

*The Story of Celebrated
Dancer Mia Slavenska*

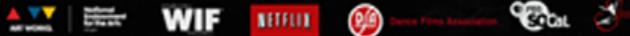
Mia

A Dancer's Journey

A Film by Maria Ramas & Kate Johnson

MIA, A DANCER'S JOURNEY with BETTYE HANNER as MIA'S VOICE
MUSIC: DAVID RAIKLEN EDITING & ANIMATION: KATE JOHNSON WRITTEN BY: MARIA RAMAS
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: DOUGLAS TURNBAUGH PRODUCED BY: MARIA RAMAS, KATE JOHNSON,
TED SPRAGUE, BRENDA BRKUSIC PBS LOCAL EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: BRENDA BRKUSIC

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MIA, A DANCER'S JOURNEY



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SHORT SYNOPSIS



This is the story of Mia Slavenska, one of the most celebrated ballerinas of her time. It is also a story about historical memory, national identity, and the power of art. In her era—the 1930s-1950s—everyone in America who loved dance knew her name. Yet, in spite of a career that lasted decades, when Slavenska died in 2002, she believed that she had been completely forgotten. As her daughter, Maria, retraces Slavenska’s life journey, she unearths the fascinating story of a maverick ballerina and a lost time of dance. And Maria discovers something more: Mia Slavenska hasn’t been forgotten after all.

Photos: Mia Čorak at seven (family photo), Mia Slavenska in *La Mort du Cygne* (Press Photo); Mia Slavenska in *Swan Lake* (Maurice Seymour).

MEDIUM SYNOPSIS

This is the story of ballerina Mia Slavenska. It is also a story about historical memory, national identity, and the power of art.

One of the most celebrated ballerinas of the first half of the 20th century, Mia Slavenska was one of a small group of famous émigré dancers who changed the face of American dance by introducing Americans to ballet as an art form. Acknowledged as the most beautiful and versatile of all her contemporaries and as the greatest technician of her era, Slavenska was one of the few ballerinas of her time to form her own companies and commission original ballets.



She was a modernist who moved freely between modern and ballet idioms. In 1952 she convinced Tennessee Williams to allow the Slavenska Franklin Ballet to produce a ballet version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. A dance *tour de force*, it was the first time a contemporary play was turned into a ballet.

In the 1930s – 1950s, everyone who loved dance knew the name Mia Slavenska. A half-century later, when she died in 2002, Slavenska believed that she had been completely forgotten. As her daughter, Maria, retraces her mother's life journey, she unearths the fascinating story of a maverick ballerina and a lost time of dance.

And Maria discovers something more: Mia Slavenska hasn't been forgotten after all.

LONG SYNOPSIS



This is the story of ballerina Mia Slavenska. It is also a story about historical memory, national identity, and the power of art.

Mia Slavenska was one of the most celebrated ballerinas of the 20th century, Croatia's greatest dancer, and a pioneer in American ballet. Caught in the maelstrom of 20th century political events, she was forced to leave her native Croatia at age twenty in order to continue to dance. At twenty-one, she was celebrated in Western Europe as the likely successor to Anna Pavlova; at twenty-three, she

escaped looming war in Europe by immigrating to the United States as one of the glamorous ballerinas of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

When she arrived in the late 1930s, Slavenska found an America where ballet was little known outside of the major American cities. She was one of a small band of famous European émigré ballerinas who helped to change the face of American dance by introducing Americans across the country to ballet as an art form.

Mia Slavenska was fiercely independent; she didn't want to be anybody's muse. She was one of the few ballerinas of her time to form her own companies and commission ballets. She was a modernist who moved freely between modern and ballet idioms. In 1952 she convinced Tennessee Williams to allow her ballet company to produce a ballet version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. A critically acclaimed *tour de force*, it was the first time a contemporary play was turned into a ballet.

Mia's daughter, Maria, remembers her mother's halcyon days of dancing only vaguely. The dancer retired from the stage in the early 1960s when Maria was still a young girl. Mostly, Maria remembers her mother's preoccupation with her lost fame. At the end of her life, Slavenska was haunted by the fear that the dance world had forgotten her. She spent the last twenty years of her life writing her memoirs. When she died in 2002, her memoirs remained unpublished, and she believed that she had been completely forgotten not only in the United States but also in her native land of Croatia.

Before Slavenska died, Maria promised that she would tell her mother's story. This film is the keeping of that promise. As Maria retraces her mother's life journey, she unearths the fascinating story of a maverick ballerina and a lost time in American dance. And, Maria makes a most surprising discovery: Mia Slavenska hasn't been forgotten after all.

Photo: Mia Slavenska Portrait (Marcus Blechman).



FROM THE DIRECTORS

KATE JOHNSON AND MARIA RAMAS

MARIA RAMAS

Mia Slavenska was my mother. For most of my life she made her living teaching ballet. Back when I was just a child, she was a celebrated ballerina—or so she always told me. But, I remember those days only vaguely. I remember traveling across America in an old school bus. Theaters were my playgrounds; dancers were my playmates. In the evenings I would sit in the audience with my grandmother and watch that ragtag group of fun-loving adults change into glittering kings and queens, swans and fairy princesses. And I would watch my mother transform into a Goddess. Everyone, even complete strangers, adored her. It was magic! When I turned five, the magic ended. I had to stay home with my grandmother and go to school. I entered the ordinary, everyday world that most of us inhabit.



