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Behind the China Dogs

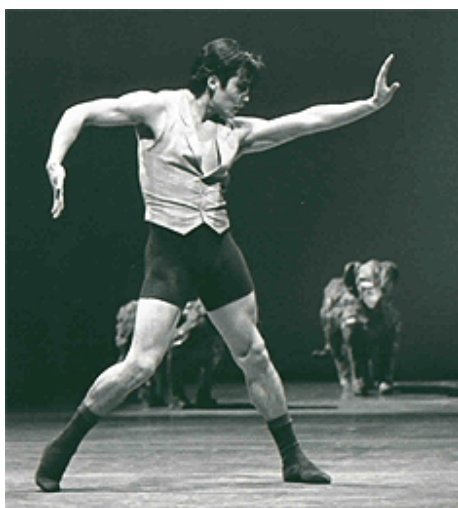


Photo © Paul Kolnik

Music Behind the China Dogs (1988) by Leslie Stuck

Choreography William Forsythe

Premiere May 7, 1988, New York City Ballet, American Music Festival, New York State Theater

Original Cast Helene Alexopoulos, Shawn Stevens, Lourdes Lopez, Melinda Roy, Jeppe Mydtskov, Jeffrey Edwards, Peter Frame, Albert Evans

Average Length 29 min.

With its high-tech musical score and Forsythe's expansive approach to classical ballet technique, Behind the China Dogs creates an unconventional and sometimes improvisational look and mood. Composed of group sections interspersed with solos and duets in which the dancers thrust, extend, leap and turn to off-balance extremes, Behind the China Dogs is an expression of the joys and tensions of the 1980's. The juxtaposition of high-tech glamour and punk influences also demonstrates his interest in European tanztheater or theater dance. Forsythe invites the audience to relinquish conventional views of dance through the inclusion of sound, speech, lighting and even set pieces as equal partners to the dancers. William Forsythe was the Artistic Director of the Frankfurt Ballet from 1984 until 2005. Since 2005, he has been artistic director of The Forsythe Company. He studied and later performed with the Joffrey Ballet before joining the Stuttgart Ballet in 1973. In 1976 he created his first ballet, Urlicht, and has since created over thirty works for companies in Europe and the United States, including the Joffrey, Lyons Ballet, Paris Opéra Ballet and the San Francisco Ballet. Behind the China Dogs was his first commission from New York City Ballet. Leslie Stuck (b. 1953) is currently a musical assistant at IRCAM in Paris (where he assisted Pierre Boulez in the creation of "...

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— George Balanchine

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explosante fixe...") and assistant professor of computer music composition at Kunitachi Music College in Tokyo. Previous collaborations with Forsythe include Impressing the Czar for the Frankfurt Ballet, and In the Middle Somewhat Elevated (a collaboration with Thom Willems) for the Paris Opera Ballet. In addition, he has composed dance scores for David Parsons and Jiri Kylian. The score for Behind the China Dogs is a collage of digested recordings of Louis Armstrong, barking dogs, and a Webern string quartet, and was commissioned for the 1988 American Music Festival.

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