

Thursday, October 4, 2007, 8pm  
Friday, October 5, 2007, 8pm  
Saturday, October 6, 2007, 2pm & 8pm  
Zellerbach Hall

## Joffrey Ballet



Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino, *Founders*

Gerald Arpino, *Artistic Director Emeritus*

Ashley Wheater, *Artistic Director*

Jon H. Teeuwissen, *Executive Director*

*The Joffrey Ballet's performances are part of Cal Performances' Focus on Twyla Tharp series.*

*Focus on Twyla Tharp is sponsored, in part, by Nancy Livingston and Fred Levin, The Shenson Foundation.*

*Cal Performances' 2007–2008 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.*

## Joffrey Ballet

### *Artists of the Company*

Heather Aagard Matthew Adamczyk April Daly Derrick Agnoletti  
Erica Lynette Edwards Fabrice Calmels Jennifer Goodman  
Jonathan Dummar Elizabeth Hansen John Gluckman  
Anastacia Holden David Gombert Victoria Jaiani William Hillard  
Stacy Joy Keller Calvin Kitten Suzanne Lopez Michael Levine  
Emily Patterson Brian McSween Alexis Polito Thomas Nicholas  
Megan Quiroz Eduardo Permuy Valerie Robin Aaron Rogers  
Christine Rocas Willy Shives Abigail Simon Tian Shuai  
Lauren Stewart Patrick Simoniello Kathleen Thielhelm  
Michael Smith Allison Walsh Temur Suluashvili  
Jennifer Warnick Mauro Villanueva  
Maia Wilkins Joanna Wozniak

### *Arpino Apprentices*

Justine Humenansky Brandon Alexander Erin McAfee  
Matthew Frain Caitlin Meighan John Mark Giragosian

*Ballet Master* Charthel Arthur

*Assistant Ballet Master* Willy Shives

### *Production*

*Principal Stage Manager* Katherine Selig  
*Stage Manager* Amanda Heuermann  
*Lighting Director* Lisa Pinkham

## *Pas des Déeses*



*Choreography* Robert Joffrey  
*Costumes* Anver Bey Khan  
*Music* John Field  
*Lighting* Kevin Dreyer, after the original  
Thomas Skelton design

*Pas des Déeses* (or Dance of the Goddesses) was inspired by an 1846 Romantic lithograph by Jacques Bouvier. At the beginning of the ballet, the dancers' pose replicates this famous print. This work was choreographed as a period piece to the music of John Field, one of the foremost composers of the day. Each variation shows off the qualities made famous by the quartet of great 19th-century dancers: the languorous Grahn, the darting Cerrito and the floating Taglioni, and the gallant partner to these dancers, St. Léon. The air of competition among three ballerinas echoes the delicate rivalry, which actually existed among these celebrated dancers of the romantic era.

*World Premiere* The Joffrey Ballet, October 2, 1956,  
State Teachers College, Frostburg, Maryland

*Original Cast* Glen Tetley (Arthur St. Léon), Diane Consoer  
(Lucile Grahn), Brunilda Ruiz (Fanny Cerrito),  
Beatrice Tompkins (Marie Taglioni)

# Program

## CASTING

### THURSDAY & SATURDAY EVENINGS

*Mlle. Lucille Grah* Maia Wilkins  
*Mlle. Fanny Cerrito* Jennifer Goodman  
*Mlle. Marie Taglioni* Valerie Robin  
*M. Arthur St. Leon* Michael Levine

### FRIDAY EVENING & SATURDAY MATINEE

*Mlle. Lucille Grah* Victoria Jaiani  
*Mlle. Fanny Cerrito* Stacy Joy Keller  
*Mlle. Marie Taglioni* Kathleen Thielhelm  
*M. Arthur St. Leon* Fabrice Calmels

## INTERMISSION

## *Deuce Coupe*



*Choreography* Twyla Tharp  
*Music* The Beach Boys†  
*Costumes* Scott Barrie  
*Scenic Design* United Graffiti Artists  
*Lighting Design* Jennifer Tipton

# Program

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In 1973, Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino invited Twyla Tharp, then an up-and-coming choreographer, to create a collaborative work between The Joffrey Ballet and Tharp's own contemporary dance company. The result was the groundbreaking creation, *Deuce Coupe*. A few years later, Tharp recreated the work solely for The Joffrey dancers and renamed the ballet, *Deuce Coupe II*. For The Joffrey's 50th anniversary, Tharp has incorporated elements of both *Deuce Coupe I* and *II*.