My mother retired from the stage when I was fourteen. She turned her back on the dance world, although she always said that the dance world turned its back on her. She settled down to teach, first in New York City and then in Los Angeles, California. And I went about the business of growing up and making a life, which, as the years passed, carried me far away from the world of dance.

So, I was surprised when I heard myself promising my mother that I would tell her story. She was eighty-six and fading fast. She believed that no one remembered her or the contributions she had made to dance. As I made my promise, her old, tired eyes--still robin egg blue, still betraying restless longing—locked on mine. She smiled.



I didn't remember much of my mother's life during her glory days apart from those fragmentary memories of my childhood travels. It has taken me ten years to discover her. When I began, I thought that I was making this film because I had promised my mother that I would tell her story. Now, I know that I made this film because—once upon a time—Mia Slavenska danced.

KATE JOHNSON

In 2004 Maria and I began the journey to tell the story of Mia Slavenska's life. I had heard of Mia Slavenska as the former Ballet Russe ballerina and the respected teacher at both CalArts and UCLA who had trained many of Los Angeles' great modern choreographers and dancers. She was from another generation, another world.



By focusing on Mia's life during the most turbulent and transformative decades of the 20th century, we are able to tell the story of how an individual artist, like many of the time, left her homeland, bringing only her art and her character, and began the process of forging a life and identity as an American artist. The mass exodus of artists and thinkers from across the

world graced American culture greatly during the 20th century. Their impact is felt, but their memory recedes as time passes. Their artistic contributions are kept alive only by the people who advocate for them long after they are gone.



When we arrived in Croatia in 2005, the scars of the recent war were evident on monastery walls and in the memories of the people. It was a new democracy, an independent country, and it was ready to reclaim its lost history. While behind the Iron Curtain, Croatia—then a part of Yugoslavia—had been sealed off from most knowledge of the many artists it had lost during the war and ensuing communist regime. Then, Mia could only be whispered about in the ballet schools and back stages of the national theatre. We witnessed a country rediscovering its rich artistic contributions, and, as Croatia’s greatest ballerina, Mia was part of its cultural legacy. She had touched many people, and the memories of her performances were some of the beautiful images stored in the hearts of those who had endured much suffering and had lived through countless wars and occupying forces. I began to understand that fleeting glimpses of artistry can nurture people through the darkest moments of their lives and can empower them to keep going in the face of insurmountable pain.

As we made the film and experienced the reclamation of a legacy, I began to explore the ephemeral nature of not only dance but also all of life. Mia did not go gently until Maria made her promise. In that way Mia was fortunate. Many artists do not have that at the end. And so they must face the fleeting nature of their work and their lives alone. I began to wonder: Is the value of our work really only in the moment, and is that what really matters to an individual life? How do we face gracefully what must end? As storytellers—who work to keep a story alive one more day, year, perhaps decade – how do we reconcile the mercurial nature of history? How many have we forgotten?

Mia, a dancer’s journey became not only a film but also a cause. We are returning to a nation the story of a dancer it lost. We are refusing to let an artist be forgotten, and we are remembering that, yes, art in all its forms does matter.



Photos: Kate Johnson and Maria Ramas (J. Gullick); Maria Ramas and Mia Slavenska in dressing room (not credited); Mia Slavenska and Maria Ramas (not credited); Kate Johnson and production photos (J. Gullick); Mirogoj Cemetery (Pondelak).



**PBS SOCIAL CELEBRATES
LOS ANGELES AREA EMMY® WIN FOR
*MIA, A DANCER'S JOURNEY***

Los Angeles, Calif. (July 27, 2015) – PBS SoCaL, PBS for Greater Los Angeles, has been honored with a Los Angeles Area Emmy® Award by The Television Academy in the Arts and Culture/History category for the film [Mia, a dancer's journey](#). The winners were announced at the 67th Los Angeles Area Emmy® Awards presentation on Saturday, July 25, 2015 at The Skirball Cultural Center Guerin Pavilion in Herscher Hall.

[Mia, a dancer's journey](#) is the story of celebrated 20th century ballerina, Mia Slavenska. The film is voiced by Emmy® award-winning actress Blythe Danner and features a daughter's promise to tell her mother's story, which becomes a fascinating and moving reflection on historical memory, national identity, and the power of dance.

The film first premiered in November of 2014 on PBS SoCaL, and was then distributed to public television stations nationally. [Mia, a dancer's journey](#) was produced by PBS SoCaL and Slavenska Dance Preservation, Inc. The following team was recognized for their production efforts:

Brenda Brkusic, Producer
Kate Johnson, Producer
Maria Ramas, Producer
Ted Sprague, Producer

The Los Angeles Area winners were selected by national active and Los Angeles Area Peer Group active members within the Television Academy. A complete list of Emmy® award winners is available at <http://www.emmys.com/losangeles>

About PBS SoCaL

PBS SoCaL is the only station in the Greater Los Angeles area providing the full PBS schedule to Southern California and is home to all PBS program premieres as they are released nationally. As Southern California's flagship PBS station, PBS SoCaL provides early education, access to a broad array of arts and culture, and programs for, about and by the people of Southern California.

PBS SoCaL is the parent to three unique broadcast channels, PBS SoCaL/KOCE-HD, PBS SoCaL Plus, and PBS SoCaL World, which are dedicated to educating, entertaining and enlightening viewers throughout Southern California. PBS SoCaL offices are located in Downtown LA, Century City and Costa Mesa. PBS SoCaL is proudly, our communities' largest classroom, largest stage for the arts and trusted source of information. Explore the future of PBS in Southern California at www.pbssocal.org.

