Orchestra personnel manager), made this a top priority. The first step was to retain Jean-Louis LeRoux as associate conductor, and the process of negotiating with the musicians' union began immediately. Auditions were held with over two hundred musicians trying out. By 1975, the Orchestra, made up of 38 musicians, was officially formed. The Performing Arts Orchestra had its premiere during San Francisco Ballet's *Nutcracker* in December. Following the first *Nutcracker* rehearsal with the Orchestra, the dancers came downstage

and applauded both the musicians and de Coteau. During ensuing repertory seasons, the Orchestra, under the leadership of newly appointed Music Director Denis de Coteau, was met with both audience and critical acclaim.

In 1978, the Company returned to New York for the first time since its 1965 engagement at Lincoln Center. The Company's 12-performance series, which included accompaniment by the Performing Arts Orchestra at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, was an unqualified success. During the engagement, the late critic Byron Belt hailed the Orchestra as "one of the best in the business." The Orchestra continued to accompany the Ballet on tour until 1984, when it ceased touring for two reasons: the cost was increasingly prohibitive, and as the Company gained stature, it performed in larger, more prominent venues that often had their own orchestras. Staying local, however, had rewards. Over the years, the Orchestra has accompanied a number of prestigious international ballet companies who have toured to the Bay Area, performing in venues such as San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House and the Berkeley Community Theatre. Some of these companies included The Royal Ballet, the Royal Danish Ballet (1979), Stuttgart Ballet (late 1980s), the Bolshoi Ballet (1987), Paul Taylor Dance Company (1990), American Ballet Theatre (1991, 1992), and the Paris Opéra Ballet (2001).

The ensemble's early objectives included a strong commitment to educating students and aspiring musicians in local schools, as well as offering music concerts that helped establish it as a professional orchestra of the highest caliber. In May 1979 the Orchestra had its debut concert, performing

works by composers such as Haydn, Ives, and Vivaldi, at Herbst Theatre in the War Memorial Veterans Building. The Orchestra also had the distinction of accompanying the Company in an evening performance for the Solemn Opening Ceremony for the 1984 Olympic Games, at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles.

With a highly capable Orchestra, the Ballet was now able to perform new and commissioned works without concern that the new music scores would be too difficult. These new ballets included Smuin's *The Tempest* (music by Paul Chihara), *Medea* (music by Samuel Barber), and *Romeo & Juliet* (music by Sergei Prokofiev), among others. Some of these works proved so musically successful that the Orchestra eventually recorded them. Of the 1981 recording of *The Tempest*, a Classical Records review read, "This inordinately handsome set brings us a sample of San Francisco Ballet's wonderful orchestra. The sound...is first rate. Highly recommended!"

With the appointment of Helgi Tomasson to the position of artistic director of San Francisco Ballet in 1985, the Company's reputation evolved from that of a regional troupe to a world-class dance company. As the Company's acclaim grew, so did the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra's, and by the 1990s it was generally regarded as one of the finest ballet orchestras in the world. Notably, in 1995, the Orchestra accompanied 12 international dance companies, as well as San Francisco Ballet, during the ambitious, weeklong UNited We Dance Festival, which promoted international communication and understanding.

In 1998, due to failing health, Music Director Denis de Coteau stepped down reluctantly, after over twenty years in this capacity. Conductor Emil de Cou, who had been with the Orchestra as conductor since

1993, assumed the title of acting music director and conductor in de Coteau's place. For the next three years, until 2001, de Cou led the Orchestra, before joining Washington D.C.'s National Symphony Orchestra. After he departed, Jean-Louis LeRoux returned to the Ballet as interim music director for two years. In May 2003, Andrew Mogrelia was named music director and principal conductor; he left in 2005 to focus on his music director duties at San Francisco Conservatory of Music as well as international conducting and recording engagements. That same year, Martin West, who had guested frequently as a conductor with the Orchestra, assumed the position.

