

- The Company
- Mission Statement
- Ballet Master in Chief
- Dancers
- Orchestra
- Personnel
- Volunteers
- NYCB Alumni
- Repertory Index
- The Viewing Room
- Brief History
- NYCB Lyre
- Annual Reports
- Job Postings

Home > The Company > Repertory Index
Square Dance



Photo © Paul Kolnik

Music Concerto Grosso in B minor, Op. 3 no. 10; Concerto Grosso in E major, Op. 3, no. 12 (first movement) by Antonio Vivaldi and Sarabanda, Badinerie e Giga (second and third movements) (Sarabanda added in 1976) by Arcangelo Corelli



Choreography George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust

Premiere November 21, 1957, New York City Ballet, City Center of Music and Drama

Original Cast Patricia Wilde, Nicholas Magallanes

Average Length 24 min.

In Square Dance, Balanchine joined the traditions of American folk dance with classical ballet. He felt the two types of dance, though widely different in style, had common roots and a similar regard for order. He wrote: "The American style of classical dancing, its supple sharpness and richness of metrical invention, its superb preparation for risks, and its high spirits were some of the things I was trying to show in this ballet." In the original 1957 version, the musicians were placed on the stage, and a square dance caller was brought in to call out the steps. Square Dance was revived in 1976 without the caller, with the orchestra in the pit, and with an added solo for the principal male dancer. Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741), one of the foremost Baroque composers, was born in Venice and died in Vienna. His unique musical language is evident in the variety of form, scoring and imaginative conception in the more than 500 concerti that he composed. A creator of orchestral program music, Vivaldi made contributions to musical style, violin technique and orchestration. Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) was an Italian composer and violinist whose work affected form, style and instrumental technique in Italy and throughout Europe. He was the first composer to gain attention solely

"CLASSICISM IS ENDURING BECAUSE IT IS IMPERSONAL."

— George Balanchine

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from instrumental composition, to owe his reputation in large part to the activities of the musical publishers, and to produce classical instrumental works which were admired and studied long after their idiom had become outmoded. Corelli's works are in three forms: solo sonatas, trio sonatas and concerti. He is considered one of the originators of the concerto grosso, an ensemble concerto for a group of soloists.

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