

## The American Ballet's Caravan

James Steichen

In October 1933 when George Balanchine was brought to the United States through the efforts of Lincoln Kirstein, the need to establish an indigenous tradition of ballet in the United States did not register as a pressing national priority. For one, the country had barely begun the long process of recovery from the worst financial crisis in its history.<sup>1</sup> If the bold actions begun earlier that year during the Roosevelt administration's "Hundred Days" had brought a new general sense of hope, the daily reality for most Americans was still quite grim, and would remain so for many years to come. In urban areas including New York City, where the Balanchine–Kirstein ballet enterprise would find a home, discontent among workers and the currency of progressive and socialist politics bred the fear—or anticipation—that the country might be on the brink of open revolution.

It was just not owing to politics or trying economic conditions that a new ballet company was not an urgent matter, however. As a growing body of scholarship has demonstrated, ballet and other forms of dance had already established quite deep roots in the U.S. by the early 1930s, and the Depression years would have proved an extremely fruitful period for the further development of dance in America with or without the addition of Balanchine to the mix. At the time that Balanchine and Kirstein were organizing their new venture, the country offered myriad pedagogical opportunities for aspiring dancers, whether in the numerous schools of ballet run by native and émigré instructors or the increasingly dominant institutions of modern dance.<sup>2</sup> Modern dance had in fact come to be understood as the more viable and appropriate idiom in which to create a uniquely American movement vocabulary distinct from ballet, which was dismissed by many as a decadent Old World import that could not truly speak to the experiences of the young nation, much less advance the left-wing political beliefs to which numerous choreographers and performers—many of whom were women and Jews (or both) from marginalized immigrant populations—were passionately committed.

Having not yet turned thirty years old and left-leaning in his politics, Kirstein was by no means unsympathetic to the dire challenges facing his fellow citizens in the early 1930s, nor was he unaware of prevailing trends in the arts more generally and dance in particular (see [Photo 1](#)). A co-

---

**James Steichen** received his PhD in musicology from Princeton University and is currently at work on a critical history of the first decade of the ballet enterprise of George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein. He is the author of two articles on the Metropolitan Opera's "Live in HD" cinema broadcast initiative and reference articles for the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism*. His reviews and translations have appeared in *Opera Quarterly*, *The Yale Review*, *Nineteenth-Century Theater and Film*, and *TLS*. Research for this article was completed with the support of a Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship and the Howard D. Rothschild Fellowship in Dance, Houghton Library Visiting Fellowship, Harvard University.



Photo 1. Lincoln Kirstein and Gisella Caccialanza, likely taken summer 1936. From the personal papers of Annabelle Lyon.

founder and editor of the modernist literary quarterly *Hound and Horn* and closely involved in the newly opened Museum of Modern Art, Kirstein was similarly well versed in the current state of dance in the U.S. and abroad. He had published several articles defending the continued relevance of ballet and notoriously critiquing what he regarded as the unstructured and overly individualized aesthetics of modern dance (Kirstein 1930, 1931).

It is without question, however, that the circumstances of Kirstein's birth had inured him to the widespread despair that pervaded so much of the country. His family's wealth and social prominence allowed him to cultivate wide-ranging interests in literature and the visual and performing arts during one of the bleakest periods of American history.<sup>3</sup> But the same social distinction that had made his projects possible in the first place was also partly to blame for the shaky public debuts of Balanchine and Kirstein's first performing company, the American Ballet. Geared to a small, Ivy League elite of which Kirstein and his business partner Edward Warburg were consummate exemplars, the 1935 Adelphi Theater debut of the company was shockingly tone deaf to the realities of the moment, and was famously dismissed by

dance and music critics alike as the somewhat amateurish offerings of a troupe that should rightfully be called "les ballets américains."<sup>4</sup>