Twyla Tharp's original creation is known as the so-called "cross-over ballet" that put such works on the map. The dance is presented in a series of duets, trios and canons, and the music's infectious good humor and animation inspire references to the pop/social dances of the 1970s. As an eye to the hurricane swirl of pop music and dancing that makes up the bulk of *Deuce Coupe*, a lone female dancer calmly goes through the entire classical ballet vocabulary.

Tharp has described her ballet as being "about teenagers" and her ballet's mood as one of young people at play. Taking the Beach Boys' "pows" and "boogalooos" at face value, the choreography delivers punchy and carefree accents along its way. *Deuce Coupe* bodies forth as a set of individual dances illuminating different songs, and builds a through-line which culminates most appropriately in "Cuddle Up," a song and dance of mellow, loving and melancholy mood.

*Special thanks to The Beach Boys for their valuable assistance and to Terry Morgan, Capitol Records, Inc. and Warner Bros. Records, Inc. for supplying records and tapes.*

† *Music compiled and edited by N. A. Gibson, after the original design by David Horowitz. Matrix piano solos transcribed, reconstructed and recorded by Paul Lewis from the original David Horowitz recordings.*

*World Premiere* The Joffrey Ballet, February 8, 1973, Chicago

## CASTING

### THURSDAY & SATURDAY EVENINGS

#### *Matrix I*

Heather Aagard,  
Emily Patterson, Mauro Villanueva

#### *Little Deuce Coupe*

Erica Lynette Edwards, John Gluckman, Jennifer Goodman, Brian McSween,  
Valerie Robin, Willy Shives, Maia Wilkins, Thomas Nicholas, April Daly, Michael Smith,  
Allison Walsh, Calvin Kitten, Emily Patterson, Mauro Villanueva

#### *Honda*

Heather Aagard,  
John Gluckman, Erica Lynette Edwards, Brian McSween, Valerie Robin

#### *Devoted to You*

Heather Aagard,  
John Gluckman, Erica Lynette Edwards, Brian McSween, Valerie Robin

# Program

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*How She Boogalooed It*

Heather Aagard,

April Daly, John Gluckman, Mauro Villanueva, Jennifer Goodman, Erica Lynette Edwards,  
Thomas Nicholas, Valerie Robin, Michael Smith

*Matrix II*

John Gluckman, Willy Shives, Emily Patterson, Maia Wilkins, Michael Smith, Allison Walsh

*Alley Oop*

April Daly, Mauro Villanueva, Jennifer Goodman, Brian McSween, Thomas Nicholas,  
Valerie Robin, Michael Smith, Allison Walsh

*Take a Load Off Your Feet*

Erica Lynette Edwards,

John Gluckman, Thomas Nicholas

*Long Tall Texan*

Erica Lynette Edwards, Brian McSween

*Papa Oob Mau Mau*

Mauro Villanueva, Jennifer Goodman, Willy Shives, Maia Wilkins, Valerie Robin, Michael Smith

*Catch a Wave*

April Daly, John Gluckman, Jennifer Goodman, Thomas Nicholas, Allison Walsh

*Got to Know the Woman*

Valerie Robin, Heather Aagard

*Matrix III*

Heather Aagard (Saturday), Kathleen Thielhelm (Thursday)

*Shut Up/Go Home*

Erica Lynette Edwards, John Gluckman

*The Welfare Song*

Maia Wilkins,

Mauro Villanueva, Calvin Kitten, Willy Shives, Michael Smith

*Matrix IV*

Allison Walsh,

Mauro Villanueva, Calvin Kitten, Willy Shives, Brian McSween, Michael Smith

*Mama Says*

Calvin Kitten, Allison Walsh

*Wouldn't It Be Nice?*

April Daly, Mauro Villanueva, Jennifer Goodman, Calvin Kitten, Willy Shives,  
Emily Patterson, Thomas Nicholas, Maia Wilkins, Allison Walsh

