

**NEWS FROM
THE JEROME
ROBBINS
FOUNDATION**

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Jerome Robbins



“There’s a place for us...”

In 1966, Jerome Robbins wrote the following, in pursuit of a grant from the newly formed National Endowment for the Arts:

The American Lyric Theatre Workshop would be a theatre laboratory in which projects involving music, dance, speech, and song would be worked upon and developed. It would also develop a company capable of performing works which do not fit into the present theatre forms, be it our commercial theatre or the separated realms of pure opera, ballet, or concert.

Having worked in all these fields, I find myself (along with others) with a body of ideas and projects which cannot be realized within the forms or pressures of our existing theatre. Even our contemporary musicals, which are internationally recognized as a uniquely American accomplishment are totally confined to their commercial aspects.

I want to create a new kind of lyric theater. It would use all the forms and potentials of our lyric theatres to produce new and original kinds of works, capable of expressing ideas in large forms with poetic vision and free imagination. With my many years of experience in all fields of theatre, I believe that with proper assistance I can bring such a theatre into being.

Like a scientist or a painter, I need a laboratory in which to study, do research, develop material, experiment, try projects. To do this I need time, space, and equipment (people). From this exploration I hope to bring into being a theatre which would be a unique development in our American culture, and an indigenous outgrowth of the American scene.

The Workshop would consist of a professional group of actors, dancers, and singers who have talents in all three arts. There is such strong, rich talent available. A carefully selected group of apprentices would be added in the training and work. Composers, authors, poets, painters, etc., would be asked to instigate and collaborate on ideas. Projects would be started; some of them would be gathered from already existent material, some must be written, and

a great deal must be made in the workshop itself—out of experiments. When enough progress on them is made, audiences would be invited to observe “work-in-progress” rehearsals.

The ultimate aim of the workshop is to provide a place for performing and creative artists to join together, work on ideas, create new works, extend and develop the musical theatre into an art capable of poetically expressing the events, deep hopes, and needs of our lives.

Finally, I hope a repertory of works could be assembled and developed, and that a company and school would arise, established on the grounds of our native indigenous materials and talents, which we already know are rich, available, and productive.

After receiving a grant from the NEA, Jerome Robbins formed a company, The American Theatre Laboratory. It was a place where he could focus on the work—the process—rather than the product. After years of success directing and choreographing for Broadway, ballet, and film, Robbins sought a place where he could explore his artistic vision in a workshop setting without any impending performance deadline. He experimented with different rehearsal techniques, pursuing a theatrical form that integrated text, dance, music, as well as other elements that supported his vision. Robbins worked in this setting for two years, working with actors, writers, dancers, and musicians.

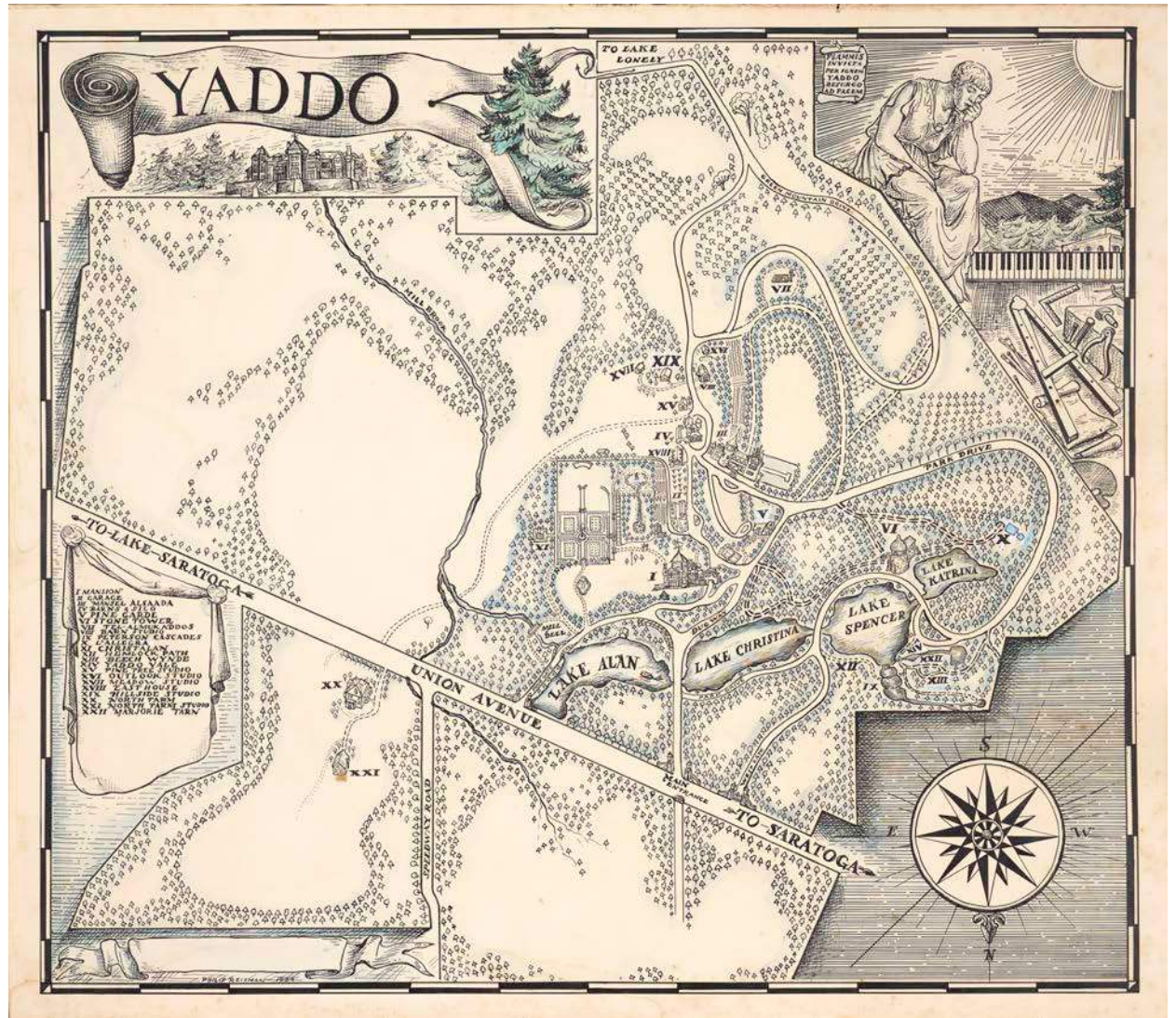
Robbins’ artistic output in the years following was particularly strong. In the next few years, he choreographed *Dances at a Gathering*, *In the Night*, *The Goldberg Variations*, and *Watermill*. In a sense, Robbins created his own Yaddo with the American Theatre Laboratory, and it resulted in a profound outpouring of artistic achievement.

The Jerome Robbins Foundation keeps Robbins’ vision of a multidisciplinary, collaborative, creative process available to artists still, through its support of organizations that aim to realize this mission.

above: Jerome Robbins’ desk, circa 1960s, with books, from left: unknown; *Life Is With People*; *The Culture of the Shtetl* (Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog); *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 1: The Formative Years and the Great Discoveries, 1856–1900* (Ernest Jones); *Mythology*; *The Italian Painters of the Renaissance* (Bernard Berenson); *Naked Masks: Five Plays* (Luigi Pirandello); *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years* (Carl Sandburg); *The Medici* (G.F. Young); *Appointment in Samarra* (John O’Hara). Photo by Jerome Robbins. above right: “Yaddo”: a map of the Yaddo estate and gardens drawn by Philip Reisman (1904–1992) during his 1934 residency there.

Sarah Marlin is a NYC-based creative. She is the Communications and Development Assistant at Yaddo. Her writing has been featured in *The New York Times* Tiny Love Stories. She's interested in theater, film, music, and Jewish culture.

There's a Place for Us Dance and Performance at Yaddo by Sarah Marlin



The Jerome Robbins Foundation was established to support dance, theater, and their associative arts. An important component of that mission is the Foundation's shared philosophy with, and financial support of, the various centers of artistic and creative exploration that offer space, freedom, and inspiration to dancers and choreographers in the form of residencies. In this issue, we focus on Yaddo, a renowned retreat for artists in Saratoga Springs, New York, and discovering what it offers to artists of the dance.

When Katrina and Spencer Trask founded Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, New York in 1900, they had a clear and simple mission in mind—to provide the gift of space and time to artists at no cost. As importantly, they had a profound understanding of why the founding of Yaddo was urgent and necessary. They shared an anxiety about social conditions, as well as the rise of fascism and concomitant wars. Katrina referred to it as the “hardening of man’s soul, and a growing deafness to the cries of the many and the wisdom of the artist.” Yaddo was to be the antidote. It was to offer working writers and artists sanctuary—a respite from urbanization, income inequality, the demands of the marketplace, noise, and political and economic upheaval.

In the 122 years since the Trasks inaugurated Yaddo, these factors have intensified, and the need for artists to have a place of retreat to dive deeply into their work is more necessary than ever. Artists look to Yaddo as a refuge and an incubator, a place for artists to focus on their projects and to immerse themselves fully, without disruption, in the creative process. While at Yaddo, residents may tackle the most complicated matters of our day. Offering a safe space to explore dangerous ideas is in Yaddo’s DNA.

Since its inception, Yaddo has hosted over 7,500 artists, including: Hannah Arendt, James Baldwin, Leonard Bernstein, Truman Capote, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Aaron Copland, Philip Guston, Langston Hughes, Ted Hughes, Grace Lumpkin, Carmen Maria Machado, Carson McCullers, Flannery O’Connor, Dorothy Parker, Sylvia Plath, Mario Puzo, Ned Rorem, Philip Roth, Clyfford Still, Virgil Thomson, Lionel Trilling, David Foster Wallace, and Eudora Welty.

Yaddo’s residency is legendary not only because of its roster of celebrated artists, but because of its superb original design. It was specifically developed to enhance the creative process. The wooded acres of tranquil, protected nature preserve are fertile ground for innovation. Yaddo’s live-work studios are designed to eliminate distractions, fostering full immersion and uninterrupted concentration. Contemplative walks in the woods provide the proven benefits of time spent in nature, while evening gatherings and shared meals foster an ongoing exchange of ideas with interdisciplinary artists at the leading edge of their fields. The five artistic disciplines represented at Yaddo include Literature, Visual Art, Music Composition, Film & Video, and Performance.

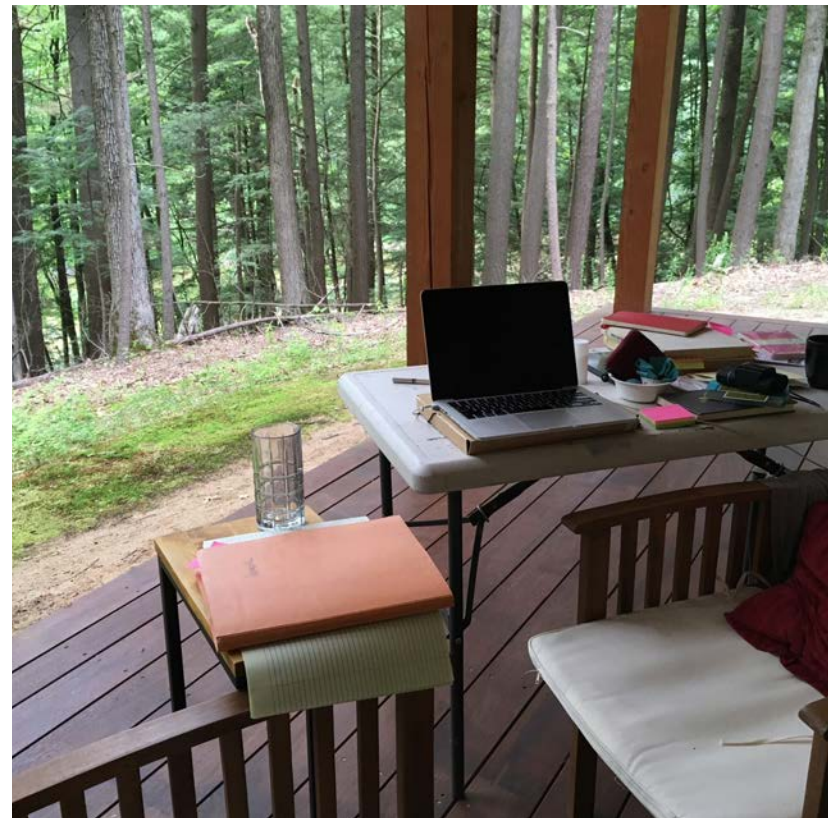
Yaddo and Performance

Since the late 1990s, Yaddo has welcomed and supported artists whose work is rooted in dance and performance. Yaddo’s support of these artists has grown tremendously in the last 30 years. Prior to its official recognition as a discipline at Yaddo, performance-based artists were accepted under a named “non-traditional” panel. As both the interest and number of applications grew, the board instilled a media and performance committee, with artist Susan Unterberg as its first chair. Later, the panel split into two separate discipline categories enabling Performance to stand as its own discipline.

When eminent performance and visual artist John Kelly—who has embodied figures from Egon Schiele to Caravaggio to Joni Mitchell in four decades on the New York cultural scene—first came to Yaddo in 1994, Performance was still yet to formally exist as a discipline. Kelly pointed out that before the construction of today’s Green House studio—equipped with mirrors and more suitable flooring—Yaddo placed marley on studio floors and a barre in the room to support performance-based artists-in-residence. An instrumental figure in bolstering Yaddo’s commitment to supporting performance-based artists, Kelly went on to chair the admissions panel for Performance for several years through the mid-2000s. Through his own artistic circle, and by direct invitation, Kelly assisted in laying the groundwork for today’s robust performance community at Yaddo. Yaddo has since hosted choreographers, performance artists, multi-media artists, writers, artists whose collaborative works incorporate live performance, and others involved in dance.