The elitist and out-of-touch repertoire of the American Ballet has found a congenial foil in the output of another institutional predecessor of the New York City Ballet, the chamber-sized touring organization called Ballet Caravan—the second significant performing company to emerge from the Balanchine–Kirstein ballet enterprise. In contrast to the American Ballet, the Caravan has been understood as a more independent organization, operating separately if concurrently alongside the American Ballet and School of American Ballet in the later 1930s. Ballet Caravan has earned this status on the one hand due to the special leadership role that Kirstein played in its formation and management, and on the other owing to the distinctly American agenda of its aesthetic program.<sup>5</sup> Kirstein himself stressed his central role in the Caravan's organization, first in his pamphlet *Blast at Ballet* (1938a, 41–48) and later in *Thirty Years*, his diary-style history of NYCB:

Early in 1936 it had come to me that, all else failing, I had best attempt to form some sort of company by myself. . . . I decided to organize a small troupe on my own and call it Ballet Caravan. It would be self-sufficient, using a dozen of our best dancers, who would also serve as stage managers and stagehands. We could travel by bus and truck with our own lighting equipment, portable switchboard, drapes, and bits of scenery. (1978, 68)

This article revisits the genesis and first season of Ballet Caravan to show how the troupe was not in fact conceived in such independent and determinative terms, and was hardly an American-focused, much less a politically leftist endeavor in its inception. This new account of the Caravan's origins draws upon journalistic accounts of the company's first season and archival materials related to its performances,<sup>6</sup> as well as Kirstein's diaries and correspondence.<sup>7</sup> These sources not only reveal the contradictions in Kirstein's published writings on the Caravan, but more notably, they change our understanding of the troupe's initial relationship with the American Ballet and the complex landscape of dance performance in the 1930s. In short, Ballet Caravan was in its initial conception neither a dancer-driven initiative nor a carefully conceived attempt by Kirstein to pursue an American artistic agenda. Instead, the Caravan was a hastily organized affair, conceived of barely six weeks prior to its first performances in July 1936 as a practical response to an array of institutional crises facing the American Ballet, including Balanchine's health problems and Edward Warburg's increasing disinterest in remaining involved with the enterprise. If we are to regard the Caravan as Kirstein's from the outset, it was "his" not necessarily as an intentional aesthetic or institutional endeavor, but rather as an insurance policy to secure the continued existence of the ballet enterprise in which he was so invested, both literally and personally, in the event of the withdrawal of Balanchine or Warburg (or both). More simply put: Ballet Caravan in 1936 was not the Ballet Caravan that it would subsequently become. In fact, just like the American Ballet, the troupe was not particularly engaged with the political and economic realities of the 1930s and was for the most part an internal response to institutional challenges rather than a bold experiment in external engagement.

Most scholarly accounts of the Caravan (by dance scholars as well as a notable number of musicologists) have focused on its later repertoire, with particular attention granted to the troupe's two most popular ballets, both premiered in 1938 and the only two works to have outlived the company's five-year lifespan: *Filling Station* and *Billy the Kid*.<sup>8</sup> These and other ballets of the Caravan's later seasons, including *Yankee Clipper* and *City Portrait*, evince an explicit commitment to native and vernacular themes, inspired by and in turn contributing to regionalist and politically activist trends in the visual and performing arts in Depression-era America.<sup>9</sup> As will be shown below, however, these influences were for the most part absent from the Caravan's debut season. What is more, the Caravan's 1936 season saw the debut of the earliest choreographic efforts of Erick Hawkins, works previously unknown to dance scholars. But far from pointing to an earlier softening of Kirstein's adamant opposition to modern dance, these early works by Hawkins provide further evidence that the Caravan's early profile was firmly grounded in the aesthetics of ballet modernism to which the young impresario was so committed.