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From The New York Times

A Daughter's Promise, a Mother's Story

'Mia, a Dancer's Journey,' at Film Festival in New York

January 30, 2015

Critic's Notebook

By GIA KOURLAS

Shortly before Mia Slavenska died in 2002, Maria Ramas, her daughter, made a promise: to tell her story. "She had spent many years feeling, as many artists do who outlive their fame and their time of creativity, that the dance world wouldn't remember her and her contribution," Ms. Ramas said in an interview. "It was really difficult for her to make peace with that."

Ten years later, "Mia, a Dancer's Journey," a collaboration by Ms. Ramas and the filmmaker Kate Johnson, was born. The documentary will receive its New York premiere Saturday at the Walter Reade Theater in conjunction with Dance on Camera.

The festival, a presentation by the Film Society of Lincoln Center and Dance Films Association, continues through Tuesday with a breadth of films and events, including "Robot," which pairs eight dancers and a robot, by the choreographer Blanca Li; a restored version of Bob Fosse's indelible 1979 "All That Jazz"; and "Black Ballerina," a documentary-in-progress followed by a panel discussion.

But the moving story of Ms. Slavenska is a reminder of how easily history can slip away in the ephemeral world of dance. Best known as a member of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Ms. Slavenska was a glamorous beauty with strong shoulders, steely legs and a sparkling, virtuosic technique. She was more than a ballerina — a dancer who embraced modern ideas.

For Ms. Johnson, a filmmaker and video artist with extensive dance training — one of her own teachers studied under Ms. Slavenska — the ballerina's story intrigued her, as she explained, "not only because of Mia's career, but because of the idea of an artist who died feeling forgotten."

"I was curious about how that could happen," Ms. Johnson said, "how someone could have this incredible life and career, yet go to the end feeling quite lost."

Ms. Johnson also saw a connection with the many forgotten artists who lost their lives to AIDS. She said, "It kind of became a cause: Let's tell her story; let's put her back out there."

Ms. Slavenska, a Croatian dancer, joined the Ballet Russe in 1938, but with so many stars in the company, good parts were hard-won. To her dismay, the impresario Sol Hurok promoted her as the sex symbol of the

company. When her contract ran out, she left, but later rejoined. This time, things were different. As Frederic Franklin, a fellow dancer, said: “She came back really as a ballerina. You saw what she could do.”

Ms. Slavenska, ambitious, opinionated and the breadwinner of her family, wanted to direct. (Ms. Ramas acknowledged that she viewed dance as a rival for her mother’s attention.) In 1947, Ms. Slavenska created Ballet Variante, a touring group, and five years later formed the Slavenska-Franklin Ballet — an effort to create something progressive — with Mr. Franklin. There, she performed one of her most meaningful dramatic parts: Blanche in Valerie Bettis’s “A Streetcar Named Desire.” Tennessee Williams, Ms. Slavenska said, visited her backstage and told her she was his best Blanche.

But the company was financially strapped and forced to shutter in 1954. “Streetcar” was sold to American Ballet Theater, and Ms. Slavenska forced herself to attend the premiere, where, she said, the dancer Nora Kaye expressed her unhappiness with the costume. In “Mia,” Ms. Slavenska recalls her saying: “ ‘How did you manage with all those skirts? That’s got to go.’ The drapery did go the very next day, and with it went Blanche’s fantasy. Her very vulnerability was shrouded in that drapery. Without it, she was just another nymphomaniac.”

At 47, Ms. Slavenska retired from dancing, spending the next 40 years teaching in California and New York, where her students included many of the postmodern dancers behind the revolutionary Judson Dance Theater. One, Meredith Monk, recalled how Ms. Slavenska would enter the studio: leggings under a fur coat and a beautiful upsweep.

“I think of her with so much affection because of all of us downtown people walking into her class: Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton and all kinds of people with some ballet dancers,” Ms. Monk said. “She was so helpful and so encouraging.”

Making the documentary led to certain discoveries for Ms. Ramas; for one, she understood more about dance than she thought. “And I learned my mother was a great dancer,” Ms. Ramas said, laughing in surprise. “I wasn’t sure, to tell you the truth, when I started. She always told me she was, but, you know.”

Dance on Camera continues through Tuesday; most screenings and events are at Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center, 165 West 65th Street; filmlinc.com.

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ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS



MARIA RAMAS (co-director, producer, writer, narrator) has been an educator at the University of California, Los Angeles for over 25 years. Her articles on women's history and feminist theory have appeared in journals such as *New Left Review* and *Feminist Studies* and have been anthologized in collections along with writers such as Erich Fromm and Juliet Mitchell. As Mia Slavenska's daughter, growing up in the ballet world of the 1950s and 1960s, Ramas experienced in an intimate and personal way the artistry of Mia Slavenska and the aesthetics of her era. This is her first feature-length documentary.



KATE JOHNSON (co-director, producer, editor, motion graphics) is an award-winning filmmaker and artist focusing on work ranging from feature documentary films to large-scale projection art. Her work has been seen in a variety of venues from television, national and international film festivals, to the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, among others. Prior to co-directing *Mia, a dancer's journey*, she was the editor for the 2008 film *Never Apologize*, starring Malcolm McDowell that premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, and went on to the AFI Film Festival, the Chicago Film Festival as well as international festivals in Europe and Asia before being distributed on DVD by Warner Bros. She has edited many other documentaries, including *Silk King*, *Jim Thompson and the Life and Disappearance of an Expatriate*, which aired on France's Channel 5, and *Healing Passages: Voices from the Water*, which won numerous awards and was broadcast on The Doc Channel.

