

Jerome Robbins



Jerome Robbins Foundation, and Others, Honored

In February 2016, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, of Lincoln Center, held its fiftieth-anniversary gala at the New York Public Library at Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue. The gala honored Library for the Performing Arts supporters Lewis Cullman, Barbara Fleischman, and the Jerome Robbins Foundation, as well as three artists: Mikhail Baryshnikov, Angela Lansbury, and Jessye Norman.

With its three exhibition spaces, an auditorium, and a café (that occasionally transforms into a cabaret space), the Library for the Performing Arts serves artists and arts lovers equally. It houses both circulating and research collections – including moving image, recorded sound, books, sheet music, and a variety of archival materials.



Les Variations Goldberg à Paris...

In February 2016, Jerome Robbins' *The Goldberg Variations* entered the repertoire of the Paris Opera Ballet. The ballet originally premiered at New York City Ballet in 1971.



Jerome Robbins' *The Goldberg Variations* at the Paris Opera Ballet in 2016 (photos © Benoîte Fanton/OnP).



The long, folded program from the Off-Broadway production of *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mamma's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad* (1962).

A Conversation Between Two Playwrights

Arthur Kopit and Gregory Fletcher

Gregory Fletcher *Before you crossed paths with Jerome Robbins, what was your awareness of him?*

Arthur Kopit I grew up in Long Island and had the good fortune of seeing much of what Broadway and the ballet world had to offer. I remember seeing *High Button Shoes*, *Bells Are Ringing*, many of Robbins' ballets, *Gypsy* and *West Side Story*—which was the real eye-opener for me. He was one of the greats; I was in awe of his work.

GF *Did you know you were destined to be a playwright?*

AK I had gone to Harvard to become an engineer. I didn't have a passion for engineering, but I was good at math and science. I loved theater, but it never occurred to me to write plays. But I also loved writing. And to my amazement, Harvard was offering creative writing courses—for credit! It sounded too good to be true. I thought I'd better take some before they stop. So I signed up for short story writing, but I was self-conscious, and that was no good.

GF *How did you move from writing short stories to plays?*

AK In my sophomore year, a professor in a short story class announced, "If anyone writes a one-act play, we'll produce it." I thought to myself, *What a great idea*. So I wrote a play, *Questioning of Nick*, and it was given a bare bones production. Later, it was given a bigger production, and it won a major award. I thought to myself, *Could I possibly do this?* When I turned to my girlfriend and said, "I think I want to be a playwright," I saw on her face—that's the end of *this* relationship. Fortunately, my parents were very supportive: "Whatever you want to do is wonderful." So I started taking playwriting courses instead of short story courses, and because my first play was such a success, various dramatic clubs at Harvard started asking me for plays. By the time I completed my senior year, I had had seven one-act plays produced. I had directed four of them, worked on the lighting, the sets; some were done off campus, on television, all over the place. It's funny, by the time I graduated, I'd had more experience seeing my work produced than someone studying theater at the Yale School of Drama. I was still technically an engineering major, but it was clear to me that I wanted to be a playwright.

GF *Did you return to New York City after graduation to pursue a life as a playwright?*

AK No, I was awarded a travelling fellowship to study theater in Europe. Also, in the last part of my senior year, Harvard announced a playwriting contest for the following fall. The prize was two hundred fifty dollars, but it was only open to current members of the university. But because I was now a fellowship recipient, I was eligible. I thought, *If I can win this two hundred fifty dollars, I'll be a professional playwright!* That was my sole impetus. So I decided to write a play unlike anything I'd ever seen before; something I knew the judges couldn't ignore. And the good news was, if it won I wouldn't have to see it, because I'd be in Europe! I threw in some influence from Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Jean Anouilh,

Jean Giraudoux, and all the plays by Tennessee Williams. I wrote the play in five days, finishing it in Stockholm, the first city of my fellowship abroad. By the time I reached Paris, I found out I won the contest.

GF *How did Harvard lead to Jerome Robbins?*

AK Because of this play contest. The play was produced, reviewed, and, to my great surprise, declared a huge hit. It was subsequently published, landed me an agent, who put it in the hands of Jerome Robbins, who then directed its New York premiere.

GF *The play you wrote in five days for the Harvard contest was Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mamma's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad?*

AK Yes, and the longest title in theater history. And there was a subtitle that followed: *A Pseudo Classical TragiFarce in a Bastard French Tradition*.

GF *Did anybody ever ask for a shorter title?*

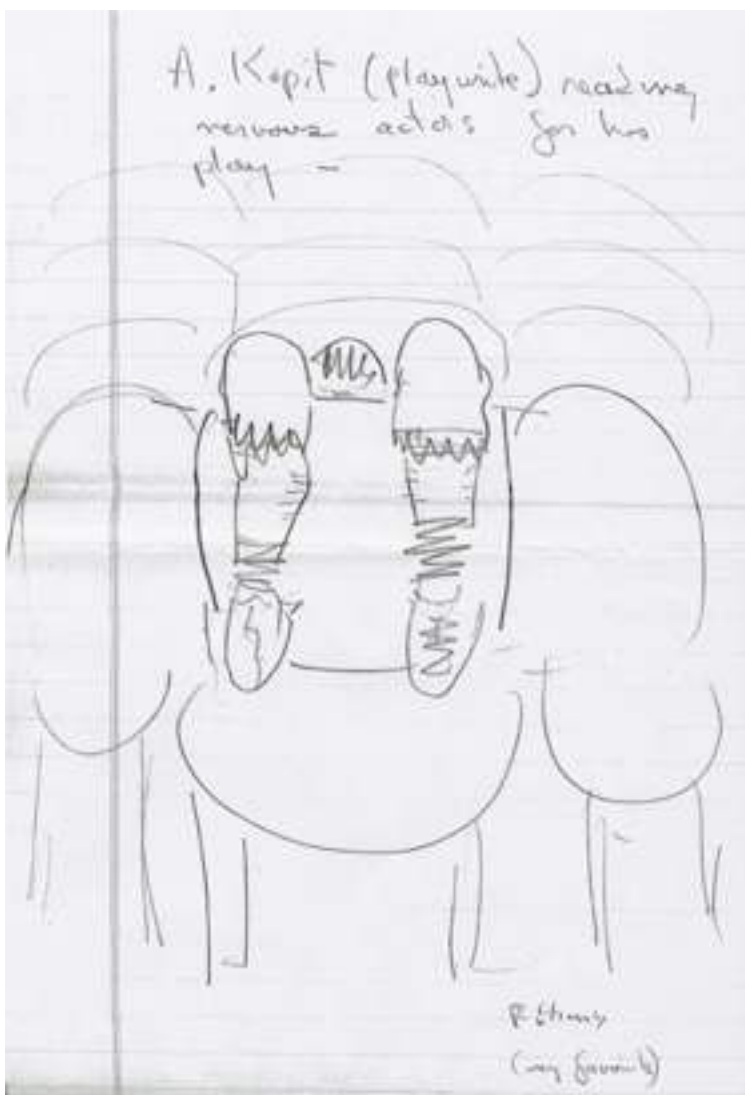
AK No. I knew it was a crazy title, but everyone loved it. When I first submitted the play, I didn't want the title to kill its chances, so I offered a shorter one—the worst title ever: *The Sound of Laughter*. Thankfully, no one ever took me up on it.

GF *The main character, Madame Rosepettle, is a very eccentric, original character. How did she come about?*

AK My mother had a wacky friend who lived near us. Attractive, strong, a widow, she had a young son, and kept all of her deceased husband's clothes in the closet—cleaned and pressed. She spoke of him in the present tense. On top of which, she was a militant Puritan: afraid of sex, but also very sexual. Once, my mother arrived to find her cooking dinner for her seven-year-old son, and she was wearing a sexy bustier. When my mother asked, "What's going on here?" her friend responded, "I'm making him something tasty, tempting, and delicious." I never used those words in the play because I didn't want my mother's friend to recognize herself. Another time, my mom found her friend sleeping in her bed next to a large overstuffed doll that her husband's family had given her. Her young boy was standing next to the bed sticking the doll with pins. And nothing beat the time she took her son on a romantic cruise to the Caribbean. I thought this was all worthy of a play.

GF *Yes, indeed, but any idea how it reached Jerome Robbins to direct?*

AK Through the father of one of my student actresses at Harvard, I was introduced to Roger Stevens, a New York theatrical producer. Later, he helped me sign with the literary agent Audrey Wood, who then got it to Jerome Robbins. But first Stevens produced it abroad. And the funny thing was, when he heard that I'd won the Harvard prize, he wrote me asking to read the script. I responded, "No, you don't want to see this one, it's a terrible play; I'm glad I'm out of the country. It only took me five days to write. How could it be any good?" End of story.



Two sketches by Jerome Robbins, drawn in rehearsal for *Oh Dad, Poor Dad...* One reads: "A. Kopit (playwrite) reading nervous actors for his play—" The other reads: "A. Kopit (playwrite) faced with rewrites— or "That Damn Typewriter." (From the Arthur Kopit Papers, Fales Library & Special Collections, New York University)

GF But the actual reviews for the original Harvard production were a bit better than the one you gave yourself.

AK To say the least. The morning after the play opened, I was in Torremolinos, Spain, and I received a telegram: "YOUR LIFE HAS CHANGED STOP YOUR PLAY IS AN OVERWHELMING SUCCESS STOP EVERY BOSTON CRITIC WAS THERE AND EVERY REVIEW IS A RAVE STOP BEING CALLED THE BEST NEW PLAY OF THE YEAR STOP YOU'RE GOING TO NEED AN AGENT STOP." After several other telegrams, I received one from Roger Stevens: "I GUESS YOU WERE WRONG ABOUT THE PLAY STOP." I was wrong indeed. Roger Stevens hired Frank Corsaro to direct a production, not in Cambridge, Massachusetts but rather in Cambridge, England. Madame Rosepettle was played by Stella Adler. Because she hadn't been on stage in fourteen years, it was a limited run because he wasn't sure she could handle all that was entailed. Halfway through rehearsals, we knew it was a disaster—part Stella, part rest of the cast, part director. Roger told me not to worry, because Jerry Robbins wanted to direct the New York production and a new cast would be assembled. I thought, *Oh my God, this is unbelievable!* Roger sent me to Paris to meet Jerry, where he was working with *Ballets: USA*. I was waiting at a café near his studio, and two American dancers were sitting nearby, speaking about what it was like to work with Jerry Robbins. I moved a little closer. Clearly, they were afraid of him. They recognized he was a genius and were in awe of him, but they were scared to death of getting anything wrong.

One told the other the infamous story of Jerry rehearsing a Broadway musical. Jerry was pushing the dancers hard, giving notes and corrections, and while doing so, he took a step toward the edge of the stage. And another. And another. And no one said anything. He continued to back up, and still nobody said anything. After another stern note, he took another step back and fell into the orchestra pit. Nobody made a move; nobody ran to help or said a word. After a moment, Jerry's hands grabbed the edge of the stage and he pulled himself up. His face appeared and he said, "Take five."

I was a little worried that he might be difficult, but our first meeting was wonderful, and we hit it off. His main concern seemed to be that the play was too short; it ran about an hour and twenty minutes. He felt an opening one-act—a curtain raiser—was needed. He picked one of my plays that I had written at Harvard, *Sing To Me Through Open Windows*.