John Kelly in Yaddo's Greenhouse Studio, in front of a set piece he worked on at Yaddo in 2019, for his production "Underneath the Skin" at NYU Skirball. There will be a 3-week restaging of this piece at La Mamma, December 1–18, 2022. Photos courtesy of John Kelly.



Front deck of Studio 2 at Yaddo, overlooking the Lakes, 2021. Photo courtesy of Kyle deCamp.

Yaddo Artists Reflect

For this article, we reached out to ten Yaddo artists whose work is rooted in dance and performance: **Hadar Ahuvia** (2018), **Mike Albo** (2003, 2020), **Sidra Bell** (2022), **Kyle deCamp** (1997, 2021), **Heidi Duckler** (2007), **Molissa Fenley** (2015), **John Kelly** (1994, 2019), **Sam Kim** (2015), **Brian Rogers** (2016), and **Christopher Williams** (2005, 2019). [The year(s) these artists were in residence at Yaddo is listed next to their name. If in residence at Yaddo more than once, their first and most recent year of residency is included.] In residence during different seasons of the year and different stages of their careers, we asked them to reflect upon their time at Yaddo.

Why were you inspired to apply to Yaddo?

Fenley I needed some uninterrupted time in the studio to work on a new piece.

Williams Amazingly, I've been awarded creative residencies at Yaddo four times...when I was still quite a young choreographer looking for the time and space to develop one of my larger new ideas, John Kelly, an artist whom I greatly admire (with a scope of vision similar to mine) suggested that I apply. When I first understood the breadth and impact of Yaddo's wonderful history and mission, the romantic mystique of the place enveloped me instantly hand in hand with a keen sense of its potential usefulness and practicality.

Bell As a dance maker, I have participated in many residencies that were in community with my collaborators. These were typically focused on developing a work for performance, technical production research and honing in on company culture. My time at Yaddo was unique and singularly focused on reflecting on my solo practice. I was intent on refining ideas in relation to pedagogy, language and methodology.

Albo I was initially invited to attend by the extraordinary performer and Yaddo board member John Kelly...After that first trip, I knew I had found a place that would continue to inspire me. Yaddo has become as embracing, inspiring, and haunting as an old family home.

What did you work on during your residency?

Kelly Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, which was presented by Lincoln Center Great Performers New Visions at the New Victory Theater...I did a lot of conceptual work and organization, so when I finally came to New York and got to

the dance studio, I knew what needed to happen...When I've worked on performance stuff at Yaddo, it has mostly been conception, development, research, blocking, some choreography. If it was ensemble work, I would try to troubleshoot as much as I [could] before I had to deal with other bodies in the room...

Fenley I started researching for a new piece. One of my main sources for the inspiration of movement vocabulary is the body as seen in Etruscan/Roman/Greek ancient sculpture and frescoes. The Library at Yaddo had several books that I borrowed for use in the studio.

Rogers I applied as an interdisciplinary artist because at the time I was working on a feature film, *Screamers*. So, I mainly edited that. The feature film finally premiered in 2018.

Williams During my very first residency at Yaddo, I was able to work in collaboration with composer Peter Kirn on my dance *Ursula and the 11,000 Virgins* (2005)—a work consisting of 11 "dance portraits" of female virgin martyr saints set to extant music in praise of each chosen saint, as well as newly composed music for some of the more obscure saints among them. To my surprise and delight, this early work in my career—on which I had worked so intensely on at Yaddo—garnered me a New York Dance & Performance "Bessie" Award.

Bell Spending time in a live/workspace that was seamless formed the way I structured my workdays. The staff gave us a lot of care and the space felt like a sanctuary. I spent time moving and improvising ideas as well as translating those ideas to written form and film. The writings I started at Yaddo will form into a book entitled *INSIDE | FORM* that I hope to release in two to three years, in combination with a larger gallery showing at Gibney Dance Center (possibly in 2025).

Duckler The residency at Yaddo was focused on how to turn an ancient poem into a future world...During my residency, I had a beautiful private studio in the woods. My sister would come visit me laden with notebooks and her secret arsenal—piles of Post-its! We would cover the walls with Post-its and spend the days scribbling timelines, ideas of the moment, our research, ideas for movements, musical inspirations, visual references, personal memories, dreams, questions, connections, character and behavior, anything really!

Ahuvia I read a lot—*Undoing Master* by Julietta Singh, and my grandparents journals. I translated them and created a triptych solo from that research. I also developed a morning movement practice that is still with me...As is the way with process, the specific material I made at Yaddo ended up on the cutting room floor but was a part of the process I shared with collaborators who joined me in NYC.



Sidra Bell in the Yaddo Mansion, 2022. Photo by Rory Golden.



Sidra Bell performing "Subjective Subject" at Yaddo, 2022. Photo and garment by Rory Golden.

What is Yaddo time? Did time change meaning for you at Yaddo? Did your patterns change?

deCamp The time/space of the Yaddo residency is a generous embrace that can hold and concentrate whatever you bring into it, build, and discover there – and keep it in play – 24 hours a day.

Williams As a young artist granted a huge space of time that I would not normally have, I went into hyperdrive during my first residency and methodically created almost all of the choreographic material I needed for each part for each dancer in what would become my Bessie Award-winning work. Time both expanded and flew by. Subsequent residencies have been similar. Knowing that I'll be able to get a lot more done during this magical "Yaddo time" than I would in my regular urban life's schedule, I aim to be productive and prolific, and somehow succeed every time.

Ahuvia Yaddo instilled in me an honoring of the structure and support it takes to nourish creative practice. I developed a regular routine.

Bell Time felt rich at Yaddo. Not every day had to be filled with productivity or output, yet time felt like it was blooming with discovery and newness. I feel now that I can slow down a bit more without guilt and enjoy what's around me both in the studio and beyond.

Kim Residencies are the freest container to make stuff...getting dropped into that environment with no obligations to produce anything, especially in this capitalist culture... You have the authority to figure out what you need at this time for the whole self and process.

Rogers You're just in this studio, you're by yourself for the majority of the day, and you can just do whatever. For me it took about four or five days to even accept that that was the reality. Time kind of disappeared and I just got so much done.... That someone is preparing all of your meals for you is lifechanging. Having a studio to work in and no expectations and, if you choose, no internet, all of those things are really helpful.

Albo I think part of Yaddo's immense effectiveness is strange and simple: time bends there. There are no schedule requirements except to arrive at 6:30 for dinner, which ends up being a perfect tentpole of reality for me, because I do my weirdest work at night and then spend the next day trying to make sense of the tangled wig of words I left on the floor.

How did the natural environment affect your work process?

Ahuvia I took a walk in the woods every day. I looked at the landscape outside my studio window, and often opened the doors to the studio, which made it feel like I was outdoors. I was looking for a more sustainable way of making, and a relationship to the landscape and the earth and other beings – trees, pinecones, and grasses all helped me develop a different sense of time, effort, and drive.

Rogers Totally. 100%. The history of the place, the people who have been there...there's this haunted quality that's generative and interesting too.

Fenley I started each day enjoying the lovely breakfast and then would go on a walk around the grounds. There are trails nearby, and the daily walk in nature was very lovely. Listening to the sounds of nature, to birds, to the wind. These morning walks and thinking times were a preparation for the work to come later...the nature around Yaddo was crucial in my thinking.

Williams The sheer stillness of the natural world at that time afforded me the perfect conditions to escape into my own private world in the studio. I'd rush huffing and puffing to dinner each night having spent every moment I could working, crafting, dreaming up new material in my little cabin in the frozen woods. I'd read, nestled in bed during the cold, dark nights. Immersion in the natural setting of Yaddo at these times freed me up for a purer, unfettered, focused, yet almost carefree, approach to the creation process.

Many of these artists and those in the dance community that live and work in New York City and other urban centers find that a residency at Yaddo is a refuge, not only for work, but for rest and space as well. In the pine forest and quiet rolling hills of Yaddo's historic estate, city-based artists can escape the claustrophobic confines of small urban apartments and the limitations of restrictive workspaces.

Rogers With the ecosystem for dance in NYC and the economic challenges of it all, I think it's pretty rare for a dance maker to carve out time for themselves, because everything becomes about the cost of studio space and having to maximize that ... then at Yaddo you can be unplugged from those needs. It's so different from any experience you would have living in the city. It's comfortable to have that experience with your own work and your own time. There's always noise and distraction and other people and there is really something calming about the experience of going to a place like that. It's incredibly valuable.

Albo Another important aspect of my time at Yaddo has been SPACE...It's been so fruitful to just place your papers and ideas and notes out on a big table (instead of crammed in a NYC apartment)...and then just having room to move your body around, to get up and roll on the floor or find a character's voice or give a project a "station" somewhere in the room helps build a creative work's strength like its a toddler on a playground.

There's really no place better for concentration than at Yaddo. For many artists who work in collaboration with others, or keep busy schedules, a residency at Yaddo is a chance to focus on their own work and individual practice. However, many artists also enjoy the benefits of the communal aspects that arise from this unique space and community.

Fenley It is wonderful to be around other artists and writers. So great to see what other people are doing. At Yaddo, there is a constant come-and-go with new people arriving and people who have quickly become friends leaving. A community is built. There are people that I met at Yaddo that I am still in touch with.

Albo I have made truly important lifelong connections there and been inspired by so many other artists' work entirely different than my own.

Bell [In residence] I also spent time collaborating with another artist, Rory Golden, on photography, fashion, book design, and site-based dance. We are continuing our collaboration into the installation of a gallery of objects of my past works that will be exhibited at Gibney Dance Center [October, 2022]...It was fortuitous to meet a like-minded person in Golden, and I look forward to continuing the work with him...The dinners were a ritual that was important to me. It was an opportunity to interface with others and dialogue about the various ways our artistic processes intersected and diverged.

Duckler I loved sharing work and hearing from the group in the central space. There was no pressure. It just unfolded organically. Sharing felt like sitting in a big lap. There is so much benefit to being a part of this community. You have the privacy to work, but also the opportunity to share and be part of a beautiful community.



"Lunch Painting" by Amitava Kumar, 2019. From the artist: "I had a writing residency at Yaddo, and during lunch, after I had eaten all my carrot sticks, I would make a daily drawing. This one was a remembered map of Yaddo with imaginary dots."

What was beneficial about being at Yaddo?

Bell Yaddo allowed me space and time to synthesize materials and generate new ideas. There was a freedom to the experience that allowed for work in solitude but to also connect with other accomplished artists in myriad disciplines. I made some beautiful friendships and learned so much from my fellow artists. I left feeling inspired and rejuvenated as I moved into other projects. The reverberations of the process at Yaddo will continue for years to come. I was able to recalibrate my lens and sharpen my approach to research.

Ahuvia It was wonderful to connect with other artists, writers, musicians, visual artists, and sense connections across media. My performance work includes a lot of text, and it was meaningful to share and get feedback from writers about my translations. Being surrounded by other artists helped me keep in the context of my work.

Williams Yaddo allows an artist to delve deeper into the artistic process. It holds a mirror up to the lone self and demands a reckoning of sorts. For me, the conditions there have always been right. Interesting cohorts of fellow artists to meet, natural surroundings that heal, and the invaluable gift of unrestricted time. Like an alchemist finding the missing ingredient in some universal elixir, I have somehow been able to access a surprise inner creativity that felt magical, flowing from within.

deCamp Residency at Yaddo is an invaluable resource for artists whose research and process benefits from a private studio with 24/7 access, a diverse artist community, lovely nature, and great food.

Would you recommend a residency at Yaddo to the dance and performance community?

Fenley Absolutely yes!! The studio space is beautiful.

Kim Yes. Always. Even if someone doesn't know what the value of that is, they will figure it out. It's the best and it will shake up their process radically. I love Yaddo. I love it...The position it holds, these are the values we uphold—have some time, some total freedom, get weird, do what you do, don't do what you don't do...I think that's the ultimate sign of respect in this culture for art which seems to be so dwindling.

Williams I highly recommend that any dance and performance artist for whom creating material while alone is part of their process take advantage of this incredible historic place and opportunity.

deCamp For multidisciplinary performance-based folk, it's a great way to focus and charge up your research and preparations for collaborations and work with groups.

Bell I would absolutely recommend a residency at Yaddo for artists in performance and, specifically, dance.

Rogers My time there was great, and I hope to return some day if I am lucky enough. I know it's had a huge, positive impact on the world that I am part of. So many artists that I have worked with have been able to go to Yaddo, and it's always transformational for them, without exceptions.

Ahuvia I would absolutely recommend a stay at Yaddo. I would come back in a heartbeat. It was expansive, supportive, and nourishing.

Duckler Writing this makes me want to return. ■

Yaddo's mission is nurturing the creative process at our 400-acre retreat in upstate, New York, protecting the essential privacy of artists, and offering an opportunity to work without interruption in a supportive environment.

We offer residencies to professional creative artists from all nations and backgrounds. You may apply individually or as members of collaborative teams of up to three artists. Peer review is the key-stone of our selection process, with different panelists each season. Residencies last from two weeks to two months and include room, board, and a studio. There is no fee to come to Yaddo, and we have access grants to help offset the costs of attending a residency.

All artists are encouraged to apply! Generally, those who qualify for Yaddo residencies are either working at the professional level in their fields or are emerging artists whose work shows great professional promise. An abiding principle at Yaddo is that applications for residency are judged solely on the quality of the work. There are no publication, exhibition, or performance requirements if granted a residency.

If you are interested in applying or know an artist who would benefit from a residency at Yaddo, please go to our website, Yaddo.org, for further information about the application process. The next application deadline is January 5, 2023.