Kate trained as a modern dancer and went on to create video art collaborations with many of Los Angeles' celebrated choreographers creating work performed in the Ford Amphitheatre, the Japan American Cultural Center, Duke University, Los Angeles Theater Center, and at several site specific locations. She was also the co-designer of the Pacific Standard Time Gala at The Getty Center creating a six-minute film about four decades of California art history that was designed for and projected onto the famous architecture of the center's five buildings.

Since 1993, Johnson has been a principal force behind EZTV, a seminal Los Angeles media arts organization and is working with ONE Archives at USC to save and archive the work of EZTV's pioneering video artists and filmmakers, many lost in the AIDS pandemic. She serves as Assistant Professor in the Digital Media Department at Otis College of Art and Design.

BRENDA BRKUSIC (producer) is the Executive Producer of Program Development and National Productions for PBS SoCaL where she oversees the development,



production, and distribution of high-quality programs and series for national broadcast on public television. Her journey began with *Freedom from Despair*, a film she produced, wrote, directed and edited for KOCE-TV. After receiving over a dozen awards for the film, she was honored on the Congressional Record of the US House of Representatives for her work promoting human rights. She was then sent to the European Union in Brussels to present the film to members of the European Parliament at the International Leader's Summit. Brenda joined PBS SoCaL (KOCE-TV) in 2006 as a producer for the station's Emmy Award®-winning nightly news program. A year later she was asked to spearhead and

manage the station's new digital TV channel and under her direction the channel received an "Education Innovation Award" from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Brenda's dedication to independent film has resulted in the creation of thousands of new programs and series for PBS SoCaL. She has received multiple Emmy Awards® for her work, including the Emmy Award®-winning film *Bloody Thursday* and the Emmy Award®-winning program *The Hollywood Reporter in Focus: The Wolf of Wall Street*. In her free time, Brenda is an active member of the Producers Guild of America and the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, where serves on the L.A. Area Peer Group Executive Committee. Brenda is also the owner of Istina Productions, a documentary film production company in Southern California. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Film and Television Production from Chapman University.

"I was honored when Maria Ramas asked me to be a part of the making of this film about her mother's life. It has been a deeply personal journey for me to be able to further explore a topic of great interest to me - the Croatian Diaspora, and in this case, the life and work of Mia Slavenska. My professional training as a dancer and as a filmmaker has heightened my appreciation for Mia's incredible journey as an émigré artist who overcame adversity and contributed significantly to the American cultural landscape. This film will serve to educate, entertain, and enlighten PBS viewers across the country and I am delighted to be a part of the effort to reveal this important story to the nation."



TED SPRAGUE (producer) is a choreographer and dancer who has danced in 15 motion pictures, 250 television shows, and as a partner to Las Vegas headliners including Cyd Charisse and Mitzi Gaynor. He has directed over 100 plays and musicals and has choreographed several ballets, including the *Trojan Women*, *Time and the Waltz*, *Face of Despair*, and *Tango Suite*.

BRIDGET MURNANE (associate producer) is a producer, director and educator known for her creative media treatments of dance, as well as experimental and narrative



projects. Her films have screened in over thirty international festivals and received numerous awards including two CINE Eagles. Her first feature, *Odile and Yvette at the Edge of The World*, premiered at the prestigious Edinburgh Film Festival and received special recognition from the Film Advisory Board and Brussels Diamond Film Festival. The PBS series, *New Television* and *The Territory*, have presented her work, as well as the cable channel, *Classic Arts Showcase*. Bridget is a Professor of

Television, Film and Media Studies at California State University Los Angeles where she is the co-associate chair, Special Assistant to the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, TVFM/TVFT Media Internship Director, and Student Production Unit Executive Director.



DOUGLAS BLAIR TURNBAUGH (associate producer) is a producer of the 2005 documentary *Ballets Russes*, which premiered at Sundance and was later released by Zeitgeist Films. He is also the producer of the 2008 short documentary on Marge Champion and Donald Sadler, *Keep Dancing*.



DAVID RAIKLEN (composer) is a producer/composer/songwriter/host/crowdfunder. He began studying keyboard and composing at age and filmmaking at age 9. He studied composition at USC and Cal Arts, later teaching at those universities. Among his mentors are Oscar winner John Williams and Pulitzer Prize winner Mel Powel. David works for Sony, Fox, Disney, Sprint, Mattel, Warner Bros and PBS, in addition to many independent producers. He's scored hundreds of films, television shows, video games, and live events, winning multiple awards including an American Music Center Grant, three Telly Awards and the Park City Festival Audience Choice Award and Gold Medal.

David has composed music and sound design for theater, dance, television, mobile, museums, concerts, video games, documentaries and features, including the New York Film Critics Top Ten Film *Heist*, *I Am Omega*, Disney's *Sing Me A Story*, *BatGirl*, *Max Steel*, trailers for the *X-Files* and *Witchblade* movies, *Atlantis*, *Fallen Idol* with Elliott Gould, *The World* with Martin Sheen, and *Worth* - winner of over 30 international prizes and awards including the short list for an Academy Award®.

David appears on the Hugo winning Star Ship Sofa series, host of SciFi Soundtrack. He's a lecturer at colleges including UCLA, USC, Emperor's College, and CalArts, and at fan conventions. He is a member the Board of The Academy Of Scoring Arts.

