Letters (1980): Article 01

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_43

Recommended Citation

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Education: National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, Subject Files I (1973-1996) at DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Letters (1980) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons-group@uri.edu.
LUCIA CHASE

Lucia Chase, one of the most respected figures in American dance, has been Director of American Ballet Theatre since 1945. Born in Waterbury, Connecticut, Miss Chase received her academic education at St. Margaret's School in Waterbury, and her professional education at the Theatre Guild School and with Mikhail Mordkin, Michel Fokine, Antony Tudor, Anatole Vilzak, and Bronislava Nijinska. She was a ballerina of the Mordkin Ballet (1938-1939), dancing in Giselle, La Fille Mal Gardee, The Goldfish, Trepak, and others. Four Mordkin productions and a nucleus of his company, including Miss Chase, were absorbed into what became Ballet Theatre. Miss Chase, was, in fact, Founder-Director of the Company (1940-1945), and became Director in 1945. As a Principal Dancer with American Ballet Theatre, Miss Chase created many roles, including the Girl in Eugene Loring's Great American Goof, Minerva in Tudor's Judgment of Paris, The Greedy One in Agnes de Mille's Three Virgins and a Devil, Nurse in Tudor's Romeo and Juliet, Oldest Sister in Tudor's Pillar of Fire, Queen in Fokine's Bluebeard, Pallas Athena in Lichine's Helen of Troy, Khivria in Fair at Sorochinsk, Innocent in Tally-Ho, and a leading role in Dark Elegies. She also performed leading roles in Fokine's Les Sylphides, Petrouchka, Le Carnaval, Fall River Legend, and Pas de Quatre.

Miss Chase continued dancing until 1960, although during those years she undertook no new roles. Presently, in addition to her ac-
tivities as Co-Director, Miss Chase continues to appear in several American Ballet Theatre productions, notably as the Princess Mother in *Swan Lake*, and the Step-Mother in *Fall River Legend*.

When American Ballet Theatre was launched in 1940, Miss Chase's aim was to develop a repertoire of the best ballets from the past and to encourage the creation of new works by young, gifted choreographers wherever they might be found.

Now, more than three decades later, American Ballet Theatre boasts a repertoire that more than lives up to the dream of those early years. It includes most of the great nineteenth century ballets, the finest works from the early part of this century, and ballets by all the contemporary masters. Furthermore, the Company is still as open to the works of young choreographers as it was in the beginning.

A troupe of about 80 dancers presents the repertoire, artists from this country and abroad, numbering among them some of the finest dancers in the world today.

American Ballet Theatre annually tours the United States and is the only major American company to do so. It has also made more than fifteen international tours and, as the most representative American ballet company, has been sponsored by the United States State Department on many of them. It was under this sponsorship that American Ballet Theatre visited the Soviet Union twice, the first time in 1960 as the first American company ever to perform there, and later, in 1966. In the Summer of 1977, American Ballet Theatre appeared in London as the official United States cultural event honoring the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

In 1971, American Ballet Theatre was named the Official Company of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C.,
where it appears several times each year. The Company has performed in over 340 cities in the United States in all 50 states, and in over 39 foreign countries.

Throughout the Company's 40 years, Miss Chase has personally supervised the choosing of repertoire, casting of ballets, and assumed all the responsibility for the day-to-day running of what has become one of our nation's most acclaimed cultural institutions.