Dancers from the Royal Danish Ballet in Jerome Robbins' *Fanfare*, 1956. Photo from the collection of Jerome Robbins.



A Look at *Fanfare* by Gregory Victor

Premiere June 2, 1953

Music Benjamin Britten (*The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, Op. 34, 1945)

Choreography Jerome Robbins

Scenery and costumes Irene Sharaff

Lighting Jean Rosenthal

Original dancers *Major Domo*: Robert Fletcher. *Piccolo and Flutes*: Ruth Sobotka, Edith Brozak, Kaye Sargent. *Oboe*: Jillana. *Clarinets*: Carolyn George, Roy Tobias. *Bassoons*: John Mandia, Shaun O'Brien. *First Violins*: Barbara Bocher, Barbara Milberg, Barbara Walczak. *Second Violins*: Ann Crowell, Marsha Reynolds, Patricia Savoia. *Violas*: Irene Larsson, Jacques d'Amboise. *Celli*: Arlouine Case, Una Kai, Charlotte Ray. *Double Bass*: Brooks Jackson. *Harp*: Yvonne Mounsey. *Horns*: Edwina Fontaine, Jane Mason, Sally Streets, Gloria Vauges. *Trumpets*: Frank Hobi, Michael Maule. *Tuba and Trombones*: Edward Bigelow, Walter Georgov, Leon Guerard, Stanley Zompakos. *Drums, Cymbals, Gongs, etc.*: Todd Bolender, Robert Barnett, William Inglis.



Dancers from the Royal Danish Ballet rehearse Jerome Robbins' *Fanfare*, 1956. *Fanfare* was the first time that Robbins staged one of his ballets for a foreign company. Photo by Jerome Robbins.

When Princess Elizabeth was to be crowned Queen of England in 1953, George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein asked Jerome Robbins to create a ballet for an evening celebrating the event. For music, Robbins chose Benjamin Britten's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, a set of variations and a fugue on a theme by Henry Purcell. The result was *Fanfare*, an ensemble ballet that premiered on the date of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in a special New York City Ballet coronation night program curated by Lincoln Kirstein to honor British choreographers, composers, and designers. The program that evening began with a brief address made by Major General William Alfred Dimoline, head of Service of Advisors to the United Kingdom and representative on the Military Committee of the United Nations. Then, Sir William Walton's "Orb and Sceptre," which had been played earlier that day during the coronation, was performed by the New York City Ballet orchestra, under the direction of Leon Barzin. Following performances of *Picnic at Tintagel* (choreographed by Frederic Ashton), *Illuminations* (also choreographed by Mr. Ashton), and *Swan Lake* (choreographed by George Balanchine, after Lev Ivanov, with décor and costumes by Cecil Beaton), *Fanfare* had its premiere. To honor the occasion, designer Irene Sharaff even topped off each dancer's costume with a crown.

Fanfare begins with a majordomo on stage, reading Britten's explanatory text from the score. Then, the full orchestra introducing the theme, which is then played individually by various instruments in turn, starting with the woodwinds, and moving on to the strings, brass, and percussion. In the ballet, the dancers each represent a different instrument or instrumental group of the symphony orchestra. *Fanfare* is a danced visualization of the score, with Robbins' choreography cleverly expressing the essence of each instrument into movement. In the final section, the dancers re-enter, one group at a time, and combine in a fugue. By assigning each musical instrument a representative dancer, Robbins clarified the equivalence of music and movement.

Though *Fanfare* was an amusing entertainment, it presented a challenge to Robbins, who had to construct several brief variations, each of which had to have a completeness of its own. In an interview in the *Los Angeles Times*, Robbins stated that in *Fanfare* he was "successful in handling the technical problem of the variation form," explaining that "it is the craft of it that interests me."

In a review in the *New York Herald Tribune*, dance critic Walter Terry wrote: "*Fanfare* is courtly, but its courtliness is suffused with good humor and peppered with mischief. Not only has Mr. Robbins selected and invented movements and, particularly rhythmic phrasings which appear to be visualized characteristics of the instruments portrayed and the themes allotted to them, but he has also found the special brands of fun associated with, say, the tuba, the double bass, or the bassoons. One sees speed and lightness in the dancing of flutes, gliding legate in the celli, soaring in the clarinets, ripples and sweeps in the harp, and fine pomposity in the percussion." ■



Sammy Bayes as The Fiddler in the 1976 Broadway production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Photo courtesy of Barbara Bayes.

“I got along with Jerry because I liked to work.” An interview with Sammy Dallas Bayes

In 2011, Bernard Carragher interviewed Sammy Dallas Bayes as part of the Jerome Robbins Foundation’s Oral History Project. What follows are excerpts from that conversation.

Sammy Dallas Bayes I should preface this by saying that the reason I started dancing was because of Jerome Robbins. I had seen *West Side Story* and it impressed me so much that I wanted to become a dancer. Then I saw *West Side Story* when I was in the service, in Germany. I put Jerome Robbins on a pedestal at that moment, and he remained there. When I got out of the service, I came to New York, and I studied. Then, auditions for *Fiddler* came up. There was no way I was going to miss those auditions, because to work for the man who was my idol was something I really wanted to happen. So, I went to the auditions, and they were long. And there were a lot of them. He was noted for that.

Bernard Carragher What did he ask you to do?

SDB I think we started off with a ballet combination. Then he gave some little character dances. I don’t recall exactly what they were, but I can remember the feeling of dancing his choreography. Everything was “right” about it. To a dancer, Robbins never gave you anything that felt bad on your body, and it was so wonderful to dance what he created. A dancer’s dream. Or it was for me, anyway. We hit it off because I was so devoted to his work, and I was very focused in the rehearsal period. People say that he was evil and that he was mean. I never found that. I found that if you didn’t do his work, he was mean. He was never evil. He demanded perfection. If you didn’t do it perfectly, you had to show him that you were attempting to do it perfectly. We were rehearsing at the Lyceum Theatre during our rehearsal period in New York and I saw that the stage was empty during the lunch hour, and I asked Jim Bronson, the stage manager, if I could use the stage during the lunch hour. He said, “Sure. Go ahead.” And I got this girl, who was also a modern dancer, and I got her to brown-bag it, and we’d work on the stage. I’d just choreograph. That’s all I would do for an hour

and a half. At one point, later in my career, I asked Robbins to come in and look at some of my work. Well, he came in, and he said, “Do you want to talk?” And I said, “Yes. I’ve got 20 minutes left of time in the studio. Do you mind waiting?” And he said, “No, no. I’ll be across the street in the coffee shop.” And then the dancers said, “You’re making Jerome Robbins wait?” I never really thought about that. All I thought about was that I had another 20 minutes of studio time and that I could get some work done. I think he appreciated the fact that I had 20 minutes left, and I was going to work during those 20 minutes. I think he liked that. I went across the street, and he critiqued me on my work. He gave me some wonderful things to think about that have really come in handy over the years.

BC What were those?

SDB One was “never be afraid to throw out your best piece of movement if it doesn’t fit.” Don’t fall in love with what you do. It can be a wonderful piece of movement that’s absolutely brilliant but get rid of it if it doesn’t work in the structure of the piece. You can always save it. Sometime later, you may be doing another ballet and it’ll come up, and you’ll say, “Oh, I’ve got this piece of movement that I remember that will work perfectly here. Nothing will go to waste, but don’t try to put something where it doesn’t belong.” The other one was, “Listen to the classical composers. Don’t try to figure them out. Don’t study them. Just listen. Through the process of osmosis, when you start creating, the more you create, you’ll automatically feel when it’s wrong. You’ll come to an understanding because you’ve listened to the classics.” And it’s true. When I choreograph, or when I’m doing a piece directorially, I can feel when something’s wrong. He said, “You’re a good choreographer.” I asked how he could tell after just seeing that, and he said, “I’ve watched you work.” And I said, “What do you mean, you’ve watched me work?” He said, “Remember when we were working at the Lyceum, and you would take that hour and a half onstage? I’d go out the stage door, go out front, go upstairs in the balcony and sit and watch you work.” So, he spent a lot of afternoons watching me work. I think I got along with Jerry because I liked to work.

BC How did he choreograph *Fiddler*?

SDB He gave everybody a character. I was Yitzuk, the street sweeper. He would do these wonderful dances, and he would shake his head and leave them alone and go somewhere else. I saw *Fiddler on the Roof* transform from the beginning of rehearsals through the opening night on Broadway. My gosh, what a transformation it went through. His creative team—Jerry Bock, Sheldon Harnick, and Joe Stein—they worked very closely with him, restructuring musical numbers, replacing musical numbers, restructuring the book, taking this out, putting this in. The same with his own ballets. The “Chavaleh” ballet, which is a very simple, little ballet in the second act was once a huge ballet in Detroit. We had trees flying in, trees flying out, carts turning around. All of that went away. “Anatevka,” a song at the end of the second act with six characters in it, was, at one point, an opener for the first act, with a big dance number in the middle of it. All of that went away, and what I saw, as I did the show and worked the show, was what he did structurally. I was very aware of how he loaded things in –

BC What do you mean by that?

SDB He tended to overload. He said, “It’s better to have too much than too little. If you have too much, you can always take it away, but if you have too little, then your work’s cut out for you, and you’ve got places you can’t go.” He tended to work that way. At least on *Fiddler* he did, until he got down to the pure essence of it. Every time I do the show, I see more of that composition in it. I see things that I hadn’t seen before. You see it from the beginning to the end of the show. The full circle goes around. If you look at the show, all the staging he did on it was based on circles, because that is the geometrical figure that is the strongest. He said it was like the Jewish people. If you break their circle, they’ll form a new circle again somewhere else in the world. But you can never break the circle forever because they always come back strong again. And that was one of the reasons for using circles in the show. And I saw how often he used it, composition-wise.

BC Right. The turntable –

SDB Yeah, the turntable, and then the staging. Every once in a while, I would put somebody into the show, and I would discover something new again. I’d think, *My gosh, I never saw that before.*

BC How did the show change? It was in a lot of trouble in Detroit, right?

SDB Yes. And Jerry knew it.

BC Did you think you were going to be in a lot of trouble?

SDB No. Nobody thought that, because with Jerome Robbins, how could we be in trouble?

BC So, in Detroit, you put on the show, and it didn’t work, or –?

SDB No, but not for lack of trying. I never worked so hard in my life. We were doing shows at night, and then we were rehearsing the next morning. There was something new being put into the show, or something being taken out. His idea was if it’s not needed, don’t do it. If it’s needed to fulfill the story, to take you to the next point, then you do it, but if it’s not needed, take it out. We were constantly in a state of flux. After Detroit, we went to Washington, D.C., and I can remember him saying, “I want the dancers in tomorrow morning.” We were all surprised because he hadn’t called the dancers in for a long time—since New York—for anything. He said, “I only want the male dancers in,” and we were all excited. We went in, and he started what has now become “the bottle dance.” I can remember some of the guys figuring that there wouldn’t be too much to do, so they didn’t warm-up with a ballet barre. So, when he gave us movement, some guys didn’t quite do it. And he was livid. When Jerry got livid, his eyes turned black. The pupils of his eyes seemed to turn absolutely black. He said, “Your body is like the instrument that a player has in an orchestra. You keep that instrument in shape. You take care of it. You oil it, you change the strings on it, and when the conductor wants you to lay that bow across the violin, that instrument should be ready to go. Your instruments are not ready to go. And you’re being paid to keep those instruments in shape and ready to do what I want with them.” Everybody perked up then and started doing a ballet barre right away. What I’m getting at is the show was getting terrible reviews, terrible word-of-mouth, until that bottle dance went in. A lot of things happened at the same time as the bottle dance went in, and all of a sudden, it was a different show. It was a successful show. Everybody said, “This thing’s going to make it.”

BC So, you were with *Fiddler* for a couple of years?

SDB Yes.

BC What was Gluck Sandor like?

SDB He was wonderful. I just loved Gluck. I had no idea that he was Jerry’s teacher. He used to tell me, “I taught Jerry,” but I thought it was just an old man talking. But he did. Once I started looking into Robbins’ past I realized *My God, he was his first teacher.* That’s another thing about Jerry that I liked. People who were important in his life, if they were having a hard time, or they weren’t making money, he always found a place for them. He found a place for Gluck—he gave him the part of the Rabbi—because Gluck got him started. Jerry always took care of his people. He was constantly helping those people who had done something for him, either in a performance or taught him something. He paid them back if they were going through a difficult time. So, all the talk of him being an angry, evil man, I can’t think that. I never saw that.



Jerome Robbins, Zero Mostel, and cast members rehearsing the original Broadway production of *Fiddler on the Roof* in 1964. Photo by Sam Falk.

BC When you look at the film of *Fiddler on the Roof*, what do you think of the choreography? There's so little of Jerry's work on film.

SDB When I look at the choreography, it's Jerry's work. I think an admirable job was done. My main problem, after coming from Broadway—where it was set in the small village of Anatevka—was that the movie didn't look like a small village. Or at least not to me.

BC And you're in the movie version also?

SDB Yes, I am.

BC Did you go to see Jerry when you were going to do the movie?

SDB No, but I'm sure Tommy Abbott did. Tommy introduced a lot of melodies—choreographic melodies—into the film that Jerry had used onstage and taken out. There's a section at the wedding where the girls do a little scarf dance. That little scarf dance was something that Jerry did in the opening number of the second act, when "Anatevka" opened the second act. That came back into the movie because the director wanted some dancing to happen with the girls too.

BC Was the choreography for the film fairly similar to the stage choreography?

SDB Yes.

BC Did you ever know why he didn't want to do the movie?