As the following new historical account of the origins and first season of Ballet Caravan shows, during the troupe's first year of existence, it was not the boldly experimental and politically engaged troupe that it would subsequently become. Far from a carefree and democratic collective, the Caravan was closely controlled and supervised by Kirstein in almost every respect. Its activities in 1936 accordingly rehearsed many of the missteps of the early repertoire of the American Ballet, offering ballets in an art-for-art's sake and Diaghilevian idiom that were novel mostly with respect to the more modest scale of their execution and the unconventional venues in which they were performed. In the eyes of many critics, these somewhat superficial modifications were reason enough to praise the Caravan as a more successful version of the American Ballet, even as it replicated many elements of the aesthetic program of its parent organization. The American Ballet and Ballet Caravan thus reveal themselves, at least in the Caravan's first season of the summer and fall of 1936, as more contiguous than distinct, sharing personnel, aesthetic values, and choreographic styles, as well as the involvement of Balanchine himself. Although the success of the troupe's first year allowed Kirstein to strike out more definitively on his own to pursue the explicitly American agenda for which it is mostly celebrated today, during this early phase, Ballet Caravan was for all intents and purposes the American Ballet's Caravan.

## Formation of Ballet Caravan and Bennington College Debut

Despite the fact that Ballet Caravan has been accorded a certain institutional independence in the pre-history of the New York City Ballet, the organization has seldom been the subject of sustained scholarly attention in and of itself.<sup>10</sup> And although the Caravan has figured in various historical accounts and other scholarly contexts, the precise reasons for its creation in 1936 and its relationship to the wider ballet enterprise of Balanchine and Kirstein have remained obscure. Echoing Kirstein's own accounts cited above, Anatole Chujoy's *The New York City Ballet* posits the Caravan as conceived of and led by the ambitious impresario, who sought a fresh institutional start following the American Ballet's unsteady first season as the resident troupe at the Metropolitan Opera (1953, 75–8). In addition to allowing Kirstein the opportunity to pursue a more explicitly American repertoire—something the American Ballet itself had yet to create—the Caravan fulfilled a more practical short-term need to provide employment to the American Ballet's dancers until their duties resumed at the Met later in the year (Chujoy 1953, 77). Debra Hickenlooper Sowell's (1998) account of the Caravan's formation, by contrast, tells this story in reverse. The Caravan's genesis is instead credited to the initiative of several of the dancers themselves—notably the Christensen brothers, who had prior experience making their own way as performers on vaudeville and variety circuits—in order to provide interim employment of their own accord (Sowell 1998, 122–4). It was only after the dancers started organizing this ad hoc touring group, as Lew Christensen recalled, that Kirstein became involved and the plans for the troupe became more substantive (123). Martin Duberman's biography of Kirstein tells a more complicated story of the Caravan's formation, calling the troupe an attempt to create “a viable prospect for the summer” in the wake of the American Ballet's unsuccessful season at the Met (2008, 315). Kirstein was motivated by a range of concerns: discontent with the lackadaisical commitment of Edward Warburg (Kirstein's main financial partner in the American Ballet enterprise), concerns over Balanchine's ill health, and new prospects on Broadway (after the successful premiere of *On Your Toes*), as well as a desire to pursue a new artistic agenda focused more exclusively on original work by American choreographers (Duberman 2008, 315–8).

Despite their differences, these three accounts all maintain that Ballet Caravan was conceived of to complement or supplement the activities of the American Ballet in some respect. Early press accounts and promotional materials suggest that there was indeed a close relationship between the two entities. Kirstein evidently took great pains to maintain the group as an official affiliate of the American Ballet, not as a distinct organization, and the Caravan's association with the company (and by extension the Metropolitan Opera) was an important selling point for the troupe. An early promotional brochure created for the first season describes the Caravan membership as “twelve accomplished dancers, all members of The American Ballet Ensemble which has recently completed its first season with the Metropolitan Opera in New York.”<sup>11</sup> Press coverage of the Caravan's first summer season of touring in July and August 1936 followed suit, identifying the troupe as composed of dancers from the American Ballet and making prominent reference to its affiliation with the Metropolitan Opera. The first of these was John Martin's introduction of the Caravan, the lead item in his Sunday column: “Its personnel consists of twelve dancers and a company manager from the ranks of the American Ballet” (Martin 1936a).<sup>12</sup> “Ballet Caravan Forms To Give Performances: Twelve Members of American Ballet in New Group,” announced an unsigned notice in the *New York Herald-Tribune*, adding in the article itself that the group “has been formed with the approval of the directors of the American Ballet” (“Ballet Caravan Forms” 1936). Similar talking points with prominent references to the American Ballet and the Met appear in press for the Caravan's other summer performances (“American Ballet at Westport” 1936; “American Ballet Group” 1936; “Ballet Numbers” 1936; “Summer Theatres: Ogunguit Playhouse” 1936). Still other notices mention only its opera affiliation, describing the troupe as “young dancers from the Metropolitan Opera,” leaving out the American Ballet entirely (“Summer Theatres” 1936a, 1936b).

