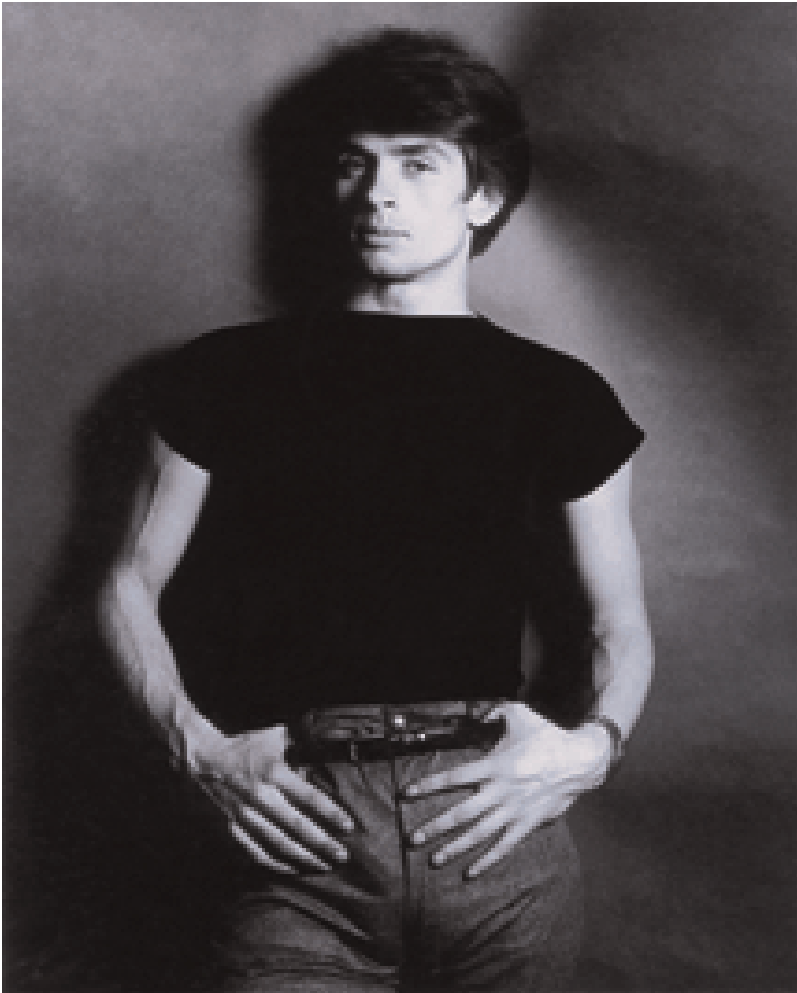


RETROSPECTIVE: 50 YEARS OF DANCE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROY ROUND

Irving Penn put it simply and beautifully when he said that a photograph is like “a thin slice of time.” This exhibition is a retrospective of the dance photography by legendary fashion, portrait and theater photographer Roy Round.



Rudolf Nureyev, 1961

The ballet work of Roy Round started in London and accompanied a successful fashion photography career. His work with the Royal Ballet and its acclaimed artists quickly established him as one of the premier photographers of dance in the world. His relationship and marriage with principal dancer Georgina Parkinson of the Royal Ballet forever linked his work to the art form of ballet. It is important to note though that this photography collection is but a segment of the total dance treasury of Roy Round and that is but a fraction of his estimable fashion work and portraiture.

Round's collection of ballet photography represents a history of this unique dance in a most selective manner—one man's experience—an extraordinary life that spans from the early 1950s to today. His career embraces the challenging evolution of film photography—an ever changing arsenal of lighting, cameras and lenses. It illustrates the value of a photographer not only understanding the technical aspects of photography, but also the storylines of the ballets, the limits and lengths that a dancer will extend themselves to get "the image," the good and bad lines of ballet, the personalities of the performers and the ever-reaching goal of artistry. These photographs are particularly important not only in their artistry but also in featuring the talents of Round as a master printer—the creation of these images are as much a result of ingenious photography and stellar dance and dancers as they are of a conscious and tremendously demanding and particular task of developing and printing the final images.

This collection is also as much a history of dance as it is an intimate glance at many of the 20th century's most accomplished dancers. It is not a review of the art form, but instead a select glimpse inside one of the most fascinating periods in the development of the art form of ballet. It starts with a nod to past stars with luminaries such as Olga Preobrajenska in her Paris studio, domestic shots of Ballet Russe star Tamara Karsavina as well as glimpse Bronislava Nijinska in rehearsal. The collection grows with dancers whose work in the 1950s and 60s defined an era in ballet—the prolific development of classic works by George Balanchine, Frederick Ashton and Jerome Robbins are shown on dancers such as Alicia Markova, Margot Fonteyn, Tanaquil LeClercq, Rudolf Nureyev and more. From MacMillan's neo-classical Romeo and Juliet created on Lynn Seymour and Christopher Gable to the iconic photographs of that production of Dame Antoinette Sibley and Sir Anthony Dowell that became almost instant classics. The 1960s and 70s also brought a new, avant garde movement to dance and the photos of Rite of Spring are among the many in his archives to dynamically show the style and artistry of this time.



Margot Fonteyn, Swan Lake



Mikhail Baryshnikov at Home in Sneed's Landing, 1980s

The 1970s and 1980s marked some profound shifts in the ballet world with the era of ballet superstars peaking and then fading, and the loss of some of the major forces in the ballet world including choreographers John Cranko, George Balanchine and Frederick Ashton. When Roy and Georgina immigrated to New York at the request of Mikhail Baryshnikov who wanted to install Georgina as a Ballet Mistress at American Ballet Theatre, a whole new canvas was created. Baryshnikov, Natalia Makarova, Gelsey Kirkland and later Julie Kent, Ethan Stiefel, Gillian Murphy all were captured by the lens of Roy Round.

The photos are representative of the times in which they were taken— they are not of a 1950s style any more than they are of a 1990s one. The dancers changed many times yet the ability to find the core of the subject, to expose the unique character and interpretation of Fonteyn's Odette, Nureyev's Albrecht, Kent's Giselle or Stiefel's Prodigal Son, typifies the work of this incredible artist. And while an observer's recognition and understanding of the artists and roles adds a delightful and poignant edge, the quality and drama of the images themselves are independent works of art that are able to reach forth to a wider audience.

Roy Round was given, and earned, a place at the forefront of the ballet photography world. He found his life-long muse in Georgina Parkinson and their experiences, both independent and together, strengthened their capabilities, their artistry and the art form. The partnership of Roy and Georgina existed in the photography studio, the theater and at home. Her generosity and knowledge were shared liberally and can be seen in these photos, though in most cases, only through the eyes of those in the studio at the time. And so the work is testament to a passionate affinity for the art form of ballet, a tribute to a wife and companion whose absence is palpable and yet whose impact and presence fill our everyday, a chronicle of some of the extraordinary characters and moments in ballet's fertile development and a gift to artists and audiences of today and tomorrow.

The Indianapolis City Ballet is pleased to work with the Herron School of Art and Design to present this historic and important collection to the people of Indianapolis and to the world.



Gillian Murphy