

Mr. B: George Balanchine's 20th Century

Jennifer Homans

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A Disturbing Dance: Diligence Partnered By Carelessness

Biographers, unlike doctors, need no board certifications to entrust themselves with the lives of any persons, living or dead. But the task comes with the responsibility not to distort reality. In her critically praised biography of the great choreographer, George Balanchine (1904-1983), Jennifer Homans, the author of *Apollo's Angels*, a former dancer who is currently the dance critic of *The New Yorker* and Director of the Center for Ballet and the Arts at NYU, presents a wealth of detail, much of it revelatory. Thanks to her unprecedented access to a staggering number of Balanchine's dancers and associates, as well as their unpublished journals, letters, and memoirs, her book is a major addition to the Balanchine canon. I had looked forward to reading *Mr. B* for a year before its publication but found the experience alternately exhilarating and dismaying.

The author's coverage of Balanchine's ballets is thorough and for the most part illuminating, although often too technical for general readers. A highlight is her twenty-page exegesis of Balanchine's *Agon*, detailing the ballet's philosophical, spiritual, historical, musical, and personal roots. Homans shows how all these elements combined to make a stunning masterpiece, with a pas de deux that is the epitome of what she calls "Balanchine's strange and unhinged classicism...." She also deserves kudos for bringing to light many fresh anecdotes, and a long interview Balanchine accorded a *Christian Orthodox Journal*, found among his papers at Houghton Library, Harvard. It reveals that he had read the philosopher Spinoza, whom he references in a meditation on time and the divine in relation to dance, the "instant," as he paraphrases Goethe in *Faust*, being "[a] small part of eternity." Dancers move through an "eternal present" where they are "divine," which is "a feeling most performers would recognize," Homans writes. In this interview, Balanchine defines the choreographer's task as using the instants of time at his disposal "to [e]ngrave his practical ideas on three dimensional space."¹

But in spite of its evident scholarship, too many sections of Homans's book are marred by glaring inaccuracies. I don't mean the inadvertent errors of fact and obvious typos that one might find in any work of this length, over 600 pages of text and nearly 200 pages of back

matter. There are serious mischaracterizations and misjudgments, some of them caused by the way the author cherry-picks quotes, rather than allowing the reader to form an impression based on ample evidence. Was this done in service to some authorial agenda(s) or simply to save space? Perhaps a bit of both. Throughout the book, I noticed an unnecessary straining to heighten the drama of Balanchine's inherently theatrical life, as well as a novelistic compression of time, the fusion of events separated by years. Even more disturbing to me, as the author of *Dancing Past the Light*, the biography of a legendary ballerina, Tanaquil "Tanny" Le Clercq (1929-2000), a major muse for Balanchine, as well as his last wife, is the way Homans denigrates female dancers Balanchine anointed with his favor.

The parts of his story that I know best are the years 1940-1969, when he was Tanny's teacher, lover, and husband. In the chapters of *Mr. B* that cover that period, I found errors that resulted from Homans's proclivity for bundling many years within a single paragraph or passage, often for dramatic effect. For instance, it's true that Tanny resisted taking over the Swan Queen role in Balanchine's one-act ballet, *Swan Lake*, made in 1951 for the powerhouse prima ballerina, Maria Tallchief, his wife at that time. But it's not true that the way he literally shoved Tanny into this role that literally made her sick "almost broke their marriage," as Homans writes. The marriage took place ten months *after* Tanny made her debut in *Swan Lake* on February 27, 1952. She married Balanchine on December 31 of that year, soon after his marriage to Tallchief was annulled, and had been performing the Swan Queen role for more than four years before rumors raced through the company that she and Balanchine "were planning to separate," as Homans declares too early in her narrative. The rumors reached their height in 1956, when his ever-roving eye had settled on a long-term obsession, the ballerina Diana Adams, Tanny's best friend at the time. They don't belong in a passage about Tanny's jitters over *Swan Lake*.²