The company's roster attests to the almost indistinguishable boundaries between the Caravan and the American Ballet. Twelve dancers, seven women and five men, formed the core of the group: Ruby Asquith, Ruthanna Boris, Gisella Caccialanza, Harold Christensen, Lew Christensen, Rabana Hasburgh, Erick Hawkins, Albia Kavan, Charles Laskey, Eugene Loring, Annabelle Lyon, and Hannah Moore (Kriegsman 1981, 57; Rhodes 1936b). All had been affiliated with the School of American Ballet and its company in the two years since its opening in 1934, though many had acquired extensive training and performing experience elsewhere. The leaders of the group were two of Kirstein's protégés, dancer and choreographer Douglas Coudy, also his lover at the time,<sup>13</sup> who was the company manager, and Lew Christensen, the group's ballet master (Martin 1936g). In addition, William Dollar, one of the principal male dancers of the American Ballet, choreographed a ballet for the company's first season, as well as appearing with Kirstein in a lecture-demonstration in the fall.<sup>14</sup> Despite this close relationship, Dollar is not named among the company members and is explicitly identified in the press as "not a member of the present company, but of the American Ballet, of which the Ballet Caravan is an offshoot" (Lloyd 1936a). Such minute distinctions reveal the unique institutional profile of the Caravan. Even as it claimed to be completely contiguous with its parent organization, it was apparently regarded as separate enough that Dollar's status had to be affirmed as that of a guest choreographer and not a company member.<sup>15</sup> The core dancers, however, felt no need to distinguish between their affiliation with the Caravan and the American Ballet, and continued to take class at the School of American Ballet, where the Caravan's initial rehearsals also took place (Interview with Annabelle Lyon, 1979).<sup>16</sup> Annabelle Lyon recalled virtually no distinction between her work for the Caravan and the American Ballet. When asked whether early rehearsals were "preparation for a new company with a new name," Lyon pointedly clarified to her interviewer that the Caravan was not thought of as something they were doing "instead of the American Ballet," but was rather something just for the summer "to give us work when the company was not functioning" (Interview with Annabelle Lyon).

These contradictory views on the Caravan's institutional independence could be attributed to the fact that the troupe was a distinct latecomer to the 1936 summer season. Despite his claim in *Thirty Years* that he developed the plan for the Caravan in "early 1936" (Kirstein 1978, 68), Kirstein's diaries and press coverage of the company attest to a more compressed time frame for the group's formation. Kirstein first mentions the very concept of a summer touring group in a diary entry dated May 28 and again on May 31, when he uses the "caravan" moniker (LK Diaries). John Martin's introductory report on the Caravan, published in the last days of June, explicitly characterizes the group as latecomers (Martin 1936a).<sup>17</sup>

Ballet Caravan gave its first performances at Bennington College's summer dance institute, and this engagement has been understood as symbolic of the troupe's indebtedness to both the aesthetics and institutional structures of modern dance (Garafola 2005b). Such observers include Kirstein himself—an erstwhile critic of what he regarded as modern dance's less structured and more idiosyncratic movement vocabularies (Manning 1993, 259–65)—who years later averred that, "Modern Dance may be said to have launched Ballet Caravan" (Kirstein 1978, 69). Sally Banes characterizes the Caravan's organizational model as "more like the small American modern dance company than the traditional ballet troupe," and speculates that Kirstein's embrace of modern dance was a cunning strategic decision (1999, 83). As Banes explains, "in attempting to create an alternative to the émigré Russian companies that he had come to despise," most notably Colonel de Basil's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, "despite his classical taste he looked for allies in the modern dance world" (1999, 83). This common-enemy theory is entirely plausible, since as Mark Franko and Gay Morris have observed, ballet and modern dance in America for much of the mid-twentieth century developed and defined themselves in a subtle if sometimes unacknowledged dialogue with one another as well as through a shared antagonism toward existing popular and commercial dance cultures (Franko 2002, 107–23; Morris 2006, 38–63).



