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Carousel (A Dance)



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Music	"Carousel Waltz, If I Loved You" (1945) by Richard Rodgers arranged and orchestrated by William David Brohn
Choreography	Choreography by Christopher Wheeldon
Premiere	November 26, 2002, New York City Ballet, New York State Theater
Original Cast	Alexandra Ansanelli, Damian Woetzel
Average Length	15 min.

Christopher Wheeldon's salute to Richard Rodgers uses the music of the composer's melodic and evocative "Carousel Waltz" and "If I Loved You." Dancing in front of the outline of a ferris wheel projected onto a neutral backdrop, the circular movement of carnival rides and their cheerful colors are echoed in the choreography and costumes for the corps. As the dancers round the stage, in pairs, in a stylized carousel formation, they often separate the rough and tumble carnie worker from the beautiful, shy young woman he loves. With a simple hint at the story of the original play, Wheeldon catches the sweep and emotion of the music and the poignant, doomed nature of the lead couple's relationship with a romantic, tender central pas de deux. Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) met Lorenz Hart in 1918 and began to collaborate with him on the lyrics for popular songs. Their first success was Garrick Gaities in 1925. Between 1926 and 1930, Rodgers and Hart were among America's most popular songwriters, producing many songs for musicals and revues on Broadway and in London's West End. After four years in Hollywood (1930-1934) writing for films, they returned to New York in 1935. In 1936, Rodgers' first major orchestral music for a ballet sequence was premiered in On Your Toes; it was the ballet Slaughter on Tenth Avenue. Hart's death in 1943 ended a prolific partnership that had

"CLASSICISM IS ENDURING BECAUSE IT IS IMPERSONAL."

— George Balanchine

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produced musicals, films and film versions of their stage presentations. In 1943, Rodgers began collaborating with Oscar Hammerstein II; their first success, Oklahoma, won the Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1944. Other works that Rodgers and Hammerstein staged were Carousel, Allegro, The King and I (choreographed by Jerome Robbins) and The Sound of Music. Their work on South Pacific brought them a Pulitzer Prize in 1950.

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