Furthermore, her performance in the ballet is dismissed here, even though it was critically praised. "Technically it was beyond her capacities," Homans writes. "She was not a strong classical dancer and gaining that kind of control over her raucous limbs was no easy task." Raucous limbs? The distinguished critic and author, Robert Gottlieb (1921-2023), who saw Tanny dance many times, lauded her "thrilling virtuosity and clarity" as the only Dewdrop in Balanchine's best-known work, *The Nutcracker*. Another influential critic, Tobi Tobias (1938-2020), called her a "thoroughbred racehorse of a dancer," whose legs "operated with the razor effect of X-Acto blades." When the dancer/choreographer Jerome "Jerry" Robbins (1918-1998)

was asked to name the greatest dancers he had ever known, without hesitation he chose Tanaquil Le Clercq and Mikhail Baryshnikov. All of this material is in my book, one of hundreds listed among Homans's copious bibliographies. Another relevant source she lists, a 2013 documentary directed by Nancy Buirski, *Afternoon of a Faun*, shows Tanny's amazing range and technical skill, although it doesn't include footage of *Swan Lake*.³

Most ballerinas struggled with the Swan Queen role, even Tallchief, who said of her rehearsals with Balanchine, "It was one of the most difficult things I ever did... I could see what he [Balanchine] wanted, but then I couldn't do it." He insisted that the Swan Queen had to be "larger, wilder, more creaturelike," and made the task even more difficult by setting a fast tempo for the orchestra.⁴

Homans's only reference notes for her assessment of Tanny's abilities in classical roles are a review by John Martin, dance critic of the *New York Times*, and "unpublished writings" by Barbara Walczak, a former soloist in the company. But she quotes only part of the review and doesn't quote Walczak. Diana Adams was also afraid of *Swan Lake*, Walczak told me when I reached her by phone. She wasn't sure what passage in her unpublished notes had informed Homans's view. In Walczak's opinion, the problem was psychological, not technical. "Tanny danced much more difficult roles in *Western Symphony* and *Symphony in C*," she said on the phone. But because Balanchine's vision of his Swan Queen required "a terrified creature, one that had never known men," Walczak suspected that something had happened in rehearsals that put Adams and Le Clercq in a frazzled state, as they struggled to convey "that fear he wanted." In Francis Mason's book of interviews, *I Remember Balanchine*, another soloist, Richard Rapp, calls Tanny's performance as the Swan Queen in Brussels, weeks before she contracted poliomyelitis in 1956, "the finest *Swan Lake* I've ever seen."⁵

Homans extracted the words "fragility" and "nerves" from John Martin's review of Le Clercq's debut as the Swan Queen, most likely to advance a dramatic narrative of weakness. An ominous paragraph follows, in which Tanny is described as "fated, tragic, erotic, walking into death..." foreshadowing the paralysis that ended her dance career, at the age of twenty-seven, four years and eight months after this 1952 performance, although no timeline is given. The title of Martin's review is a rave, "Dancer Yesterday, a Ballerina Today," but readers have to flip to the notes to read it. Homans leaves out this crucial accolade: "It is small wonder that she was frightened, but she can breathe freely, for this morning she is definitely a ballerina."⁶

Other ballerinas, pinned to Homans's pages like specimens, suffer harsher treatment. "Consider Heather Watts..." the author proposes, before making short work of describing this principal dancer, who had struggled to correct her scoliosis. "...[Balanchine] saw something he could use in her crooked spine and vexed vulnerabilities. For her there were shoulders to stand on—and push aside." Readers will search *Mr. B* in vain for documentation of the basis of this judgment. Although Homans extols the "electric" pairing of Watts and Mel Tomlinson in a 1981 revival of *Agon*, her focus is on Tomlinson's debut in the role. She doesn't quote this laudatory passage from Anna Kisselgoff's review: "By the time Mr. Tomlinson had finished his pas de deux... with the equally sensational Heather Watts, the entire house was totally caught up in the excitement." Many of Watts's performances are available online, so readers may judge for themselves. And they might also look at the performances of Merrill Ashley, whose technique is praised, although Homans calls her a "machine" with a "limited emotional range" which Balanchine attempted (unsuccessfully) to extend with his ballet, *Ballade*, in 1980.⁷

There are snubs of omission as well. Mary Ellen Moylan, a ballerina Maria Tallchief called "the first great Balanchine dancer," is ignored. Gelsey Kirkland, a wunderkind who joined the company at age fifteen, in 1968, is described mainly in relation to her defiance of Balanchine by working with a private coach. There's no mention of Balanchine's reviving *Firebird* for her, nor of her blaming him for her drug addiction in the memoir, *Dancing on My Grave*.⁸