Today, the Orchestra accompanies the Ballet for the entire run of the annual *Nutcracker* production and throughout each repertory season. The existing Orchestra can be expanded for ballets requiring fuller orchestration, such as the full-length *Romeo & Juliet*. In addition, the ensemble's vast repertory includes hundreds of works, spanning four centuries of music history, from Monteverdi and Mozart to film scores. Notably, the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra has made critically acclaimed recordings of composers from Handel to Goldenthal, as well as four televised recordings for the PBS series "Dance in America" (Lubovitch's *Othello*; Smuin's *The Tempest*, *Cinderella*, and *Romeo & Juliet*). Of the 1999 recording by San Francisco Ballet Orchestra entitled *Debussy Rediscovered*, ClassicsToday.com and Amazon.com music critic Robert Levine wrote, "The playing throughout is exemplary and the performances leave nothing to be desired. Very highly recommended." The year 2005 marked the 30th anniversary of San Francisco Ballet Orchestra's founding. In late 2007, the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra released a self-produced recording of the full score of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*.



Members of the SF Ballet School Trainee Program in Balanchine's *The Four Temperaments* (©Erik Tomasson)

about

San Francisco Ballet's Trainee Program

Established in 2004, the San Francisco Ballet School Trainee Program is a one to two-year pre-professional program comprised of students chosen from the School's most advanced level. Trainees range in age from 16 to 19 years old and hail from all over the world. Participation is by invitation from SF Ballet Artistic Director and SF Ballet School Director Helgi Tomasson and School Associate Director Lola de Avila.

Trainees participate in daily ballet technique class, as well as pointe, batterie, and pas de deux classes taught by SF Ballet School faculty members. They rehearse and perform classical and contemporary works from the repertory of SF Ballet and works staged especially for them. Trainees also participate in workshops on teaching a ballet class, choreography, and stagecraft. The Trainees perform from October to June throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. These performances include outreach programs at schools and community centers, appearances at corporate and special events, as well as their own full evening performances. They understudy and dance in many SF Ballet productions including Tomasson's *Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake*. The year culminates with the SF Ballet School Student Showcase performances in May.

This comprehensive program provides the experience necessary to ease the transition from student to professional dancer, all while offering personal attention in a small, nurturing environment. Past Trainees have gone on to join SF Ballet as well as other notable companies including: Ballet San Jose, Cincinnati Ballet, Houston Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, Oregon Ballet Theatre and The Washington Ballet.

Trainees joining SF Ballet after completion of the program:

2004-2005: 2 (apprentice positions)

2005-2006: 4 (3 apprentice positions, one corps de ballet position)

2006-2007: 2 (apprentice positions)

2007-2008 2 (one apprentice position, one corps de ballet position)

2008-2009: 5 (3 apprentice positions and 2 corps de ballet positions)

2009-2010 6 (3 apprentice positions and 3 corps de ballet positions)

Session

4



San Francisco Ballet rehearses Balanchine's *Coppélia*
(© Eric Tomasson)

about

Coppélia

For *Coppélia* readings, please refer to the supplemental materials from *Balanchine's Complete Stories of the Great Ballets*, George Balanchine and Francis Mason

Composer: Léo Delibes

Choreography: Alexandra Danilova and George Balanchine (after Marius Petipa)
© The George Balanchine Trust

Music: *Coppélia, ou La Fille aux Yeux d'mail* (1876) by Léo Delibes. With excerpts from *Sylvia* (produced 1876) and *La Source* [Naila] (1866)

Premiere: July 17, 1974, New York City Ballet, Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Saratoga Springs, New York

Original Cast: Patricia McBride, Helgi Tomasson, Shaun O'Brien, Marnee Morris, Merrill Ashley, Christine Redpath, Susan Hendl, Colleen Neary, Robert Weiss

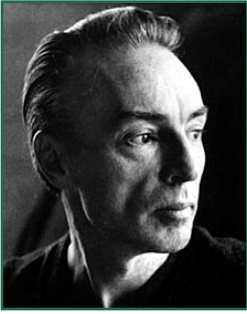
Average Length: Act I: 36 min.
Act II: 28 min. Act III: 35 min.