GF Did any intimidating moment with Mr. Robbins ever happen?

AK Only once, a scary moment back in New York at a party at his home. I told him the story of overhearing the two dancers at the Parisian café, and his face turned stern to say the least. "Who were they?" he demanded. "Oh, Jerry, they love you; they were in awe of you." But he continued to push me to name them, but I couldn't, even though, at that moment, they were standing only a few feet away. Finally, when he let it go, he said, "Okay, all right, but if I find out..." I thought to myself, *Oh, Jesus*.

GF Were there any such moments in rehearsal with the cast?

AK No, never. When Jerry was working, it was never about ego. He would go into a zone, a focus, and you couldn't jostle him when he was there. It was all about the work and getting it just right.

GF What impressed you the most about him?

AK That we were nineteen years apart, and he never dealt with me as if I were a novice. Despite all of his success, he didn't pretend to have all the answers. He was on a journey of discovery like everybody else. Also, he understood his own weakness and dealt with it accordingly. For example, he wasn't comfortable giving actors direction, so he hired an assistant, Bill Daniels, who translated his direction into "actor talk." This gave Jerry more time to consider things. He never went with his first instinct, he always checked himself by trying things several ways. Time was of the essence, and he didn't waste a minute. In fact, Jerry started rehearsing *Oh Dad, Poor Dad...* during auditions. Austin Pendleton read for the role of Jonathan, the awkward son, and both Jerry and I thought he was wonderful. Jerry brought him back for a callback, and again we thought he was fantastic. Jerry invited him to another callback, and another, and I thought to myself, *Why is Jerry calling him back so much? We want him.* Jerry had him try different things with each new reading. He must've called him back five or six times. Jerry was using the audition process as if it were a laboratory. He knew he wanted to cast Austin, but audition time didn't take up rehearsal time or cost the production money. I believe Austin complained to Actors Equity, and the union passed a new ruling that its members could only be called back three times for an audition; after which, they had to be paid.

Austin was cast and he was magnificent. Barbara Harris, too, cast as Rosalie. The sound, the music, the sets; Jerry worked closely with each aspect.

When I first saw the bedroom set slide out, I thought the color on the wall was wrong. I shared it with Jerry, and he said, "You haven't seen it lit yet." Later, when the lights were up, the color of the wall changed to something quite different, and it was perfect. Jerry knew exactly what he was doing. I learned to trust him. Even still, he'd ask, "Any thoughts?" He was gracious with me. I was in awe, but not intimidated. Jerry was concerned with getting the play right. He was wonderful to work with.

GF *Did the cast change for the national tour that followed?*

AK Hermione Gingold replaced Jo Van Fleet, and Sam Waterston replaced Austin Pendleton. The rest of the cast stayed intact.

GF *How did Jerry as a director affect your expectations for future directors?*

AK We had long conversations about the play and what the scenes were about, so his vision always supported the play. Everything was about making the play work. What a fortunate break it was for me, an extraordinary chance to work with a great director—a genius—that had befallen me. And I was awed by it. I learned that it should be a learning experience for everybody. Jerry's learning as he works on the play, the actors were learning, I was learning, everybody's learning.

GF *Were you able to see his genius as a choreographer when he worked solely as a director?*

AK Yes, because he knew how to move people really well. He understood balance. He could move them to where the dynamic was. It wasn't straight blocking. When an actor got up to put a hand on somebody's shoulder—what did that move mean? What did gestures mean? There was always a reason for movement. Not just to look nice. He never did anything to show off. Movement defined character. Movement led to emotion. He investigated what moved the actors, what moved himself—visually and emotionally, balance and space, the truth of a moment. It wasn't about how to read a line of dialogue. Bill Daniels was able to direct that. Robbins investigated what the emotion was, what the scene was about, and how the musicality came about: the rise and fall, the rhythm of the scene, those dynamics.

GF *And he communicated such notes with Bill?*

AK Right, not to the actors. And then Bill would translate Jerry's vision to the actors.

GF *Was Robbins completely cut off from the actors?*

AK No, he was present and warm to them. There was nothing that I ever saw that sounded like what the dancers in Paris had described. The actors were never afraid of him. He was respectful and caring. I would think from the actors' point of view that they knew they had an amazing person out there watching over them. He knew what wasn't working, and he'd adjust the rhythms, tighten it, and he understood the build of things and when it wasn't building quite right.

GF *Did any rewrites or big changes come out of the preview performances once the audiences were involved?*

AK Not in the writing. The play pretty much stayed the same as it did from the beginning. But he did cut the opening one-act play. It wasn't a good curtain raiser because it left the audience in a very somber, pensive mood. Such a shame because it was gorgeously directed with exquisite music, but then it was very hard to get in the right mood for *Oh Dad, Poor Dad...* One night Jerry suggested, let's do it without the curtain raiser, and all of a sudden *Oh Dad, Poor Dad...* got the laughs it deserved.

Jerry wanted to establish laughter in the very first moment. The problem was the actress playing Madame Rosepettle didn't have the comic chops. She was able to handle all the dark interior moments, very powerful and scary, but she wasn't funny. So Jerry hired a graphic artist to create a film of a cartoon strip of the title of the play that slowly projected across a screen in front of the set. By the time the title was complete, the audience was roaring with laughter, right where Jerry wanted them. Then when Jo Van Fleet entered and said her opening line, even though it wasn't as funny as we had wanted, it was clear to the audience that the play was a comedy. It was similar to how he saved *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* by changing the opening number of the musical to "Comedy Tonight."

GF *Did you two ever work together again?*

AK Twenty years later, in 1981, I came to him with an idea for a musical. It was a wonderful idea and he loved it. He said, "If I were still doing musicals, I'd develop it with you." I asked him, "Why aren't you doing musicals anymore?" He was

dissatisfied with the limited rehearsal time for theater. He wasn't interested in throwing together a production. He wanted to get things exactly right, which was hard to do in such a short rehearsal period. I think with his ballets, he could ask for the time he needed. But with theater, there was never enough time. I really think that's why he stopped doing musicals.

GF *Will anyone follow in Jerry's footsteps to revive the play?*

AK It's a really hard play to do. If the casting isn't just right, it can be horrendous. I haven't approved of a New York revival because I've never been convinced of the casting of Madame Rosepettle. Jo Van Fleet had everything the character needed but the comedy. Hermione Gingold replaced her for the tour and limited Broadway run, but despite her comic chops, she had none of the darker interior elements. Luckily, the original production had a director who could compensate for what was lacking in the casting. Jerry's production made the play work. I've never seen a revival of the play that's lived up to Jerry's production.

GF *Shouldn't you have pity on those of us who've never had the chance to see the play produced?*

AK Well, you may be in luck. In the summer of 2017, La Jolla Playhouse in San Diego will be reviving the play with the best possible Madame Rosepettle I've ever seen. Someone who has both the comedic and dark elements; someone who is truly extraordinary.

GF *Who?*

AK I can't tell you.

GF *Could you at least name the director in honor of Jerome Robbins?*

AK Alright. He's an English director, Anthony Van Laast.

GF *Who comes from a dance background, how interesting is that? Are you sure you can't announce the perfect casting for Madame Rosepettle? After all Jerome Robbins means to you?*

AK You're right. It's Frank Langella, who actually approached me about doing the play, which he had seen, and has always loved. I should add: he will not be performing the role in drag, but as a woman. At a reading we did, he simply applied lipstick and two earrings, and he became a woman as powerful as Jo Van Fleet, and as funny as Hermione Gingold. I've never seen the role done better.

GF *With Langella on board, I should think the play is bound for New York once again. How exciting—congratulations!*



Arthur Kopit is the author of *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mamma's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad*; *Indians* (Finalist for Pulitzer Prize); *Wings* (Finalist for Pulitzer Prize); the book for the musical *Nine* (score by Maury Yeston; Tony Award for Best Musical, 1982; Tony Award for Best Musical revival, 2003); *End of the World with Symposium to Follow*; the book for the musical *Phantom* (score by Maury Yeston); the book for the musical *High Society* (score by Cole Porter); *Road to Nirvana*; *BecauseHeCan*; and other plays. Mr. Kopit is this year's recipient of the Helen Merrill Distinguished Playwright Award, a recent winner of the Dramatists Guild Flora Roberts Award, and the William Inge Award for Distinguished Playwriting.



Gregory Fletcher's plays have had nine productions Off-Off-Broadway. He's a recipient of the Mark Twain Prize for Comic Playwriting and the National Ten-Minute Play Award from the Kennedy Center ACTF; a nominee for Outstanding Original Short Script for the NY IT Awards; a playwriting grantee at Sundance Theatre Lab; a finalist for Reva Shiner Comedy Award, the Heideman Award, and a first runner up for the David Mark Cohen National Playwriting Award. Published by Back Stage Books, Dramatic Publishing, *Wilde Magazine*, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Gender Programs, and Northampton House Press. A graduate of CSUN, Boston University, and Columbia University. For more, visit www.gregoryfletcher.com.

“A Desire for Accuracy in Style”

Robbins’ Goal for Authenticity in *Billion Dollar Baby*

by Ben Redmayne

Fresh from the success of *On the Town*, *Billion Dollar Baby* was created by the mostly young team of Betty Comden, Adolph Green (book and lyrics), Paul Feigay, Oliver Smith (producers) and Jerome Robbins (choreographer). The not-quite-as-young George Abbott also directed this production, having been firmly established on Broadway with his work with Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart. Even with such an esteemed creative team, this show is a mostly forgotten musical with very little mention in Broadway literature. In fact, most discussion that does exist focuses on Leonard Bernstein and how he rejected the opportunity to compose the score for *Billion Dollar Baby* to instead focus on his career in art music. Instead, Morton Gould was asked to compose the score, his first for Broadway. It is from that point on that most people overlook the show.

Billion Dollar Baby is subtitled “a musical play of the terrific twenties,” a fairly vague description of what the show entails. Intended as a satire, the plot centers on a beauty contestant, Maribelle, who hopes to win the Miss America contest so she can achieve independence and leave her family home in Staten Island. Unfortunately, this does not work out and she ends up entangled in the world of gangsters, speakeasies, and bathtub gin. With a taste for stardom and money, she ends up in a love triangle between two gangsters and then goes on to seduce a multi-millionaire. The musical reaches its climax when the stock market crashes, just as Maribelle says “I do” to the millionaire stock investor.

Like many Broadway productions, *Billion Dollar Baby* was not without its problems. The try-out period was challenging, especially when Abbott fell ill, leaving the talented but inexperienced team to respond to its out-of-town reception.

However, *Billion Dollar Baby* documents an important yet unseen stage in the development of all the collaborators, including Robbins. This is what led to my interest and curiosity in the musical and eventually developed into my MA thesis, which explores its genesis, the intriguing attitude about post-war gender roles and the sophisticated (and sometimes problematic) use of satire. My dissertation was assembled from a wide range of overlooked archival sources from research trips to the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library, exploring several collections including the papers of Peggy Clark, Gould, Comden, Green, and Robbins. These documents uncovered a wealth of information and guided my research to uncover new perspectives about the musical and its creative team.