Little space is granted the ballerina Mimi Paul, a gorgeous, much-photographed New York City Ballet principal of the 1960s, who defected to American Ballet Theatre in 1969. Jacques d'Amboise admired Paul's way of "bringing beauty to every gesture." Homans, trained by Mimi Paul at the North Carolina School of the Arts, describes her former teacher in a few sentences that highlight Paul's background, the principal role she originated in the *Emeralds* movement of Balanchine's *Jewels*, and her departure from Balanchine's company, along with other dancers, over his favoring of Suzanne Farrell. To document the latter, Homans gives a telling anecdote: Balanchine crossed Paul's name off a casting board right after Farrell "said that *she'd* like to dance *Barocco* after all..."⁹

Farrell, Balanchine's last great muse, is extolled as a dancer, but she is deemed "spoiled" on one page and "spoiled and manipulative" on another. There is no substantiation of this assessment, but it seems to be based on her acceptance of his unseemly favoritism. Insofar as Balanchine is blamed, it is for being "morally blind to her [Suzanne's] age, her suffering, her

desires, and even (especially) to her confusion and wily manipulations." Farrell, a supremely gifted young woman with an equally titanic ambition, was being offered the roles of a lifetime from the choreographer of the century. She didn't have to manipulate him. All she had to do was say yes or oppose him, and who dared to do the latter? She did, eventually, but only after she could no longer say yes to everything he wanted from her. That's more than the board of the New York City Ballet apparently did. Few people, apart from some dancers, dared to challenge Balanchine, for fear that he would quit the company, as he nearly did after the Suzanne fiasco.¹⁰

It's a shame that this otherwise worthy book is studded with authorial pronouncements that don't stand up to scrutiny. Here are three more: First, Homans gives Balanchine's apparently illegitimate birth a dramatic weight it doesn't merit: "Thus emerged the first truth of his life: the bedrock was sand." Born Georgi Balanchivadze, Balanchine was raised by his birth parents in a musically rich household, although his father, a Georgian composer, was often away. He acknowledged Georgi and his two siblings in 1906, when the future choreographer, the middle child, was two years old. The toddler certainly knew nothing of his illegitimacy then and may not have known about it later. Its probability was publicly revealed (at least in English) long after his death, by the scholar, Elizabeth Kendall. Homans relied on Kendall's book, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse: Revolution and the Making of a Choreographer*, for much of her account of his early years, and yet Kendall is only mentioned in the notes, not in the body of the text, where her name belongs. Other experts are credited in the text for far smaller contributions.¹¹

Second, Homans makes a metaphoric mishmash of the sniffing tic that had earned Balanchine the nickname "rat" at the Imperial Ballet School, stretching a simple comparison into bizarre territory: "It was a tic that would endure for most of his life, the first of many masks he would hide behind and a sign of his nerves and appetite for traveling unnoticed through the worlds he found himself in, collecting scraps and gems to be stored in his mind and later extracted for use in art." Neurological studies have revealed the genetic causality of tics, more common in boys. They are involuntary, not masks that children don to "hide behind."¹²

Third, Homans makes far too much of a raunchy acrostic (which she mistakenly calls a "limerick") that Balanchine wrote for Tanny. This light poem doesn't merit such heavy-handed deconstruction. It ends with the line "Queen of Dance." Homans writes, "The poem said it all: not a lover or a wife, but Queen of Dance. It was all in the dance, and as long as that was good,

they were good.” In the course of my research on Le Clercq’s life, I found far wittier verses from Balanchine, but given the histrionic weight Homans accords this acrostic, I can’t ignore it.¹³

Each line starts with a letter from Tanny’s last name. Balanchine had obviously called her “Queen of dance” because Le Clercq ends with a q. Furthermore, Tanny had been named after an Etruscan queen, Tanaquil, the wife of Tarquin. Homans’s analysis, disparaging Balanchine’s feelings for his wife, pushes the false narrative that, even in the midst of their romance, he was only interested in her as a dancer, and not as a woman. As *Mr. B* makes abundantly clear, “as long as that was good, they were good...” is simply not true. Tallchief was at the peak of her powers when Balanchine left her for Le Clercq. His infatuation with Diana Adams kept simmering while Tanny was winning acclaim in signature roles he made for her.