Gennadi Nedvigin and Maria Kochetkova rehearse
Balanchine's *Coppélia*
(© Erik Tomasson)

George Balanchine's joyous classic *Coppélia* makes its long-awaited San Francisco Ballet premiere in a lavish and colorful new production. Filled with merriment, comedic charm, and spectacular dancing, *Coppélia* is the story of Swanilda and Franz, whose courtship takes a surprising turn when Dr. Coppélius, a mysterious inventor, creates a life-like doll with whom Franz becomes infatuated. Determined to teach her wanderlust lover a lesson, Swanilda dresses up as the doll and pretends to come to life. Ultimately, Swanilda and Franz reunite and a vivacious wedding day celebration ensues.

This enchanting story ballet features a melodious score by French composer Léo Delibes and all new scenery and costumes by Italian designer Roberta Guidi di Bagno.



(© Tanaquil LeClerq Collection)

George Balanchine
Choreographer

biography

Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, George Balanchine (1904-1983) is one of ballet's most influential and innovative contemporary choreographers. After studying at the Imperial Ballet School as a child, and working as a dancer in the Mariinsky Theater (now the Kirov), Balanchine left Russia and became ballet master for Serge Diaghilev's newly formed Ballets Russes in Paris. A meeting in 1933, with the American arts patron Lincoln Kirstein led Balanchine to emigrate to the United States, where he and Kirstein dreamed of creating an American ballet company.

According to one story, Balanchine famously told Kirstein, "But first, a school," and the two men established the School of American Ballet in 1934.

Ultimately it was not until 1948 that they would found New York City Ballet, where Balanchine would serve as ballet master and principal choreographer from 1948 until his death in 1983.

During that time he created 425 dance works, many of which are still performed today and many of which are in the repertoire of San Francisco Ballet, including *Serenade* (1934), *Concerto Barocco* (1941), *Le Palais de Cristal*, later renamed *Symphony in C* (1947), *Agon* (1957), *Symphony in Three Movements* (1972), *Stravinsky Violin Concerto* (1972), *Ballo della Regina* (1978), *Jewels* (1967) and many more.

Balanchine also created choreography for films, operas and musicals, among them "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue," originally created for Broadway's *On Your Toes*, *Babes in Arms*, *Song of Norway*, *Star Spangled Rhythm* and *The Goldwyn Follies*

As noted in the Balanchine Foundation's biography, "A major artistic figure of the twentieth century, Balanchine revolutionized the look of classical ballet. Taking classicism as his base, he heightened, quickened, expanded, streamlined, and even inverted the fundamentals of the 400-year-old language of academic dance. This had an inestimable influence on the growth of dance in America. Although at first his style seemed particularly suited to the energy and speed of American dancers, especially those he trained, his ballets are now performed by all the major classical ballet companies throughout the world."



Arthur Saint- Léon
(Photo by B. Braquehais)

Arthur Saint-Léon Choreographer

biography

Born in Paris in 1821, Arthur Saint-Léon was the Ballet Master of St. Petersburg Imperial Ballet from 1859 until 1869 and the original choreographer of the ballet *Coppélia*.

Trained as a dancer at the Paris Opéra Ballet, Saint-Léon also studied violin with the legendary Niccolò Paganini. A demi-caractère dancer, he debuted as a teenager at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, later touring Europe and garnering acclaim for his technique and light lofty jumps—a notable achievement in an era where ballerinas en pointe were more in vogue than male dancers.

It was during one such tour that Saint-Léon met the Romantic ballerina Fanny Cerrito whom he would court and later marry in 1845. To showcase Cerrito's particular qualities, Saint-Léon devised his first major ballet *La Vivandière* (1843).

As his renown grew, Saint-Léon began to teach and choreograph at the Paris Opéra, as well as at Venice's La Fenice Theater. However, his relationship with Cerrito deteriorated, leading to a parting of ways in 1851. And when Cerrito joined the Paris Opéra as a dancer, Saint-Léon left.

In 1859, Saint-Léon was offered the position of Ballet Master to the Imperial Ballet in St. Petersburg, following in the footsteps of Jules Perrot. He remained in that post for ten years, succeeded by the great classical choreographer Marius Petipa.