SDB No. I didn't get into that. I knew that Norman had been hired and I've since read about his troubles on *West Side Story*. Probably, he said to himself, "I don't need to go through this again." He was such a perfectionist. He didn't care how many people were standing around waiting, or how many takes it would take. He wanted to get it the way he wanted it, which was good for him, but not for the producer.

BC Did he ever come on the set of the movie?

SDB No, he never did. What I loved about him—I went to see his *Les Noces* at American Ballet Theatre and I was stunned at the brilliance of it. Afterward, I went to a little restaurant across the street from Lincoln Center, and somebody was waving at me. I looked over and I thought, *that looks like Jerry Robbins!* He called me over and I came over, and I said, "I just saw your ballet." He said, "What did you think?" I said, "It was wonderful." Then he said, "I don't know. I don't know. For me, there are some elements—I don't know. Are you sure it's okay?" He was asking *me* if *his* ballet was okay, and I was so taken aback by his humility.

BC So how did you get the gig of staging *Fiddler*? You've done quite a few *Fiddlers*.

SDB Tommy Abbott and Ruth Mitchell used to do it. Then, they both passed. When Tommy passed, I was the next logical person to go to, because Jerry approved of me. He sent me over to Japan to do the first production ever done in Japan, in 1966, I think. Shortly after we opened in New York, he sent me over. For the [1990] Broadway revival starring Topol, Ruth Mitchell reproduced the direction, and I reproduced the choreography.

BC You didn't do the [1976] revival with Zero [Mostel]?

SDB No. When they were opening on Broadway, they needed a fiddler because the actor was ill, and Zero said, "Call Sammy Bayes. I want Sammy Bayes to play the fiddler. I've done it with him, and I like him." So, Ruth Mitchell called and asked if I would play the fiddler, and I said no, and told her that I didn't perform any more. I was choreographing by then and I wasn't really interested in going back on stage. She said, "Don't you understand? Zero wants you." I said, "That's nice. Tell Zero I don't want to do it." She said, "You're not hearing me. Zero wants you. What's your contract going to look like?" And a light went on. I could make some money by doing this role because Zero wanted me and no one else was going to do it except me. If that's the case, maybe I'll do it for a month. Then I went in and did it for two months while the other fiddler got well. I had other choreographic assignments after that, so I left the show. But it was nice, because it was the first time I really had a chance to spend time with Zero in his dressing room. We'd hang out and he'd talk art and painting. During that revival was the first time I really got to know him one-on-one. A wonderful man.

BC Did Jerry come in and look at the show at all?

SDB I don't know if Jerry came in. He did come down to Philadelphia to see the revival that we did with Topol.

BC What did he think?

SDB It wasn't so much what he thought as it was what he did, with the fewest words, and in the least amount of time I'd ever seen anybody use to pull off a miracle. He knew I knew the show very well. There's a book with all the choreography written out. So, when I was sitting in the audience and taking notes for Jerry, he would either nudge me in the ribs with his elbow, or he'd grunt, and I knew exactly what he was talking about, and I'd write down the note. Then he came in the next day and worked with the kids, and I've never seen such a transformation in a performance. He spent two hours talking to them and just vaguely going over things. That evening, the show was a whole new ballgame. It was incredible.

BC What would he say?

SDB It's not what he said, it was him saying it. It was the way he would say it, and the belief in what he was saying to one actor or another, or to the whole group, that made them focus. When you focused on him, he gave you information that didn't go in one ear and out the other. It went in one ear, and it stayed. That was part of his gift, to be able to do that. A two-hour rehearsal period, then do the show that night—but absolutely different in intensity and quality. He had this incredible gift.

BC Did Jerry come to see the original production very often?

SDB No. Once he got it up, he was pretty well finished with it. He'd done what he wanted to do, and it was successful. I think he just wanted to let it go, and let it be. At that time, he was getting back into ballet. Once it opened on Broadway, that was it.

BC Who maintained the choreography while it ran on Broadway for so many years?

SDB Tommy Abbott did, and then I took over. When it opened on Broadway, Frank Loesser came to Jerry and said, "I want the rights to do the summer stock productions." It was called Frank Productions at that time. It's now called Music Theatre International. Jerry told Frank Loesser, "If you come up with a concept of how my choreography can be recorded, so that they always do my choreography, I'll work with you on getting the rights to do the show." So, Frank came up with a formula.

BC What was that?

SDB Well, you take the score, and you follow the score, and you count it by bars. What happened was when Jerry approved of the formula, Frank asked Jerry who would do it? "Call Sammy Bayes. He can do it." So, Frank Loesser called me and said, "We're not going to be able to get the rights for a couple of years, so you've got a couple of years to work it out." It was a matter of taking the score and going from bar to bar, noting what was happening with the foot, the hand, the arm, the steps, and the patterns. Everything, down to the fingers, was the same as Jerry did. Now there's a book, called *The Director's Book*, that I created, that goes out with every show. You're supposed to follow it, and if you do follow what I put in there, you'll be doing Robbins' choreography verbatim.

BC At least it's all annotated.

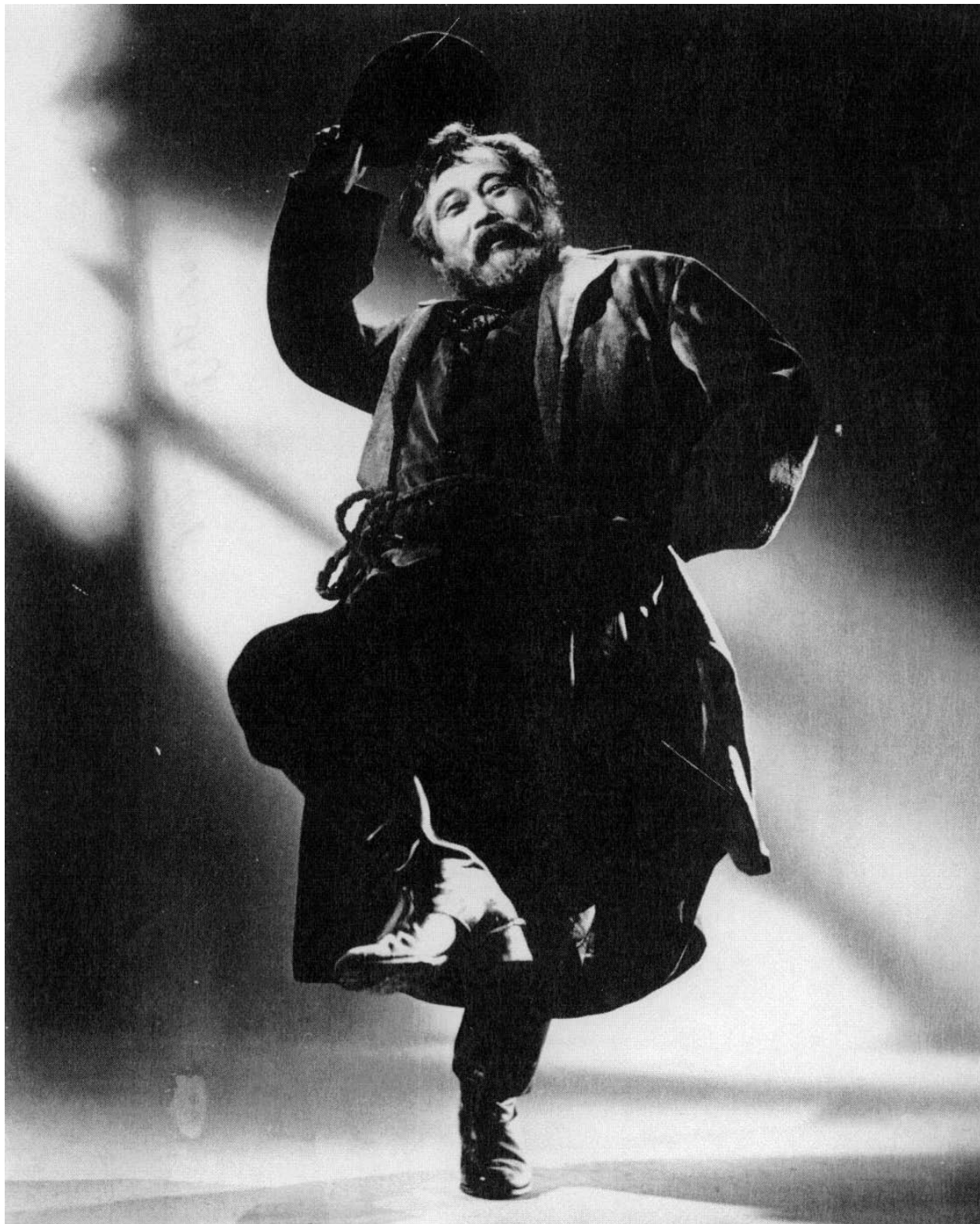
SDB It is. And that's the reason I know the show so well. To make the book, I had to study, down to each bar of music, what was happening with the body.

BC With each character?

SDB Yes, and it paid off. I'm now teaching a guy younger than me the original choreography. He will then take over. Then there's a guy younger than him, whom I'm also teaching. We've got about 20 years between each of us. So, between myself and the younger kid, we've got over 40 years difference in age. But I want him to learn it so that when it's restaged and it says it's the original choreography, it *is* the original choreography. My objective is to make sure that there's always somebody to hand the choreography down to, so that it remains intact as it originally was in 1964.

BC Did you ever think you'd still be doing *Fiddler* after all these years?

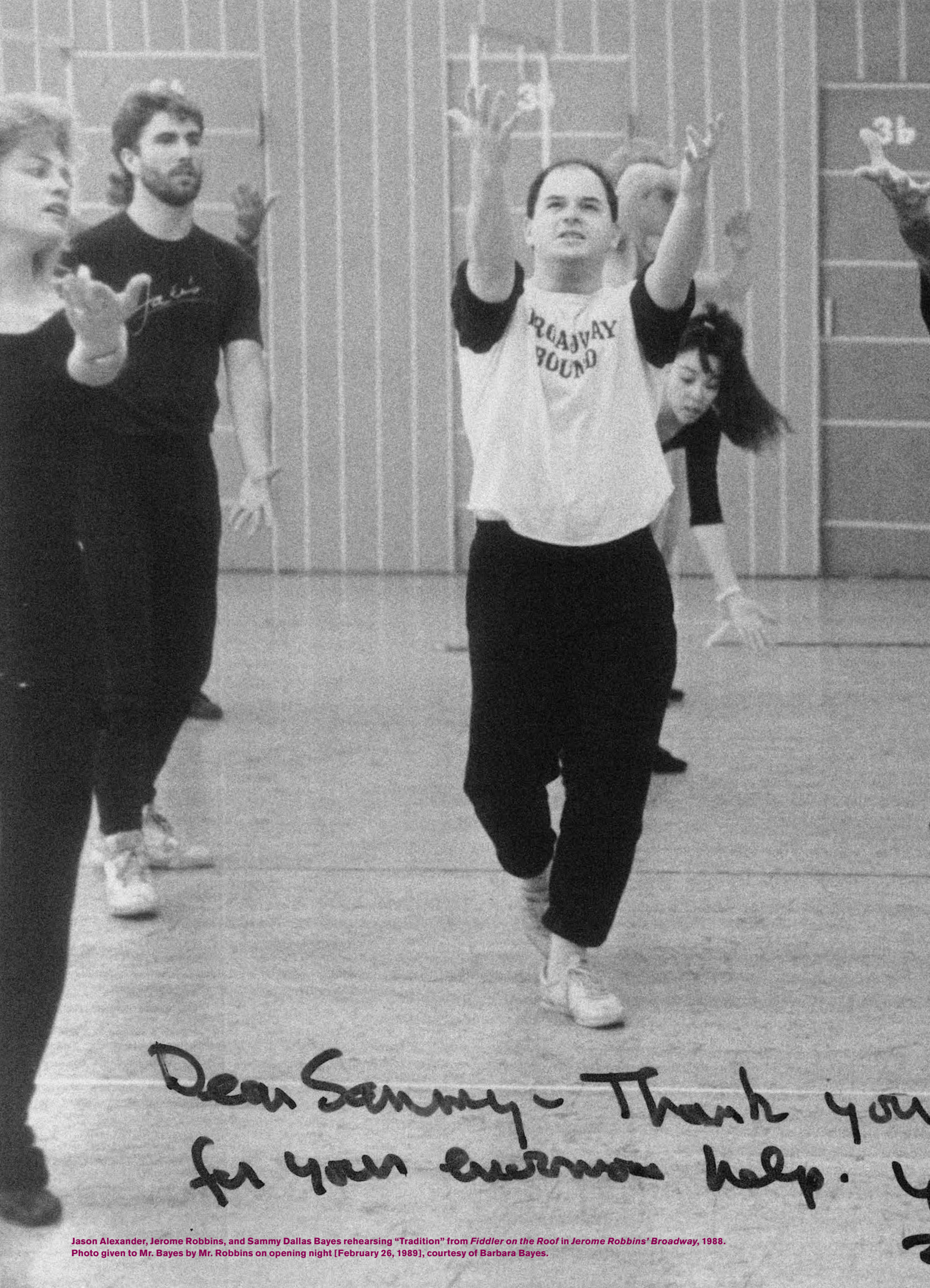
SDB No. If somebody had come up to me on the day that I auditioned for *Yitzuk*, the *Streetsweeper*, and told me that I'd be staging the show and be responsible for its choreography for the rest of my life, I would have said, "What are you, crazy?" ■



Hisaya Morishige as Tevye in the first Tokyo production of *Yane No Ue Violin Hikki (Fiddler on the Roof)* in 1967. For the production, Sammy Dallas Bayes reproduced Jerome Robbins' direction and choreography. Photo from the collection of Jerome Robbins.

