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**Triptych (Strings Percussion Celesta)**



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**Music** [Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta, by Béla Bartók](#)  
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**Choreography** [Christopher d'Amboise](#)

**Premiere** [June 7, 2000, The Diamond Project IV, New York City Ballet, , New York State Theater](#)

**Original Cast** [Wendy Whelan, Kristin Sloan, Jock Soto, Albert Evans](#)

**Average Length** [31 min.](#)

**"BALLET IS IMPORTANT AND SIGNIFICANT—YES. BUT FIRST OF ALL, IT IS A PLEASURE."**

— George Balanchine

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Béla Bartók (1881-1945) is considered one of the 20th-century's greatest composers. He established an international reputation for his research into folk music as well as for composition and his virtuoso piano technique. As a child he was exposed to several varieties of folk music by his mother, who was a piano teacher. Bartók became an accomplished pianist and composer while still very young. Bartók had the facility of composing music in which folk elements were transmuted into universal themes. He was not popular in his homeland (his music lacked melody and was considered atonal, although that was not the case), but was highly regarded outside his native Hungary. With *Dance Suite* (1920), Bartók finally achieved popularity within Hungary. Liszt influenced the type of musical structures Bartók developed. Halsey Steven in his biography of Bartók has written: "His motives, frequently of two or three notes only, are in a constant state of regeneration. They grow organically; they proliferate; the evolution process is kinetic. No doubt many motivic manipulations which seem carefully calculated were brought about intuitively." When the Nazi threat grew imminent, Bartók left Hungary and settled in the United States where, until his death, he worked at Columbia University and pursued an active career as a composer. Within a few years of his death, Bartók was among the most performed of all modern composers. His *Mikrokosmos* (153 graded pieces for the piano ranging from simple to difficult)

became standard teaching material. It can be said that Bartók's music, taken as a whole, represents most of the modern techniques in melody, harmony, rhythm, tonality and texture.

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