

opinion

NYC Ballet founder mourned

Genius. The word frequently has been used to describe George Balanchine, probably the most famous and most prolific choreographer of the 20th century and founder of the New York City Ballet.

Thanks to Balanchine's genius and guidance, the New York City Ballet has become — in the words of author Linda Doerer — "a major influence on the art" and one of four or five "world leader" companies.

But the New York City Ballet — and the world — suffered a great loss Saturday. Balanchine died of pneumonia at the age of 79.

Many people who have no interest in ballet may not know or understand why Balanchine's death is a loss.

But Balanchine had a major impact on American ballet and American dancers, and he will be missed.

He came to the United States in 1933 and founded the School of American Ballet with Lincoln Kirstein in 1934. Kirstein, a dance enthusiast with enough money to start a company, had a vision of a truly American ballet company combining talents of American painters, musicians, dancers and choreographers.

From the humble beginnings of the School of American Ballet, Balanchine helped Kirstein make this dream a reality with the founding of the New York City Ballet in 1948.

The New York City Ballet, under Balanchine's direction, has become one of the best ballet companies in the world



rebeca zimmermann

— using American dancers and American style.

He brought his Russian training in teaching and creating ballets to the United States, but he was entranced by the American freedom of movement. He used this style of movement in his dances and broke from the stylized and often bravura dancing of the grand Russian traditions.

He combined the athleticism and high-kicking show style of Americans with the elegance of the Russian Imperial Maryinsky Theatre, at which he trained in the early 1900s.

Believing in the potential of U.S. dancers to be every bit as good in classical dance as any European or Russian dancers, Balanchine gave them the chance to prove it.

Balanchine also believed in the purity of dance and would let nothing detract from the dance itself.

To achieve this purity, he revolutionized ballet choreography by leaving

opulent scenery behind. He also created ballets so that music and dance enhanced and complemented each other. Previously, a choreographer often would write the steps and hand the composer a list of how many bars of various kinds of music he needed.

Balanchine was able to work so musically because he studied music as a student at St. Petersburg (now Leningrad).

He closely collaborated with composer Igor Stravinsky. The two created some of the most well-known ballets performed today — *The Firebird*, *Apollo*, *Concerto Barocco*.

Balanchine's ballets often are musically abstract works with subtle emotional approaches to various topics. Dance critic Marcia B. Siegel, speaking about the ballet *Union Jack*, says Balanchine "once again launched on a seemingly undanceable idea, through which he succeeds in showing us new things about dance."

And Balanchine was versatile. Along with ballets, he also choreographed numbers for Broadway musicals. He choreographed the dances for the 1936 musical *On Your Toes* that is being performed now on Broadway — as American a dance institution as one is likely to find.

A genius and mentor for American ballet has died. We owe him much for giving so much to American ballet.

No finale. No encore. We can only offer a grand reverence to his memory and his work.

Farewell to a great man.

Slouch By Jim Earle



"I've never understood before why he liked to study in the library!"

Liberalism urged

Conservative Agg

Editor:

Richard Fosberg writes in an April 29 letter to the editor that Texas A&M should remain a conservative institution since the introduction of liberalism into the University community would mean the reduction of A&M to a state of mediocrity. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I would first ask Mr. Fosberg to define, precisely, the terms conservative and liberal. Both terms are vague and have changed in meaning throughout history.

When Mr. Fosberg claims that liberalism has debased the public schools, I would like to know what type of liberalism he means. Is it liberalism in the political sense, or is it liberalism in the educational philosophy of the public schools?

The implications of Mr. Fosberg's sentiments are frightening. Would Mr. Fosberg, by advocating uniform thought at A&M, extrapolate his philosophy to society as a whole? It seems that a little man with a black mustache held a similar view as leader of the German Third Reich.

No Mr. Fosberg, what A&M needs is more liberalism. With a more thought-provoking academic environment, future conservative Aggies would be better prepared to venture into the real world of intellectual and political discourse. Moreover, if A&M is to become a world-class university, it must adopt the traditions that characterize any world-class university — one of which is the belief that a university should be a place where in the free exchange of ideas can occur.

Richard C. Braastad, '83

to do with his personal character. Ted Kennedy is hardly representative of all liberals. How about John Kennedy Franklin Roosevelt? Were they too?

During the colonial era, there was a "tradition" of revolution. The founders of our nation were some of the most forward thinking leaders in history. They were the conservatives of that time who continued to support King George.

The budding nation in the back of the economic and military subversion. The ability to accept varied views, no matter how different they should be an important attribute of great universities, including Texas A&M. We, the students, are the ones who make it happen.

Keven K... Doug Roberts... Mark Mc... John M...