David is serving as a producer on the sensational new science fiction series *Space Command* starring Doug Jones, Bruce Boxleitner, and Mira Furlan - setting a funding record on Kickstarter plus composing the epic score. He is also scoring a documentary on the Laker's featuring Jerry Buss, Kobe Bryant and Phil Jackson. He is producing and composing for *Blood Kiss*, a tale of Golden Age Hollywood with vampires, featuring Neil Gaiman's acting debut. David was recently interviewed on Entertainment Weekly and ABC News about his work.

MICHAEL J. MASUCCI (director of cinematography, creative consultant) is an award-winning film & videomaker, as well as a stage and multimedia producer, director,



writer and artist. Masucci is Artistic Director of EZTV. He has produced work throughout the United States, as well as in China, the U.K., Mexico, Finland and Thailand. His work has screened at a variety of world class venues including the Museum of Modern Art (New York),the Institute of Contemporary Art (London), the American Film Institute, Downtown Community Television (New York), and on BRAVO, the BBC, PBS, and numerous galleries, festivals and conferences. Masucci was an early advocate and adopter of the emerging digital filmmaking tools. He and EZTV have been

honored by the American Film Institute as “some of the core pioneers and advocates of digital technology in the moving image arts.” and EZTV is part of the Getty’s Pacific Standard Time.

ABOUT THE CAST



MIA SLAVENSKA (1916 –2002) (self), glittering ballerina of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, was known for her beauty, her powerful stage presence, and phenomenal technique. She was born Mia Čorak in Slavonski Brod, Croatia on February 20, 1916. She was a child star at six; at age 18, she became the first Croat Prima Ballerina of the National Theater of Yugoslavia. In Zagreb, She studied ballet with Josephina Weiss, a former ballerina with the Vienna State Opera, and with Margarita Froman, former soloist with the Bolshoi Ballet and with Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, and the founder of the National Theater of Yugoslavia Ballet. During her teen years, Slavenska studied modern dance with Gertrud Kraus and ballet with Leopold Dubois in Vienna.

In Paris, she trained with the Russian émigré ballerinas Olga Preobrajenska, Natalia Kschessinskaya, and Lubov Egorova. In the 1930s she danced in Paris with Bronislava Nijinska’s company and opposite Serge Lifar in *David Triumphant*. In 1936 Slavenska shared top prize with the eminent German modernists Mary Wigman and Harald Kreutzberg at the Berlin Dance Olympics. In 1937 she gave a solo recital at Salle Pleyel in Paris, which launched her international career. Slavenska starred in Jean Benoit-Levy’s prize-winning 1937 film *La Mort du Cygne* about backstage life at the Paris Opera, released in America as *Ballerina*. In 1938 she was invited by Léonide Massine to join the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo as ballerina. Between 1938 and 1943 she toured in the USA, France, England, Canada and South America with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. In 1948 she returned to the Ballet Russe for one season as guest ballerina. Here she danced all the classic roles including *Swan Lake*, *Coppélia*, *Giselle*, and the *Nutcracker*, as well as Michel Fokine and Léonid Massine works *Scheherazade*, *Seventh Symphony*, *Capriccio Espagnol*, *Gaîté Parisienne*, and George Balanchine’s *Le Baiser de la fée*. Marc Platt’s ballet *Ghost Town*, to a musical score by Richard Rodgers, was created expressly for her. During the 1940s, she retrained with Cechetti protégé Vincenzo Celli, whom she considered to be her greatest teacher.

Slavenska formed her first concert company, Slavenska Tihmar and Company in 1944, followed by Slavenska Ballet Variant in 1947. In 1952 Slavenska formed the Slavenska Franklin Ballet with Frederic Franklin. In this company she produced and starred as Blanche Dubois in the Valerie Bettis-choreographed *A Streetcar Named Desire*, based on the play by Tennessee Williams. It was one of the first times a contemporary play was turned into a ballet. In the late 1950s, Slavenska helped pioneer regional ballet in America, heading companies in Louisville and Fort Worth.

After many guest appearances on television and in musicals and a season as ballerina with the Metropolitan Opera, Mia Slavenska retired at the top of her form in 1961 at the age of 45. She devoted the rest of her life to teaching. She was a “favorite teacher” to the cream of the avant-garde modern dancers in New York including Lucinda Childs, Deborah Hay, Steve Paxton, and Meredith Monk. She was a member of the founding faculty of the Dance Department at California Institute of the Arts and a member of the dance faculty at UCLA. Her protégé Yoko Ichino became a world-class ballerina who danced with major ballet companies in North America and Europe. Mia Slavenska was married to Kurt Neumann. They had one child, Maria Ramas. Mia Slavenska died in Los Angeles on October 5, 2002. Her ashes were interred in 2005 at Mirogoj Cemetery, Zagreb, Croatia.



BLYTHE DANNER (Mia Slavenska’s voice) is an acclaimed stage and screen actress. Among her many Tony Award nominations was one for her portrayal of Blanche DuBois in the 1988 Broadway revival of Tennessee Williams’ *A Streetcar named Desire*. She received a Tony Award for *Butterflies are Free*. Her Broadway appearances include *Blithe Spirit*, *Follies*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*. She has also received two consecutive Emmy Awards for her work on the critically acclaimed Showtime series *Huff*. Her film credits include: *Meet the Parents* and its sequel *Meet the Fockers*, *Prince of Tides*, *The Sisters of the Travelling Pants*, and *Brighton Beach Memoirs*.



