

- 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
Serenade



Photo © Paul Kolnik

Music Serenade for Strings in C, Op. 48 (1880) by Peter Ilyitch Tschaikovsky



Choreography George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust

Premiere March 1, 1935, American Ballet, Adelphi Theater, New York

Original Cast Leda Anchutina, Holly Howard, Elise Reiman, Elena de Rivas, Sylvia Giselle (Gisella Caccialanza), Helen Leitch, Annabelle Lyon, Kathryn Mulloony, Heidi Vosseler, Charles Laskey, Ruthanna Boris

Average Length 32 min.

The first performance of Serenade was on June 10, 1934, by students of the School of American Ballet, at Felix Warburg's estate, White Plains, New York. Serenade is a milestone in the history of dance. It is the first original ballet Balanchine created in America and is one of the signature works of New York City Ballet's repertory. The ballet is performed by 28 dancers in blue costumes before a blue background. Originating as a lesson in stage technique, Balanchine worked unexpected rehearsal events into the choreography. When one student fell, he incorporated it. Another day, a student arrived late, and this too became part of the ballet. After its initial presentation, Serenade was reworked several times. In its present form there are four movements -- "Sonatina," "Waltz," "Russian Dance," and "Elegy." The last two movements reverse the order of Tschaikovsky's score, ending the ballet on a note of sadness. Balanchine had a special affinity for Tschaikovsky. "In everything that I did to Tschaikovsky's music," he told an interviewer, "I sensed his help. It wasn't real conversation. But when I was working and saw that something was coming of it, I felt that it was Tschaikovsky who had helped me." Peter Ilyitch Tschaikovsky (1840-1893) studied at the Conservatory in St. Petersburg, where Balanchine later studied piano in addition to his studies in dance. Tschaikovsky is one of the most popular and influential of all romantic composers. His work is

"WHAT ATTRACTS ME VERY MUCH TO THE COMPANY IS THAT THERE ARE REALLY NO SET RULES."

— Peter Martins

Find Tickets

Event Calendar

Performance Search

2008 Season

Rep Seating & Pricing

Special Events

Sponsors

Group Tickets

Snow Policy

Accessibility

expressive, melodic, grand in scale, with rich orchestrations. His output was prodigious and included chamber works, symphonies, concerti for various instruments, operas and works for the piano. His creations for the ballet, composed in close partnership with Marius Petipa, include Swan Lake, The Nutcracker and The Sleeping Beauty.

**NEW YORK CHOREOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE
SCHOOL OF AMERICAN BALLET**

Copyright © 1998 - 2008 New York City Ballet

The choreographies depicted at this Web site are copyrighted by the individual choreographers.

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Credits](#) | [Site Map](#) | Developed by [Interactive Media Associates](#).