*Cuddle Up*

Heather Aagard,  
April Daly, John Gluckman, Mauro Villanueva, Jennifer Goodman, Erica Lynette Edwards,  
Calvin Kitten, Willy Shives, Emily Patterson, Brian McSween, Thomas Nicholas,  
Maia Wilkins, Valerie Robin, Michael Smith, Allison Walsh

**FRIDAY EVENING & SATURDAY MATINEE**

*Matrix I*

Heather Aagard (Friday), Kathleen Thielhelm (Saturday),  
Emily Patterson, Patrick Simoniello

*Little Deuce Coupe*

Erica Lynette Edwards, Derrick Agnoletti, Anastacia Holden, Fabrice Calmels,  
Valerie Robin, Michael Levine, Megan Quiroz, Thomas Nicholas (Friday),  
Jonathan Dummar (Saturday), April Daly, David Gombert,  
Allison Walsh, Tian Shuai, Emily Patterson, Patrick Simoniello

*Honda*

Heather Aagard (Friday), Kathleen Thielhelm (Saturday),  
Derrick Agnoletti, Erica Lynette Edwards, Brian McSween (Friday),  
Fabrice Calmels (Saturday), Valerie Robin

*Devoted to You*

Heather Aagard (Friday), Kathleen Thielhelm (Saturday),  
Derrick Agnoletti, Erica Lynette Edwards, Brian McSween (Friday),  
Fabrice Calmels (Saturday), Valerie Robin

*How She Boogalooed It*

Heather Aagard (Friday), Kathleen Thielhelm (Saturday),  
April Daly, Derrick Agnoletti, Patrick Simoniello, Anastacia Holden, Erica Lynette Edwards,  
Thomas Nicholas (Friday), Jonathan Dummar (Saturday), Valerie Robin, David Gombert

*Matrix II*

Derrick Agnoletti, Michael Levine, Emily Patterson, Megan Quiroz, David Gombert, Allison Walsh

*Alley Oop*

April Daly, Patrick Simoniello, Anastacia Holden, Brian McSween (Friday),  
Fabrice Calmels (Saturday), Thomas Nicholas (Friday), Jonathan Dummar (Saturday),  
Valerie Robin, David Gombert, Allison Walsh

*Take a Load Off Your Feet*

Erica Lynette Edwards,  
Derrick Agnoletti, Thomas Nicholas (Friday), Jonathan Dummar (Saturday)

*Long Tall Texan*

Erica Lynette Edwards, Brian McSween (Friday), Fabrice Calmels (Saturday)

# Program

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*Papa Ooh Mau Mau*

Patrick Simoniello, Anastacia Holden, Michael Levine, Megan Quiroz, Valerie Robin, David Gombert

*Catch a Wave*

April Daly, Derrick Agnoletti, Anastacia Holden, Thomas Nicholas (Friday),  
Jonathan Dummar (Saturday), Allison Walsh

*Got to Know the Woman*

Valerie Robin, Heather Aagard (Friday), Kathleen Thielhelm (Saturday)

*Matrix III*

Heather Aagard (Friday), Kathleen Thielhelm (Saturday)

*Shut Up/Go Home*

Erica Lynette Edwards, Derrick Agnoletti

*The Welfare Song*

Megan Quiroz

Patrick Simoniello, Tian Shuai, Michael Levine, David Gombert

*Matrix IV*

Allison Walsh

Patrick Simoniello, Tian Shuai, Michael Levine, Brian McSween (Friday),  
Fabrice Calmels (Saturday), David Gombert

*Mama Says*

Tian Shuai, Allison Walsh

*Wouldn't It Be Nice?*

April Daly, Patrick Simoniello, Anastacia Holden, Tian Shuai, Michael Levine,  
Emily Patterson, Thomas Nicholas (Friday), Jonathan Dummar (Saturday),  
Megan Quiroz, Allison Walsh

*Cuddle Up*

Heather Aagard (Friday), Kathleen Thielhelm (Saturday),  
April Daly, Derrick Agnoletti, Patrick Simoniello, Anastacia Holden, Erica Lynette Edwards,  
Tian Shuai, Michael Levine, Emily Patterson, Brian McSween (Friday),  
Fabrice Calmels (Saturday), Thomas Nicholas (Friday), Jonathan Dummar (Saturday),  
Megan Quiroz, Valerie Robin, David Gombert, Allison Walsh

