

FROM: **AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE**
890 Broadway
New York, New York 10003
(212) 477-3030

JOHN LANCHBERY

Born in London, John Lanchbery won the Henry Smart Scholarship in Composition in 1942 which enabled him to study at the Royal Academy of Music, where his teachers included Sir Henry Wood. During the war he served in the Royal Armoured Corps, and at the war's end, returned to the Royal Academy to complete his studies.

Lanchbery spent two years in his first professional conducting post as the Music Director of London's Metropolitan Ballet. He then went on to work with the Sadler's Wells Ballet, serving as the principal conductor of the company, later known as The Royal Ballet, from 1960-1972. After a tour with The Australian Ballet to the United States in 1970, Lanchbery became that company's guest conductor and was subsequently appointed the company's music director in 1972.

Lanchbery arranged the scores for Sir Frederick Ashton's ballet *La Fille Mal Gardée*, and the Franz Liszt music for Kenneth MacMillan's full-length ballet, *Mayerling*, which was given its World Premiere in the spring of 1978 at Covent Garden. He arranged the Franz Lehár score for the first full-length ballet production of *The Merry Widow* by The Australian Ballet, the first of five successful collaborations with choreographer Ronald Hynd, and subsequently conducted the Adelaide Symphony and Singers in a 1976 recording of highlights from *The Merry Widow*, which earned him a Gold Record in 1977. Lanchbery has composed music for films and various BBC sound and television programs, and his work on the film score for *The Tales of Beatrix Potter* was highly acclaimed. Other film score arrangements included *Evil Under the Sun* and the Oscar-nominated *The Turning Point*. Most recently, Lanchbery arranged a score for the special restoration of D.W. Griffith's silent film classic *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), and composed an original score for John Ford's silent film *The Iron Horse* (1924).

(more)

LANCHBERY – Page 2

In Lanchbery's past association with American Ballet Theatre, he conducted several performances of *Giselle* in the Spring of 1977 and conducted for the triumphant World Premiere of Mikhail Baryshnikov's *Don Quixote (Kitri's Wedding)* at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. in 1978. Lanchbery specially arranged the Ludwig Minkus score for Natalia Makarova's full-length production of *La Bayadère*, which received its premiere in 1980 at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. He also served as American Ballet Theatre's Music Director from 1978-1980.

While maintaining his close association with The Royal Ballet, Lanchbery appears regularly as ballet conductor with many of the world's leading opera houses including Paris, Stockholm, Rio de Janeiro, New York, and Houston. He has also toured with The Australian Ballet to Japan, Russia, China, and London. He recently returned to The Australian Ballet for a year as chief conductor, which included the company's 1990 summer tour of the United States.

Most recently, Lanchbery completed a score for Ben Stevenson's *Dracula*, to music of Franz Liszt.

John Lanchbery received many honors. He was the first foreign conductor to receive the Bolshoi Medal. In 1989, he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award from the Royal Academy of Dance and the Carina Ari Medal, presented by HRH Princess Christina of Sweden "for the furtherance of the Art of Dance." In 1991, he was awarded the OBE in the New Year's Honours List.

Lanchbery died in February 2003 aged 79.