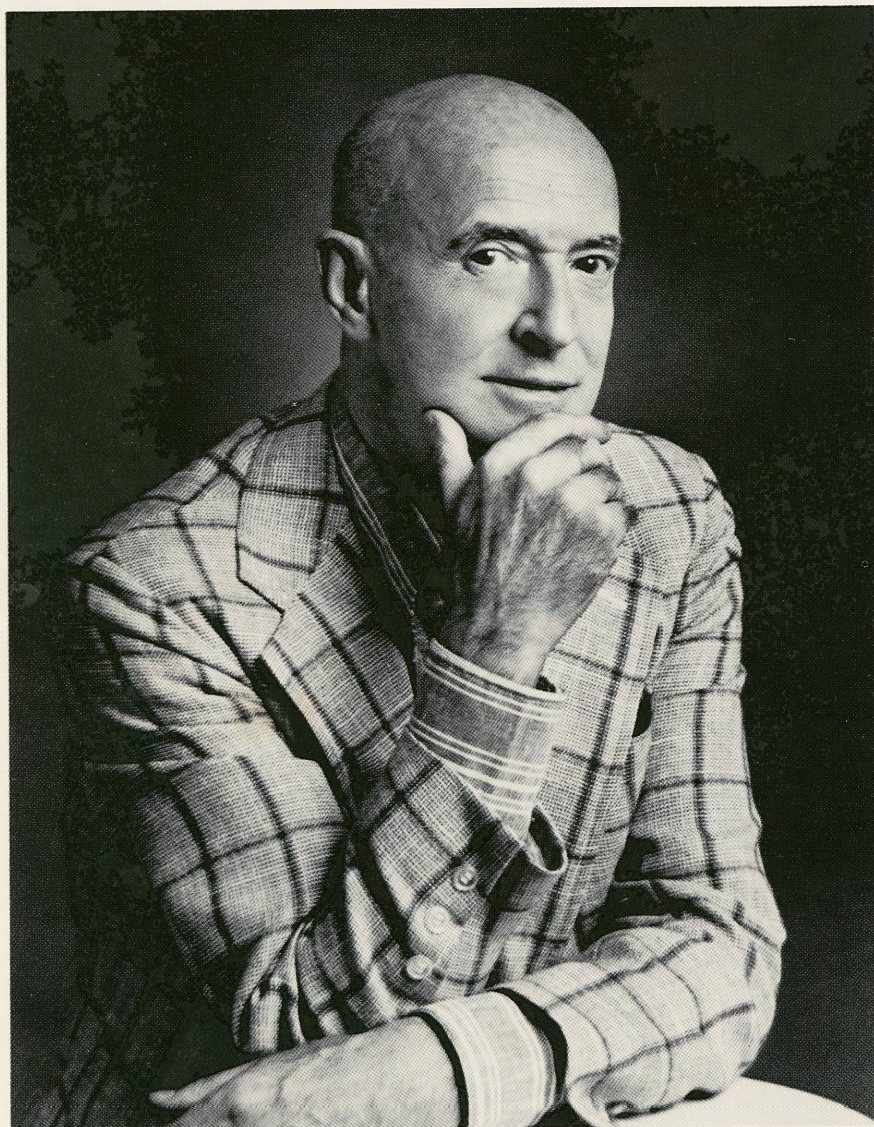


# Ballet Review

Graham and the Golden Thread  
A Tribute to Antony Tudor  
Balanchine & the Kirov  
Violette Verdy on Paris Opéra  
Paul Taylor Reviewed  
Fall 1986





# BR

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Francis Mason

**Ballet Review 14:3**  
**Fall 1986**

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## Forewords and Afterwords

Francis Mason

25 APRIL. At the offices of the Swedish Consulate General in New York, I see a film about Antony Tudor that tells the story, finally, of his unparalleled contribution to ballet. Witnesses to his work throughout the years — Martha Hill, who sponsored his teaching at Juilliard, Nora Kaye, who starred in his American work, and Agnes de Mille, who knew his ballets in England at the start — all testify that Tudor put the spine of drama into ballet. The film was made by Gerd Anderson and Viola Aberlé, who have been associated for many years with the Royal Swedish Ballet and worked there with Tudor. Their film is an extraordinary document created with love and knowledge. When I speak to Tudor and mention Balanchine's admiration for his *Romeo* — "the only *Romeo and Juliet*, really, the only one that is truly English, with true English music" — Tudor seems more pleased than I can imagine. "I did not know that," he says. This means all the more as I realize from this film the genesis of his interest in making ballets. It came about, he said, from seeing the final seasons of the Diaghilev Ballets Russes in London and watching Balanchine's *Prodigal Son* and *Apollo*.