*INTERMISSION*

## *Sometimes It Snows in April* from *Billboards*



<i>Concept and Direction</i>	Gerald Arpino
<i>Choreography</i>	Laura Dean
<i>Music</i>	Prince, in collaboration with Wendy Melvoin and Lisa Coleman
<i>Costumes</i>	Rosemarie Worton, from original concept by Laura Dean
<i>Billboard Designs</i>	Herbert Migdoll
<i>Lighting</i>	Howell Blinkley

The Joffrey Ballet is the first dance company for which Prince exclusively wrote music (an expanded version of “Thunder” appears in *Billboards*) and the first dance company Prince has ever authorized to use his music.

The concept for *Billboards* was developed by Gerald Arpino, who was always intrigued by the powerful billboard imagery that he saw as he traveled throughout America while touring with The Joffrey Ballet. Some of the billboards were so striking as to attain the status of American folk art and, especially in locales like the Sunset Strip in Los Angeles, Mr. Arpino felt it was like being in a wonderful outdoor art gallery.

When Prince was inspired to compose music for The Joffrey after he attended his first ballet during the 1991 Los Angeles season, Mr. Arpino saw a way to bring his concept of *Billboards* to the stage. Mr. Arpino envisioned a full-length, abstract work that would unite the scope and breadth of Prince’s music with the sweep and dynamism of four innovative modern choreographers who had all worked previously with

# Program

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the company: Laura Dean, Charles Moulton, Peter Pucci and Margo Sappington. The stylized billboard designs of Herbert Migdoll and the dramatic costumes of Charles Atlas, Christine Joly and Rosemarie Worton all contribute to the *Billboards* reflections on our society. The final element in producing *Billboards* was the contribution of Hancher Auditorium at the University of Iowa, which helped support the creation of the ballet with funding and technical resources.

*Billboards* was featured in PBS's *Dance in America* in 1994.

*World Premiere* January 27, 1993, Hancher Auditorium,  
University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

## CASTING

### THURSDAY & SATURDAY EVENINGS

Megan Quiroz, David Gombert, Joanna Wozniak, Patrick Simoniello, Allison Walsh, Temur Suluasvili, April Daly, Fabrice Calmels, Kathleen Thielhelm, Matthew Adamczyk, Alexis Polito, Tian Shuai, Christine Rocas, Michael Smith, Lauren Stewart, Jonathan Dummar, Emily Patterson, John Gluckman

### FRIDAY EVENING & SATURDAY MATINEE

Anastacia Holden, David Gombert, Stacy Joy Keller, Thomas Nicholas, Jennifer Goodman, Eduardo Permuy, Victoria Jaiani, Brian McSween, Erica Lynette Edwards, Mauro Villanueva, Abigail Simon, William Hillard, Heather Aagard, Aaron Rogers, Lauren Stewart, Jonathan Dummar, Elizabeth Hansen, Derrick Agnoletti

# Focus on Twyla Tharp

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## Twyla Tharp: A Brainy Populist

Twyla Tharp began her choreographic career in the far reaches of the avant-garde. Specifically, in a room in the art department at Hunter College in New York City, on April 29, 1965. The dance, less than fifteen minutes long, was given twice, so that the overflow audience could be accommodated. The title, *Tank Dive*, may have seemed ominous, but Tharp probably meant to suggest a feat of daring and optimism. Everything she's undertaken since has been charged with the same energetic confidence.

Besides being one of the most prolific and accomplished choreographers of the last four decades, Twyla Tharp is a breakthrough artist. With a succession of dazzling dances, she's challenged the perception that art-dance is a specialized or esoteric taste. She embraced videotape in its infancy, as a tool for creating and learning dances. When other dancers mistrusted television and movies, she annexed those media as ways to reach a broader audience and preserve her repertory. A fusion artist to the core, Tharp has never confined her creativity to a single format. She built a distinctive movement style by utilizing everything she and her co-dancers could do, and then demanding more. She created an engaging repertory for the great ensemble of modern and ballet dancers she led in the 1970s and 1980s.

After 1985 Tharp re-invented her working situation several times, determined to avoid the burdens of running an independent dance company. As a freelance choreographer, she has crossed back and forth between ballet commissions, Broadway and groups developed for her own short-term projects. She has shown a new generation that there are alternatives to the conventional choreographer-centered modern dance company model.