JACK ANDERSON (self) is well known for his numerous reviews of dance performances in the *New York Times* and *Dance Magazine* as well as for his scholarly studies in dance history and for ten volumes of poetry. He is the author of *The One and Only: The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo* and *Ballet and Modern Dance: A Concise History*.



MARGERY BEDDOW (self) (1931-2010) danced with the Slavenska Franklin Ballet, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and the Metropolitan Opera Ballet. Her first Broadway show was *Two On The Aisle* and she danced in *Redhead* and *Little Me*. She was a favorite of choreographer Bob Fosse and in later years appeared in singing and acting roles. She also choreographed.

FLEUR ISRAEL (self) attended the famous High School of Performing Arts in NYC and her first professional appearances were with the Slavenska Franklin Ballet. She danced on Broadway and on television. After retiring from the stage, she began teaching ballet and for over thirty years taught at the American Dance Theater Workshop, the official school of The Eglevsky Ballet.

DINKO BOGDANIĆ (self) coached by Mia Slavenska in the 1970s for his role as Albrecht in *Giselle* while a young dancer with the Pittsburgh Ballet fell “under the spell of Mia’s charms” forever. After a flourishing career with several American and European ballet companies (Pittsburgh, Hamburg), he returned to his native Croatia as artistic director of the Croatian National Ballet. As choreographer, he contributed many works to the repertory, among the most popular being *Tramvaj Žvan Cenja (A Streetcar Named Desire)*, his personal tribute to Slavenska. He is currently a judge on the Croatian version of *Dancing with the Stars* and in demand as a freelance choreographer.



JOE BRANDON (self) was a close friend of Mia Slavenska from 1945 until her death in 2002. He is a great lover of ballet and especially loved the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.



GEORGE DORRIS (self) is a dance historian whose articles and reviews have been published in *Ballet Review*, *Dance Now*, and *Dancing Times*. From 1997 to 2007, he was the co-editor with Jack Anderson of *Dance Chronicle: Studies in Dance and The Related Arts*.



MAJA ĐURINOVIĆ (self) is a critic and historian of Croatian dance. Her monographs include biographies of Mia Čorak Slavenska, Ana Maletić, Milana Broš, Almira Osmanovic as well as a survey histories of Croatian dance such as *The Croatian National Theatre Ballet: 1840-1992*. She is the editor of the book series “Dance Gesta” (Gesture), a member of the editorial board of the cultural journal *Kretanja*, and a dance critic for Croatian journals and newspapers.



FREDERIC FRANKLIN (self) (1914-2013) is probably the most beloved, versatile, and inspirational male dancer in all of Ballet History! Blessed with an incredible memory, he carved a new career for himself re-creating the 20th century masterpieces in which he’d danced. A sampling: Markova-Dolin Ballet, Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo (1938-1952), Slavenska Franklin Ballet (1952-1954). He left an indelible mark as Stanley in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. In his 90s he was still dancing character roles in *La Sylphide*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Swan Lake* for American Ballet Theatre.



LYNN GARAFOLA (self) is Professor of Dance at Barnard College, Columbia University. She is a dance historian and critic, the author of *Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes* and *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance* and a regular contributor of articles and essays to both scholarly and general interest publications. She is the former editor of the book series "Studies in Dance History" and the founder of the Columbia University seminar in Dance.



MITZI GAYNOR (self). In this film, the legendary film star of the Golden Age of Movie Musicals recalls the excitement of a barely teenage ballet student meeting one of Ballet’s most glamorous ballerinas. It is both touching and amusing.



GEORGE JACKSON (self) is a dance critic and writer. He wrote dance reviews for the *Washington Post* and other Washington publications from 1972 until 2011 as well as writing for national and international publications such as *Dance Magazine*, *Danceview*, *Ballet Review*, *Ballettanz*, and *danceviewtimes.com*.



ALAN JOHNSON (self) is a three-time Emmy Award winner for Choreography. He is best known for his work in Mel Brooks films *The Producers*, *Blazing Saddles*, *Dracula: Dead and Loving It*, *History of the World*. He also directed *To Be or Not To Be* and *Solarbabies*. Since appearing in the original Broadway production of *West Side Story*, he has re-created the Jerome Robbins choreography throughout the United States and internationally. He has staged concert and television appearances for Shirley MacLaine, Chita Rivera, Bernadette Peters, Ann-Margret, Ann Reinking, Donna McKechnie, Sandy Duncan, Anne Bancroft, and Tommy Tune.



MALCOLM MCCORMICK (self), a former member of the dance faculty at the University of California in Los Angeles and California Institute of the Arts, is co-author with Nancy Reynolds of *No Fixed Points*, *Dance in the 20th Century*.



MARION SCOTT (self) (1922-2008) was born in Chicago. She moved to New York to study modern dance and eventually danced in the Martha Graham company and with Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman. She was a soloist with the Helen Tamiris-Daniel Nagrin company and formed her own Marion Scott company. She began studying with Slavenska in the early 1960s and they became lifelong friends. Both relocated to California and both taught at UCLA.



MARIA TALLCHIEF (self) (1925-2013) Much has been written about Tallchief but what is little known about her is this: She studied with Slavenska in Los Angeles during her high school years and Slavenska invited Serge Denham to observe her in class. Denham invited the young Tallchief to audition for the Ballet Russe if she came to NY after graduation. That is exactly what came to pass and she was hired for the corps de ballet. When Slavenska later re-joined the company, she often coached her young protégé and taught Tallchief her own roles. Mia even suggested the name change from Betty Marie to Maria. When Slavenska's daughter was born a few years later she was named Maria Elizabeth. The next season Balanchine came to stage *Song of Norway* for Ballet Russe and the rest is ballet history!