An interesting aspect of Robbins’ work in *Billion Dollar Baby* is his desire for an authentic reflection of 1920s New York in the choreography, a result of his extensive research when creating the show’s ballets. Robbins’ choreography strengthened the musical’s satirical theme and intentions, which was a challenge for all the collaborators. Comden and Green had a history of creating and performing satirical songs and sketches with their nightclub act, *The Revuers*, but *Billion Dollar Baby* was something they and the others had not attempted before — a satire of the past. This stemmed from Comden and Green wanting to invoke the past to ridicule their present post-war situation. They discussed this several times in the media. One instance was in an interview with the *New York Times* in May 1946, when they stated: “Our look at the post-war ’20s was always



with one eye on today...we had no nostalgia for the 1920s. It was a dreadful decade. We'd been thinking, though, of the speak-easies, the gangsters and the inflation as wonderful material for satire." This required them to interpret 1920s culture when most of the creative team were too young to remember the decade vividly. Doing so required careful research.

An example of this is the 'Charleston Ballet,' the most prolific dance in the show and arguably the high point of *Billion Dollar Baby*. It is the peak of mockery in the musical and fully displays the collaboration of the team. The genesis of the ballet can be found in Comden and Green's draft synopsis of the show in the Betty Comden Papers in the New York Public Library:

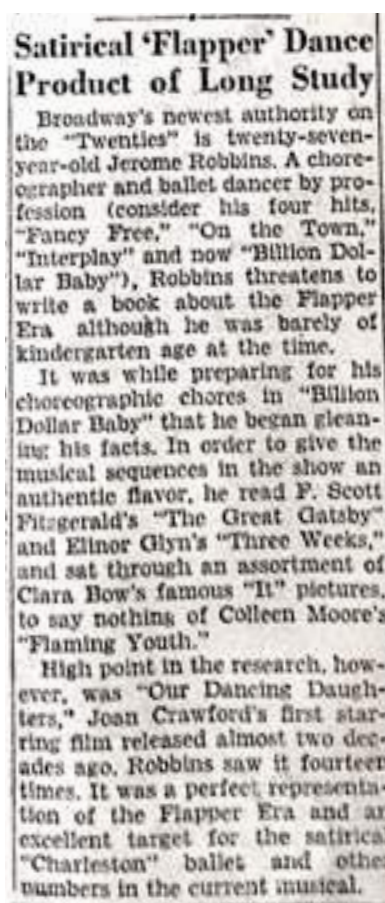
Short dance scene in 1. There is a door in the center of the stage, with a slot-hole, obviously the entrance to the speakeasy. In stylized dance fashion couples flit by—varied types bent on a good time. Some dance before the door, knock on it, a face appears behind the slot—some are allowed in upon presentation of a card, others are turned away, and dance off angrily—still others reel out wildly through the door—some are forcibly ejected—there are policemen also passing, unconcerned, waving to the face behind the slot; and newsboys, shrieking headlines, about stock-market returns, or the latest Hollywood scandal.

Written while Comden and Green were midway through performing in *On the Town*, the description above (and the end product) is similar in structure and ideology to *Fancy Free* (1944), which suggests that they had the same collaboration in mind, (themselves, Robbins and Bernstein). Robbins and Bernstein had enjoyed success with their ballet about young sailors in wartime New York enjoying the nightlife offerings. Carol Oja, in her recent monograph *Bernstein Meets Broadway: Collaborative Art in a Time of War*, describes the ballet succinctly as a piece about "transience, risk taking, and the sheer fun of popular culture." From the above scenario, we see that Comden and Green appear to have been inspired by that same idea. One significant difference between the two is that *Fancy Free* focused on contemporary times, whereas the 'Charleston Ballet' looked to the past. Another difference is the composer. Gould and Robbins had built a good working relationship when they worked together on the ballet *Interplay* (1945).

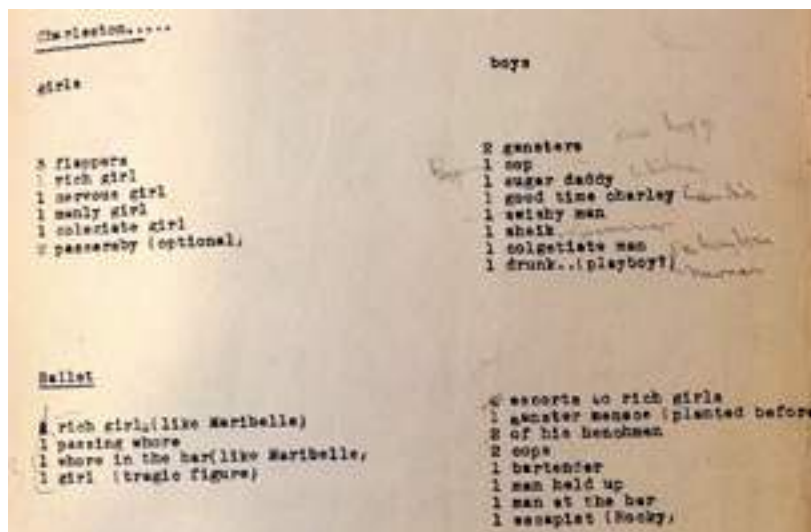
Critics of the original production commended the 'Charleston Ballet.' One in particular—Louis Kronenberger, of *PM*—praised Robbins above everyone else, calling him "the hero of the evening" for creating the 'Charleston Ballet.' A month after the show's opening, Robbins was interviewed by the *New York Post*. The reporter, Harriet Johnson, noted: "Robbins fortunately has the mind which combines the desire for accuracy in style... his talent was well established through his choreography for *Fancy Free*, *On the Town*, and *Interplay*, but none of these required knowledge of a period not of his own. Therefore, what he has established in *Billion Dollar Baby* is of special interest." To achieve this, Robbins went to great lengths to create an authentic '20s style for the show. In Johnson's article, Robbins shares how he "studied all the cartoons of the period" he could find and "all the possible movies of the '20s" and "talked to everybody who remembered the period," stating that he wanted his "dances to really portray the kind of people who were typical of the time." The media interest in Robbins' research method continued throughout the run of the show, when it was discussed in the *Herald Tribune* in March 1946 "In order to give the musical sequences in the show an authentic flavor, he [Robbins] read F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Elinor Glyn's *Three Weeks*..."

Interestingly, the article describes how Robbins' "highpoint in his research" was his viewing the film *Our Dancing Daughters* (1928), which he watched fourteen times. The author states "It was a perfect representation of the Flapper Era and an excellent target for the satirical 'Charleston' ballet." The need for authenticity is also reflected in archival sources at the New York Public Library. In the Jerome Robbins Collection, there is a folder of newspaper clippings, pictures, and instructions about the Charleston that he collected. Clearly, Robbins went to great lengths to make sure his dance reflected the culture, mood and people of the '20s, just as he reflected contemporary attitudes in *Fancy Free* and *On the Town*.

Another fascinating document from the Robbins papers is a preliminary character list for two ballets, including the 'Charleston Ballet.' Here, Robbins lists his character requirements, highlighting the different personalities he drew from his research. This confirms the comic elements Robbins interpreted from the '20s, with characters such as "drunk..(playboy)" and "good time charley," along with the customary stereotypes of the period such as the flapper girls and gangsters. These characters set the structure of the ballet. They guided Gould's amusing musical interpretation for each set of characters—for example, the collegiate couple are accompanied by college-band-style music and the gangsters with a menacing bass line—which Howard Barnes of the *New York Herald Tribune* described fondly as "savage melodic lampooning."



Opposite page: 'Charleston Ballet' in *Vogue*, 1946 (from the Morton Gould Papers, Music Division, Library of Congress). Left: Article about *Billion Dollar Baby* in the *Herald Tribune*, March 1949 (from the Karl Bernstein scrapbooks, Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts). Below: Character list for two ballets, including the "Charleston" (from the Jerome Robbins Collection, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library).



Thus, this ballet is a good demonstration of Robbins' research guiding his and the other collaborators' work in *Billion Dollar Baby*. It is apparent that he genuinely wanted to reflect the people of the time—aiding Comden and Green's goal to reflect their present situation and attitude through a mockery of the past—while adding to the satire with his comic characters and also directing Gould's musical interpretation. Robbins' need for authenticity developed his creative process and gave him the opportunity to successfully provide choreography for a satire on a time period not of his own. This reinforced the satirical aspects of the show and supported the musical in its reasonably successful Broadway run. The 'Charleston Ballet' has enjoyed an afterlife of its own in *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* (1989) and more recently was performed in November 2014 by the American Dance Machine for the Twenty-First Century, proving Robbins' extensive research process was worthwhile.

This article is just a small glimpse into the curious production of *Billion Dollar Baby*. The show may be mostly forgotten, but it bridges the gap between *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town* (1953) and firmly established the partnership between Comden, Green, Robbins, and Abbott. In all, by examining overlooked shows, like *Billion Dollar Baby*, we can clarify the early progression of valued Broadway collaborations and shed new light on their work together, demonstrating the importance and gratification of studying 'lost musicals.'

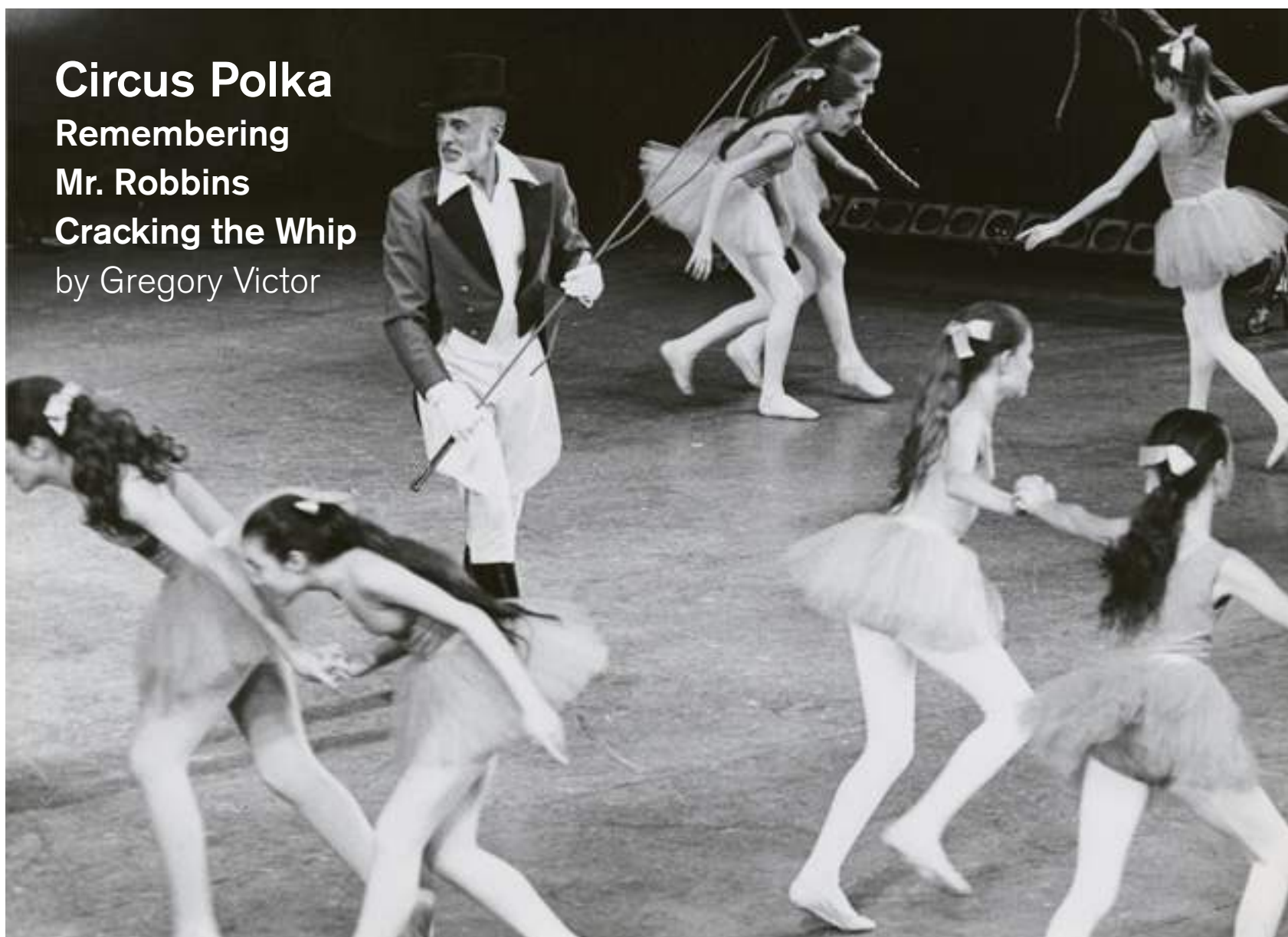
Ben Redmayne has recently completed his Masters in Musicology at the University of Sheffield. He is looking forward to embarking on a PhD in the future.