Besides an immense talent, drive and wide-ranging taste, Tharp has a restless temperament. She hates repeating herself and fears getting stuck in her own success, but there's a tension between pushing on with new schemes and letting her past accomplishments disappear. In the midst of her ongoing relationship with American Ballet Theatre (she has created 15 works for them to date), she embarked on an unprecedented three-year proj-

ect to transfer six of her dances to Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. Nowadays, licensed revivals of her dances are performed by ballet, modern dance and student groups.



An innovator to the core, Tharp has never been a true avant-gardist. When she left Southern California to attend college at Barnard as an art history major, the dance world was on the brink of a revolution. Experimental workshops and showings of radical new work were going on at Judson Church and in lofts, galleries, parks and alleyways. Happenings, new theater and cinema shook up the categories and overturned known definitions. Tharp explored the more conservative options first. Besides modern dance classes at Barnard, she sampled the major New York studios. She joined Paul Taylor's company as soon as she graduated, then left after a year to try her own hand. *Tank Dive* was a collage, heavily influenced by her partner at the time, painter Robert Huot.

Huot, a proto-minimalist, introduced Tharp to his artist friends. She soaked up their endless discussions of new ideas. At Judson Dance Theater concerts, she studied the downtown aesthetic of the ordinary and the incongruous. She was receptive to the eclectic, even nonsensical performance assemblages, the disdain for glamour and artifice, the crossover collaborations between dancers, artists, musicians and poets. Huot had made performance pieces himself, and a version of his faux-combat duet *War* was incorporated in *Tank Dive*.

Tharp's debut concert had the Judson look. But it also had a message. *Tank Dive* was an inversion, a sort of anti-dance, suggesting in its very resistance that there were resources and subjects dance hadn't tapped before. She "starred" in the piece, demonstrating two crucial ballet moves (*plié* and *relevé*), a basic modern-dance stretch, and a couple of sportive gestures: she spun a yo-yo and took a running slide across the floor. She wore two pairs of inappropriate footwear (high heels and oversized wooden flippers). All these things, arbitrary as they seemed, referred to the potential scope of dancing. Even the accompaniment, Petula Clark's "Downtown," announced, ironically, that pop music was okay.

## Focus on Twyla Tharp

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The thing Tharp didn't like about the Judson avant-gardists' platform was their rejection of formal dance technique. Incongruity was all very well, but she wasn't going to give up the thrill of technical, musical mastery that she had worked so hard to gain. From the beginning she and her dancers studied with Merce Cunningham and took ballet class. Within two years she'd stopped trying to banish dancing from her dances. It was Tharp's irrepressible facility for movement invention that brought her to prominence. Critics and audiences recognized an original talent almost immediately.

The late 1960s were an auspicious time for all dance. The first large-scale public funding had been put in place by the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. Theaters and cultural centers were opening around the country. Audiences were getting to see more dance, and to appreciate its diversity. When the first extended showcase for modern dance was scheduled for the Billy Rose Theater in 1969, Tharp was one of three downtown choreographers included. (The others were Yvonne Rainer and Meredith Monk.) She and her company of six women presented three uncompromising dance pieces, all without noticeable music.

Right after the Billy Rose she responded to an invitation to perform in the Opera House at Brooklyn Academy of Music. Under the leadership of Harvey Lichtenstein, BAM was beginning its long campaign to establish an outpost for dance and theater in the presumed wilderness across the river from Manhattan. Facing the prospect of selling 2,000 tickets, Tharp decided to put the audience on the Opera House stage with the performers, thus giving it a close-up view and forestalling the possibility of empty seats. She called the evening "Dance for an Open Space." In an early sample of her genius for recycling and retooling her own work, she expanded *Group Activities*, which she'd just premiered, from five to ten dancers. Instead of revising the dance, she simply divided the space in half and staged the same choreography, reversed left-to-right, in both sides. *Generation*, the other piece at BAM, consisted of five different solos performed simultaneously. Again, there was no music to hold the dances together, although she'd used Beethoven to choreograph *Generation* and then



discarded it. Onstage, a metronome ticked the pulse. Sharon Kinney kept time against a written score, cuing the dancers when they called out for help.