Though Saint-Léon was one of the first ballet masters to devise a system of notating ballets—his book *La Sténochorégraphie, ou Art d'écrire promptement la danse* was published in 1852—few of his choreographic works have survived into the modern repertoire.

Coppélia, perhaps his most famous ballet, however, is still performed in the active repertoire of many companies today. Though the debut was inauspicious—its first run was cut short by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War and the choreographer himself died only two days afterward in 1870—its effervescent charm and gaiety have made it one of the most beloved of the Romantic era ballets.



Marius Petipa
(Photographer unknown)

Marius Petipa Choreographer

biography

Marius Ivanovich Petipa Born Victor Marius Alphonse Petipa on 11 March 1822 in Marseille, France — died in Gurzuf in the Crimea, Russian Empire, in what is now Ukraine, on 14 July [O.S. 1 July] 1910) was a french ballet dancer, teacher, and choreographer. Marius Petipa is cited nearly unanimously by the most noted artists of the classical ballet to be the most influential balletmaster and choreographer that has ever lived (among them George Balanchine, who cited Petipa as his primary influence).

Marius Petipa is noted for his long career as Premier Maître de Ballet of the St. Petersburg Imperial Theatres, a position he held from 1871 until 1903. Petipa created over fifty ballets, some of which have survived in versions either faithful to, inspired by, or reconstructed from the original — The Pharaoh's Daughter (1862); Don Quixote (1869); La Bayadère (1877); Le Talisman (1889); The Sleeping Beauty (1890); The Nutcracker (which was most likely choreographed by Lev Ivanov, with Petipa's counsel and instruction) (1892); Le réveil de Flore (1894); Le Halte de Cavalerie (1896); Raymonda (1898); Les Saisons (1900), and Les millions d'Arlequin (a.k.a.

Harlequinade) (1900).

Throughout the 1880s Petipa staged revivals of older works with increasing regularity. In 1884 Petipa staged what is considered to be his definitive revival of the romantic masterwork Giselle, and in 1885 he mounted a new production of Arthur Saint-Léon's Coppélia, a revision which would serve as the basis for nearly every version staged thereafter.

There are a number of various dances from Petipa's original works and revivals that have survived in an independent form in versions either based on the original or choreographed anew by others — the Grand Pas classique, Pas de trois and Mazurka des enfants from Paquita; La Carnaval de Venise Pas de deux from Satanella; The Talisman Pas de deux; the La Esmeralda Pas de deux; the Diane and Actéon Pas de deux; Le Halte de Cavalerie Pas de deux; the Don Quixote Pas de deux; the La Fille Mal Gardée Pas de deux; and the Harlequinade Pas de deux.

All of the full-length works and individual pieces which have survived in active performance are considered to be cornerstones of the ballet repertory.



San Francisco Ballet rehearses Balanchine's *Coppélia*
(© Eric Tomasson)

Léo Delibes
Composer

biography

Léo Delibes was born in Saint-Germain-du-Val, now part of La Flèche (Sarthe), France, in 1836. The son of a mailman, Delibes was raised mainly by his mother—a gifted amateur musician—and his uncle following his father's early death.

At the age of 11, Delibes entered the Paris Conservatoire to study music composition under the composer Adolphe Adam, later taking up positions as a rehearsal accompanist and chorus master at the Théâtre Lyrique, as second chorus master at the Paris Opéra, and as organist at Saint-Pierre-de-Chaillot.

He found some success in 1856 with his first operetta, *Deux sous de charbon, ou Le suicide de Bigorneau* ("Two sous-worth of coal"), written for the Folies-Nouvelles, but it was a cantata for Napoleon III that brought him a measure of acclaim.

As a result, Delibes collaborated in 1866 with Léon Minkus on the ballet *La source*, contributing several musical numbers and marking his entry into the world of ballet. With the enormous success of his score for the ballet *Coppélia* in 1870 and *Sylvia* in

1876 he secured his place in the canon of notable ballet composers.