In contradiction of her own narrative, Homans lists Tanny among others who, in the author’s view, “had all run from Balanchine’s overbearing love.” Balanchine liked to say that all his wives had left him, but most of them did so after it became clear that his interest had shifted to another muse. Allegra Kent, a great ballerina who was never his lover, wrote in her memoir of a “time limit” to Balanchine’s love. He aged, but “the ages of his wives stayed roughly the same.” His marriage to Tanny formally ended because of his obsession with Suzanne Farrell, which Homans fully documents, not because Tanny ran away from his (by then) dutiful, far from “overbearing” love. Balanchine didn’t cling to his past. There was always another elusive muse to pursue. He lived as he told his dancers to do, for “now.”¹⁴

In a separate category are the authorly pronouncements that, while not exactly wrong, leave little room for nuance. Here’s one: “He [Balanchine] and Tanny were both politically conservative, and Tanny fit in easily with George’s virulent anti-Communism and Eisenhower Republicanism.” The word “conservative,” at least in the way it has been used in this country since the Reagan years, doesn’t fit Eisenhower or Balanchine. Fond of quoting the Soviet poet, Mayakovsky, Balanchine was also on excellent terms with the left-leaning firebrands who danced in his first companies, among them Barbara M. Fisher and Ruthanna Boris, with whom he often argued. And yet, he asked Boris to accept his apology for resisting unionization for years: “Union makes my work easy... saves us money; it makes us partners with our dancers, not enemy to them...” During the late 1940s, when Balanchine came to accept joining the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA), he was also urging the members of his company to think of themselves as “Dancers for Rockefeller,” a liberal Republican who had used his deep pockets

and connections to rescue them many times. Nelson Rockefeller was a childhood friend of the leftwing, bisexual and bipolar Lincoln Kirstein, co-founder of Balanchine's school and company. As a founding member of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the Governor of New York by the late 1950s, Nelson supported the efforts of his older brother, John D. Rockefeller 3rd, to fund the construction of Lincoln Center, which housed a theater built to Balanchine's specifications. That support was reason enough for Tanny to vote Republican, as well as her loathing of discrimination of any kind: The Southern Democrats of that era were staunch segregationists.¹⁵

Not that she bothered to vote. Her "Republicanism" was just another sign of her devotion to Balanchine, "the leader of her thinking and her heart, her whole life," according to her friend, Martha Swope, a former dance student who became a photographer. Since Martha was a lifelong Democrat and their votes cancelled each other's, she and Tanny made a pact to spend election days together and not vote.¹⁶

Another example of this lack of nuance is the way Jerry Robbins is characterized: "He [Robbins] was a Jew who didn't want to be a Jew, a homosexual who didn't want to be a homosexual and who also at moments genuinely loved women— Tanny...." This is not false, as far as it goes, but the statement imprisons Jerry Robbins within the most anguished writings in his personal papers. There are no qualifying details, no room for personal and societal evolution, no mention of how *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), a musical rooted in Jewish culture, became a gift to the patriarchal, Jewish father with whom Jerry had long been in conflict.¹⁷

According to the friends of his last three decades that I interviewed, Jerry was not tormented by his homosexuality or Jewishness in the second half of his long life. The two primary sources of anguish then were his always tortuous creative process and his guilt over betraying friends to McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), in 1953. He tried to exorcise his guilt in *The Poppa Piece* (1991), tying issues with his father to the HUAC debacle. After months of rehearsals, he shut the show down. "I betrayed my manhood, my Jewishness, my parents, my sister," he wrote on a 1980 draft of the script. "I can't undo it and I can't undo it in this piece."¹⁸

Although the men fare better than the women in this book, even Balanchine is demeaned. There's a snide tone in the passages that dissect his sexuality and some of his occasional bed partners. A late New York City Ballet soloist and stager of Balanchine's works around the world, Una Kai, is "Reticent, pushy Una... For Balanchine, she was part of the landscape...." A note

references correspondence and interviews with Una and her daughter. Could this contradictory assessment (*reticent* AND *pushy*) have come from one of them, or is Homans presuming to speak for Balanchine? Given the care that he took to assure a more than comfortable life for Tanny to the end of her days, it's hard to imagine that he would be so cruelly dismissive of a valued and devoted colleague, especially one who didn't press him to make roles for her.¹⁹