Circus Polka

Remembering Mr. Robbins

Cracking the Whip

by Gregory Victor



Photograph by Martha Swope of Jerome Robbins and students of the School of American Ballet in New York City Ballet's *Circus Polka*, 1972 (from the Jerome Robbins Collection, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library).

In *Charles & Ray Eames: The Architect and the Painter*, the PBS American Masters program devoted to the lives of the celebrated mid-century designers, Jeannine Oppewall, an artist in the Eames office stated, "Every time the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus would come to town, we would all get out our cameras and our Ektachrome, and we'd go running downtown, and we'd photograph the circus!" Charles Eames instructed his co-workers to photograph anything they wanted at the circus. The photographs recorded the system at work, showing how, although the circus might look like a free-for-all, behind the scenes it was, as design critic Ralph Caplan put it, "a marvel of constraint." For Eames, the flow of assigned tasks and responsibilities to everyone who worked at the circus was a performance in itself.

Jerome Robbins was also a regular visitor to the big tent. Whether Ringling Bros. or The Big Apple — which became an annual New Year's Eve destination for Robbins — when the circus came to town, Jerry was there. Like Eames, Robbins also got his camera out when he headed to the Big Top. It should be no surprise, then, that one of his most entertaining and charming ballets was *Circus Polka*, the Stravinsky ballet he choreographed in 1972.

The idea for the music of *Circus Polka* (composed for a young elephant) was George Balanchine's. When he was invited by Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey to choreograph a performance by elephants — one of whom would carry ballerina Vera Zorina (Balanchine's wife at the time) — Balanchine asked Igor Stravinsky to write a brief piece. Stravinsky agreed, with one condition: that it only be for a young elephant. In the spring of 1942, at Madison Square Garden, the dance was premiered by fifty pairs of showgirls and pachyderms, all wearing pink tutus. In 1945, George Balanchine re-choreographed it for the students of the School of American Ballet. This *Circus Polka* featured one girl as "A Little Elephant," supported by a corps de ballet, and had one performance at Carnegie Hall.

During New York City Ballet's Stravinsky Festival in June, 1972, Jerome Robbins choreographed a new version of *Circus Polka*. In it, he cast himself in the role of Ringmaster (making his first stage appearance in nearly a decade), putting 48 students from the School of American Ballet through their paces. The

three groups of 16 dancers in *Circus Polka* entered the stage in reverse order of age, from the oldest (twelve years old) to the youngest (seven years old), each group defined by its own pastel-colored tutu (first blue, then green, then pink). Once all the girls were onstage, the Ringmaster deployed them in three concentric rings to simple but kaleidoscopic effect. The ballet ended with the dancers forming Stravinsky's initials — I and S — complete with periods.

Some of Jerome Robbins' most classic work was with children: Baby June, Louise, and the newsboys in *Gypsy*; the Darling children in *Peter Pan*; and the Royal Children in *The King and I*. Then, there are the children in *Circus Polka*. Full of joy, they are the epitome of youthfulness. As the philosopher Eric Hoffer wrote, "Youth itself is a talent, a perishable talent," and Robbins captured it for a moment. He organized it, displayed it, and in doing so, he gave generations of young students their first opportunity to dance with New York City Ballet, all while supervising "the flow of assigned tasks and responsibilities" and cracking his whip benevolently.

Not many people know this, but Daniel Duell, Founder and Artistic Director of Ballet Chicago, was Robbins' stand-in while Robbins created the piece. I recently interviewed Mr. Duell, and a few of the dancers in the original (Ingrid Ehrenberg, Miriam Mahdaviani-Goldstone, and Treva Swersky), who shared their memories of *Circus Polka*.

Daniel Duell "At that time, a group of us were taken into the Company under a special contract arrangement called 'extra corps,' created specifically for the Stravinsky Festival. I think there were five of us, and we were all in S.A.B. at that point. The difference between 'extra corps' and 'apprentice' was that apprentices were limited to learning a certain number of ballets without having to become a full company member. So the union accommodated a request to provide an opportunity for young dancers to be apprentices who could learn more than just two ballets. That gave NYCB some freedom to spread us around and it was in that vein that Jerry needed someone to stand in for him onstage, so that he could look at the ballet."

Treva Swersky “We all went into the State Theater studio on the fifth floor, the big rehearsal room where company class was held. I remember Jerry lining us all up and saying he had this concept. And like nothing, he choreographed it. The music went on and he put all of us in a line. I remember him saying that we were like trained animals in a circus. He wanted one of the little pink ones — one of the babies — to get lost at the very end, like she ran away. It was truly by accident; he was the Ringmaster and she didn’t know what to do, and he said, ‘Well, it will be like an animal coming into the circus ring and being lost. I’ll crack the whip put her back...’ Jerry rehearsed us and he was like an animal. Over and over and over again. You just never stopped. I loved it.”

Miriam Mahdaviyani-Goldstone “I remember feeling very special, that we were the only children chosen to be in the Stravinsky Festival. Somehow, we knew that the Stravinsky Festival was a momentous event for New York City Ballet.”

Ingrid Ehrenberg “The most challenging part of being in the ballet was learning and adapting quickly and trying to behave professionally.”

Treva Swersky “All of us, being at the School of American Ballet, had long hair. He made us all take out our buns. We never let our hair down. That was a big deal. He said, ‘It’ll be like horses manes. I want all the pony-tails to be swinging.’ It was fast, and we worked hard. We didn’t have weeks and weeks of rehearsal. We rehearsed it and it was on.”

Miriam Mahdaviyani-Goldstone “The rehearsals were assisted by David Richardson. He made sure we were all marching in unison, and in time with the music on our entrance. Counting the music was the most challenging part of the dance.”

Daniel Duell “The role of the Ringmaster wasn’t a demanding technical role, but Jerry always liked to prepare in advance different versions. It was my first acquaintance with Jerry Robbins’ style of direction. It was very much more ‘Broadway Baby.’ Cut-and-dried. ‘Go this way — Go that way — an occasional whistle (whistling noise) — No, go this way this time.’ I don’t think any of us in the ballet were particularly used to that. I didn’t take offense to it; it was just a different way of relating. It seemed to me a means of efficiency, especially if you’re someone like Jerry, who likes to try many different and quick directions. It was a way to accomplish that.”

Daniel Duell “I really didn’t know of Jerome Robbins until I got to the school. But when I started seeing performances of New York City Ballet, of course I saw his ballets. The big ballet that had just had its premiere was *Dances at a Gathering*. I remember seeing it for the first time, thinking ‘What a rapturously beautiful and deeply involving work it was. I remember thinking. ‘Only a person with a very beautiful mind could conceive such a beautiful moment.’”

Miriam Mahdaviyani-Goldstone “Certainly, I knew who Jerome Robbins was. I loved working with him. I remember thinking how brilliant it was that the dance ended with all the dancers forming the initials I.S. All the children were hoping to be chosen for one of the two periods.”

Treva Swersky “I was a quick study and I was always chosen for the extra parts ... Balanchine’s *Harlequinade* or ‘Christian Girl’ in Balanchine’s *Don Quixote*. Working with Jerome Robbins and Tom Abbott was the highlight, because I loved to work hard. They were very serious and very professional. They didn’t treat us like children at all. So when it came to me being one of the ‘dots’ [the I.S. initials], I imagine it was because I had had experience. I was chosen as the dot after the ‘S.’ I remember, because it was very hard. Jerry had the first girl at the bottom of the ‘S’ lay down, and he wanted the ‘S’ to gradually get higher. Then some would be on one knee, and the last girl was standing in a full-on fourth position. In order to get to my position after the ‘S’ — in like six counts or less than eight counts — I had to run far. It was hard, because when that ‘S’ came around, I had to hit that dot and end it right on the music.”

Miriam Mahdaviyani-Goldstone “Performing at the New York State Theater was always a thrill. I had already performed in ballets for NYCB, so I felt comfortable in rehearsals and on stage at the theater. But to my 11-year-old mind, this dance seemed more special than the others. We had played a part in creating it, the children were the focus of the ballet, and it was a new piece, loved by the audience. There was a lot of excitement in the air every time we performed. I recall that on opening night, the ballet was so favorably received that we performed an encore.”

Ingrid Ehrenberg “I don’t remember anyone getting hit with the whip.”

Miriam Mahdaviyani-Goldstone “No, no-one got hit by the whip. He was very kind and patient with us.”

Daniel Duell “I never held the whip. I always had to hold it in my imagination.”

Ingrid Ehrenberg “The best thing about being in *Circus Polka* was watching and being part of the creative process, together with some of ballet’s great masters. We also got to sit in on rehearsals for other ballets in the Festival.”

Daniel Duell “I remember seeing the ballet from the audience and being utterly, utterly charmed by how it came together in costume, with Jerry in that wonderful Ringmaster outfit, with the black boots, the white riding pants, the big red coat and the black top hat. I thought, ‘What a far cry from any notion I had of how it was going to turn out, while rehearsing it in the studio.’ That helped galvanize for me that theatrical vision starts the moment that the work starts in the studio.”

The 1972 audience for this ballet intended as a pièce d’occasion demanded an immediate encore. While many other ballets created for the Stravinsky Festival have disappeared, Circus Polka endures. This April, the ballet was performed at the Ballet Academy of Pittsburgh as well as the Pittsburgh Youth Ballet, both staged by Garielle Whittle.