Tharp had mesmerized the critics. Two years later, she won the hearts of the public. Having smashed the avant-garde prohibitions against dancing itself, and sneaked bits of music almost at random into her works, she finally set a dance to music. Not “serious” music either. *Eight Jelly Rolls*, to the recordings of Jelly Roll Morton, set a new modern-dance precedent by taking on the beat, the swing, and the casual virtuosity of jazz. *Eight Jelly Rolls* had many distinctions, including an almost undetectable choreographic scheme that resembled the structure of jazz by showing off the dancers individually and as foils for the ensemble. The dancing was fast, articulate, funny and smart. Through some synergy of choreography, movement, music and engaging personalities, *Eight Jelly Rolls* humanized the dancers and endeared them to us. The

dance inaugurated Tharp’s lifelong inquiry into the vast resources of American popular music.

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When Robert Joffrey invited her to make a new dance for the Joffrey Ballet in 1973, the longstanding philosophical rift between ballet and modern dance hadn’t yet been bridged. Tharp wasn’t the first modern dancer to choreograph for a ballet company, but she was the first to blend exemplars of the two styles into a single choreography. When she accepted Joffrey’s invitation, she insisted that the work include her own company of individualistic modern dancers (Sara Rudner, Rose Marie Wright, Ken Rinker, Isabel Garcia-Lorca, Nina Weiner and herself). *Deuce Coupe*, in fact, turned out to be a ballet that was *about* reciprocity between the two dance styles. At the same time, it was a supercharged, witty entertainment about adolescence, set to recordings by the Beach Boys. Genuine graffiti writers were recruited off the

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streets of New York to spray-paint their signatures on a rolling backdrop during the course of each performance.

The ballet was a sensation. Extra performances had to be added during that first Joffrey season at New York City Center. The two companies performed it on the Joffrey's spring tour to San Francisco and Seattle, and again during the following summer and fall. But obsolescence had been built into the ballet from the start. Tharp's company had its own busy touring schedule to fulfill. *Deuce Coupe* was put on hold until Tharp made a new model, *Deuce Coupe II*, for the Joffrey dancers alone, which premiered on tour and at City Center early in 1975. Tharp reworked it again at least twice in the 1980s for her own company, which numbered about 16 dancers by then. For each version, she "customized" the ballet to suit the personnel and the evolving audience.

The dance returned to the Joffrey Ballet in 2006 under the direction of William Whitener. As a Joffrey dancer he was in the original cast of *Deuce Coupe*. Whitener then joined Twyla Tharp's company for a decade; he's now artistic director of Kansas City Ballet. As a principal reconstructor for *Deuce Coupe*, Whitener has staged the present streamlined model, known to Tharp insiders as *Deuce Coupe III*, for Kansas City Ballet and the Juilliard Dance Theater as well as the Joffrey. Practicalities have eliminated the live graffiti writers, but a new backdrop with graffiti overtones was designed by Chris Foxworth of Kansas City, and it now travels with the production.

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After the tremendous success of *Deuce Coupe*, Tharp's company became a magnet for adventurous dancers who knew she wouldn't keep them in pigeonholes. Over the next decade, Tharp Dance grew from the core group that developed her jazzy signature style into a sophisticated ensemble that included William Whitener, Richard Colton and Christine Uchida from the Joffrey Ballet; Shelley Washington from Martha Graham's company; Raymond Kurshals, who had danced with Merce Cunningham; and dancers from other ballet and modern dance backgrounds. Tharp's inspired work gradually assimilated them all into a perfectly

blended ensemble. Nothing demonstrates this better than *Baker's Dozen*, which, Tharp once told a writer, "represents my ideal society."

With an unobtrusive but elegant compositional structure, the dance explores the ways twelve people can be divided into groups. Beginning with duets, it streams into trios, quartets, sextets and finally all the dancers get to solo against the rest, propelled all the while by Willie "The Lion" Smith's nonchalant jazz piano pieces. Strolls, chases, and tangos tumble after one another in the most amiable manner. Like the music, the dance keeps shifting our attention, so that each new combination of forces seems to bring out different aspects of the dancers.