A long paragraph on Balanchine's sexual proclivities as his potency waned, his preference for "finger sex or oral sex," is a mix of whispered confidences from former company members of varied eras, not one of whom dared to be credited with the information. *Mr. B* covers the rumored abortions of ballerinas who had affairs with Balanchine (Tanny's close friend, Diana, is one), and the speculation (for which Homans states there is "no proof") that Paul Mejia, the dancer who defied Balanchine by marrying Farrell, was his son. According to Homans, this false suspicion was "part of a blur of fact and emotion that grew into feelings so strong they played a role in real life." What role and in whose life? That's never made clear.²⁰

What might Mr. B have made of the bold title of the chapter that encompasses his marriage to Le Clercq, "Tanny and Jerry"? It underlines Homans's conviction that "although she [Tanny] would marry George, the greatest love of her life would always be Jerry, a stubborn fact that would have consequences for them all," consequences never spelled out. All of Jerry's relationships with men and women were fraught, as Tanny well knew. Friends of hers I interviewed, Randall "Randy" Bourscheidt and Abraham "Abe" Abdallah, both also close to Jerry, did not believe that he was "the greatest love of her life." In the film, *Afternoon of a Faun*, Randy declared that, long past their divorce, the "enormous respect, gilded with love, that she had for George Balanchine, was never diminished." Jacques d'Amboise and Pat McBride Lousada, friends from Tanny's teens, said that Balanchine was the love of her life. But he wrote few letters to her or anyone. Jerry and Tanny exchanged impassioned letters almost daily on the 1956 tour and during her hospitalization in Copenhagen. Their words, read by actors, are an emotionally resonant part of the soundtrack of *Afternoon of a Faun*. I think she loved both men, in complex ways. But in 1951 she wrote to Jerry, who had also wanted to marry her, "I'm in love with George... Can't we be friends?" (This letter is quoted in Homans's book.) And in a long interview with Holly Brubach, in 1998, Tanny shared the intensity of her attraction to Balanchine as a young woman. You can see it in her photos of him—handsomer and more virile than he appears in most shots taken by others. She almost certainly had a brief affair with Jerry during a

period of extreme marital tension, just before the 1956 tour that ended her career. But many years later, when Tanny was dismayed by his behavior, she distanced herself from Jerry for about a decade. In the end, their complicated, loving friendship survived.²¹

After polio, Tanny's relation to Balanchine changed. She was, in Homans's words, "his wife, his patient, his child, his work of art (his dog to walk, she wryly put it)." That's fully in keeping with the author's view of Tanny as sardonic, which she could be, but there is nothing wry about the utterly sincere letter, Homans's source for this canine image, that Tanny sent from a Copenhagen hospital in February 1957. Both Jerry and her husband had expressed interest in wheeling her through Central Park, once she was transferred to a hospital in New York, a prospect she dreaded, as she wrote to Jerry: "Rather like walking a dog... Perhaps you might take me sometime— or is it embarrassing? People will stare I suppose...." The letter expresses self-consciousness about the way she would now appear to others. It's not quite a vision of being treated as if she were Balanchine's dog.²²

Homans dismisses *The Ballet Cook Book*, the closest Tanny came to autobiography, as "a book of dancers' recipes." Tanny's deft and loving personal essays about each contributor, witty and sometimes subtly political (taking stabs at the DAR and rightwing notions of what makes one an American), merit more than that, given that Homans has room to quote at length from Tanny's letters to friends about foods prepared with Balanchine. From these letters, she concludes that their marriage had become a "routine domestic affair." Of course, polio changed everything, including sexual intimacy, but in deciding to write a cookbook, quite possibly at Balanchine's instigation, Tanny was following his lead. He often said that had he not been a choreographer, he would have been a chef. Cooking together was not only part of Tanny's research process but also an expression of her desire to connect with him after polio.²³

Inside a dance studio, Homans is on more solid ground. She knows, on a visceral level, how dancers feel. The chapter, "Disciplining the Body," is an excellent survey of Balanchine's teaching, casting, dictatorial strictures about weight, and meddling with the political views of his dancers. But here, too, on a page describing "the erotically charged atmosphere of the theater," Homans makes too much of a glimpse: "George could be found during breaks sitting in a dressing room with Tanny and Diana in their bras and panties, smoking cigarettes." Her sole source is Jacques d'Amboise's memoir, where he recorded what he saw, as a self-described "teenage peeping Tom," exactly once in the early 1950s, on a European tour. Even if this single

instance is representative of Balanchine's habitual behavior, the scene is rather tame: The bras and panties of that era were hardly more revealing than the skimpy bathing suits the dancers wore on stage in the Balanchine/Robbins ballet, *Jones Beach*. What an impressionable teen glimpsed once does not belong in a passage detailing Balanchine's penchant for raunchy, backstage humor. Mr. B wasn't given to barging into dressing rooms. He went where he was welcome, and I see nothing shocking about his being comfortable in a dressing room shared by Tanny and her best friend.²⁴