Gregory Victor is a theatrical director and stage manager, living in New York City and Woodstock. He is also Editor-in-Chief of *Jerome Robbins*, the newsletter.



These photographs were taken by Jerome Robbins when he visited the circus between 1952 and 1958 in New York City (from the collection of Jerome Robbins).



Photo by Paul Kolnik of Robert La Fosse, as the Ringmaster, and students of the School of American Ballet in Jerome Robbins' *Circus Polka* at New York City Ballet in 2008.

In the original 1972 Stravinsky Festival staging, the dancers ended the ballet by forming the initials "I.S." (for Igor Stravinsky). In a 1998 tribute to Mr. Robbins, featuring Mikhail Baryshnikov as the Ringmaster, they read "J.R." In the 2008 Jerome Robbins Festival, that tradition continued.



Reflections

The 2016 Dance/NYC Symposium

by Tara Sheena

Since 2010, Dance/NYC has held its daylong symposium for a growing and interested dance community from the five boroughs of NYC and beyond. This year's event, held at Gibney Dance Center in the financial district, surpassed expectations and welcomed a record number of five hundred attendees from across the fields of dance and performance, in addition to technology, philanthropy, education, law, and health and human services. A greater focus was given to issues in equity and inclusion in the field, as well as disability and dance, largely prompted by DanceNYC's *Disability. Dance. Artistry.*, a report on the current state of access in dance for disabled populations. This was also the first year a pre-symposium event took place, allowing more focused sessions on disability initiatives and best practices to take place. With more than thirty-five sessions over the course of two days, I am able to write on only a small sampling of what was offered. However, my attendance strived to reflect the current hallmarks of Dance/NYC's mission-driven work in equity, inclusion, and disability in dance.

The first event at this year's pre-symposium was a discussion titled "Beyond Accessibility" led by John McEwen, Executive Director of New Jersey Theatre Alliance, with Christine Bruno and David Harrell, from Alliance for Inclusion in the Arts. New Jersey is currently the only state that requires Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) approval be submitted in order to receive state funding for the arts, so this session was especially elucidating in order to hear from those who already have this line of thinking ingrained into their work. A large part of this session was what McEwen deemed our "cultural tour," where all participants closed their eyes to envision attending an event at a favorite venue, but doing so with a specific disability in mind. In going through the steps it took for us to arrive, get in to the event, witness the show or exhibition, use the restroom, and exit the space, many of us realized that the event itself is often not the main deterrent; it is the preparation it takes to get there. Simple questions like "Is there a phone number you can call for assistance?" for someone who is low vision and may not be able to navigate a website, or "Is it possible to coordinate assistance upon arrival?" for someone who requires a wheelchair, cane, or other walking assistance, revealed many inherent shortcomings in these cultural experiences.

The main symposium began with a much-anticipated conversation between Lane Harwell, Executive Director of Dance/NYC, and Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation. The Ford Foundation has long been committed to social justice work within various contexts, endeavoring to strive for equal opportunities to advance human potential, but their explicit connection to dance, and the arts in general, has been a bit more vague. That said, it was heartening to hear Walker's enthusiasm toward the work of so many in the room. Toward the end of their hour-long conversation, Walker posed, "What can we do for you?"



Alice Sheppard and Simi Linton at the 2016 Dance/NYC Symposium (photo by Christopher Duggan).

Walker also touched on what would become a big theme throughout the weekend: language. In talking about these large, complex topics and how they not only impact trends, jobs and data in the field, but actual people doing the work, the attention to how we speak about these things is an important consideration. Walker's focus was on reclaiming empowerment narratives, so language is not something that obscures or impedes on progress, but only something to help it along. I cannot stress enough how much this point — on language and how we are talking about diversity, inclusion, and advocacy at this particular moment — was continuously stressed in myriad ways throughout the symposium.

If the opening conversation was a gentle settling in to the day's events, the Department of Cultural Affairs Diversity Initiatives presentation was a more direct setup of facts and figures. Acting Commissioner Edwin Torres and Deputy Commissioner & General Counsel Kristin Sakoda led a presentation of data, the first display of these findings, that attempted a comprehensive snapshot of the diversity of New York and how that translates to workplace populations. Torres made a point to mention that while the survey displayed admirable efforts in capturing details on race and gender, it also revealed shortcomings in religious affiliation, socio-economic background, non-binary genders, and LGBTQ status.

"As a field, we look like America, not NYC" Torres noted of the 38.48% total minority population in the arts in NYC versus the 67% minority population in the entire city. That does point to a widely accepted notion that top management positions across most fields, the arts included, are predominantly white (and male), but there was survey data that indicated a shift is imminent. More information on this survey can be found at nyc.gov/culture/diversity.

A "Philanthropic Approaches" panel allowed the issues and data posed in the DCLA session to come to a deeper, focused discussion. The main posit of this conversation, moderated by Holly Sidford of Helicon Collaborative, was "How can funding advance equity in the field?" The panelists included perspectives from Maurine Knighton of Nathan Cummings Foundation; Sage Crump, now at Leveraging a Network for Equity (LANE), formerly of National Performance Network/Visual Arts Network; Judilee Reed of Surdna Foundation; Katie Steger of the Mellon Foundation; and Hoong Yee Lee Krakauer of Queens Council on the Arts.

One of the biggest themes that came through was how to evaluate works for funding when varied communities and artists are all being judged on the seemingly same criteria — criteria that is based on a dominant Western culture that is widely seen in a large percentage of consistently funded art across the country. "These organizations are the scholars of their own experience," Crump noted, summing up the increasing inclination by foundations to allow artists to lead their thinking instead of imposing the same guidelines on each. "They shouldn't qualify the quality of artistic practice by the quality of the building in which it's housed," Reed echoed.

A lunchtime conversation with Misty Copeland and Virginia Johnson continued the discussion on race, diversity and dance. Copeland is not only a clear example of this power but offered an important reminder of how dancers can develop this within themselves, noting that diligent efforts and perseverance can allow "any dancer to become the dancer they want to be." Mentorship was also an equally important facet of this conversation, with Copeland citing the work American Ballet Theatre is doing with their Project Plié initiative, offering mentorship opportunities for not only students but their parents as well. It is important for students and parents to know "what it means to exist in this world," Copeland mentioned with Johnson in agreement.

In the second half of the day, we heard from wider perspectives across the country, not just the Metropolitan New York City areas, in a session titled "National Voices: Embodying Equity and Inclusion at Dance/USA." This was the only session led by representatives from Dance/USA, the national service organization devoted to dance and an ally to Dance/NYC. This presentation saw four individuals associated with Dance/USA — Michelle Ramos Burkhart, Denise Saunders Thompson, Mina Matlon, and Jaamil Olawale Kosoko — in a loose conversation around the strides Dance/USA has made in the areas of equity and inclusion. Moderated by Executive Director of Dance/USA Amy Fitterer, the discussion was casual and left ample time for many participants to react and respond directly to each panelist.

As the day's events wound down, many pointed conversations continued to percolate and echo outward throughout the halls, stairways, and lobby. In my last session of the day, choreographer Camille A. Brown led what she deemed an "anti-panel" titled "Diversity and Inclusion in Dance Education." This session opened with a participatory "gallery walk" wherein various posters containing questions on dance education were strewn about the room. All participants sauntered around the room and, if they wanted, could respond in writing to each prompt; questions like "What are the specific issues that most concern you regarding dance education today?" were posed and answered by participants. The invited guests were Maria Bauman, Co-organizer of Artists Co-creating Real Equity (ACRE); Ananya Chatterjea, Professor at University of Minnesota; Theresa

Ruth Howard, founder of mobballet.org; Joan Finkelstein, Executive Director of the Harkness Foundation for Dance; and Zazel-Chavah O'Garra, Artistic Director of ZCO/DANCE PROJECT.

There was an exciting range of perspectives in the room and, after an hour of conversation, a few general points emerged. Namely, how can the work of K-12 educators meaningfully translate into students (and teachers alike) who enter higher education and the professional dance world? And how can advocacy and activism be taught (and valued) alongside technique and pedagogy? The gallery walk seemed to offer a generative point to build off of in this session, as the questions posed at the top of the session were met by more and more questions. It is important to note that the piling up of questions was content with not acquiring answers right away. These issues, it became clear, often beg more questions than answers. In this vein, Chatterjea offered, perhaps, the most smartly concise summation of the day: "Diversity is not a head count, it's a methodology."

The Dance/NYC Symposium is an essential event for the dance community in NYC and beyond. There are no other daylong events devoted to the pooling

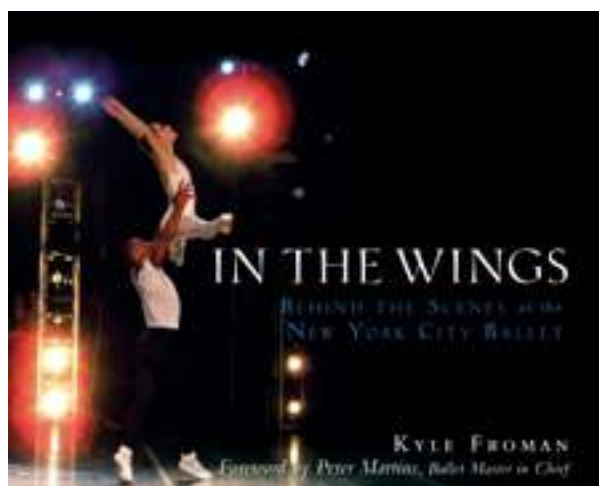
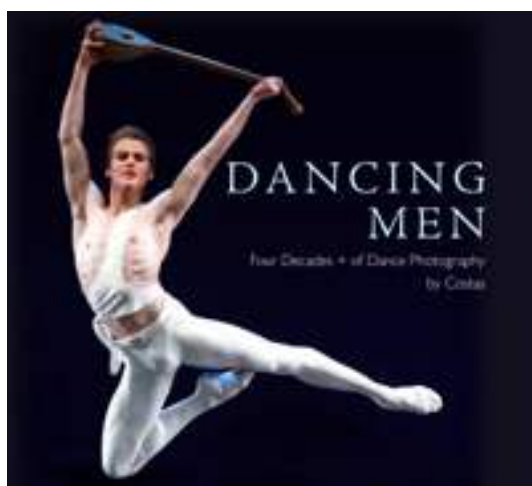
of ideas and resources between so many aspects of the field. This mixing and matching of perspectives and experiences carries power to inspire change and fuel progress. Within the rich and necessary discussions that occurred throughout the day, there was still space and time to disagree or challenge accepted beliefs and methodology, moments I was most grateful for. Overall, it is clear there is energy around creating more opportunities for betterment in the field. And there is work to be done. But, along with that work, there comes excitement, diligence, renewed progress, and the realization that there is so much to celebrate about dance in NYC.

For more information on Dance/NYC, please visit dance.nyc.

Tara Sheena is originally from Detroit, MI and currently resides in Brooklyn, NY. She works as a dancer and freelance writer, in addition to serving as a current member on the Dance/NYC Junior Committee.

"Photography is my antidote to the theatre. I work quietly, alone, in the dark, without pressure or time limits."

