

FROM: **AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE**
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KNUDÅGE RIISAGER

Knudåge Riisager, a Danish composer of strongly modernistic and nationalistic style, was born in Port Kunda, Estonia on March 6, 1897. He took his degree in political economy at Copenhagen University in 1921 but one year later decided to turn to music and composing and began his studies in music theory with Peder Gram and Otto Malling. He also began his study of the violin at that time with Peder Moller.

Riisager traveled to Paris to work with Albert Roussel and Paul Le Flem in 1930 and then to Leipzig to study counterpoint with Hermann Grabner. Critics generally agree that Riisager's compositions are especially reflective of the teachings of Roussel and indicate the strong influence of the works of Paul Dukas. He was the recipient of several prizes during his career, including the prize from the Danish Ministry of Education in 1942 and the Wilhelm Hansen prize for composition in 1925. In 1937, Riisager became the President of the Danish League of Composers.

Among Riisager's compositions are four symphonies, two overtures, the *Dionysian Suite*, *Variations on a Theme by Mezangeau*, *Poem mecanique*, *Jabiru T-DOZC*, the Trumpet Concerto and several ballets, including *Benzin* (1930), *Cocktail Party* (1942), *Tolo med Posten* and *The Bird Phoenix* (1942), *Qarrtsiluni* (1942), and works for chamber groups, male chorus, voice, and the piano.

Riisager died in Copenhagen on December 16, 1974.