

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE

A HISTORY

2 X 60, 1 X 120 HD



PBS

INTERNATIONAL

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Delving into the rich history of one of the world's preeminent ballet companies, Emmy®- and Peabody Award-winning filmmaker Ric Burns chronicles the American Ballet Theatre (ABT) from its earliest days as a small, financially struggling collective, to its pinnacle as one of the most respected and revered dance companies in the world.

Burns combines intimate rehearsal footage, virtuoso performances, and interviews with ABT's key figures: artists pivotal to the company's formation, including Alicia Alonso and the late Donald Saddler and Frederic Franklin; contemporary luminaries, including dancers Susan Jaffe and Julie Kent, choreographer Alexei Ratmansky, and artistic director Kevin McKenzie; past and present stars Misty Copeland, Gillian Murphy, Marcelo Gomes, and Hee Seo; dance historian and author Jennifer Homans; and prominent dance critics Anna Kisselgoff and the late Clive Barnes.

Beginning film production in 2006, Burns was given unprecedented access to the company and shot hundreds of hours of original footage, including dramatic live performances in Paris and Havana, grueling rehearsals at ABT's flagship studio in New York City, and slow-motion captures at Kaatsbaan International Dance Center in Tivoli, N.Y. The footage from Kaatsbaan features iconic dances by nine ABT dancers, including Misty Copeland, Gillian Murphy, Hee Seo, Marcelo Gomes, Isabella Boylston, Herman Cornejo, Daniil Simkin, Joseph Gorak, and Cory Stearns, chosen by McKenzie for their diversity and breadth of talent to illustrate the ABT dancers' formidable technicality, intricate artistry, and nuanced emotion.

Shot by Emmy®-winning cinematographer Buddy Squires and a 30-person crew using Phantom Flex cameras—which capture up to 2,500 frames per second and bring to life even the smallest of movements—the footage brings a new dimension to the understanding of the extraordinary efforts made in the perfection of form, from the delicate placement of a fingertip to the perfectly executed jeté. Combined with hundreds of carefully curated archival stills and rare footage of ballet icons Jerome Robbins, George Balanchine, Agnes de Mille, Twyla Tharp, and Mikhail Baryshnikov, *American Ballet Theatre – A History* provides a comprehensive inside look at American Ballet Theatre and the world of professional ballet.

American
MASTERS

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CREDITS

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Photo: Courtesy of Buddy Squires, ASC



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