Miracle of miracles! The beloved Off-Broadway production of *Fiddler on the Roof* in Yiddish has returned in a limited engagement at New World Stages in New York City, through January 1, 2023. The production is directed by Academy Award and Tony winner Joel Grey. Steven Skybell reprises his role as Tevye.

In 2018, audiences fell in love with this unique version of *Fiddler*, presented in Yiddish with English and Russian supertitles, for the very first time. A *New York Times Critic's Pick*, *Fiddler on the Roof* "strikes a deep emotional chord." It was hailed as "a richer, deeper interpretation" by *The Wall Street Journal*, and "a mitzvah" by *Time Out New York*. Harold Prince, the original producer of *Fiddler on the Roof*'s first Broadway production said, "If you have seen *Fiddler* before, you must see this production because it will make you feel you are seeing *Fiddler* for the first time."



Dear Sammy - Thank you
for your evermon help.

Jason Alexander, Jerome Robbins, and Sammy Dallas Bayes rehearsing "Tradition" from *Fiddler on the Roof* in *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, 1988. Photo given to Mr. Bayes by Mr. Robbins on opening night [February 26, 1989], courtesy of Barbara Bayes.



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ITS GOING WELL
THANK YOU

ZAP
LIVE STATE THEATRE

Samuel
Jones - Jerry
2.26.89

Staging and choreography, "Bibles" on the desk of choreographer Staś Kmiec during rehearsal for the 2022 revival of *Fiddler on the Roof* in Yiddish at Manhattan's New World Stages. Photo courtesy of Staś Kmiec.

"It was important to Sammy to pass it on..." A conversation between Jan Lisa Huttner and Barbara Bayes

In September 2022, Jan Lisa Huttner, author of *Diamond Fiddler: New Traditions for a New Millennium (Why Fiddler on the Roof Always Wins)*, spoke with Barbara Bayes, the wife of Sammy Dallas Bayes, who sadly passed in May.

Jan Lisa Huttner How did you and Sammy meet?

Barbara Bayes Sammy and I met in 1985. I was a performer, dancing and singing in an industrial show for IBM. Sammy was our choreographer. We met at the earliest possible moment that we could have met in our lives. I was 20 years old. Sammy was 45. So, it was quite scandalous. We dated for five years, and then, on September 22, 1990, we got married. The date is significant because *Fiddler on the Roof* opened on Broadway on September 22, 1964. We wanted to get married in the Fall, and it just so happened that the 22nd was on a Saturday that year. Sammy joked: "At least I'll remember my wedding anniversary." Sammy and I were married for 31 years, and we raised two beautiful daughters. Just like Tevye, Sammy was a "girl dad."

JLH Do you know the Yiddish word *bashert*? When all the pieces of a puzzle fit together, it's "*bashert*," meaning "meant to be." Tell me a bit about your career.

BB I divide my life with Sammy into three acts. When I met Sammy, in Act One, I was doing summer stock, and getting myself going. In Act Two, after we decided to have children, I happily put that on the shelf. I did a bit of theater and commercial work, but just as it fit into our schedule. Sammy was traveling quite a bit in those days, and we made an agreement – if Sammy was going to be gone for more than five or six weeks, we would all go. London! Sydney! Tokyo! It was wonderful, being together – as a family – in these beautiful cities. Now, in Act Three, I'm going back into New York City to see what the market is like for a woman of my age. It turns out everybody needs a mom or a grandmother, so I have been booking quite a bit. I did a play Off-Broadway called *Executive Decision* in which I played the President of the United States. I really loved that!

JLH In 2011, Bernard Carragher spoke with Sammy for the Jerome Robbins Foundation's Oral History Project. Sammy talked very intimately and very beautifully about Robbins in that interview. He specifically described the quality of attention that Robbins had, especially in the context of the choreography manual they did together for *Fiddler*. It was clear to me – reading that interview – that Sammy felt he had had a profoundly important relationship with Robbins, and he wanted to emulate the qualities he attributed to Robbins in his own theatrical relationships.

BB One of the last plays I did with Sammy was *Into the Woods*. Sammy was the director, and I was the witch. Working with Sammy was divine. He had such a way of telling stories and getting things out of his performers that we didn't even know we had within us. Somebody asked me recently: "Did Sammy prefer choreographing? Directing? Writing?" And I said: "You know, he started as a dancer, but I think what he really liked to do was tell stories." He could see how a story should be told, and he told it with his actors and his staging. That was his gift, and, I think, to a great degree, that was due to his connection with Jerome Robbins. I've never been in a production of *Fiddler*. I need to fulfil that dream one day. But while our daughters were in high school, Sammy and I co-directed the annual musicals at their high school. One year, I said, "You've got to do *Fiddler*." Sammy was reluctant, but I said: "It would be a shame not to give them that experience." So, we did, and it was incredible. Our older daughter – Alexa – played Yente, and our younger daughter – Taylor – played Hodel. I will tell you this: stage crew, actors – be they female or male – it was a rite of passage to learn The Bottle Dance! The kids were just astounded that it wasn't a gimmick – that they had to really balance the bottles on their hats! Sammy treated them the same as he would a professional cast. He didn't cut any slack for anybody.

JLH Such a breadth of experience across space (from New York to Tokyo) and time (from 1964 to your daughters' high school). Was Sammy ever surprised that so many people embraced the characters in this story?

BB Oh no, that never surprised Sammy. *Fiddler* is a universal story. It's a story of family and moving forward while trying to hold onto what you know from your past. It's a beautifully told story, so even though it's set in a Jewish shtetl in 1905, it resonates around the world. We want what's best for our kids, right? We want them to be happy... but sometimes we want them to be happy on our own terms.

JLH I called Sammy in 2009 when I was covering Topol's "Farewell Tour" for Chicago's *JUF News*. Such an illuminating conversation. I devote a whole section to that interview in my book *Diamond Fiddler: New Traditions for a New Millennium*. I also spoke with other members of the fabulous team Sammy had assembled. Everyone sang Sammy's praises as director and choreographer. Topol has spoken very movingly – to me and to others – about his emotional arc. When he played Tevye in London in the 1960s, he was a very young man, but by 2009, he was the father of two adult daughters (as well as one son). How did Sammy feel about *Fiddler* once he also became the father of daughters?

BB Sammy adored his girls – it goes without saying – and when Alexa and Taylor came into our lives, it just changed his perspective completely. There's something protective that happens. I think he even treated the actors differently once he became a father. He loved his actors. He loved working with them. Life had a deeper purpose.

JLH The *Fiddler* is always played by a dancer (never an actor or a musician). According to IBDB (the Internet Broadway Database), Sammy didn't play The *Fiddler* in the original cast. So, when did Sammy become The *Fiddler*?

BB Sammy started off playing Yitzuk (the street sweeper). According to Sammy, one of Robbins' gifts was to give everybody a name. Robbins didn't want "Street Sweeper" in the credits. Everybody had a character – with a name – that they could develop. But by 1972, he was The *Fiddler* (after years as The *Fiddler*'s understudy as well as the Dance Captain). When the show returned to Broadway in 1976, Sammy played The *Fiddler* again.

Here's the story Sammy told me: He was a young dancer in New York, and he had gotten several callbacks for *Fiddler*. He was literally down to like a dollar in his pocket. He said he had gone to the butcher and asked for scrap bones, and he had bought a carrot and an onion. He made soup and he ate that soup for a week. "I refused to take a temp job. I was just going to do what I wanted to do." I'm sure his thought was: "If I take some sort of temporary job, it's going to take me away from my goals." So, he stayed with it...

It was the last callback, and Sammy said it was down to him and another guy, and Tommy Abbott (Robbins' assistant) said: "Take Sammy." They went back and forth, and then Jerry said: "Oh, just take them both." Talk about a sliding door moment. That moment connected him to this musical theater masterpiece and connected him to Jerome Robbins. And that association was lifelong. He had such profound respect for Robbins' work. So, that's the story Sammy told me about how he got cast in *Fiddler*.

In 1989, when Robbins put together his final Broadway show – *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* – they contacted Sammy about assisting Robbins in recreating the *Fiddler* section of the show. Of course, Sammy was so happy to be a part of it. I remember he came home after rehearsal one day and he just looked different, like almost in a dazed state. "I had such a great day... At the end of rehearsal, everybody's leaving, and Jerry pulls me over, and he says to me: 'That was really good work today.' And I said to him: 'Oh, thank you.' Jerry said: 'No, no, Sammy. That was really good work today.'"

"The Master said I did good work." Sammy often referred to Robbins as "The

Master.” And then, later in the rehearsal process, Robbins gave Sammy a T-shirt that said “Head Coach, Fiddler” along with a referee whistle. That just meant the world to Sammy.

When we went to the opening night of *Jerome Robbins’ Broadway*, Robbins was at a table at the after party, and so many people were coming over to congratulate him. Sammy and I made our way up to the table, and when he saw Sammy, Robbins’ face literally lit up: “Oh Sammy, Sammy.” And Robbins grabbed his hands, and Sammy said: “Oh Jerry, it was so good!” And Robbins said: “Really, was it good? Was it good?” I’m thinking: “You’re asking if it was good? It was incredible! It was beyond!” But it was so kind that Robbins just wanted to know if Sammy thought *Jerome Robbins’ Broadway* was good. “Really, was it good? Was it good?” It’s crazy, right?

JLH Did you think it was good?

BB It was great! It won six Tony Awards including Best Musical! And then, shortly after that, was the 25th Anniversary Broadway Revival of *Fiddler*. Sammy choreographed that. I happened to swing by the theater when they were rehearsing the Inn Scene. I’m sitting there in the house at the Gershwin Theatre, and Sammy is working with these young dancers. It’s the pileup scene at the end of “To Life.” They’re doing it and doing it, and Sammy says: “No, no, no, no, no. Do it again. Do it again. No, that’s not it.”

Sammy gets up on the stage and says: “Stand back.” He cues the music, and the dancers start falling pile-by-pile. Sammy was the last one to go into a handstand. He hopped up on the bar, and then the last guy is on the floor. Boom!

Everybody un-piles. Sammy stands up, and he says: “That’s how you do it.” Then the guys surround Sammy: “Oh, my God, Sammy, that was amazing. I got it now. I got it.” And Sammy walks over to me, and he whispers: “Don’t ever let me do that again!”

JLH Okay, this is a great place to introduce a topic from the 2011 Carragher interview. Bernie and Sammy discussed one of the great dilemmas in dance—how to ensure correct choreography. Bernie asked: “Who maintained the *Fiddler* choreography?” Sammy discussed how he came up with the concept of the *Fiddler* director’s book that goes out with the script when the show is licensed. Sammy also mentioned that he wanted to pass his *Fiddler* knowledge on to younger generations, so that Robbins’ original choreography always remains intact. My question to you is this: Was Sammy able to achieve that continuity before he passed?

BB It was important to Sammy to pass it on. It’s a piece of art and history that you don’t want to be lost. Sammy started working with a trained ballet dancer who has taken the mantle now. His name is Staś Kmiec.

JLH Oh, gosh! Staś Kmiec is the person who did the choreography for the Yiddish *Fiddler*.

BB Correct. Staś was on tour with Sammy (probably on more than one tour). When planning began for the Yiddish *Fiddler*, they emailed Sammy about it, but, unfortunately, his health prevented him. So, we emailed back and said: “Staś Kmiec is the guy you want to talk to.” Sammy had really taken great care to pass that information on to Staś, so, yes, the original Robbins choreography lives on.

JLH I’ve seen the Yiddish *Fiddler* four times. It’s wonderful! When *Fiddler* premiered on Broadway in 1964, the Holocaust was only just emerging in popular culture as a distinct phenomenon in world history. I know that’s hard to believe now, but most people in the United States—including many Jewish Americans—knew very little about the Holocaust before 1961 (when the Eichmann Trial began). *Fiddler*’s creative team knew that survivors and children of survivors would be in the audience, so they would be dancing—so to speak—around extremely tender feelings.

Jerome Robbins (who had been to the “old country” as a child) was aware of this. In 1964, the subject of intermarriage was especially problematic; it’s still fraught even now. When I spoke with Sammy in 2009, I asked him pointed questions about Fyedka (the Russian youth who falls in love with Tevye’s daughter Chava). I told him the Fyedka in Topol’s “Farewell Tour” was a different character—in subtle, sympathetic ways—than any Fyedka I had ever seen on stage before. During our phone conversation, Sammy affirmed my POV: “Yes, Fyedka was always intended to be a good guy.” Some things that had to be covert in 1964 could be more overt in 2009. For Sammy, working in the 21st century, the time had come.

BB Sammy never talked about Chava and Fyedka’s interfaith marriage with me, but he did say—as you write—that he brought Fyedka to the forefront. After the scene at the Inn, Tevye knows who Fyedka is.

JLH Yes, he does. Sammy made that very clear in his staging. There were things Robbins couldn’t do in 1964, but I sincerely believe that Sammy knew what was in his heart.

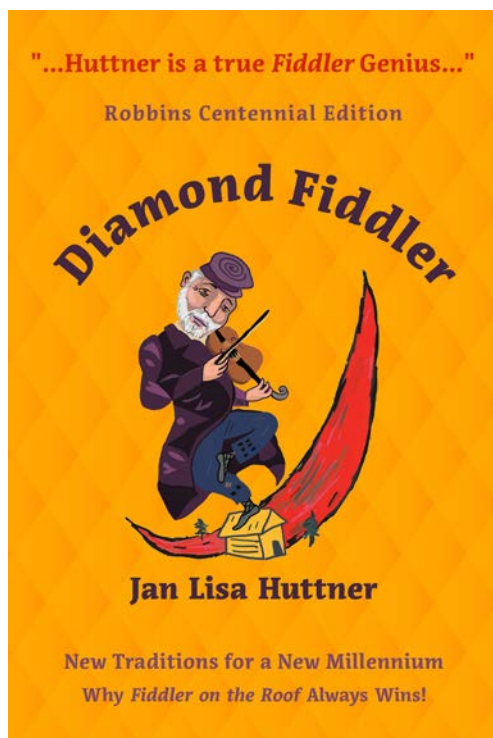
BB One of the things that Sammy told me, over the years in working with Jerry, Jerry told him, “Don’t be afraid to edit.” Fyedka’s story got pared back for whatever reason in 1964, but when Sammy put Fyedka in the spotlight at the Inn, it was so brilliant.