Delibes also composed the music for the popular divertissement *Le jardin animé* for an 1867 restaging of the ballet *Le Corsaire*.

An influential link between the early Romantics and composers such as Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saëns and Debussy, Delibes remains beloved for his lushly romantic melodies, many of which have become memorable icons, one of the most being *The Flower Duet* ("Sous le dôme épais") from his last opera, *Lakmé*.

After his death in 1891, he was buried in the Cimetière de Montmartre in Paris.



© David Allen

Bruce Sansom
Ballet Master and
Assistant to the Artistic Director

biography

Born in the U.K., Bruce Sansom received his dance training at The Royal Ballet School, before joining The Royal Ballet in 1982 and rising through the ranks to become a principal dancer five years later. He performed all the major leads in the repertory including roles created on him by Richard Alston, David Bintley, Siobhan Davies, Sir Kenneth MacMillan, Ashley Page, and Christopher Wheeldon.

Sansom guested with a number of companies including the Australian Ballet, Hamburg Ballet, and Scottish Ballet, in addition to the year he spent performing as a principal dancer with San Francisco Ballet for the 1992 Repertory Season.

In 2000, he concluded his dancing career and spent two years in America; the first undertaking an extensive artistic director apprenticeship at San Francisco Ballet, the second earning the equivalent of an MA in arts management at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C, through what is officially known as the Arts Management Program.

In 2002, he fulfilled a one-year contract as head of development for Rambert Dance Company. During summer 2004 in England, he created, directed, and presented *An Evening of British Ballet*: a program of works by seven British choreographers performed by five couples from The Royal Ballet.

In addition to guest-teaching assignments, Sansom has worked as an independent arts producer, made regular contributions to *Dance Now* magazine, and served as a trustee of the Royal Academy of Dance and The Cecchetti Society Trust.

In 2006, he was named the director of London's Central School of Ballet, where he served for three and a half years prior to returning to SF Ballet as Ballet Master and Assistant to the Artistic Director in July 2009.

Session 5



San Francisco War Memorial Opera House
(© ME Hunt)

The War Memorial Opera House *a legacy restored*

Repairing the Damage, Preparing for the Future

When the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake struck, San Francisco Opera was preparing for a performance of Mozart's *Idomeneo*. In the great tradition of theater, the show went on, but the earthquake had left its mark. A safety net was stretched across the auditorium ceiling, chunks of plaster were missing, and a network of new cracks crisscrossed the interior walls. In late 1990, San Francisco voters passed a bond issue to repair damage caused by the quake and bring a number of city-owned buildings, including the Opera House, up to current earthquake standards.

A major challenge in the seismic design was dealing with two separate buildings—the original 1932 Opera House, and the 1978 annex added to the west end of the original building. Each had been designed under different building codes, and the two had incompatible structural systems. This became evident during the 1989 temblor, when the force of the quake caused the two structures quite literally to knock into one another. It was clear that because of this incompatibility, the potential for severe damage in future quakes threatened the Opera House and its occupants.

There were two goals for the seismic retrofit: to make each building stronger and to achieve compatibility between the structures. For the 1932 building, strengthening was accomplished primarily by adding new concrete shear walls reinforced with steel bars and placing steel plates on existing concrete floors. The shear walls run from the sub-basement to roof and surround the auditorium, the stage, and other public areas. To strengthen the annex, which had



(© ME Hunt)

been constructed under updated earthquake standards, structural steel columns and girders were erected.

Finally, to make the two buildings more rigid, 16 viscous dampers—giant shock absorbers—were installed to limit lateral movement between the buildings. The whole seismic effort was a material-intensive project, requiring 600 tons of structural steel, 375 tons of rebar (reinforcing steel bars), and 2,300 cubic yards of concrete.

