

FROM: **AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE**
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HARALD LANDER

Harald Lander was born in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1905 and received his academic and dance training at the Royal Danish Ballet School in Copenhagen beginning in 1913. Before travelling to the United States to train with Michel Fokine and various other teachers, he had become a member of the Royal Danish Ballet and had begun to dance solo roles with the company. While in the United States, Lander appeared in starring roles in several Paramount-Publix Circuit shown throughout the country and traveled to Mexico in 1929 to study dance. Late in 1929 he returned to the Royal Danish Ballet with which he appeared as a leading dancer, performing such roles as Gennaro in *Napoli*, Don Alvarez in *Far from Denmark*, Toreador in *The Toreadors*, and Officer in *La Valse*. He retired as a performer in 1945 and continued in his position as ballet master until 1951 (a position which he had held since 1932). During his career as ballet master for the company, he choreographed many ballets: *Bolero* (1934), *Seven Deadly Sins* (1936), *Thorvaldsen* (1938), *La Valse* (1940), *La Vida Española* (1945), *Phoenix Bird* (1946), *Aubade* (1950), among them. In 1948, he created *Études*, the work for which he became most widely known. The ballet has been staged for companies the world over, and entered the repertory of American Ballet Theatre in 1961. Lander was also very highly regarded for his careful staging and preservation of the Bournonville repertory (*Napoli*, *La Sylphide*, *Conservatoriet*, *Far from Denmark*, *La Ventana*, *Folk Tale*, *Kermesse in Bruges*, *The Guards from Amager*). This was done with the assistance of the retired ballerina Valborg Borchsenius, who was a noted Bournonville interpreter, and with her help, he was able to make perhaps his most important contribution – the restoration of the ballets which have become the cornerstone of the Royal Danish Ballet. He also revived the highly successful production of *Coppélia* by Hans Beck (1934).

(more)

In 1953, Lander was appointed ballet master of the Paris Opera and was subsequently appointed director of the Paris Opera Ballet School in 1959. He held these positions through the 1962-63 seasons, and, to fulfill the requirements for the latter position, Lander became a French citizen. In Paris, Mr. Lander staged *The Whims of Cupid and the Ballet Master* in 1952, *Hop Frog* (1953), *Printemps a Vienne* (1956), *Rendez-vous* (1961), and also restaged *Études* (1952), *La Valse* (1958), *Qarrtsiluni* (1960). He also arranged ballets for the following operas: *Oberon*, *Don Giovanni*, *Salome*, *Ballo in Maschera*, and *Les Troyens*. For other companies, Lander staged *Études*, *Coppélia*, *Napoli* and *Vita Eterna* (London Festival Ballet), *La Sylphide* (International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas and Teatro alla Scala, Milan), *Études* and *La Sylphide* (American Ballet Theatre, Netherlands National Ballet), *Études* (Teatro Municipal of Rio de Janeiro), *The Whims of Cupid and the Ballet Master* (Netherlands National Ballet), and a program of *Études*, *Qarrtsiluni* and *Napoli*, Act III (Finnish National Ballet). He restaged *Études* for the Royal Danish Ballet early in 1962 when he returned as a guest choreographer and also staged *The Triumph of Love*, based on the ballet by Jean Baptiste Lully.

Lander was married to Margot Florentz-Gerhardt, one of Denmark's greatest ballerinas and then to Toni Pihl Petersen (Toni Lander). He was a Knight of the Dannebrog and had been decorated by the Swedish, Belgian and French governments. He died in Copenhagen on September 14, 1971.