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Marshall Artists Series Robert T. Gaus Presents The American Folk Ballet in "Prairie Years"

Burch Mann

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MARSHALL ARTISTS SERIES

ROBERT T. GAUS

presents

for its

Second National Tour

THE AMERICAN FOLK BALLET

BURCH MANN, Director

in

"PRAIRIE YEARS"

"A Folk Ballet Recapturing the Energy and Spirit that Built America"

Featuring

DORAIN GRUSMAN GEORGE LEFAVE
CECIL GOLD VICTORIA BARRETT
SAN CHRISTOPHER

and

REGAN CALLAIS RICHARD GILLIS
JOAN C. ZAJAC FRANK FETTA

Settings by
JOHN CARRATO

Costumes by
"T" KELLEY

Lighting by
GEORGE KEYES

Musical Arrangements by
BILL ST. PIERRE

Conductor
ROBERT HERR

Entire Production and Narration Conceived, Staged, and Choreographed by

BURCH MANN

Tour Direction: Robert T. Gaus Associates, Inc., 36 West 44th Street, New York, N. Y.

KEITH - ALBEE THEATRE

Monday, March 11 at 8:30 P.M.

THE AMERICAN FOLK BALLET

presents

"PRAIRIE YEARS"

Dedicated to all the proud men and women and the beautiful wild horses that ran in the unfenced freedom of the western plains.

Prologue

"Wide Country"

(Composed by Bill St. Pierre)

"Ox Driver's Song" (Folk) - - - - - Singer: Richard Gillis

ACT ONE

- I. Unfenced Land - - - - - Dancers: Dorain Grusman
George LeFave
- II. Night Camp - - - - - "Mule Train" (Heath and Lange) - - - - - Entire Company
"Shenandoah" (Traditional)
"Rye Whiskey" (Traditional)
"Old Joe Clark" (Traditional)
- III. Daughters of Michael Dongarven - - - - - Singers: Regan Callais
Joan C. Zajac
Richard Gillis
- IV. Father's Side of the Family - - - - - Dancers: Cecil Gold
Gwenn Grimes
Medley of Irish jigs and reels
Original Music from Folk Themes
(Arranged by Bill St. Pierre)
- V. Sunday Morning Over on Lonesome Creek - - - - - Entire Company
"Valse" (Poulenc)
"Bringing in the Sheaves" (Traditional)
"Big Meeting" (Tim Spencer)

INTERMISSION

ACT II

- I. **The Foot Peddler** - - - - - The Peddler: George LeFave
The Farm Girl: Dorian Grusman
"Wild Goose Grasses" (Folk) - - - - - The Sisters: Gwenn Grimes
"Camel Driver's Song" (Folk) - - - - - Victoria Barrett
"Hora" (Traditional) - - - - - Paula Jene Smith
"Hinah Ma Tov" (Folk)
"Wonderful Country" (Alex North)
"Restless Wind" (Arranged by Bill St. Pierre)
- II. **Whippoorwill Country** - - - - - Entire Company
"Cuckoo" (Traditional)
"Hemmed-in Holler" (Mann & Gillis)
"Shady Grove" (Traditional)
"Bile Them Cabbage Down" (Traditional)
Courting Dance
"The Hanging Tree" (David & Livingston)
Fiddle Jigging
"Shady Grove" (Traditional)
"Bile Them Cabbage Down" (Traditional)
- III. **Murder Ballad** - - - - - San Christopher
George LeFave
Cecil Gold
"The Ballad of Mad Laura"
(Mann & Gillis) - - - - - Entire Company
- Sing the Song Slowly**
"In the Hills" (Bill St. Pierre)
- IV. **Party Over at Grandpa Whorton's** - - - - - Entire Company
"On the Ohio"
"Speedin' West" (Medley arranged by Bill St. Pierre)
"This Old House"