The next day I telephone Channel 13 to tell them about the Tudor film and urge them to show it as soon as possible. Now, in the wake of the Capezio award to Tudor on 28 April, reported in this issue, and the Kennedy Center award to him in December, the film will hopefully be scheduled.

28 APRIL. Memorial service for Lucia Chase at the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center. Two hundred persons gather to hear Lucia Chase remembered by her family, her friends, her dancers, her collaborators at American Ballet Theatre. It was remarkable seeing in

one place so many persons who made ballet history with Lucia Chase across nearly fifty years. In silence we watch photographs of Lucia Chase in many roles over the course of her life. Oliver Smith, Osato, Donald Saddler, Karnilova, Nancy Zeckendorf, Morton Gould, Anna Kisselgoff, Baryshnikov, Gregory, Robbins, Markova, Tudor, and de Mille then spoke; and Alexander Ewing, Lucia Chase's son, told us in a moving address what it was like growing up with a mother who was devoted to both family and to American Ballet Theatre. *Ballet Review* will publish in the near future an edited text of the remarks made on this occasion.

15 MAY. Baryshnikov this season at ABT has the lead role in the two big novelties, *The Mollino Room* and *Murder*, but only *Murder*, by David Gordon, hits the mark. Karole Armitage's *Mollino Room* was presaged by a press kit so weighty that critics were obliged to try to find in it clues on significant things to watch for. But we'd known we were in for a big mix when a trot was put out beforehand telling us that the name of the piece came from an Italian designer, Carlo Mollino, who liked mixing odd materials and loved "bad taste." This advance protectionism justified the odd mix of music and sound: of Hindemith (Kammermusik No. 5 and String Quartet No. 3)

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and sound (Nichols and May in "My Son the Nurse"), of stunning paintings by David Salle of odd mixes, again (a fishing reel, shoes, and a tea set), plus multilayered action which featured Baryshnikov as dancer, artistic director, and Mr. Lonely-hearts, who seemed to be saying "It's great when you're out front onstage, but behind the scenes it isn't easy." Oddly enough, only this last part of the piece, when the lead dancer is clearly having a hard time and envies the freedom and youth of his juniors, had any memorable character. Those of us who hoped for a breakthrough for dance and for a new use of décor onstage were disappointed, but it was brave of Armitage to try. Is an invitation to make a ballet for ABT at the Met an offer an experimental choreographer can refuse? Nothing says that major talent has to work in a major space like the Met. But David Gordon's refined, lyrical, and witty talent has moved from the studio to small open spaces, to the Joyce Theater and to the Met in only a couple of years, and he's kept true to himself. In his hands, Baryshnikov assumed many guises and was very funny. It was good to have a belly laugh at the ballet.

24 MAY. Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a colossal disappointment on television. The whole project, as in so much opera we have to look at on TV, shows how far ahead European video is in grasping a whole production and putting it across. Balanchine's idea of the Shakespeare romance encompasses both a huge stage and a small; you have to be able to catch the comings and goings both of royal and minor creatures. The meetings and partings of the star-crossed lovers are so clear in the stage action at the New York State Theater that no one worries about what is happening. On television, the field of vision was so limited that we could not connect. It was as if we were in the top balcony at the Metropolitan, hoping to understand distant stage action. I didn't, on television. I also did not understand the conception of the second act: Jean-Pierre

Frohlich as Puck came across fine, but who were all those other great persons? I suppose the intermission host, who interviewed Robert Irving and Peter Martins, could have told us, but he was so intent on wondering why both these men were not living up to some fantasy of his that I could barely listen. The only dancers who came across right royally in this televising of an important Balanchine work were Merrill Ashley and Adam Lüders. Alas, the film of this ballet made so long ago under Balanchine's supervision, with Farrell and Vilella and Allegra Kent, cannot be seen. Where is it?