According to the research of Janet Mansfield Soares, Kirstein approached Bennington founder and director Martha Hill directly to request a slot for the Caravan on the festival's program, which was ultimately granted over the objections of Hill's associate Mary Jo Shelly (Soares 2009, 83–85). Surviving journalistic and archival sources suggest that the Caravan's performances on July 17 and 18 were somewhat hastily arranged, like the formation of the company itself only six weeks earlier. John Martin's June 28 column announcing the formation of the Caravan makes no mention of the Bennington performances, which were subsequently announced in his column of July 5, barely two weeks in advance (Martin 1936a, 1936b).<sup>18</sup> Kirstein for his part mentioned the Bennington dates in a July 9 letter to his parents, then vacationing in France,<sup>19</sup> and first referenced the engagement in his diary on July 15 (LK Diaries).

The Caravan's engagement was evidently intended to provide ideological balance and new perspective to the Bennington Festival's offerings (see [Photo 2](#)). As Soares explains, Hill justified the inclusion of the troupe based not only on her latent affinity for ballet, but also on the grounds that "Kirstein's new effort might ferret out choreography that championed a healthier American spirit and perhaps serve as a counterbalance to the angst and browbeating of the leftist voices" (2009, 84). The Caravan's performances were ultimately presented separately from the official festival programs, however, perhaps in a conciliatory gesture to Shelly and other more partisan stakeholders.<sup>20</sup> This distinct status was made plain in press accounts, which describe the Caravan's performances as "unscheduled," "unexpected," and "outside the regular festival series."<sup>21</sup> All of which is to point out that the Caravan was initially included in Bennington's activities owing to its balletic credentials as an affiliate of the American Ballet. In other words, the troupe's affinity with modern dance circles might be better understood as a result, not necessarily a cause, of its Bennington debut.<sup>22</sup>

Despite this outsider status, the company received a much warmer welcome than it had anticipated for its performances, which evidently "added to the eclectic mix of dance offerings without much commotion" (Soares 2009, 88). According to Kirstein's diaries, the dancers were worried enough about their reception that they had mentally prepared themselves for "even heckling," but in the end the festival was more than generous and accommodating to the Caravan (LK Diaries, July 24). The group even earned special praise from Martha Graham, with whom Kirstein had begun to cultivate a close and mutually admiring relationship.<sup>23</sup> "Miss Graham was charming and demonstrative," according to Kirstein, and "said she realized we were in different worlds but she firmly believed in our destiny and in the vitality of the classic form" (LK Diaries, July 24).

## Summer on the Road

Although its Bennington debut positioned the Caravan among the leading and most influential exponents of modern dance, the company's subsequent performances would embrace the ethos of the latter in a different way, that is, by patching together a summer season through a heterogeneous itinerary of colleges, civic auditoriums, movie theaters, and other popular and private venues. Although the barnstorming journeys of Anna Pavlova had followed similar circuits (to much larger audiences), the more immediate model for the Caravan was the touring enterprises of Ted Shawn, Doris Humphrey, and Martha Graham.<sup>24</sup> This was perhaps no surprise since the woman responsible for the Caravan's management, Frances Hawkins, had made her name booking talent for such artists, most notably as a manager for Graham, and enjoyed direct entrée to the inner circles of modern dance. Along with Hill, Hawkins also no doubt helped facilitate the Caravan's appearance at Bennington, since she had worked at the festival as an administrative assistant in 1935 and in later seasons helped manage publicity (Kriegsman 1981, 15). Kirstein was well aware of Hawkins's unique portfolio, including her vaudevillian pedigree, and saw it as an asset for the Caravan's efforts.<sup>25</sup>

According to Kirstein's diaries, he first met with Hawkins on June 5 to discuss the possibility of her managing the Caravan, only a week after he had first mentioned the idea of the troupe, and on June



Photo 2. Members of Ballet Caravan, likely taken summer 1936 at Bennington College. From the personal papers of Annabelle Lyon.