Colonial viewpoint

Editor: This is in response to the letter by Richard H. Fosberg that appeared in Friday's Batt.

While I sincerely hope that the principles set down by great men like Jefferson, Franklin and Washington, I wonder what it is that makes Mr. Fosberg these men were conservatives. They have been their ideas of all men created equally, of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? Maybe it was the belief that the power of a government rested in the people, not in the king or Parliament. Maybe it was their belief that each generation had the right to change the social institutions of that they didn't have to accept the because they were there. Then there was his belief in a bill of rights to the constitution.

Yes, these ideas certainly make men as conservatives. Especially you consider the fact that these were voiced over two hundred years when the world hardly knew the meaning of the word democracy. Take blinders off Mr. Fosberg, and try things from a wider angle instead of a narrow tunnel you seem to be looking down now.

Michael Pal...



Letters: Salvadoran issues continue

Editor:

This is in reference to the letter to The Battalion on the Central American situation.

First of all I would like to thank you for your letter to The Battalion in which you tried to realize the "full scope of the situation in El Salvador." This shows that at least somebody at A&M cares about foreign affairs and U.S. policy towards foreign countries.

I am an international student from a small country called Guatemala, which happens to have a common border with the Republic of El Salvador, and where

the problems are similar to those in that country. This shows you, Mr. Graybill, that I am not U.S. media-influenced. I do not demonstrate a 50s but an 80s mentality, for I have learned something from the United States' poor strategy in the 60s and 70s in Vietnam.

But let me point out your lack of information about El Salvador. First, El Salvador's population is not 1.5 million, rather it consists of more than 4 million people.

Second, El Salvador is not a "Banana Republic," as you disrespectfully called it, since it does not produce bananas at all.

Third, to think that El Salvador does not face Cuban-trained and supported Marxist terrorists who seek to impose upon the people of that country the totalitarian system under which Cubans and Nicaraguans now suffer, is not only naive but too optimistic. The "heroic" Civil War between the "progressive" insurgents and the elected government and its army is pure nonsense.

I would like to invite you to visit my country to have a better understanding of what the problems really are. They are not linked with the Anglo-Saxon idiosyncrasy, but are deeply rooted in the mentality of its people.

Finally, while such guerrilla wars nibble at and progressively destroy the civilian and military infrastructure, your "backyard" is being lost to the Soviets. Your security is being jeopardized, and the willingness of the Central Americans to live democratic and free is gradually being buried under the so-called American passivity.

Aldo C. Lopez '86

More on El Salvador

Editor:

This letter is in response to Gregory Graybill's letter of April 29. First of all I want to point out that I

disagree with most of what you said. I think that your overall knowledge of the subject is suspect, if not null. You pointed out that the issue of the Salvadoran guerrillas being Soviet-supported is a debatable issue, and I think that this is a petty remark.

Any military expert will tell you that the Soviet Union is involved in the Salvadoran affair via Cuba and Nicaragua. This is a well-known fact, and a way of supporting this is by looking at the history of the U.S.S.R. getting involved in Third World revolutions.

The fact that the guerrillas carry American-made guns rather than Soviet guns doesn't tell you anything. Strategically thinking, the U.S.S.R. would not send their own weapons to the area — the involvement will be too obvious. The Soviets send money so guerrillas can buy weapons on the black market.

I agree that El Salvador has had a bad military rule, but this is not a good enough reason to let the country fall into communist hands. The work has been set to correct this problem, and with the close scrutiny of the United States, you can expect the problem to be improved, if not totally corrected.

How do you expect the reforms to work overnight? And then again, doesn't El Salvador have a costly war going? Doesn't this deplete any economy? The only answer for any successful reforms to be consummated is the end of the war.

The price is worth it to support this nation. The domino theory is a well supported theory because of the close economic ties of the countries in this region.

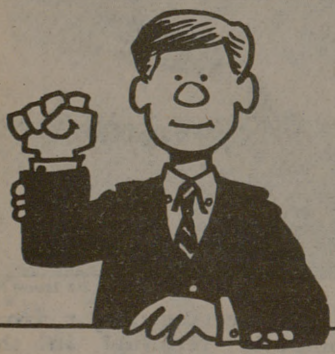
If the United States doesn't act quickly and effectively, the day will come when Mexico will be threatened by communist hands, and therefore the red hand of communism will be closer on threatening the United States' freedom.

I suggest that you do a little more research on the subject, and most important of all open your eyes. The Soviet threat is real.

Rafael F. Fortin '84

Berrys World

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory for students in reporting, editing and photographing news within the Department of Communication.

Questions or comments concerning any matter should be directed to the editor.

Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they exceed this length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit for style and length, but will make every effort to retain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed and show the address and phone number of the writer.

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