## London - I

### Stephanie Jordan

SUPPORTED by a mammoth publicity campaign, memories of glowing London seasons, their dates uttered like a litany—1956, 1963...and the persistent notion in some quarters that Russian dancers, like their caviar and their winters, must forever be the best, the arrival of the Bolshoi became the event of the British dance year. This time, as befits ambassadors of a mighty proletarian culture, for their first appearance in the British Isles since 1974, effort was made to show the company off to as large a proportion of the populace as possible. So the tour extended from Dublin to Covent Garden, then to Manchester, Birmingham, and finally back to London for appearances in Battersea Park in a specially built marquee seating 3,650 (I was away during the divertissement programs shown there, but apparently the view from the rear seats was terrible). The BBC and independent TV channels scraped together four programs to celebrate and document the big event. Covent Garden regulars had to contend with a variety of unfamiliar and unwelcome impedimenta: bouncers, security

37. Ibid., p. 104.
38. See Wigman, "Raumlehre," in Lämmel, *Der Moderne Tanz*, p. 107.
39. See *The Mary Wigman Book*, p. 38.
40. See Frank Thiess, *Der Tanz als Kunstwerk: Studien zur Einer Aesthetik der Tanzkunst* (München: Delphin Verlag, 1920), p. 38.
41. Wigman, *The Language of Dance*, p. 11.
42. Wigman, *Komposition* (Dresden: Tanzschule Mary Wigman, 1924-25), p. 9; and *The Mary Wigman Book*, p. 89.
43. See Laban, *Die Welt des Tänzers*, p. 56.
44. See Laban, *Choreographie*, p. 74; and *Gymnastik und Tanz*, pp. 67-68.
45. *The Mary Wigman Book*, p. 38.
46. See Wigman, "Rudolf von Laban's Lehre vom Tanz," p. 103.
47. Ibid.
48. Laban, *Gymnastik und Tanz*, p. 148.
49. See Laban, *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage* (London: Macdonald and Evans, 1950), pp. 139-140.
50. See "Die Schrittskalen," Mary Wigman Archive, Academy of Arts, West Berlin.
51. *The Mary Wigman Book*, p. 87; see also *Komposition*, p. 8.
52. *The Mary Wigman Book*, pp. 91-92; see also *Komposition*, p. 11.
53. Laban, *Die Welt des Tänzers*, p. 11.
54. *The Mary Wigman Book*, p. 130.
55. See Wigman, *Komposition*, pp. 13-14.
56. Lämmel, *Der Moderne Tanz*, p. 108.
57. Bach, *Das Mary Wigman Werk*, p. 35.
58. See Egon Vietta, *Der Tanz: Eine Kleine Metaphysik* (Frankfurt am Main: Societats Verlag, 1938), pp. 169, 170.
59. See Vera Skoronel, "Laban," *Singhor und Tanz* 24, December 1929, pp. 299-300.
60. See Lämmel, *Der Moderne Tanz*, pp. 103-104.
61. *The Mary Wigman Book*, p. 30.
62. See Alfred Schlee, "Tänzerkongress in München," *Schrifttanz* III, 1930, pp. 54-55; André Levinson, "The Modern Dance in Germany," *Theatre Arts*, February 1929, pp. 143-153; and John Martin, "Munich's Festival," *The New York Times*, 13 July 1930, section 8, p. 6, and "A Futile Congress," 20 July 1930, section 8, p. 6.
62. "Notizen: Einigung Wigman-Laban," *Schrifttanz* I, 1929, p. 17.

## Dance on Cassette

### David Vaughan

WHILE waiting to see the Bolshoi next summer, we can keep up with some of what's new in Soviet ballet, thanks to the New Jersey publisher Kultur. *Anyuta*, choreographed by Vladimir Vasiliev, has actually entered the repertory of a Western ballet company, that of the San Carlo Opera House in Naples, where Violetta Elvin, formerly a ballerina with both the Bolshoi and England's Royal Ballet, has lately assumed the post of director. On video cassette, *Anyuta* is seen in its original form as a film-ballet, made in 1982 with dancers from the Bolshoi, the Kirov, and the Maly companies, including Vasiliev's wife, Ekaterina Maximova, in the title role. The piece is based on a satirical story by Chekhov about a woman, married to a man she does not love, who discovers that love affairs are an easy way to relieve the boredom of provincial life. Vasiliev himself appears as her father, a widower who has taken to drink. Satire in Soviet ballet seems to mean giving people funny walks. What little actual dancing there is happens in Maximova's duets with Dzon (formerly "Johnny") Markovsky, as a student who really loves her.

A more considerable work by Vasiliev is his version of *Macbeth* (or *Makbet*), "live" from the Bolshoi, but with some postproduction effects such as double exposures and superimpositions. Vasiliev has attempted more than a transliteration of the play. There is even some psychological subtlety in his treatment, as compared with other ballets in the Soviet "heroic" style (*Spartacus*, *Ivan the Terrible*), thanks mainly to the powerful assumptions of the leading roles by Alexei Fadeychev and Nina Timofeyeva. She, of course, is of the same generation as his famous father, Nikolai, but the disparity in age makes