EDWARD VILLELLA studied at the prestigious School of American Ballet as a child, joined the New York City Ballet in 1957 and was Principal Dancer by 1960. He created many roles in George Balanchine ballets including *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Tarantella*, *Rubies*, and *Prodigal Son*. He danced in Jerome Robbins Dances *At A Gathering* and *Watermill* among others. He founded the Miami City Ballet and served as its Director until 2012. He was a Kennedy Center Honorees recipient in 1997 and was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Clinton that same year.



RAVEN WILKINSON (self) was born in NYC and was a ballet student of Ludmila Schollar. She danced with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo from 1955 until 1961. She also danced with the Dutch National Ballet for 7 years and with the ballet of the New York City Opera from 1974-1985. She continues to perform occasional acting roles with that company.

CREDITS

The following are the main credits for *MIA, A DANCER'S JOURNEY*

DIRECTORS

Maria Ramas and Kate Johnson

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Maria Ramas

PRODUCERS

Brenda Brkusic

Kate Johnson

Maria Ramas

Ted Sprague

MIA SLAVENSKA VOICED BY

Blythe Danner

WRITTEN BY

Maria Ramas

Mia Slavenska's narrative based on her personal writings

EDITED BY

Kate Johnson

MUSIC BY

David Raiklen

DIRECTOR OF CINEMATOGRAPHY

Michael J. Masucci

MOTION GRAPHICS DESIGN & ANIMATION

Kate Johnson

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Bridget Murnane

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Douglas Blair Turnbaugh

CREATIVE CONSULTANT

Michael J. Masucci

STORY CONSULTANT

Michelle R. Anderson

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Brenda Brkusic

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Michelle R. Anderson

ADDITIONAL CAMERA

Jesse Grce

Johanna Gullick

Kate Johnson

Maria Ramas

ADDITIONAL EDITING

Jesse Grce

Maria Ramas

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CINEMATOGRAPHER	Branko Cahun
CAMERA OPERATOR	Anton Štor
BOOM OPERATORS	Dario Mačešić Krunoslav Ljubanović
GAFFERS	Michel Baković Željko Vrščak
POWER TRUCK OPERATOR	Davor Drvodelić
DOLLY GRIP	Branko Vulić
DOLLY GRIP	Krešimir Čehulić Petar Orlić
JIB ARM OPERATORS	Davor Oblak Zoran Borković
DRIVERS	Mijo Budimlić Boris Vlahovaksi
NARRATOR	Maria Ramas
FORD PAVILION ANNOUNCER	Phil Oakley
NEWSREEL REPORTER	Michael J. Masucci
LOUIS BIANCOLLI	Michael J. Masucci

CROATIAN VOICES

CROATIAN VOICES

Brenda Brkusic

Dragan Culin

Milena Rasic Culin

Mike Milinkovic

Mile Rasic

Verica Rasic

INTERVIEWEES

Jack Anderson

Margery Beddow

Dinko Bogdanić

Joe Brandon

George Dorris

Maja Đurinović

Frederic Franklin

Lynn Garafola

Mitzi Gaynor

Fleur Israel

George Jackson

Alan Johnson

Mia Slavenska

Malcolm McCormick

Marion Scott

Ted Sprague

Maria Tallchief

Edward Villella

Raven Wilkinson

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Maja Đurinović

Lynn Garafola

Malcolm McCormick

Allegra Fuller Snyder

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Susan Ricketts

TRANSLATOR

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SOUND RECORDING

Johanna Gullick

Kate Johnson

Maria Ramas

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EZTV, Santa Monica, CA

ARCHIVAL FILM TRANSFER

Monaco Film Labs and Video Services, San Francisco, CA

Yale Film and Video Valencia, CA

CHOREOGRAPHY/MUSIC SYNCH CONSULTANT

Robert Morrow

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STILL PHOTOGRAPHY

Johanna Gullick

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Sean Fernald

MUSICIANS

SEA, Flute

Peggy Baldwin, Cello

Byran Pezzone, Piano

MUSIC RECORDED AT

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SCORE MIXER

Michael Aarvold

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EZTV Media, Santa Monica, CA

Pop Sound, Santa Monica, CA

Tree Falls Post, Los Angeles, CA

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ONLINE EDITOR AND COLORIST

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ARCHIVES

Cinematheque de la Danse

Tošo Dabac Archives

Framepool

Critical Past

eFootage

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ARCHIVES

Los Angeles Public Library
 Margarita Froman Archives, University of Connecticut
 Jacob's Pillow Dance Archives
 Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library,
 Ann Barzel Film Archives, Newberry Library
 Joe Brandon Photo Collection
 Mia Slavenska Film and Photo Collection
 Ringland Anderson Film Collection,
 Australian National Film and Sound Archive
 Zagreb Theater Archive

ARCHIVAL MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION EXCERPTS

Witch Dance

Choreographed and performed by
 Mary Wigman
 Danish Film Museum

A Streetcar Named Desire

Choreographed by Valerie Bettis
 Performed by the Slavenska Franklin Ballet
 Courtesy of Ann Barzel Film Archives
 The Newberry Library
 Thanks to Alison Hinderliter

A Streetcar Named Desire

Choreographed by Valerie Bettis
 Performed by the Slavenska Franklin Ballet
 Camera: Kurt Neumann
 Mia Slavenska Film and Photo Collection