—Jerome Robbins in *The Theatre Magazine*, July 1960



Left: Photo by Costas of a rehearsal for Jerome Robbins' *Watermill* at New York City Ballet in 1990, with (left to right) Jean-Pierre Frohlich, Perry Silvey, Edward Villella, and Jerome Robbins. Above: Photo by Kyle Froman of Sara Mearns rehearsing Peter Martins' *Swan Lake* at New York City Ballet in 2006.

Costas is a physicist who became a dance photographer. He has photographed New York City Ballet and many other dance companies since the early 1970s. His latest book, *Dancing Men*, was published by Tide-mark Press in January 2016.

On photographing Jerome Robbins' ballets:

"Mr. Robbins' vision was broad and deep, yet no small detail escaped his 'laser light' attention: take the first section of *Glass Pieces* as an example. Dancers wear costumes of different colors. They walk in different directions, they pass each other quickly. Mr. Robbins had cloths of different hues of each color, and he put them next to each other so that he could determine which shade of each color was best for creating a harmonious whole!"

Kyle Froman is the author of *In the Wings*, a photography book chronicling the world of New York City Ballet, and was a dancer in the company as well. He shoots for newspapers, magazines, dance companies, Broadway shows, and fashion designers around the country.

On photographing Jerome Robbins' ballets:

"I love photographing Jerry's ballets as much as I enjoyed dancing them. There's a wonderful sense that the dancers are part of a community onstage. Whereas Balanchine ballets are driven by the music, are normally abstract, and performed 'out' to the audience, Jerry's ballets create a world onstage where the dancers dance with each other. These differences come across in my photos."



Tiler Peck and Damian Woetzel in Jerome Robbins' *Fancy Free* (photos on pages 16–17: New York City Ballet in 2008, photo by Kyle Froman).

“This is the story of three sailors who are out on the town...” by Jerome Robbins

Jerome Robbins wrote this scenario while conceiving *Fancy Free* for Ballet Theatre in 1943 (the premiere took place on April 18, 1944). This description of the characters, movement, and mood was created as an aid for Robbins himself and also as a guide for Leonard Bernstein as he composed the score. It is heavy on clear-cut description and light on opinion; any emotion in the narrative is evident in the visual description of the action. Robbins' choreography conveyed this same unsentimental sense of simplicity, confidence, and honesty.

FANCY FREE

A one-act ballet based on an incident concerning three sailors on a shore leave

Characters: Three Sailors

The Brunette

The Red-Head

The Blonde

Bartender

Time: The present; a hot summer night.

Place: New York.

This is the story of three sailors who are out on the town on a Shore Leave. It is a jazz ballet, light in mood, running about 15 minutes. The costumes for the sailors should be the regular dark sailors' uniforms. The girls should wear actual street dresses that permit free movement. The bartender should wear the usual white apron-jacket combination. The set, imaginatively designed, should represent a city street, a bar at center stage so that its interior is visible, and a lamppost stage left. The action takes place at night.

(Perhaps a subway entrance at stage right — No.)

Music and Mood

*Fast, explosive,
jolly, rollicking.*

A bang-away start.

*Transition period
to slower mood.*

*Slow, relaxed...
music should have
literal meanings
as far as specific
action is concerned.*

Action

Three sailors explode onto the stage. They are out on shore leave, looking for excitement, women, drink, any kind of fun they can stir up. Right now they are fresh, full of animal exuberance and boisterous spirits, searching for something to do, something to happen. Meanwhile they dance down the street with typical sailor movements — the brassy walk, the inoffensive vulgarity, the quality of being all steamed up and ready to go. They boldly strut, swagger and kid each other along. This section should serve as an introductory dance as well; bright, fast, gay, happy. One should feel immediately that the three are good friends, used to bumming around together, used to each other's guff... that they are in the habit of spending their time as a trio, and that, under all their rough and tumble exterior, there is a real affection for each other, a kind of "my buddy" feeling.

They finally arrive at the lamppost around which they gradually settle as the first impetus and excitement of being on shore dies down. One, with his arm crooked around the pole, swings slowly back and forth; another rocks on his heels; the third leans: and the more seriously they become involved with what to do next, the quieter they become. Finally they decide that a drink is what they need. They saunter toward the bar, enter, and each approaches the bar and places his foot on the rail. They order up three beers, which the bartender serves. They pick up their

glasses and clink them in a mutual toast. Simultaneously they lift, drain, and plunk their glasses back on the bar. A moment of satisfaction; a pause of relaxation. They turn front and, as part of their habits, choose to see who pays. Two of them secretly agree on the same amount of fingers, and consequently the odd man pays. He shakes his head (as if this happens all the time, which it does), and pays. The three hitch their pants and move to the door, where they stand looking out at the night and street. One yawns, another stretches, and the third produces a slice of gum, breaks it in three parts and hands a piece to each. Each unwraps it, rolls up the paper, puts the gum in his mouth, and then with a neat kick, deftly flips the wrapper away. They stand in the doorway chewing. A pause of satisfaction, a sigh of "Now what should we do?"

The tempo changes and the Brunette enters from the left. (She's a nice girl who doesn't mind the horseplay about to happen. In fact, she knows it's coming the minute she sees them and anticipates the fun of it.) Her quality and movements should be in the style of the music. There should be an influence of the Negro fluidity and suppleness, the under-excitement and sexuality in her walk and dancing. She has to cross the stage in front of the sailors. They are motionless except for their heads, which follow her closely, their eyes sizing her up, their mouths still chewing. As she passes them, all three impudently tip their hats. She goes on smiling but ignoring them. Then they really get into action, an "Aha, a female — here we go" routine. They spruce themselves up. They pick up her walk and rhythms and try to insinuate themselves with her. They tease and heckle her, trying to get her to break down. They attempt various approaches and techniques, the "Hi, sister," etc. They snatch her bag and toss it from one to the other. She pretends to be angry with them, and annoyed, but both she and they know she isn't. She actually enjoys the attention very much, and with subtlety leads them a merry chase. Of course, three sailors are too many for one girl and the competition seems too much for one of them: he tires of the horseplay and shuffling; his enthusiasm ebbs; and he allows the other two to go off trailing her. As they go off, the sailors are still persistent, and she has her reserve about her, but it looks as if it's breaking down.

The remaining sailor watches after them awhile. At the same time, the Redhead enters from the opposite side. He turns to go back into the bar and they come face to face, almost bumping. He gives her the once-over quickly, and then excuses himself for bumping into her as a means of introducing himself and picking her up. She realizes it but likes it and him. He looks back to be sure the others have gone off, then turns and suggests a drink — to which she agrees, and they enter the bar. They order up a drink, finally leading into a dance. This *pas de deux* should

Dreamy... waiting...

*Sudden, loud change of
tempo and mood. Hot
boogie-woogie influence,
which quiets down to
being insistent with
sudden hot loud licks.*

*Transition of music and
mood to next quality.
As they leave, slowly,
music dies and alters.*



Tyler Angle, Damian Woetzel, and Joaquin DeLuz.



Tiler Peck and Damian Woetzel.

Slowly... torchy, somewhat low-down, but pleasant. Not sentimental or romantic at all. Blues...

Sudden break in mood at reentrance of three figures... same in music... transition to theme of completion, and constant rise in music as each incident provokes further antagonism between the three sailors until it breaks off at the three variations.

Starts here...

grows...

grows...

higher...

breaks off.

be different in timbre than the preceding section. The dance has more depth to it. There is more open attraction between them, there being only two of them. There are moments of casualness mixed with sudden moments of heat and intensity. On the surface, their flirtation is carried on in nice terms, but there is a sure feeling of lust underneath. The boy is very happy to have a girl all to himself—a piece of good luck—and the girl is quite content with him. He makes no rude or vulgar movements, and she is drawn to him. They make a good-looking pair. Finally, he pays for her drink, and, arm in arm, they start out the door.

At this very moment, the Brunette and the two sailors reappear. Evidently she has broken down before their charm and persistence, and the three are returning for a drink together, in a happy joking mood. They spy the one sailor who is trying to make his escape with the girl "all his own." They nab him in time, whereupon he returns and introduces his girl to his two friends. They are very happy to have another girl to share among them. The two girls know each other and go downstage for a huddle full of giggles and mischievousness. They realize that they have the advantage because there are only two of them to three men... that if they play their cards right they can rule the evening. Meanwhile, the three men are standing apart, kind of sizing each other up again, inwardly preparing for the competition there will be for the girls. This competition underplays the whole of this next climaxing section, building constantly to a higher note each moment. The men from here on seize every opportunity to show off, not only for the girls but for their buddies as well. The girls encourage this rivalry by playing one against the other and by playing with all three.

The five reenter the bar. There is a scuffle to determine who is to escort which girl, a scramble for seats, and a conflict over who is to sit next to whom. There is a frantic effort on the part of each to pay for the girls' drinks. There is a mad scramble to light their cigarettes. When they dance, there is continual cutting in, and reshuffling of partners. Finally, each sailor alone tries to show off how well he can dance. Each wants the attention; they vie for the center of the floor. The action grows more and more rough until it reaches a point at which they are on the verge of fighting. The girls intercede, and, after a moment's consideration, back two of them off the floor to allow the remaining one to show his stuff first. He gives the other two a look of triumph: they return sneers and smirks (this occurs between and after each solo dance). He starts his dance.

These three solo dances form the highlight of the ballet. Each sailor is given a chance to dance for the girls. Each dance is brilliant, flashy, and technical enough to be showy, imaginative enough to project three distinct personalities. Each should be different musically, and in quality. None of them is long, but each is full enough to be a complete variation in itself, practically a *tour-de-force* dance. They cannot be described; they must be danced. Each sailor, however, has his own personal style and type of movement, which can be presented. The first is the most bawdy, rowdy, boisterous of the three. He exploits the extrovert vulgarity of sailors, the impudence, the loudness, the get-me-how-good-I-am. When he finishes, instead of the other two fighting to go next, each wants the other to go first. Finally, the second yields and dances. His dance is very different in quality... the music is lighter, gayer, more happy-go-lucky, come-what-may. His movements are more naïve, lovable, there is more warmth, humor, and almost wistfulness about him. At last, the third dances. His keynote is his intensity. There are swift, sudden movements, a strong passion and violence, an attractive flashiness and smoldering quality.

resumption of competitive theme on higher scale...

building...

building to this climax where it breaks, wild and loose and whooping.

bang... crash, etc.

quickly slowing up...

slow...

empty... after-the-storm feeling.

Recovery, and...

Return to same theme as in opening...

slow...

relaxed...

tired...

dreamy...

Same break as in entrance of first girl... perhaps a little more nasty. It dies away... quiets down... slower...

slower... suspended...

Crash...

loud...

finis.