Although I am disturbed by the author's unfair characterizations of many people, I do admire the way that she incorporated the analyses of musicologists to describe the scores that Balanchine, a consummate musician, adapted for his ballets. Her coverage of his brilliant 1941 ballet, *Concerto Barocco*, uses a detailed analysis, by music theorist Kara Yoo Leaman, of Bach's *Concerto in D minor for Two Violins*. Ballet enthusiasts will want to see the ballet again, armed with this book, as well as Martha Ullman West's, *Todd Bolender, Janet Reed, and the Making of American Ballet*. As dance critic Mindy Aloff writes in *Why Dance Matters*, West revealed that the intricate counts in the third movement of *Concerto Barocco* were worked out by Balanchine with Trude Rittman, the musical advisor to American Ballet Caravan, when he made the work during a company tour of South America, in 1941. This information, which West found in a 1976 interview by the dance historian, Nancy Reynolds, doesn't detract from Balanchine's "amazing achievement in that work," Aloff writes. "[It] expands one's appreciation for the capaciousness of his intellect...."²⁵

Homans's summaries of some other ballets are idiosyncratic or just plain wrong. For instance, she writes that Balanchine's dancers lamented his cutting of "the mimed birth and death scenes" from *Apollo*. It's true that for a 1979 revival, with Baryshnikov in the title role, Balanchine cut the birth scene and changed the ending, but the end of the ballet was never about death in any version. In prior versions, Apollo, having heard the voice of his father, ascended a staircase to Mount Parnassus. He didn't descend to Hades.²⁶

The *La Valse* section of the eponymous Balanchine ballet is summed up: "Tanny was there in a resplendent white gown, and a man tried to dance with her, but she had eyes only for the black-clad figure of Death...." In fact, Death lurks in the shadows, and she is initially unaware of his presence. His henchman appears first and exerts a mysterious tug on her movements that make them seem, at first, involuntary, a chilling part of the choreography. And

as for that “man,” he was the dancer Nicholas Magallanes, with whom she had just performed a gorgeous pas de deux in the eighth waltz. They briefly resume dancing before Death appears.²⁷

There are also small errors, easily fixed in a reprint. I note two that I haven’t seen mentioned elsewhere: A 1962 letter from Tanny to the pianist, Robert Fizdale, was not sent, as a note says, “from Hamburg before arriving in Russia.” She didn’t go to Russia. Balanchine called her from Hamburg, as her letter, quoted in the note, plainly states. And the Bolshoi could not have spurned Balanchine’s ballets in favor of the opening of *West Side Story* when they came to New York to perform in 1959. The musical opened in 1957 and closed months before the Bolshoi arrived.²⁸

Homans clearly admires her subject, evident from her subtitle alone (*George Balanchine’s 20th Century*), although she doesn’t shrink from describing, in excruciating detail, his slow death from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, “barely coherent, unable to attend to his own toileting, crying, babbling in Russian....” But there is a saving grace: I found it poignant to read that when Baryshnikov came to the hospital with a gift of Georgian *satsivi*, Balanchine, who could no longer eat, smeared some of the sauce on his face and “inhaled the scent lavishly....” A messy but oddly moving moment near the end of an intense and brilliant life. No matter what his circumstances, Balanchine lived for “now.”²⁹

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¹ Jennifer Homans, *Mr. B: George Balanchine’s 20th Century*, 373, 252. New York: Penguin Random House, 2022.

² *Ibid.*, 347.

³ *Ibid.*, 347; Orel Protopopescu, *Dancing Past the Light*, 335, 332, 333. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2021; Robert Gottlieb, “A Choreographer Steps Up; Farewell to a Sublime Dancer,” *New York Observer*, January 15, 2001, 12; Tobi Tobias, “Stopping Short,” *New York Magazine*, January 22, 2001, 78; “On Ballet: Fran Lebowitz and Nick Mauss/Live from the Whitney,” recorded in May 2018; Nancy Buirski, *Afternoon of a Faun*, Kino Lorber, 2013.