STAFF FOR THE AMERICAN FOLK BALLET

ConductorRobert Herr
Musical Arrangements and
Original CompositionsBill St. Pierre
SettingsJohn Carrato
CostumesT. Kelley
Ballet MasterMicolaus Tarnowsky
Choral Arranger and Musical Consultant Barbara Erdman
Singers' Drama DirectorRegan Callais
Stage ManagerMichol Pawlowski
Lighting DesignGeorge Keyes
Associate Director and ChoreographerSan Christopher

THE AMERICAN FOLK BALLET

CREDITS

Shoes by Capezio
All Photographs by Clemens of Copenhagen
Personal Management: **Raymond Katz Enterprises Ltd.**
Dancers

Victoria Barrett
Mary Louise Biggerstaff
San Christopher
Susie Currier
Nancy Elliott
Cecil Gold

Pamela Goode
Gwenn Grimes
Dorain Grusman
Dorothy Hinton
George LeFave
Kathy Orme

Dan Parker
Paula Jene Smith
Mickey St. Jacques
Cheri Williams
Caroline Zardi

Singers

Regan Callais Frank Fetta Richard Gillis Joan C. Zajac

THE AMERICAN FOLK BALLET is a young concert group using a new style of ballet rooted in the soil and folk-history of this country. It is searching in the the great attic of America's past for all the stories waiting to be told, stories of a migrating people coming to a virgin land, the oppressed, the landless, the dispossessed, the believers, the disbelievers, "Black robed priests who broke their hearts in vain to make (America) God and France, or God and Spain." Woodsmen who came on foot across the Blue Ridge Mountains down through the green Cumberland Gap with little more than shirts to their backs, swift and enduring as Indians; plainsmen who pushed their wagons out from the last protecting forests into the emptiness and solitude of a great prairie.

These were the people who braved a wilderness in search of freedom. They felt tall for they knew the eye of history was upon them — strong because they knew that far out on the frontier their conscience was the only religion and the only law. They were sobered by the responsibility of such freedom, and a shining glory fell upon them as they went carrying in their saddle bags the dream of a great nation where mercy and justice would bless the land.

This is America's heritage, a new world, a new kind of man. For though the pioneer left New England his wagon loaded with all the refinements of his past culture, he slowly left them behind. Follow the trail west: an abandoned chest, with family pictures blowing from a broken velvet book, baby clothes tangled on a nettle bush, a spinet piano white keys warping in the sun, and sand gradually burying it from sight. And the little graves! One by one the treasures of a life left behind.

How can anyone read this story of inconceivable suffering and courage and not be set afire with the glory of the human spirit that endured such hardship, or read the poets' vivid portraits and not be proud to be the descendants of such men and women.

The American poet Benet, in his short story "A Tooth for Paul Revere" has Revere, a silversmith and patriot, say to a lady who has complained that the silver cream jug he's just made for her has not one single unicorn or lion:

"Madame, we're making new things in this country — new men — new silver — perhaps, who knows, a new nation. Plain, simple, bare as the hills and rocks of New England — graceful as the boughs of her elm trees."

Burch Mann, creator of American Folk Ballet, says: "When art separates itself from man's daily life, when it ceases to be the spontaneous expression of his joys and sorrows, it quickly loses vitality. For the average American, especially the average American man, to wholly accept ballet as an important part of his life, it must relate to experiences with which he can identify. Only two generations removed from frontier heritage it is hard to involve him deeply with an 18th Century courtier whose manners and life experiences have so little in common with his own. I've tried to create a ballet with which the average American can identify."

"I want to carry an audience back into the time of innocence when we were like the land, open and generous; like the prairie grass, 'swift-springing, full of motion and light:' and free like the wild mustangs riding with the wind in the blowing, unfenced freedom of the great western plains.

"I want people to remember when we were a classless society, God-fearing, industrious and enduring. I want to inspire Americans with the folk tales of their ancestors, the men, women and children whose courageous and unconquerable spirit hammered a nation out of a wilderness."

"I think of European ballet as a beautiful and intricately cut crystal vase, footed in gold; American ballet as a deep wooden bowl carved from the heart of a prairie-grove oak, unadorned, enduring as the earth. With this in my heart and mind, I am slowly and painfully whittling out small pieces that I hope may someday form a complete and whole American ballet."

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