JLH Yes. It was Sammy who showed me how Fyedka could be presented in a very sympathetic way.

BB Sammy was extraordinary in so many ways. He loved his work so much, and because he was present at the creation of *Fiddler*, it was really such a blessing for him. It gave him so many insights and it helped him to understand. You tell me you keep learning new things about *Fiddler*. Well, Sammy always kept learning things about *Fiddler on the Roof* too. ■



Sammy, Taylor, Barbara, and Alexa Bayes at *Raising the Roof*—the 50th anniversary celebration of *Fiddler on the Roof*—at Town Hall in New York City, 2014. Courtesy of Barbara Bayes



Diamond Fiddler by Jan Lisa Huttner

Jan Lisa Huttner is a graduate of St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, and holds master's degrees from Harvard University, the State University of New York at Binghamton, and the University of Chicago. Huttner is the Editor-in-Chief of FF2Media.com, a website dedicated to expanding cultural awareness of women artists. Huttner served as one of two credited story consultants (along with Alisa Solomon, the author of *Wonder of Wonders: A Cultural History of Fiddler on the Roof*) for Max Lewkowicz's award-winning and highly acclaimed documentary film, "Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles."

Huttner's book *Tevye's Daughters: No Laughing Matter* provides an analysis of where Sholem Aleichem's Tevye stories fit in the context of other father/daughter stories. Her recently published book is *Diamond Fiddler: New Traditions for a New Millennium*. It is a comprehensive examination of all things *Fiddler*, based on textual analysis of the transformation of Sholem Aleichem's eight Tevye stories into *Fiddler on the Roof*. Kirkus Reviews described the book as "a must-read for *Fiddler* enthusiasts." ■

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts announces 2022–23 Dance Research Fellows

Juli Brandano, Rosemary Candelario, María de los Angeles Rodríguez Jiménez, Lindsey Jones, Richard Move, and Rachna Nivas have embarked on a six-month fellowship at the Library for the Performing Arts to highlight the work of dance practitioners engaged with ecosystems and the biological interdependence of the natural world, and to generate projects that contribute to addressing the global responsibility of climate change.

The Jerome Robbins Dance Division Dance Research Fellows was created in 2014 to support scholars and practitioners engaged in graduate-level, post-doctoral, and independent research using the division's unmatched holdings. In addition to supporting research utilizing the Library's resources and archives, the Library has granted each fellow a \$10,000 stipend, and will organize a concluding symposium on January 27, 2023.

"The impact on our planet from global warming is at a crisis point and requires immediate action," said Linda Murray, Curator of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division at The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. "Although science will lead this effort, the arts can play a vital role through advocacy and creative response. Dance, in particular, is suited to this task as the instrument of the form is the human body. This year's cohort of the Dance Research Fellowship comprises a range of projects that consider dance's relationship to nature and our collective responsibility to the environment we inhabit."

Juli Brandano Inspired by the 1970s Land Art movement, Juli Brandano will explore the concept of "Dance as Land Reclamation," as a way to think through how earthworks on ecologically devastated sites could rehabilitate the land. Brandano will use her fellowship to research archives of choreographers Anna Halprin, Elaine Summers, and others who made outdoor dances contemporaneously to the Land Artists in more community-based ways.

Rosemary Candelario As part of her goal to make dance practice able to serve community, social, and survival needs, Anna Halprin worked with and even collaborated with US-based butoh and butoh-related practitioners. Rosemary Candelario has been observing those artists who have been deeply influenced by Halprin and her work, such as Eiko & Koma, Body Weather Laboratory Los

Angeles, Nature Moves, inkBoat, and will augment these studies using Halprin's archive.

María de los Angeles Rodríguez Jiménez In the Brazilian tradition of Candomblé, *orixás* are spiritual intermediaries within nature that connect, depend upon, and energize humankind and the divine—and the dance of the *orixás* is at the heart of this circle of energy. María de los Angeles Rodríguez Jiménez will begin compiling an extensive archive of videos, photographs, interviews, writings, and interpretation of the various dances of Candomblé from Salvador da Bahia, Brazil.

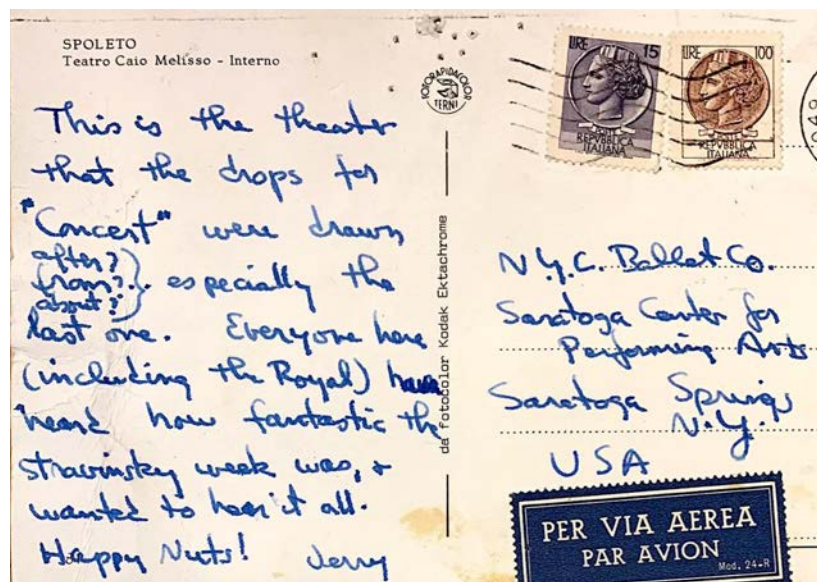
Lindsey Jones Studying herbalism at Arbor Vitae School of Traditional Herbalism has taught dance artist Lindsey Jones how the body can heal itself with the help of plants. Jones will pair her learnings of traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurveda and other western practices with research into the work of dance artists like Eiko Otake, Jennifer Monson, Deborah Hay, and musical artists like Pauline Oliveros and Meredith Monk.

Richard Move Adding to a 20-year span of creating site-specific dance performances that activate natural environments while calling attention to ecological issues, Richard Move has been developing *Herstory of the Universe*. With their fellowship, Move will research the thawing permafrost to add to their body of work and placing research of like-minded choreographic artists alongside new scientific studies through an essay, accessible dance film, and workshop.

Rachna Nivas After studying South Asian Studies and Molecular Environmental Biology, Rachna Nivas made a pivot to become a full-time dancer and educator. Nivas brings both of these fields of study together with a project that draws from the exclusive collections of Indian classical dance at the Jerome Robbins Dance Division by illuminating masters of Indian such as Balasaraswati, Rukmini Devi, and Uday Shankar, among others. Nivas will elevate the Eastern philosophies of how dance is consumed, perceived, and approached as a platform for social change. ■



above: Dancers of Carolina Ballet, in front of a backdrop designed by Saul Steinberg, in Jerome Robbins' *The Concert*, 2022. Photo by Chris Walt. below: Postcard showing the interior of the Teatro Caio Melisso in Spoleto, Italy, sent from Jerome Robbins to the New York City Ballet company in 1972.



West Side Story at the Hollywood Bowl

West Side Story. Everyone knows it is quintessential New York.

But perhaps the connection between the landmark musical and the City of Angels is greater than most realize. Don't forget that the musical was partly inspired by Los Angeles. Jerome Robbins brought the idea of a musical setting Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in contemporary New York City to composer Leonard Bernstein in 1949. For several years they developed the idea, until librettist Arthur Laurents read an article in the *Los Angeles Times* about turf disputes and gang fights in San Bernardino, California. Consequently, for the name of the leader of the Sharks gang, Laurents chose the name Bernardo.

Still, Hollywood embraced the film. The original 1961 version was nominated for 11 *Academy Awards* (and won 10, including Best Picture and a special award for Jerome Robbins). And in 2021, Steven Spielberg's *West Side Story* was nominated for seven *Academy Awards* (including Best Picture), with the film winning a Best Supporting Actress Oscar for Ariana DeBose.

Then, in July 2022, Gustavo Dudamel, whom Steven Spielberg had chosen to conduct the soundtrack of his film, led the Los Angeles Philharmonic in two very well-received performances of the Leonard Bernstein/Stephen Sondheim score at the Hollywood Bowl, while Spielberg's film was projected on outdoor screens. ■



Photo by Farah Sosa, courtesy of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association.



Sean Lavery, Alexia Hess, and Kipling Houston in Jerome Robbins' *Dances at a Gathering* at New York City Ballet.

Dancing Women by Costas

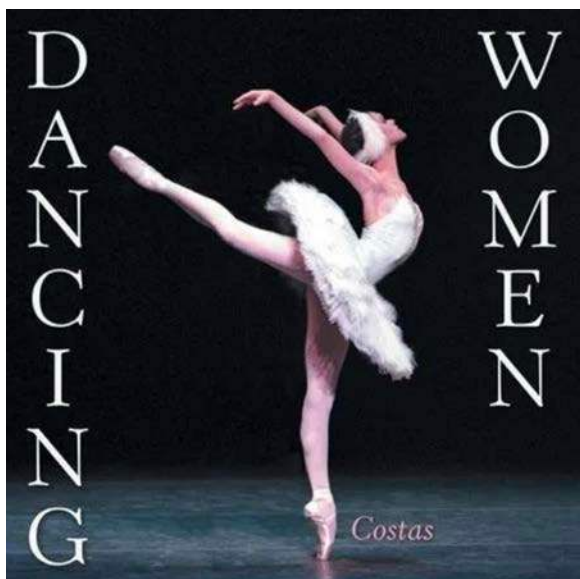
In his previous book *Dancing Men*, Costas, one of America's foremost dance photographers, shares a remarkable collection of photographs that reaches across four decades and pictures of some 50 notable male dancers in more than 100 images. He now presents its companion book, *Dancing Women* (published by Archway Publishing), which features pictures of great female dancers from around the world taken during his 50-year career.

This book contains images of major dancers of both ballet and modern dance companies, such as New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, the Bolshoi Ballet, the Mariinsky Ballet, the Paris Opera Ballet, the Martha Graham company, the Paul Taylor company, the Mark Morris company, as well as dancers from the Far East.

"There are too few books depicting dancers in performance or rehearsals, showing dancers in action, as opposed to dancers in photo studios. The latter do not have the energy of the former. In addition, this book is not about great dancers of one company, but of many companies both classical and modern," Costas says.

When asked what he wants readers to take away from the book, Costas answers, "Dance photographs stay still so you can look at them as long as you wish. They let you notice details that are difficult to see when the dancers move. Repeated viewings of dance photographs yield new discoveries. Thank you for looking at my photographs. I hope you like them." ■

Costas has photographed dance for more than 50 years. His photographs of New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, the Bolshoi Ballet, the Mariinsky Ballet, the Paris Opera Ballet, and many other ballet companies, as well as modern dance companies, are part of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. His dance pictures have appeared in a variety of publications including books, periodicals, records, film and television footage and in gallery exhibitions around the world. His 2003 book, *Balanchine: Celebrating a Life in Dance*, has gone through several editions. Costas was also responsible for the photographs in the annual Balanchine calendars. He lives and photographs in New York City.



Uliana Lopatkina in *Swan Lake* at the Mariinsky Ballet.

Reflecting on Watermill at 50

Premiere February 3, 1972, New York City Ballet, New York State Theater

Music Teiji Ito – "Watermill" (1971)

Original cast Edward Villella, Penny Dudleston, Colleen Neary, Tracy Bennett, Victor Castelli, Hermes Condé, Bart Cook, Jean-Pierre Frohlich, Deni Lamont, Robert Maiorano, Merrill Ashley, Renee Estópinal, Meg Gordon, Kathleen Haigney, Gloriann Hicks, Linda Homek, Terri Lee Port, Donna Sackett, Marjorie Spohn, Lynne Stetson, James Bogan, Stephen Caras, Richard Dryden, William Johnson, Peter Naumann, David Richardson, Francis Sackett, Paul Sackett, Nolan T'Sani

Musicians Dan Erkkila, Genji Ito, Teiji Ito, Kensuke Kawase, Mara Purl, Terry White

Costumes Patricia Zipprodt

Set Jerome Robbins in association with David Reppa

Lighting Ronald Bates [later, Jennifer Tipton]

Jerome Robbins' epic ballet *Watermill* is a meditative work that explores the transformative nature of time. *Watermill* concerns the life of a man. In this ballet about the relationship of time to life, the man observes all and contemplates his past. The ballet shows the hours of his day, the seasons of his year, and the years of his life. It is a work that challenges audiences' assumptions about ballet and theatrical time. The score, performed by onstage musicians, is a precise, intense, often slow, often quiet experience full of music that composer Teiji Ito described as "silent sounds."

From Jerome Robbins' notes, written on February 6, 1972, three days after the premiere of Watermill:

Choreographically, *Watermill* discards the artificial vocabulary and virtuosity of classic ballet. Instead, it considers dance legitimately able to embody its opposites. Thus, very natural, very slow, and even no movement as basic materials for choreography.