When Tharp talked about *Baker's Dozen* as a kind of utopia, she revealed her softest, most generous instincts. She didn't want to express her feelings but this dance above all shows us her love for her dancers. She didn't want to tell stories, but she tells a choreographic story here: the process of the dance is the story of a dance company. By distinguishing and recombining these versatile talents, she was showing how one style, one personality, one group could interact with another to make a new community.

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With her dances in demand, Tharp has delegated several trusted alumni to stage them around the world. The two Sinatra ballets in repertory have been directed by Elaine Kudo and Shelley Washington. Kudo, a member of American Ballet Theater who joined one of the later Tharp companies, was Mikhail Baryshnikov's gorgeous partner in the video of *Sinatra Suite* shown on PBS in 1984.

Tharp began using the songs of Frank Sinatra in 1976, right after her smash hit *Push Comes to Shove*. *Push* was the first American work to demand a new style from the great Russian dancer, who'd come to this country only two years earlier. Tharp stunned and delighted the ABT audience by transforming Baryshnikov into a goofy Lothario (to ragtime) and an even goofier classical star (to Haydn). After *Push* he asked Tharp to create a pièce d'occasion for the two of them, to be shown at an ABT gala performance the following

# Focus on Twyla Tharp

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spring. This became Tharp's first Sinatra dance, *Once More Frank*. ABT's gala audience, all set for Baryshnikov to perform the *Don Quixote pas de deux* or some other showpiece, was disappointed to see the hijinks of a couple of tomboy pals in shorts and polo shirts. It was one of Tharp's few failures, but rehearsals had been filmed for her extraordinary PBS special, *Making Television Dance*. That footage reveals a sweaty, sensuous partnership, as Tharp and Baryshnikov worked at the choreography in closeup.

Tharp didn't give up on Sinatra's music, and five years later she made the long string of romantic duets for her own company that became *Nine Sinatra Songs*. Kudo and Baryshnikov took an abbreviated and refocused version, *Sinatra Suite*, into ABT's repertory in late 1983.

Romantic love was hardly Twyla Tharp's milieu, but romantic dancing intrigued her. Or, as she said in the narration for her 1991 *Men's Piece*, finding a way for a man and a woman to dance in each other's arms was a problem that could lead to many solutions. Although both *Sinatra Suite* and *Nine Sinatra Songs* use the Crooner's 1960s recordings with their lush Nelson Riddle orchestrations, Tharp produced another two different takes on the music. The *Nine* is a straightforward exposition of ballroom dance styles for seven couples dancing consecutively. There's virtually no group choreography in the piece. Even in the two numbers where couples appear together on the stage, they're engrossed in their own partners. The dance is extroverted, almost impersonal, like a ballroom exhibition. As each couple introduces a different style—soft and floating, flirtatious, effervescent, passionate—you see how a certain kind of dancing can embody a sensibility and describe a relationship.

In the *Sinatra Suite*, one couple dances all the numbers. The costumes are the same: tuxedos and suave Oscar de la Renta cocktail dresses. Some of the songs are the same, and even the choreography may be linked to its corresponding number in the bigger dance. But the *Suite* is not just a condensed version of the *Nine*. By zooming in on the intimate story of one particular relationship, it takes on a more dramatic and emotional gloss.

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Though she's probably best known for her dances to jazz and popular music, Tharp has always been drawn to classical ballet. *Pointe* work was used as a didactic device in *Deuce Coupe*, but right after that she made an all-*pointe* ballet for the Joffrey, *As Time Goes By*. She reveres classically trained dancers, and they are galvanized by working with her. After *Push Comes to Shove*, she formed the longstanding ties with American Ballet Theater that resulted in new ballets, the adoption of repertory works, and, in 1988, a more formal connection when ABT was headed by Baryshnikov. Tharp disbanded her own company and, with seven dancers, she joined ABT as an artistic associate. The arrangement fell apart when Baryshnikov resigned a year later, but Tharp continued to make new ballets for the company. She's also created works for Paris Opera Ballet, New York City Ballet, Boston Ballet and London's Royal Ballet, among other companies. Next spring, Miami City Ballet will premiere a new untitled piece to music of Elvis Costello.

