

CINCINNATI Ballet

VICTORIA MORGAN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
CARMON DELEONE, MUSIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(please include in all calendar listings)
[07/03/06]

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What: Cincinnati Ballet screens the acclaimed documentary *Ballets Russes*, with commentary from Frederic Franklin, CBE

Where: The Mickey Jarson Kaplan Performance Studio
1555 Central Parkway
Cincinnati, OH 45214
Free parking at adjacent elevated lot

When: July 29, 2006
5:00 - 5:45 pm: Drinks & refreshments
5:45 - 7:45 pm: Screening of *Ballets Russes*, a film by Dayna Goldfine and Dan Geller
7:45 - 8:15 pm: Q&A with Frederic Franklin, CBE, moderated by *Cincinnati Enquirer* contributor David Lyman

Tickets: \$30
Call the Cincinnati Ballet Box Office at 513-621-5282
or order online at www.cincinnatiaballet.com

Cincinnati, OH – Cincinnati Ballet is delighted to announce the return of Frederic Franklin, CBE, to Cincinnati during a one night run of *Ballets Russes*, a film by Dayna Goldfine and Dan Geller.

Called “enormously absorbing” by *Variety*, the much-lauded 2005 documentary, which captures the heart and spirit of one of the 20th century’s most fabled ballet companies, will be screened at the company’s own Mickey Jarson Kaplan studio, after which *Cincinnati Enquirer* contributor David Lyman will moderate a Q&A session with the legendary Franklin, known for his self-deprecating humor and encyclopedic knowledge of everything balletic.

One of the subjects of the film, Franklin, who turned 92 on June 13, has had an extraordinary career that so far has spanned 75 years in the theater. Known affectionately in the dance world as “Freddie,” he still travels the world to stage and coach ballets.

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Ballets Russes has been a huge success drawing audiences in the United States and London. Joe Morgenstern of the *Wall Street Journal* called its documentary approach to the story of the revolutionary twentieth-century dance troupes known as the Ballets Russes “absolutely breathtaking [in] sweep and joyous energy.”

The film stars Alicia Markova, Irina Baronova, Yvonne Chouteau, Marc E. Platt, Maria Tallchief, Franklin, and other former dancers with the Ballets Russes, and contrasts vivid historic footage of their performing days with reminiscences of the legendary troupe that became not one but two rival dance companies, who fought the infamous “ballet battles” that consumed London society before World War II.

Ballets Russes also references Cincinnati’s Julius Fleischmann, who was the major patron of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

Ballets Russes maps the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo’s origins in Diaghilev-era turn-of-the-century Paris—when artists such as Nijinsky, Balanchine, Picasso, Miro, Matisse and Stravinsky united in an unparalleled collaboration—to its halcyon days in the 1930s and 40s when two commercially dueling Ballet Russe companies toured America, introducing audiences schooled in vaudeville with artistry never before seen, to its demise in the 1950s and 60s when rising costs, rocketing egos, outside competition and internal mismanagement ultimately brought these revered companies to their end.

Franklin has had a more than thirty year association with Cincinnati Ballet. He has served as choreographer, choreographer-in-residence, acting artistic director and today is artistic director emeritus. Most recently, in 2002, he revived excerpts from Frederick Ashton’s *Devil’s Holiday* and Léonide Massine’s *Seventh Symphony*, for Cincinnati’s Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo celebration, a collaboration with Cincinnati Ballet, The Cincinnati Art Museum, and The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

Franklin restaged the two remaining extant movements from *Seventh Symphony* two seasons later, aided by Cincinnati Ballet’s Principal Ballet Mistress Johanna Bernstein Wilt, who researched and recreated all three *Seventh Symphony* movements from the original 16 mm film with coaching from Franklin.

Franklin’s longevity is amazing, as is the amount of dance history his career has encompassed. Trained in his native Liverpool, and London, the young dancer made his debut with The Jackson Boys, the back-up group for Josephine Baker. He performed with Anton Dolin and Alicia Markova, two revered stars of the English ballet world at that time. In 1937, Franklin joined Léonide Massine’s Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo as a principal dancer. He starred for decades with the dazzling prima ballerina Alexandra Danilova in an inimitable partnership. The two were renowned for their ability to dance as if they were one.

Also on Franklin’s voluminous resumé are roles he created still performed today, such as the Baron in *Gaite Parisienne*; the Champion Roper in *Rodeo*; and the Poet in *Night Shadow (La Sonnambula)*. He capped his career with the role of Stanley Kowalski, in the dance version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, staged for the Slavenska-Franklin Ballet.

Franklin continues to perform mime roles with American Ballet Theater and Cincinnati Ballet, and in 2004 was honored as a Commander of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II.

Critics Give *Ballets Russes* a solid “thumbs-up”!

“ . . . It could well be the most accessible and touching . . . dance documentary ever made.”

- Sid Smith, *The Chicago Tribune*

“It captures the heart and spirit of one of the 20th century’s most fabled ballet companies, with a history that stretches continents and decades.”

- R. M. Campbell, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

“Enormously absorbing . . . much more than a specialty item for dance aficionados. Takes viewers on an ebullient odyssey from Russia, to Australia to whistle-stop America, populated by a cast of charismatic, eternally young-at-heart ballet vets.”

- Scott Foundas, *Variety*

“It gives you such an intense hit of creativity that afterward you may find yourself trying to jêté out of the theater and into the street.”

- Michael Sragow, *Baltimore Sun*

“A feature-length documentary, by Dayna Goldfine and Dan Geller, of absolutely breathtaking sweep and joyous energy.”

- Joe Morgenstern, *Wall Street Journal*

“Goldfine discovers so many fascinating themes within their seemingly narrow subject that anyone with the slightest interest in history or human nature will find it absorbing.”

- Elizabeth Weitzman, *New York Daily News*

“It’s a profoundly optimistic and delightful movie, for balletomanes and neophytes alike. It made me happy for days afterward.”

- Andrew O’Hehir, *Salon.com*

“The archival footage is so breathtaking, the reminiscences so piquant that even a stranger to dance can’t help but be swept up by this peek into such exquisite, now vanished glamour.”

- Lisa Schwarzbaum, *Entertainment Weekly*

Get tickets (\$30) by calling the Cincinnati Ballet Box Office at 513-621-5282 or order online at www.cincinnati-ballet.com.

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MEDIA NOTE: For more information, digital images, or to set up an interview, please contact Tania Saldana at (513) 562-1107 or tsaldana@cincinnati-ballet.com.

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