Furthermore, dancing to strict metric orders is discarded. No "counts" are used. The timing, the movements, patterns, and sequences are set, but the dancers perform them on their personal (and communal) inner tempi, and on the cadences of the experience of the ballet.

In a similar manner, the music accompanies the dancers without metered values. The score acts as a guide-companion experiencing the journey of the ballet jointly with the dancers.

The score for WATERMILL was composed during (and at) rehearsals of the ballet with the musicians attending. It derives from the religious ceremonial and theatrical music of Japan.

Although the ballet is influenced by the music and theatre of the East, the people, and events, and world of the ballet are not construed as Oriental.

Watermill is a rite concerning man's and nature's time cycles. It is structured in the following way:

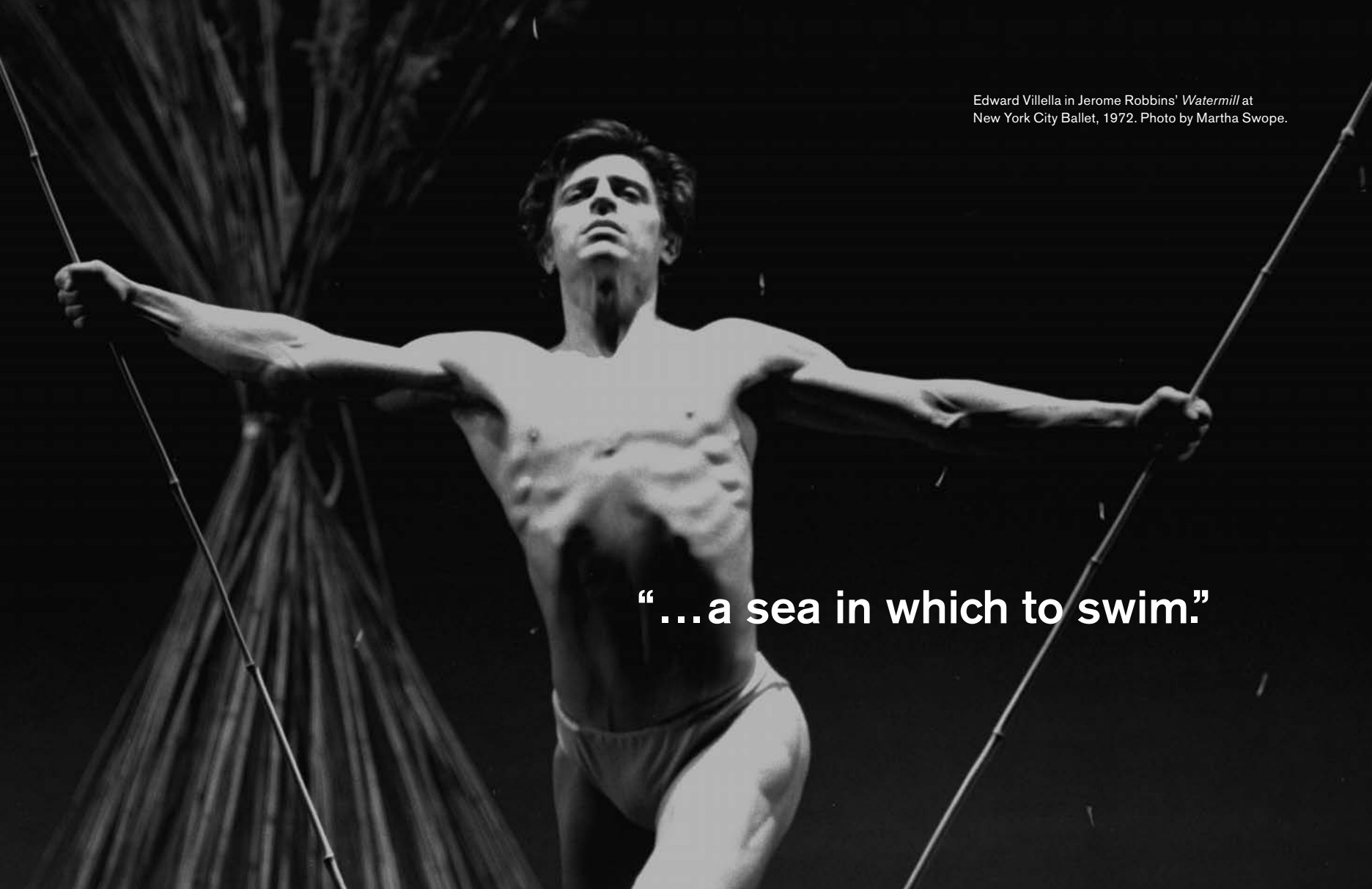
Prologue: the celebrant enters, prepares, and is prepared for the rite. He faces the four cardinal points of the compass. He dances.

Spring Interlude: Equinox – coming of age

Summer Interlude: Equinox – nightmare

Fall Winter Epilogue: the celebrant closes the ritual by greeting the return of another time cycle and acknowledges his temporary stay within it.

It is an hour long.



“...a sea in which to swim.”

An interview with Edward Villella on the 50th anniversary of *Watermill*

When *Watermill* begins, Edward Villella is a man alone onstage, wearing a brownish cloak and facing mostly upstage. In the opening moment of *Dances at a Gathering*, the man “in Brown” – a part Edward Villella also originated – enters alone and begins facing mostly upstage. Jerome Robbins used the same dancer to establish the opening of each ballet in its own similar, thoughtful manner. By taking his time before engaging the first walk toward the center of the stage on his own impulse, even though the music seems to drive the man “in Brown” toward actual dance steps, he is clearly in charge. Similarly, the man who is at the center of the stage in *Watermill* sheds his cloak and begins to move in his own time. Both ballets use the dancer as a needle in Robbins’ compass that indicates the direction of time and space for the next hour.

Edward Villella To have been alive in that time, to have participated, as a principal, as someone who had deep responsibility, it was extraordinary, and most of us knew it. We knew we were in the presence of these icons, and what they were providing for us.

Gregory Victor How would you prepare for a performance of *Watermill*?

EV That work was an enigma. I had no point of departure and I had to wait until Jerry was making the work – making it on me – to understand why he was doing it, and why I was, at that moment, this character. It was such a head trip for me. Before the curtain was raised, I would get everybody away from me and, just as they were called to the stage, I would begin settling in. And when it was now time – “Places! Places!” – I just removed everybody, and I would let it happen to me. Whoever I was, whatever I was, whatever was going to come out, I was coming out the other end of it. And it was a fascinating journey. There was such a restraint about it. There was no other way to approach it but let it happen, and let it influence everything I would do. And swimming in that music. That’s what

he gave us. He gave us a sea in which to swim. That was essentially it. It was a head game, and for me in particular, because I was not Jerry, and I didn’t want, in any way, to imitate. I had to understand it, because of the responsibility that went with dancing it. There was a uniqueness about it, and nobody was ever going to do it the same way. That was my pared down sense of it.

GV During the ballet’s rehearsals, did Jerry demonstrate what he wanted you to do?

EV Jerry always participated. And he wanted it Jerry’s way. It didn’t matter who you were. That was it.

GV And were the musicians, who are part of the performance, there at all rehearsals?

EV They were there every minute. They set the atmosphere. They set the reason for doing the movement. Musically, it was the reflection of a man’s mind, and how he saw it. So, that, for me, was that much more difficult, because I had to get in his cracks and crannies and still be the character that I thought I was going to just be, and not imitate. The acting is the act of being here. It’s not that you emulate or do – you are. You have to get to that area that you are comfortable in articulating.

GV Can you tell me about the rehearsals for *Watermill*?

EV When we first began, there were very few people. And it was done onstage. If you can imagine the number of hours that went into that, and the number of stagehands, who built boats because of it.

GV They must have loved *Watermill*.

EV They were all terrific. They had a shop down in the basement, and they would build their own boats there. And they used to thank me.

GV What a gift, to create the piece on the stage. That’s a rare event these days.

EV In my experience, it had never, ever happened before. I mean, to tie up an entire company, and the stage, and the whole house—but that was Jerry. He wanted what he wanted. And Balanchine was Balanchine—“Okay. You need that? I step aside and I give it to you.” Amazing.

GV Mr. Balanchine could create a ballet in the lobby, right?

EV I never saw him puzzled. I never saw him stuck. The only thing he would say was, “Oh, if you didn’t get it, I’ll make something else. Don’t worry.”

GV Had Jerry ever discussed the concept of minimalism with you in connection with *Watermill*?

EV No. He never got to that level, of discussing a sense of minimalism. But you could just see—the lighting, the set, the fence that was there, the odds and ends, the characters—you could talk about it forever. You could label it 20 different ways and they would all kind of work. So, I just had to, “This is it. This is what I know. This is what I can put on.”

GV Is the man onstage remembering his life?

EV It’s a moment when he is seeking memory, allowing memory.

GV Did the *Watermill* score present a challenge? Were you counting, or listening for certain instrumental moments? The accompaniment is such an atmospheric, liquid event.

EV For me, I was in that world. And I was responding to that world that was provided for me. And what could I do with it? Whatever—I’ll use your word, and I’ve never used that word before, minimalism—I certainly understood what that meant, but I didn’t apply that. I knew it was a series of separate events, and the people and the characters were, and so was I. And sometimes just feeling a light change was a whole experience. Every moment of that. I used to be an athlete and I like to watch athletic events. You listen to an athlete who is hot—like a baseball player—and they go through the season, and it has its levels. It’s like finding the groove. As I was standing there, and allowing all of this to permeate, I was sliding into the groove. I knew what Jerry had done. He had isolated me, and then I turn around and “Here I am.”

GV Did the process you had begun in rehearsal continue while you were performing *Watermill*?

EV Yes. I didn’t want clarity. I wanted it to be happening. I relied on that. It was shaping what I was doing. Essentially, it was out of my hands. I was hoping that’s what Jerry was providing me with by saying, “O.K., here it is. It’s yours now. Now it’s up to you.” I remember the first night of *Dances at a Gathering*. I do the opening Mazurka, then I finish, and I go offstage, and there’s Jerry. His beard is in front of me. And he said, “I’ve got to tell you. I’ve never done this in my whole life, ever before. But I had to come back and tell you what I thought of your performance.” That happened a second time with Balanchine, after *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Balanchine went to Lincoln Kirstein and said, “Villega’s going to ruin the ballet.” And Lincoln mentioned this to Stanley Williams, who was my pal—a smart, terrific guy—and Stanley said to me, “They tell me you’re going to ruin the ballet.” And I thought, *What? He hasn’t even done the variation for me yet!* Four days before the opening night, he does the variation for me. After the performance—the next day—I’m hanging out backstage at City Center and Balanchine walks in, sees me, walks past me, stops, and turns around. He walks over to me and says, “You know, dear, you danced excellent last night.” He puts his arm around me, takes it off me, and leaves. You know, these are moments of monumental reminiscence. Two guys of that dimension, to give you that recognition.

GV You must have looked forward to dancing the ballet again, after that.

EV Well, I wanted to see if I could do it again. It was always a challenge. I spent my whole life flying around the stage with this arrogance and energy and joy, and now I’d have to be—it really was almost a calamity for me to give in to it. To let it happen.

GV That sounds like dangerous territory.

EV For me, the scary part was getting out of that character. How do I get back in? That was always something that concerned me. You know, I have a shirt that says, “I Have No Fear.” If I was going to do this, I had to have no fear. “Watch out. Here I come,” and that’s how I felt waiting for the curtain.

GV Can you recall the curtain call at the premiere?

EV When the curtain was coming down, the cheers and the boos were in the same dimension. I could sense what was happening on the other side of the curtain, and I couldn’t wait until the curtain finally hit the stage because then I’d really find out. And I did. I don’t think there was a person in that house who did not have an opinion. And they let us know. I’ll never forget the look on Jerry’s face as he came onstage to bow.

GV When the curtain rose again, it was a curtain call for you, the dancer, not for the ballet. You didn’t hear any booing then, correct?

EV No, I didn’t. Somehow people were understanding of the challenges that I was attempting. They were also, at that time, an audience that knew very well, and they had expectations. So, here was this big premiere, with me, and I didn’t leave the floor once. They were waiting to see high jumps, but it was very different than what they expected.

GV Did your performance change at all as the season went on? Did Jerry make any changes?

EV He would say, “Slow. Just take it slow.” Then, next time, he’d say, “Maybe you should speed it up a little.” [laughing]

GV Can you describe what it felt like to return to the role in 1990, for New York City Ballet’s Jerome Robbins Festival?

EV I said, “Jerry, are you kidding?”

GV Then, after you agreed to think about it, Jerry made an announcement at a press conference.

EV Yes. He announces my appearance to the press. Not to me. I said, “Jerry. Do you know what you’re doing? You’re asking a 53-year-old retired guy to stand center stage, half naked, and present himself? Jerry, are you serious?” “Oh, yeah,” he said. “You can be any age to do this. Any age.”

GV Given that it is a work partly about time—layers of time, looking back over time, the speed of time, the meaning in time—was it a different experience, dancing it at a different age?

EV My attempt was to be true to the work. That was my life. Whatever the challenge was, I’d face it with no fear. And that’s a very important thing, when you step onstage. To have no fear. I’ve seen brilliant dancers... Erik Bruhn—one of the greatest dancers I’d ever seen—was a wreck before he went onstage. I couldn’t believe it. How could you do that? I watched Igor Youskevitch sitting offstage, reading a newspaper, and then putting it down and running onstage. It’s the way you approach it, and I had my approach—“This is how it is. This is how I operate. You like it? Great. You don’t? Get somebody else.”

GV Did the performances in 1990 feel as if you had never been away?

EV It was bittersweet because I was doing what I had done. The thought, *Oh, I’ll never do it again*, probably went through my mind, but it wasn’t the primary thought in my head at the time.