Don Quixote Pas de Deux

Choreography after Petipa
 Performed by Mia Slavenska and Royes Fernandez
 Camera: Kurt Neumann
 Mia Slavenska Film and Photo Collection

Don Quixote Pas de Deux

Choreography after Petipa
 Performed by Mia Slavenska and Frederic Franklin
 Courtesy of Jacob's Pillow Dance Archive

Coppélia

Choreography after Arthur Saint-Léon
 Performed by Mia Slavenska
 Camera: Kurt Neumann
 Mia Slavenska Film and Photo Collection

ARCHIVAL MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION EXCERPTS

Parade

Choreographed by Léonide Massine,
 Performed by The Joffrey Ballet
 Dance in America, © WNET 1976

The Green Table

Choreographed by Kurt Jooss
 Performed by The Joffrey Ballet
 Dancing with Death, The Green Table
 Directed by Thomas Grimm © 2002 WTTW
 Original Ballets Russes Archival Footage
 Courtesy of The Australian Ballet

ARCHIVAL MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION EXCERPTS

Les Noces

Choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska
 Performed by the Royal Ballet
 Directed by: Ross MacGibbon
 Stravinsky Staged
 © BBC 2002

La Mort du Cygne

Directed by Jean Benoit-Levy
 Presented by Arthur Mayer and Joseph Burnstyn
 © Teledis. Appl. Au: Star Films. PUG 1938

Ed Sullivan Show

© Sofa Entertainment

The Great Waltz

Max Liebman Productions © 1955

The Bell Telephone Hour

A production of Henry Jaffe Enterprises, Inc.
 © 2005 Jaffe Partners Limited partnership.

Mia Slavenska 1983 Interview and footage of Mia Slavenska teaching
 Courtesy of Bridget Murnane

Dance Magazine Covers
 Courtesy of Dance Magazine

Portrait Painting of Mia Slavenska by
 Boris Chaliapin

ARCHIVAL STILL PHOTOGRAPHS BY

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 W.H. Stephan
 Bert Stern
 Studio Isis
 Francis Wolfe

RECORDED MUSIC

Tchaikovsky: "Introduction" from *Swan Lake*, Opus 20
 Arranged by Seth Berg and Raphael Tisdale
 Published by Aegeus Music Publishing
 Courtesy of Opus 1 Music Library

Chopin; Act 1 "Valse no. 13" from *Les Sylphides*
 Performed by the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by David Zinman
 © Phillips Classic Productions, 1993

Delibes, Act III: "L'aurore," "Bolero," "La Travail" from *Coppélia*,
 Performed by the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Andrew Mogrelia.
 Courtesy of Naxos of America

Rimsky-Korsakov: *Capriccio Espagnol*: "Alborada"
Sheherazade IV: "Allegro molto."
 Performed by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Vladimir Valek.
 Supraphon a.s., 2010

Delibes: "Danse de la Fete." From *Coppélia*
 Performed by the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by David Zinman.
 © Phillips Classics Productions, 1993

RECORDED MUSIC

Strauss, Jr.: “The Blue Danube Waltz”
 Performed by the Moscow Symphony Orchestra
 Arranged by Harry Standing
 Published by: Alliance AudioSparx
 Courtesy of AudioSparx

Tchaikovsky: Th12 –N4 “Pas de Trois 2” from *Swan Lake*, Opus 20.
 Arranged by Anais Morgan,
 Published by Musique & Music
 Courtesy of Opus 1 Music Library

Minkus: Act IV: “Entrance” and “Adagio” from *Don Quixote*
 Performed by the Sofia National Opera Orchestra conducted by Boris Spassov
 (p) Delta Music, 1995)

Tchaikovsky: Act III “Pas de Deux” and “Danses des cygnes” from *Swan Lake*
 Performed by the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by John Lanchbery
 © EMI Records, Ltd., 1989

Dean H. Anderson, “Houndogs and Hogs”
 Performed by Music Candy
 Published by AudioSparx and Music Candy
 Courtesy of AudioSparx

Alex North, “Main Title” and “Stan and Stella” from *A Streetcar Named Desire*
 Performed by Gerry Goldsmith and the National Philharmonic Orchestra
 Courtesy of Varese Sarabande Records © 1995
 Published by Warner Music by Arrangement with Warner Chappell Music

Sousa: “Invincible Eagle”
 Performed by the U.S Army Band

Delibes: “Intermezzo” and “Valse lente” from: *Sylvia Suite*
 Performed by Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra
 Courtesy of Naxos of America

Tchaikovsky, “June” from *Seasons*
 Piano: Byran Pezzone
 Arrangement by David Raiklen
 Courtesy of Raiklen Music

MUSIC FOR MIROGOJ SCENE

“Ako Spavaš vilo Moja”
 Traditional Folk Song
 Transcribed by Dinko Fio
 Produced by Nenad Bach
 Arranged by Nenad Bach, Ante Gelo, Dinko Fio

MUSIC FOR MIROGOJ SCENE

Performed by Klapa Nostalgija

Ante Krola- first tenor

Ivan Čikeš- second tenor

Martin Veža - second tenor

“Ako Spavaš vilo Moja”

Josip Vatabuk – baritone

Marko Rogošić – bass

Damir Rončević –bass

Musicians

Cello – Jasen Chelfi

Violin – Martina Sačer Pavlin

Violin – Tamara Petir

Viola – Tvrtko Pavlin

Mandolin – Ante Gelo

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