⁴ Nancy Reynolds, *Repertory in Review: 40 Years of the New York City Ballet*, 130. New York: Dial, 1977.

⁵ *Mr. B*, N83, 687; Telephone interview by Orel Protopopescu with Barbara Walczak, July 31, 2023; Francis Mason, *I Remember Balanchine: Recollections of the Ballet Master by Those Who Knew Him*, 411. New York: Doubleday, 1991.

⁶ *Mr. B*, 347; John Martin, “Dancer Yesterday, a Ballerina Today,” *New York Times*, February 28, 1952, Amusements, 22.

⁷ *Mr. B*, 546; Anna Kisselgoff, “City Ballet: Tomlinson Makes Debut in ‘Agon,’” *New York Times*, November 29, 1981, Section 1, 82; *Mr. B*, 548.

⁸ Maria Tallchief, in the film, *Dancing for Mr. B: Six Balanchine Ballerinas*; Nancy Reynolds, *Repertory in Review: 40 Years of the New York City Ballet*, 100.

⁹ Jacques d’Amboise, *I was a Dancer*, 414. New York: Knopf, 2011; *Mr. B*, 464.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 545, 467, 496.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 13; Elizabeth Kendall, *Balanchine & The Lost Muse*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

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- ¹² *Mr. B*, 46.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 324.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 467; Allegra Kent, *Once a Dancer....An Autobiography*, 77. New York: St. Martin's, 1997.
- ¹⁵ *Mr. B*, 323; Alexander Dubé and Dorothy Kochiras, "Who's to Argue with Balanchine," *AGMA Magazine* 51, No. 3 (Fall 1997); *Dancing Past the Light*, 58. ("dancers for Rockefeller" source: Esther Magruder Brooks, a dancer with Balanchine's Ballet Society, email to Orel Protopopescu, August 1, 2020.)
- ¹⁶ *Dancing Past the Light*, 287. (Sources: Abraham Abdallah, email to the author July 15, 2018; Martha Swope, in the film *Afternoon of a Faun*.)
- ¹⁷ *Mr. B*, 328.
- ¹⁸ Amanda Vaill, *Somewhere: The Life of Jerome Robbins*, 514. New York: Broadway Books, 2006.
- ¹⁹ *Mr. B*, 440, N55, 705. (Una Kai and Barbara Walczak co-authored a well-regarded book, *Balanchine the Teacher: Fundamentals That Shaped the First Generation of New York City Ballet Dancers*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008. I did not see it among Homans's copious bibliographies.)
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 441, 471.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 325; Randall Boursheidt and Pat McBride Lousada, in the film *Afternoon of a Faun; Dancing Past the Light*, 174. (Source: Jacques d'Amboise, interview by the author, June 14, 2018); Letter from Tanaquil Le Clercq to Jerome Robbins, undated, October 1951, Jerome Robbins Personal Papers, Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library (henceforth, JRDD), quoted in *Mr. B*, 335; Brubach, "Muse Interrupted," 62-63; *Dancing Past the Light*, 312, 317-18.
- ²² *Mr. B*, 356; Letter from Tanaquil Le Clercq to Jerome Robbins, February 20, 1957, JRDD.
- ²³ *Mr. B*, 436; *Dancing Past the Light*, 287.
- ²⁴ *Mr. B*, 308; *I was a Dancer*, 271.
- ²⁵ Mindy Aloff, *Why Dance Matters*, 146-47. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022. For more on *Concerto Barocco*, see also: Martha Ullman West, *Todd Bolender, Janet Reed, and the Making of American Ballet*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2021, and Nancy Reynolds, *Repertory in Review: 40 Years of the New York City Ballet*. Although Reynolds, a member of the NYCB corps de ballet in the 1950s, interviewed Rittman for her now classic work, she did not mention Rittman in the section on *Concerto Barocco*. For Balanchine's incisive explanation of how he chose the music and used it choreographically, see the entry on *Concerto Barocco* in his book, *Complete Stories of the Great Ballets*, co-authored with Francis Mason. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1977.
- ²⁶ *Mr. B*, 240-43, 557. See *Complete Stories of the Great Ballets* for Balanchine's summary of the original ending of the ballet now known as *Apollo*.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 332.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, N6, 700, 383.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 167, 582-84.