For years, patrons complained about three comfort issues—poor ventilation; saggy, unsprung seats; and a shortage of restrooms. All three problems have been addressed. The ventilation system has been revamped to bring more fresh air in to the auditorium, and spot air conditioning has been added in the orchestra pit and to the standing room areas at the orchestra and balcony levels. The ventilation renovation will lower temperature an average of four to six degrees. The original 1932 seats in the orchestra have been completely refurbished, with new hardware, padding, and upholstery—plus a new feature, a spring to keep seats raised when unoccupied. The seats in the rest of the House have new seat cushions and upholstery. Finally, the capacity of ladies' restrooms increased by 80 percent, and for the gentlemen, by nearly 50 percent.

The War Memorial Opera House *a legacy restored*



(© ME Hunt)

Investing in Stagecraft

Today's opera and ballet fans at the War Memorial Opera House expect stunning performance by world-renowned singers, dancers, and orchestras. They have also come to expect sophisticated sets, staging, lighting, and sound that take their breath away. The three major theatrical systems in the House—lighting, rigging, and audio-visual communications—have all been dramatically upgraded to provide the technical resources for consistently spectacular productions.

When the original light board was installed in the House, it measured five feet by thirty feet and was the largest in the world (briefly!), until Radio City Music Hall was finished. Over the years, however, it had become an unwieldy, inefficient, and inflexible giant. By 1995, it had been virtually abandoned.

The new system has more than 2,000 dimmer circuits capable of controlling more than 4,000 lighting devices, with an electrical capacity of over five million watts. Its software, all housed in a small table-mounted computer console, is unique in the world. It allows distribution of digital data throughout the theater to direct light from a variety of sources, including remote-controlled, moving light instruments. New performance lighting positions on and above

the stage, combined with architecturally integrated lighting positions in the auditorium, will provide maximum flexibility for today's imaginative lighting designs.

The new counterweight rigging system replaces a 65-year old, mostly manual system which did not have the capacity to handle today's heavy scenery. The new system not only doubles the load-bearing capacity to 1,800 pounds per set of lines, but even more importantly, provides for a motorized system that increases rigging capacity to 2,800 pounds. In addition to the motor-assisted counterweight system, a network of motorized "spot" lines allows the positioning of a line anywhere over the stage for use in handling three-dimensional or slanted sets. The computer system that controls both of the systems is the first in an American opera house. For the audience, this will mean magic on the stage—faster, quieter, and precisely synchronized scene changes.

The new audio-visual equipment provides modern systems for production monitoring and backstage communications. Controlled from a computer console in the newly constructed sound center above the stage, nearly 100 miles of wire and cable send voice, data, and digital signals throughout the House. A new speaker system in the auditorium, used primarily for recorded music for the ballet performances, provides state-of-the-art sound. With the new video and audio technology, a dazzling array of special effects is possible—all with the flexibility and reliability of programmable preset levels.

The new theatrical systems eliminate antiquated, inefficient, and jerry-rigged systems that have served the House for the past 65 years. The new technology brings the House into the 21st century, enabling San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Ballet to mount complex, innovative productions equal to those anywhere in the world.

The War Memorial Opera House *a legacy restored*

All That Glitters . . .

Untouched for more than 60 years, the original gilded surfaces throughout the House had turned to a dull greenish-black. Now, thanks to a painstaking gilding process, there's a golden shimmer once again. Each of the 530 rosettes that cover the lobby's barrel-vaulted ceiling and all the ornamental molding on the entry doors, walls, and ceiling of the auditorium have been totally re-gilded with either real gold leaf or dutch metal, an artificial gold consisting of 90 percent copper and 10 percent zinc. The real gold leaf has been applied in the same limited locations selected by Brown and Lansburgh in 1932—the large masks at either side of the proscenium arch, the entire arch of flutes, rosettes, and borders, and the wood and plaster molding in the box seating area. All other gilding is dutch metal, including the heroic horses and figures above either side of stage.

The re-gilding process requires a number of steps. After cleaning surface dirt off the original gilding, a clear plastic sealer was applied to prevent oxidation from attacking the new gilding from the inside. Then, each of the 492,500 paper-thin, six-inch-square leaves in dutch metal, and 75,250 leaves of 23-Karat gold (a mere .0035 inch thick - 1,000 of them weight just 16.5 grams!) were put on by hand and smoothed with camel-hair brushes and lamb's wool pads. Another coat of sealing was applied to prevent oxidation from attacking the gilding from the outside. Then, the final step—brushing on “rotten stone,” a powdered pumice substance that dulls the gilding. This last touch brings to life the three-dimensional aspect of the ornamentation and gives it a classically antique glow.