*In the Upper Room*, created on Tharp's own company in 1986, went with her into ABT, and played the Opera House in San Francisco when ABT brought it here on tour in March 1989. The ballet's general idea reflects *Deuce Coupe*: a rapprochement between two styles of dancing. But *In the Upper Room* makes its statement in formalist patterns, with no literal reference to popular culture. The ensemble is divided into ballet dancers and athletic contemporary dancers. They begin with identifying movement themes and then recombine and share their resources. As they shed parts of their Norma Kamali costumes, they seem to be getting less parochial. When she made it, Tharp described *In the Upper Room* as a piece about counterpoint, about floor patterns that call your attention to the foreground against the background, to speeds, vocabularies and exchanges of action. But with a driving minimalist score by Philip Glass and smoke and lighting effects by Jennifer Tipton, the dance rises in intensity to a theatrical and physical high that audiences can't resist.

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Over the years, Tharp dance has made frequent appearances in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her own company has performed at Zellerbach Auditorium

## Focus on Twyla Tharp

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several times since its debut there in February of 1978, and when her works were on during ABT tours, they could be seen at the Opera House. She tried out the *Nine Sinatra Songs* for two years on the road before bringing it to New York, and one of its first performances took place at Bill Graham's Warfield Theater in the fall of 1982, and it was first performed in Berkeley in 1985. *Baker's Dozen* was one of the eight dances on two programs Graham produced at the Warfield in the spring of 1981. The Zellerbach audience saw it in March of 1979, when Tharp's company set out on tour after the BAM season that marked its premiere, and again in 1985 and 1988. Cal Performances' *Focus on Twyla Tharp* series gives Bay Area dance enthusiasts the most extensive look at Tharp's extraordinary dances since the days of her own touring company.

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# About the Artists

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## The Joffrey Ballet

Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino's uniquely American vision of dance first took form in 1956. The original company consisted of six dynamic and highly individual dancers. While Robert Joffrey stayed in New York to teach ballet classes and earn money to pay the dancers' salaries, Gerald Arpino led the troupe as they traveled across America in a station wagon pulling a U-Haul trailer. Their repertoire of original ballets by Robert Joffrey set them apart from the other small touring companies of the time who often performed scaled-down versions of the classics. From the beginning Joffrey and Arpino wanted a company that came out of their roots, out of America.

The Joffrey Ballet's first performance took place on the morning of October 2, 1956, at Frostberg State Teachers College in Maryland. In 1957, The Joffrey's first performance in a major city took place in Chicago at the Eighth Street Theater. On the strength of that Chicago performance, The Joffrey began to transform itself from a fledgling company to one of the premier ballet companies in the world. The Joffrey has performed in over 400 US cities and in all 50 states. International tours include Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, England, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Iran, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Korea, Mexico, Portugal, Russia, Scotland, Singapore, Spain, Syria, Taiwan and Turkey. The Joffrey Ballet was the first American company invited to tour the former Soviet Union, and the first dance company to perform at the White House. The Joffrey also pioneered dance on television, inaugurating public television's *Dance in America* series. In 2003, director Robert Altman made a feature film called *The Company*, based on The Joffrey Ballet.

Together, Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino created a one-of-a-kind American company of dancers for whom they choreographed original and socially relevant ballets. They were the first to commission ballets by modern dance choreographers such as Alvin Ailey, Laura Dean, Mark Morris and Twyla Tharp. They amassed the largest repertoires in the United States of works by such choreographers as Sir Frederick Ashton, John Cranko and Leonide Massine. They also reconstructed "lost" ballets of the early 20th century, primarily from Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, including Nijinsky's *Le sacre du printemps*, Massine's *Parade* and Balanchine's *Cotillon*. One of the most recognized names in dance, The Joffrey Ballet is known around the world for its repertoire of historical ballets as well as groundbreaking works, such as *Billboards*, a full-length work created to the rock music of Prince.

The Joffrey Ballet was originally established in New York in 1956 and for many years was the resident ballet company at City Center. The Joffrey's first appearances in Berkeley were in the form of a two-week residency in August 1970, during which the Zellerbach audience enjoyed its first look at *Pas des Déesses*, and the company returned for another two-week residency the following summer. The Joffrey was also the resident summer dance at Ravinia Festival from 1972 to 1979 and the resident ballet company of the Los Angeles Music Center from 1982 to 1992. Finally, The Joffrey Ballet made Chicago its permanent home in 1995, and it is currently the resident ballet company of the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University.