When they are finished, there is a moment's pause. The girls really get to work on them. Now comes a fast kind of finale-coda dance. It picks up from where the excitement broke off, and before the three dances. The vitality and concentration of the excitement grows. The dance becomes hotter, almost a furious lindy hop. The girls are whirled from one man to the next, are snatched from one to the other. The boys become more violent in their contact with one another; they push, and shove and nudge until finally it happens—one shoves another too hard and a fight breaks out. Before the girls can stop it, it is a real knock-down, rough-and-tumble, bang-away fight. They jump at each other, they swing and duck, they dive and tackle and heave and throw each other. The two girls stand nearby, frightened (the situation has gone further than they intended). The boys are in a heap on the floor, arms, legs, heads, bodies entangled and weaving; grunts, groans, heaves and swings, kicks and jerks—they struggle and pant and pull and push. Suddenly, one gets flung off the pile, and he rolls fast across the floor, hitting the two girls in the shins and knocking them flat. Ignoring them completely, he dives back into the melee. The girls help each other to their feet, shocked and furious. They rub their sore spots and stamp their feet for attention, to no avail; the men are too busy fighting. They both spy one free head, and together, they smack it with their bags. Then they turn and exit, walking haughtily, angrily down the street. The smacked head turns in time to see them exit. After many futile attempts, he finally gets the others to stop struggling. They look around. No girls. They slowly disentangle themselves and get to their feet. They walk to the door and look off one way. No one in sight. The other way. Nothing. Then they look at each other, take in their messed clothes, cock-eyed hats, dirty and bruised faces, hurt disappointed expressions. Then they smile, increasingly as they realize the humor, ridiculousness, and irony of the whole situation... their knocking themselves out so hard that the girls escape them. They laugh and smack each other on the back.

They pull themselves together and decide that what they need is a drink. They go back into the bar and order up three beers. They pick up their glasses and clink them in a mutual toast. They lift, drain, and plunk them back on the bar simultaneously. A moment of relaxation... a pause of tired satisfaction... They choose to see who will pay, with the same intrigue and the same results. The "sucker" shakes his head but pays. The other two shake hands on swindling him again. Then the three saunter to the door to stand looking out at the night and the empty streets. One yawns, another stretches, and the third produces a stick of gum which he tears in three pieces, giving a part to each. Same routine of unwrapping and flipping the paper away, etc. Then they stand there, waiting, relaxed, chewing.

The Blonde enters from the left. She is very much like the Brunette in movement and shrewdness. The sailors stand motionless, their heads following her, their eyes sizing her up. She crosses the stage and just as she gets past them there is a general sudden movement of "Let's get into action," swiftly cut and held by a movement of "Hey, wait a minute—remember what just happened." They look at each other and relax. They watch her go offstage. Then, for each other's benefit, they shrug kind of bored, and start off in the direction opposite to that the girl took. There is a strong tendency to lag, and many looks off toward the girl. They get slower and slower, until finally they stop completely, watching each other, waiting for the first to make a move—one does, and bang—they are off down the street after the girl, boisterous, excited, swaggering, loud, and happy.

“We all knew we had something to contribute...”

Some remarks by Donald Saddler on Jerome Robbins
(as told to Bernard Carragher)

Donald Saddler was born in Van Nuys, California and was the youngest of twelve children. His father was a landscape designer. His mother was of Cherokee descent. Every weekend the family gathered in their living room and Donald would be asked to dance. “They thought that by dancing I would regain strength after a bout with scarlet fever. It was a ritual that my family loved.” Eventually his mother took note of his talent and signed him up for tap classes in Santa Monica.

In high school, he ushered at the Philharmonic Auditorium in Los Angeles and saw the Ballets Russes. “I immediately said, ‘This is what I want to do.’” He went to Theodore Kosloff’s studio on Hollywood Boulevard on Saturdays for basic ballet. There, he met the dancer Paul Godwin, who said that if Donald was really interested in ballet he should study with Carmelita Maracci, a well-known concert dancer.

*The next year, Paul Godwin left for New York and wrote to Donald, telling him that he should come to New York to study theater, and dance in Broadway shows. Easter week of 1939, Donald headed east and looked up Godwin. He was in the chorus of a musical, *Stars in Your Eyes*, which was a vehicle for Ethel Merman and Jimmy Durante introducing the Russian ballerina Tamara Toumanova, making her Broadway debut. After a matinee, Godwin told Donald “Come backstage. I want you to meet my new friends in the chorus.” They were: Nora Kaye, Maria Karnilova, Alicia Alonso, and Jerome Robbins. The next fall that group and Donald joined Ballet Theatre, the company that eventually became American Ballet Theatre, and all their lives started to blend together.*

What was Robbins like in the early days of Ballet Theatre?

“Happy one day, very serious the next. I could always make him laugh. He would scowl or get uptight about something and I would make him laugh during breaks at rehearsal. Jerry would play the piano by ear, and we would do things to make the company laugh. We were sort of a team. We had the same sense of humor.

I treasure our early days at Ballet Theatre. We had great fun. We never worried. We all knew we had something to contribute. There was great joy in the company. On birthdays, Jerry, Maria Karnilova, Nora Kaye, and I would get together and talk about our past in an infectious, beguiling way. I didn’t want anything from Jerry but his friendship. He thought of me as a chum who could always make him laugh...

Jerry’s weakest moments were when he couldn’t work with someone. If he thought for a moment you doubted him or didn’t see eye-to-eye with him, then it became tough on him. He had dark moods and you had to be careful at those moments....

Jerry was a good dancer. He had also trained to be an actor with Maurice Schwartz, while under Schwartz’s direction at the Yiddish Art Theatre in 1937, where he danced in two numbers and served as a supernumerary in crowd scenes. Schwartz’s knack for shifting between humor and poignancy, and his ability to be at once grand and pitiable, probably helped Jerry shape the image of Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* years later...

Robbins’ first serious teacher of dance was Gluck Sandor, who was hired by Schwartz as a choreographer. Robbins and his sister Sonia were in I.J. Singer’s *The Brothers Ashkenazi*. It was about Polish brothers and how the brothers became rivals in business and romance. Robbins never forgot Gluck Sandor; he cast him as the Rabbi in the original *Fiddler on the Roof*...

During these years, Jerry had a very clean dancing technique, not flashy at all. But there was ambition there. By the time I met him, Jerry had played in the chorus of a Broadway musical as well as done ballet. He was very serious

about his ballet technique. At the Ballet Theatre, Michel Fokine was our main choreographer. One of the greats of Russian ballet, he was in his late 50s or early 60s.

The only other choreographer we had was Anthony Tudor, who was English and from a different school of ballet. His ballets had the quality of drama in them. He was wonderful with “gesture” — we gained from that. Tudor wasn’t close to the dancers, he kept it separate or maybe we kept it separate. Anthony Dolin was a premiere dancer and a star. He staged *Swan Lake*. He was from the Ballets Russes during the Diaghilev period. He had a lot of tradition behind him, he was a good influence on all of us.”

Saddler was with Ballet Theatre from 1939 until 1942, and then he went into the service. By then, he had a friendship with Robbins. When Saddler was at Fort Richardson, in Alaska, Robbins wrote to him that he had decided to become a choreographer. Saddler was not surprised that Robbins wanted to choreograph:

“We had so many influences at Ballet Theatre, we all assumed we could make up our own dances. Jerry was beginning to work on *Fancy Free*, and in his letters he would sketch out his designs for the story — where the bar was, and where the lamplight was. It was all very Jerry. It was fun; there was humor in all three variations that made up *Fancy Free*. Like Fokine he showed you what he wanted, whether the character was a man or a woman. He knew Muriel Bentley. He trusted her and gave her a lot of freedom with the rhythm and the steps traveling across the stage. She was the girl that all three sailors chased after. Then she outsmarted them...

When I got out of the service, Jerry called me and said Rex Cooper, who played the bartender in *Fancy Free*, was leaving the company and he would like me to take over the role. ‘I would like to have you in the ballet,’ he said. So I went to London to do the bartender role there. I got to see Jerry as a choreographer. He got very tense and nervous and uptight, at himself more than anyone else. You could see him getting tight, and he would start stuttering a little bit. But I felt I was seeing him evolving into a serious artist. We all were. There was a family feeling. We were glad when someone got a good part, or gave a wonderful performance. It was very warm and *gemütlich*...

After doing *Fancy Free* in London, I came back to New York and went to the American Theater Wing, where returning veterans could study whatever they wanted to for free. I took voice, diction, and other courses. Then, one day, Jerry called me to replace my friend Paul Godwin as Uncle Willie in *High Button Shoes*. Paul was leaving to choreograph a new show. Jerry asked, ‘Would you be interested in this? You could do it wonderfully.’ ‘Okay,’ I said, ‘but I want to come in and audition, because I don’t want to be known as just an old friend of yours taking on the role.’ George Abbott was the director, and all he wanted was to see if I could say the lines. Soon I was making my Broadway debut singing and dancing a tango with Helen Gallagher...

Jerry had written me a note saying ‘Stay with me.’ It was wartime and hard to get a hotel room. When I left New York for the service, Jerry was living on Sixth Avenue between 56th and 57th Streets, above a shoe shop. The room was divided and the bath was out in the hall. By now he was a choreographer with a couple of successful shows like *On the Town* and *Billion Dollar Baby* and several ballets under his belt. His new address was on Park Avenue at 55th Street on the East Side in a snazzy apartment. What a big change...

Jerry next asked me to help him out on *Call Me Madam* in 1950. It was a musical comedy with music and lyrics by Irving Berlin and book by Howard Lindsay and



Dancers on tour with Ballet Theatre in Mexico City, in 1941 (from left to right): Albia Kavan, Donald Saddler, Alicia Markova, Miriam Golden, Anton Dolin, John Kriza, Jerome Robbins and Charlie Payne (from the collection of the Estate of Miriam Golden, photographer unknown).

Russell Crouse, suggested by the 1949 appointment of the Washington hostess Perle Mesta as Ambassadors to Luxembourg. Jerry's assistant had to leave for another job, so I signed on for a two-week contract while the show was trying out in Boston. I could see how Jerry worked with director George Abbott and a star like Ethel Merman. Jerry always said he was scared to death by George Abbott. Abbott was intimidating by his size — a big, imposing, good-looking figure. He was completely at ease with himself and the world. In the theater that was terrifying. Of course, Jerry got to know him and respect him, but that came later in his life.

Ethel Merman was very businesslike. She had been the star of *Stars in Your Eyes*, when Jerry was a chorus boy in that show and that fact never really disappeared from their relationship on *Call Me Madam*. He would ask her to do a gesture and she would say, 'That doesn't work Jerry. Got something else?' She was tough on him, and she was a real star. Jerry handled her cautiously. No matter how celebrated he had gotten, she never got friendlier. It was always implied, 'I knew you when.' I also heard that Bette Davis in *Two's Company* in 1952 treated him the same way."

The following year, Saddler choreographed his first Broadway show, Wonderful Town (featuring music by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, book by Joseph A. Fields and Jerome Chodorov, directed by George Abbott, and based on Ruth McKenny's book My Sister Eileen). When the show was trying out in Boston, they didn't have an opening number and since all the show's creators were friends of Jerome Robbins, he was called in.

"Jerry very much liked what I did as a choreographer, but said, 'You have to introduce all the characters in a prologue.' So Betty and Adolph went off and wrote a song about the interesting people on Christopher Street and that became the show's opening number. Jerry didn't take over my job, which he could have. It was very nice of him to just help out, since it was the first Broadway show I choreographed. Jerry did some staging — no choreography — just simple moments to physically capture the characters. *Wonderful Town* came to New York and became a hit and I won my first Tony Award for choreography."

What was Robbins' genius?