A Golden Lining

In May 1996 as construction was proceeding on time and on budget, a four-alarm fire



(© ME Hunt)

broke out at the House. Ignited by a spark that fell from the front grand tier, the fire spread quickly in the central box area. Within minutes, the San Francisco Fire Department responded with nearly 120 firefighters. In less than an hour, the fire was out, thanks to the quick thinking of the construction workers on site and the rapid response of the Fire Department. Their speed and “tender, loving care” while fighting the fire minimized damage and was a tangible reminder of just how beloved a landmark the House had become. The aftermath added more work to an already complex project, but became a “golden lining.” Original plans had called for the restoration of the orchestra seats alone, but the smoke damaged many of the other seats in the House—and thus, all were scheduled for an overhaul. Water damage to the carpet at the orchestra, box, and grand tier levels made replacement necessary. Smoke and fire had damaged the gilding as well, and though it had been scheduled only for repair and cleaning, complete regilding now became a priority. Total damage from the fire amounted to close to \$7 million, all covered by the contractor's insurance.

Lighting up the House

When the house opened in 1932, the *San Francisco Call* described the “bright starlike jewel of a great chandelier.” At long last, the post-earthquake net covering the ceiling and the chandelier is gone, and the jewel is a star

The War Memorial Opera House *a legacy restored*

once again.

Restoration of the chandelier involved cleaning 65 years of accumulated dust and grit, removing the original fabric-covered wiring, installing modern circuitry, enhancing the ventilation to dissipate the heat generated, and connecting new dimmers. The uplighting was restored to replicate the effects of the 1932 lighting, which once again in showcases the beautiful blue ceiling. The uplighting had been turned off years ago, or so the story goes, at the order of an unhappy maestro. He had been enraged by the “snap, crackle, and pop” given off during the overture when the cast aluminum of the chandelier began to cool.

The refitted chandelier has 581 halogen lamps arrayed in six tiers, and 44 lamps providing uplighting, for a total of 66,850 watts. The chandelier restoration makes the general lighting level in the auditorium nine times brighter.



(© ME Hunt)

Preserving an Architectural Treasure

Restoring the War Memorial Opera House as a historic landmark and legacy of the Beaux Arts movement meant enhancing the House’s function while preserving as much as possible of the original character of the building. In fact, many features, including paint colors, light fixtures, sinks, bathtubs, dressing tables, lockers—even the cracks in the walls of the public promenades—remain the same because they are protected by preservation guidelines.

The challenge of finding—or creating—historically accurate materials sent renovation team members to points around the world. While determining the exact shade of blue for the auditorium ceiling was a matter of checking with local eye-witness sources (who had vivid memories of the original delicate azure paint hue), matching the marble and tile in the resources meant locating sources in Italy, Belgium, and Tennessee. The original orchestra level seats, custom made in 1932 to top-of-the-line specifications, were sent to Toronto to be restored. The auditorium carpet could be re-created only in Scotland. And a sample of the original gold stage curtain was shipped off to New York, where its fabric was replicated on a computerized loom. Nearly 2,000 yards of the gold brocatelle were then sent to Los Angeles, where the second reincarnation of the famous curtain, with its swagged valances, tassels, and fringe, was stitched together.

about

The Ferloni Tapestries

The two tapestries that were donated to the War Memorial in 1945 by A. Livingston Gump and that hang in the north promenade of the Opera House were created at the Ospizio Apostolico de Poveri Fanciulli di San Michele a Ripa in the early 18th century under the supervision of tapestry artisan Pietro Ferloni for Cardinal Ottoboni. They are part of a set of 13-15 tapestries in a series of illustrations for Torquato Tasso's GERUSALEMME LIBERATA.