GV Have you coached other dancers in the role since then?

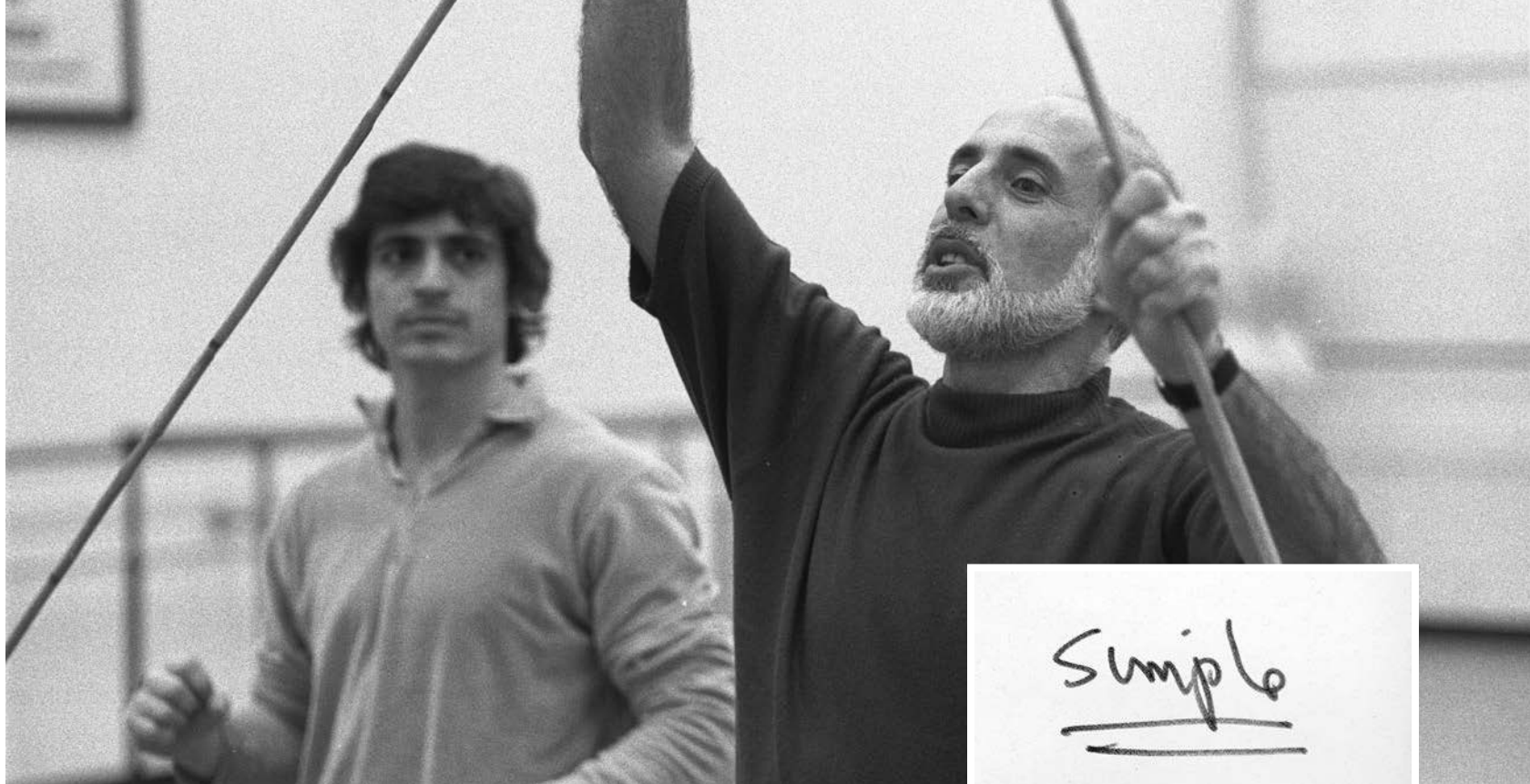
EV When Joaquin [De Luz] sought my advice, I suggested to him, “You have your own ability. Be comfortable with it. You don’t have to imitate me. But the style of it, I will share with you. You will have experienced what I experienced. Try to be as true as you can to that aspect of the work.” That’s always the heart of it—do you have it? Do you understand it? Do you own it?

GV Did Balanchine ever share any of his thoughts about *Watermill*?

EV No. He let Jerry do, and be, Jerry.

GV With *Watermill* and the Stravinsky Festival both taking place that year, 1972 was quite a year for New York City Ballet, and for you, as a dancer.

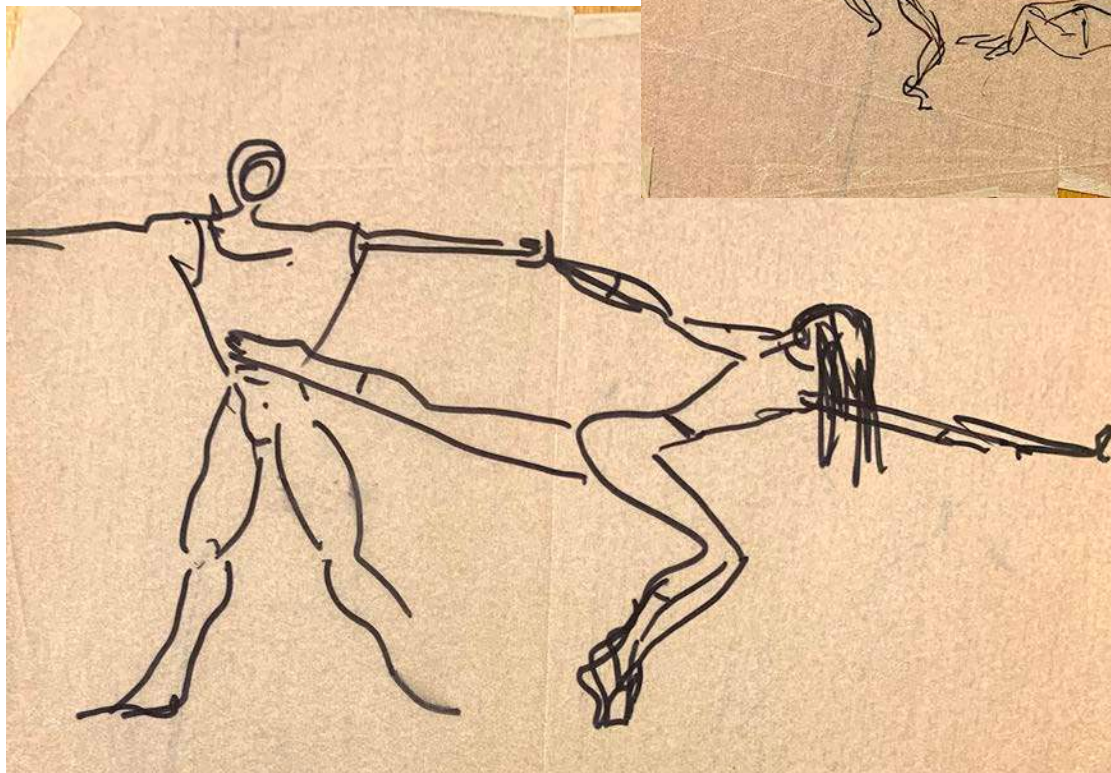
EV The thing is, I lived it all. I experienced it all. I was challenged by it all. You can talk about it a thousand different ways—the discipline, or this or that—but for me, it was always really about the work. It wasn’t about you. It was about the work. It was about your challenge. The work was providing a challenge. Were you up to it? “I don’t know, but I’m gonna try.” And that’s what I did. ■



Simple

Keep it
the
simplest

“It’s a search into another place. George (Balanchine) said that it’s a ballet about there being no time. And that was when he made a remark to me about choreographers – that we dare to get our fingertips into the land where there are no names for anything.”
– Jerome Robbins (1990)



Edward Villella and Jerome Robbins in rehearsal for *Watermill* at New York City Ballet, 1972. Photo by Martha Swope.

Admonition from Jerome Robbins’ journal, written during the creation of *Watermill* in 1972.

Sketches and notes from Jerome Robbins’ journal, written during the creation of *Watermill* in 1972.

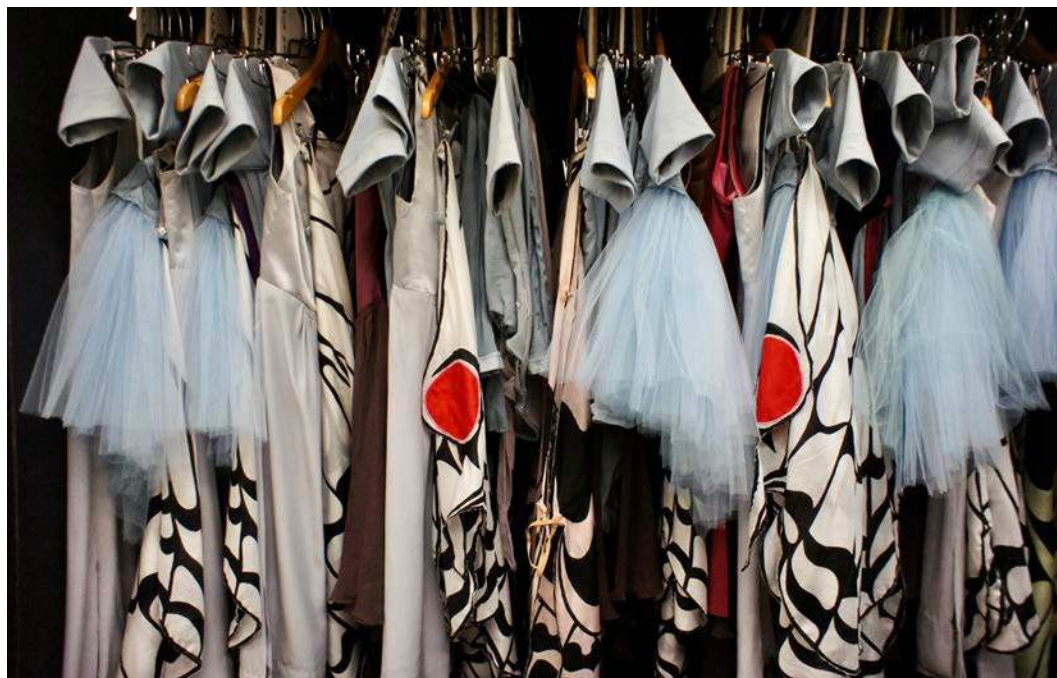


David Huffmire and Kazlyn Nielsen in Jerome Robbins' *Glass Pieces* at Ballet West, 2022. Photo by Beau Pearson.



Mayu Oguri, Steven Melendez, and Joshua Andino-Nieto in Jerome Robbins' *Concertino* at New York Theatre Ballet, 2022. Photo by Richard Termine.

**RECENT
ROBBINS**



above: Costumes for the Carolina Ballet production of Jerome Robbins' *The Concert* (design by Irene Sharaff). Photo by SarahAnne Perel. left: Dancers of Carolina Ballet in Jerome Robbins' *The Concert*, 2022. Photo by Chris Walt.



Dancers of Carolina Ballet and musicians of the Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle (under the direction of Alfred E. Sturgis) in Jerome Robbins' *The Concert*, 2022. Photos by Chris Walt.



New York City Ballet soloist Roman Mejia rehearsing Jerome Robbins' *A Suite of Dances* at the 2022 Vail Dance Festival. Photo by Christopher Duggan.

cover: Sam Kim's evening-length work, *Fear in Porcelain*, at The Chocolate Factory Theater, Queens, New York, 2016. *Fear in Porcelain* was developed in part during residencies at Baryshnikov Arts Center, The Bogliasco Foundation, Djerassi Resident Artists Program, Mount Tremper Arts, Movement Research, New York Live Arts Studio Series, and Yaddo.

Select Upcoming Performances of Jerome Robbins Works

DECEMBER 16, 17 (2022)
IN THE NIGHT (company premiere)
FANCY FREE
 Sarasota Ballet, Sarasota, Florida

MARCH 4, 5, 9, 15, 17, 21, 22, 23 (2023)
FANCY FREE
GLASS PIECES
THE FOUR SEASONS
 Royal Danish Ballet, Copenhagen, Denmark

MARCH/APRIL (2023)
ANTIQUÉ EPIGRAPHS
 University of Oklahoma School of Dance
 Norman, Oklahoma

APRIL 14, 15, 16 (2023)
WEST SIDE STORY SUITE
 Miami City Ballet, Miami, Florida

APRIL 14, 15, 20, 22, 23 (2023)
IN THE NIGHT
 Ballet West, Salt Lake City, Utah

APRIL 21, 22, 23 (2023)
WEST SIDE STORY SUITE
 Miami City Ballet, West Palm Beach, Florida

APRIL 29, 30 (2023)
WEST SIDE STORY SUITE
 Miami City Ballet
 Fort Lauderdale, Florida

APRIL 28 & MAY 6, 13 (2023)
THE CONCERT (or, The Perils of Everybody)
 Slovak National Theater, Bratislava, Slovakia

APRIL 30 & MAY 19, 21, 28 (2023)
THE CAGE
 Ballett am Rhein, Düsseldorf, Germany

MAY 12, 13, 14 (2023)
AFTERNOON OF A FAUN
ANTIQUÉ EPIGRAPHS (company premiere)
 Miami City Ballet, West Palm Beach, Florida

MAY 19, 20, 21 (2023)
AFTERNOON OF A FAUN
ANTIQUÉ EPIGRAPHS
 Miami City Ballet, Miami, Florida

Cancellations or postponements are always possible.

News from The Jerome Robbins Foundation

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 Please send all correspondence by email to:
newsletter@jeromerobbins.org

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