"Jerry had a wonderful background with people he worked with in the Yiddish Art Theatre, with Maurice Schwartz and then Gluck Sandor. During those years (the summers from 1938 through 1941) playing in and staging shows at Camp Tamiment, Jerry learned how to pull things together on the stage."

Why do you think Robbins left the theater after Fiddler on the Roof in 1964?

"He very much wanted to do ballets. He wanted to go into another world. The ballet ambiance inspired him to do new things that weren't Broadway. I think he also loved being with George Balanchine. For Jerry, that was a big step forward, as a person and as an artist."

The quotations by Donald Saddler in this article come from an interview with Bernard Carragher, for the Jerome Robbins Oral History Project in 2009.

Donald Saddler staged 21 Broadway shows (winning Tony Awards for *Wonderful Town* and *No, No, Nanette*) as well as many operas, ballets and television shows. His last appearance on Broadway was in a 2001 Roundabout Theatre revival of *Follies*, in which he and Marge Champion played a pair of vaudevillians, Vincent and Vanessa, who performed a ballroom dance to Stephen Sondheim's "Bolero d'Amour." They enjoyed the experience so much that after the show closed, they hired a rehearsal hall twice weekly and did barre and performed the dance. An award-winning film was made of them dancing by Douglas Blair Turnbaugh and Greg Vander Veer called *Keep Dancing*. Donald Saddler died on November 1, 2014 at the Lillian Booth Actors Home of the Actors Fund in Englewood, New Jersey, at age 96.

Bernard Carragher is a theater critic for *New York Theater News* and *The Catholic Transcript*. He has written for *The New York Times*, *Playbill*, and *Show* magazine. He was one of the producers of *My One and Only* and *Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life*.

THE BUSINESS OF SHOW

What Arts Organizations Can Learn from SoulCycle

by Erik Gensler

Last fall I took my first SoulCycle class. I was curious (and late to the game) to discover what all the hype was about. For those who don't know, SoulCycle is a spinning/cycling studio that has a cult-like following for some urban dwellers. Classes cost \$34 each and even at that steep price, the class I took was full (with at least 40 enthusiastic peddlers). It was clear from the branded gear they were all wearing, familiarity with the staff, and cycling skills that most of these people were SoulCycle regulars.

At my firm, Capacity Interactive, we talk a lot about focusing resources on your existing fan base versus screaming at the masses to get new people in the door. It's the foundation of permission marketing and we know that it works.

Remember the Orchestra Churn study that the League of American Orchestras published? This study unearthed that 90% of first-time orchestra customers and 60% of occasional concertgoers don't purchase tickets again the following season. This leaves symphonies constantly chasing new prospects in a desperate effort to fight "the churn." Sound familiar? The study's primary conclusion was that organizations should make a "killer offer" enticing first-time attendees to come back a second time. Getting first-timers to return even one or two more times during the season increases their likelihood of returning the following season from 10% to 50%.

So it's all about getting a newbie back a second time — something SoulCycle is very good at. I think there is so much that arts marketers can learn from this strategy.

The day before my SoulCycle class, I created a new account and reserved my bike online. When I arrived at the check-in desk I saw that my bike was highlighted in bright yellow on the bike map, which indicated I was a new customer (and was perfectly on-brand as yellow is their main brand color). I already felt special.

Very friendly Nicole (everyone who works there is really, authentically friendly) enthusiastically welcomed me to my first class announcing I was a first-timer to her colleagues at the desk. They all welcomed me and engaged in friendly banter while I filled out my waiver and reviewed a form with details of what I should expect. Then I went on a private tour of the facilities with Nicole so I could get the lay of the land.

Before class started, Nicole came over to my bike to make sure I was all set up. Once class started the instructor acknowledged that there was a newbie in the class. The class was an intense workout full of fun music and lots of energy and encouragement. Everyone was REALLY into it.

After class I headed out of the studio, covered in sweat, and was greeted again by Nicole asking how I liked it. She handed me a silver envelope that said, "WELCOME." Inside the envelope was a card inviting me back for a free class. As a nerdy arts marketer all I could think was, "They must have read that churn study" and "Damn, they are GOOD."

If that wasn't enough, an hour after class ended I received a personal email from Nicole checking in again and inviting me back to the studio for my next class.

Count it up. Seven personal touch points around a one-hour class. Now contrast this with how newbies are treated at most cultural institutions. Do they get a tour? A card? Any acknowledgement of being a first-timer? A personal email afterwards?

I'm sure you are thinking, "We couldn't do that for all the new people that come to our theater every night" or "We don't have the staff, money, resources, time..." I am not saying you need do this exactly, but I think you can take some ideas away from my experience:

- You can include a special offer to return or welcome card in their ticket envelope.
- You can have your box office staff acknowledge that it's their first time and welcome them.
- You know the seats where newbies are seated. Can you have one or two staff people in the theater each night whose job it is to ensure newbies have a great experience? ...who come to their seats to welcome them to the theater or check-in with them at intermission? ...who offer to show them around or just talk to them about what they are going to see?
- You can send a personalized thank you email giving each newbie a killer offer to come back.

It's easy to say, "This would cost too much money" or "We don't have the staff for that." But the truth is you probably do have the money. You're probably just spending it on interruption marketing trying to reach new people — continuing "the churn" — instead of engaging people who are already in your universe.

We need to stop thinking of marketing as buying ads — it should be focused on building a solid infrastructure to support current buyers to get them to come back and talk about you. My guess is that you spend 70% of your budget trying to interrupt new people to get them in the door and 30% of your budget on talking to the important people who are already in your universe. Imagine if you swapped that and instead focused 70% on your tried and true and 30% on acquisition. Not only will this get your loyalist coming back more, but if this is done well they will tell their friends. This money could be invested in:

- Investing staff time or a third party to look at and analyze your database and build customer groupings beyond "single ticket buyer" and "subscriber." Applying an RFM framework (Recency, Frequency, Monetary Value) is a great place to start, followed by planning strategic communications based on these groupings.
- Personalizing email communication. Rather than "blasting" the same message to everyone, creating triggered emails that are sent based on a constituent's relationship with your organization (see above bullet).
- Building digital tools that encourage your loyal audience to tell their personal networks about you. This could include building features on your website that encourage social sharing after key moments like a purchase. We did a project for an NYC institution where we built this functionality and saw that each post-purchase social share was worth \$10 to the institution.
- Having staff focused on serving your loyal customers. This could include writing personal emails or sending hand-written notes thanking them for their attendance. Or initiating "surprise and delight" moments like giving a coupon for a free drink or a seat upgrade in a ticket envelope.

SoulCycle does a phenomenal job of turning newbies into loyal customers and these loyal customers tell their friends. And I have to say — it worked on me. I went back for my second (free) SoulCycle class. When I presented my card, another super friendly team member seemed genuinely excited I was back. The management of SoulCycle understands the lifetime value of each customer and investing in their loyalists. I am really impressed and have been back to many classes since. And I am even writing about it. Maybe I will get another free class. Anyone from SoulCycle reading? Anyone?

Portions of this article initially appeared on the Capacity Interactive blog.

Erik Gensler is the President of Capacity Interactive — a digital marketing consulting firm for the arts whose clients include some of the country's leading cultural institutions including Seattle Symphony, New York City Ballet, the Kennedy Center, and Jazz at Lincoln Center. Erik founded Digital Marketing Boot Camp for the Arts, a two-day conference each October in NYC. He speaks regularly about digital marketing for the arts at conferences and universities across the world.

West Side Story Suite in Houston...

In March 2016, Jerome Robbins' *West Side Story Suite* premiered at Houston Ballet. The ballet originally premiered at New York City Ballet in 1995.



Artists of Houston Ballet in Jerome Robbins' *West Side Story Suite* at Houston Ballet (photos by Amitava Sarkar, courtesy of Houston Ballet).

“I feel very lucky, very fortunate, about [*West Side Story Suite*] still having a life of its own... There’s all kinds of dancing in it I think that’s legitimate. It’s why I think it’s worthwhile saving. It’s about our experience here in New York, really a plea for a little more understanding between the variety of people who live here.” —Jerome Robbins in *New York Times*, May 14, 1995

Upcoming Performances of Jerome Robbins Works

Here is a select list of upcoming performances of Jerome Robbins ballets in the USA and elsewhere:

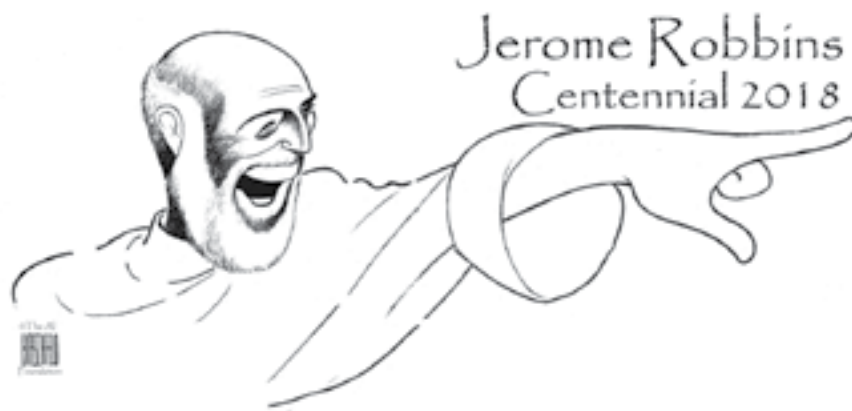
Other Dances
Houston Ballet
September 8, 2016

The Concert
Ballett am Rhein, Düsseldorf
October 28, 2016

Glass Pieces
Miami City Ballet
January 13, 2017

Other Dances
Royal Danish Ballet, Copenhagen
January 11, 2017

Fiddler on the Roof
Broadway Theatre, New York City
ONGOING



“Something’s Coming” in 2018: The Jerome Robbins Centennial

October 11, 2018 will mark the 100th birthday of Jerome Robbins. To represent this centennial year, the Trust has enlisted the aid of the only visual artist to have a Broadway theater named after him: Al Hirschfeld, who penned this iconic image of Jerome Robbins to mark the opening of *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* in 1989.

The 2018–2019 season will see celebrations of Jerome Robbins' life and work both in the U.S. and abroad. For information on events, look to this section of the newsletter and a special website currently under construction



News from The Jerome Robbins Foundation Volume 3, No. 1 (2016)

Jerome Robbins will be sent upon request.
Please send all correspondence to:
e-mail: newsletter@jeromerobbins.org

Jerome Robbins is a publication of The Jerome Robbins Foundation.
© 2016 by The Jerome Robbins Foundation.
Editor: Gregory Victor | Design: Julie Fry
Executive Director, The Jerome Robbins Foundation: Christopher Pennington

Visit our website www.jeromerobbins.org
“Like” us on Facebook www.facebook.com/TheGeniusOfJeromeRobbins
Follow us on Twitter [@JeromeRobbinsFd](https://twitter.com/JeromeRobbinsFd)

Right: Photograph taken by Jerome Robbins between 1952 and 1958 in New York City (from the collection of Jerome Robbins).
Front cover: Photograph by Martha Swope of Jerome Robbins in *Circus Polka*, at New York City Ballet in 1972 (from the Jerome Robbins Collection, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library).