The peregrination of these tapestries over the centuries is long, colorful, and fascinating. For example, besides hanging in the Opera House, other Ferloni tapestries currently hang in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and in the Embassy of the German Federal Republic at the Vatican.

The War Memorial's Ferloni tapestries were most likely sold by Cardinal Ottoboni's niece, Maria Francesca Boncompagni Ottoboni, in October of 1745 and were probably acquired

by the tenth Duke of Hamilton for Hamilton Palace in Scotland. These tapestries were sold from Hamilton Palace in 1882 and were acquired by Archduke Leopold Salvator of Vienna. The War Memorial's Ferloni tapestries were placed for sale in the Archduke Leopold Salvator sale at Anderson Galleries in New York City (February 4-5, 1927) as Lot Nos. 282 and 283, at which sale they were acquired by A. Livingston Gump.

By the way, Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni was the great-nephew of Pope Alexander VIII, who was made Pietro a cardinal of the Roman Church and Vice Chancellor of the Papal States in 1689. During his tenure, Pietro resided at the Palazzo della Cancelleria, which became known as "the centre of the most enlightened and extravagant patronage in Rome." Pietro was the last of the "Cardinal-Nephews" because a Bull of June 22, 1692 put a permanent end to papal nepotism.



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The San Francisco Ballet Building *renovation*

Opened in 1983, San Francisco Ballet's building was the first facility in the United States created expressly to house a major ballet company and its school. The Ballet's home served as a model for other dance-related buildings throughout the country including facilities in Boston, Houston, Seattle, and New York City. Groundbreaking for the SF Ballet Building took place in May 1982 and construction lasted until November 1983. The total cost of the project was \$12.3 million—funded through private donations. The architect for the project was Willis and Associates, Inc.

The Ballet and its School have flourished during 20 years of residency at 455 Franklin Street. In this building Artistic Director and Choreographer Helgi Tomasson has created new productions of *Giselle*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Don Quixote*. Leading dancers and choreographers for SF Ballet and other companies throughout the United States and Europe have been trained and nurtured in the studios of 455 Franklin Street.

The Ballet Building has also served the arts community in the Bay Area. Thousands of public school students have experienced ballet—many for the first time—in this building. Local dance groups have used the facility for many years, as have non-dance groups such as the San Francisco Opera and the American Conservatory Theater.

When it first opened in 1983, the Ballet Building defined “state-of-the-art.” However, the changing needs of the Company and School combined with nearly two decades of continuous use took its toll on the facility. Beginning in 2002, SF Ballet undertook the first comprehensive renovation and expansion of its home. The renovation took place in two separate time periods with Phase I finished in summer 2002 and Phase II completed in May 2004.

Central to the building's renovations was the installation of an enlarged Dancer Wellness Center, with new locker rooms, a fitness studio, and expanded physical therapy spaces. Another project highlight includes the renovation of all studios and the replacement of dance floors. The building also includes new Education department offices, and a lounge and new locker rooms for School students. There are also two new ballet studios for the Company, School, and Education department. The Ballet renovated the entire infrastructure of the facility, including a new heating and ventilation system and an improved security system. The Ballet also built an annex for administrative and support functions.

One major effect that the Ballet wished to achieve as a part of this project was a change in the “look” of the building interior to better reflect the nature of the primary activity of the building—teaching, creating, and

The San Francisco Ballet Building *renovation*



Photo courtesy of San Francisco Ballet

performing ballet. This was accomplished by hanging ballet-related art, primarily photography, of choreographers, dancers and students, past and present.

Brayton+Hughes Design Studios were the architects of the renovation. The total cost of the project was \$15.1 million. Funding for the project was provided through a private bond issue, which will be paid off in 2032 through general revenues of San Francisco Ballet.

In April 2010 the Ballet paid tribute to SF Ballet Board of Trustees Chair Emeritus Chris Hellman by naming the Ballet building in her honor.

Since its opening, the Ballet's building has been a proud addition to the cultural landscape of San Francisco and to ballet and dance internationally. The renovation of SF Ballet's Building will ensure the continuation of this proud tradition.