16 she was officially contracted to manage the tour. “The mechanics of traveling seem far easier than I thought,” Kirstein noted in late July, “due mostly to the efficiency of our manager Francis [sic] Hawkins a very nice person indeed” (LK Diaries, July 24). Although Hawkins did not remain with the group for the entirety of the tour, she was “on hand at all important junctions and very helpful” (LK Diaries, August 7). In contrast to the recollections of Lew Christensen and others that the Caravan was a dancer-led initiative, Kirstein’s diaries suggest that this story was in fact a cunning public relations gambit of Hawkins’s invention. In part to contravene the perception that the Caravan represented an institutional schism with the American Ballet, Hawkins advised Kirstein to downplay his involvement and instead pretend that the concept for the troupe had originated with the dancers themselves.<sup>26</sup> Thus despite Kirstein’s perceived ownership of the Caravan, the success of the troupe’s first summer season—launched at the seat of modern dance and continued in a series of popular venues—might be credited more to Hawkins’s unique professional network and expertise rather than any distinct strategy on his part. This success is all the more notable given the extremely short lead-time that Hawkins had to arrange the tour at all.

If it is sometimes unclear where, what, and for whom the Caravan performed on each stop of its first summer tour, the overall complement of dances it presented is well documented. Many of the dances in this repertoire outlasted the summer, moreover, and were presented in several engagements in the fall of 1936 and in the Caravan’s subsequent seasons. Initially the repertoire included four one-act ballets, two of which were typically presented at any given performance. Lew Christensen’s *Encounter*, set to Mozart’s *Haffner Serenade*, is described by turns as a “classic ballet,” “in the classic manner,” or a “neo-classic ballet,” and featured costumes “after drawings of J. G. Von Schadow” but did not have any literal plot (Lloyd 1936a; Martin 1936g; Rhodes 1936a; “Summer Theatres: Ogunquit Playhouse” 1936). Eugene Loring contributed the more narrative “ballet pantomime” *Harlequin for President*—initially called *Harlequin’s Election* (“Dance Notes” 1936)—a commedia dell’arte-inspired “satire on contemporary politics” with music by Scarlatti and costumes by Keith Martin (Lloyd 1936a; Martin 1936g; Rhodes 1936a; “Summer Theatres: Ogunquit Playhouse” 1936, see Photos 3 and 4). The choreography for the “character ballet” *Pocahontas* has been generally credited to Christensen (Martin 1936g)—one account claims it was “composed by the group jointly” (Rhodes 1936a)—with an original score by Elliott Carter and costumes “after the engravings of Theodore de Bry” (Lloyd 1936a; Martin 1936g). William Dollar’s *Promenade* used Ravel’s *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, featured costumes “after Horace Vernet,” and was said to be based “on the modes and manners of the ascendant middle class of France in the period just after the revolution” (“Summer Theatres: Ogunquit Playhouse” 1936). In keeping with the insistence on Dollar’s special status with respect to the Caravan, *Promenade* was sometimes identified as “the only ballet composed outside the ranks of the company” (Martin 1936g).



Photo 3. Annabelle Lyon and Eugene Loring, posing in costume for Harlequin for President. From the personal papers of Annabelle Lyon.

Photo 4. Eugene Loring in costume for Harlequin for President. From the personal papers of Annabelle Lyon.



In *Blast at Ballet*, Kirstein maintained that the decision to include work by a variety of choreographers was an intentional strategy on his part: “Realizing the danger Diaghilev risked by never having more than two choreographers at his disposal at one time, and only five in his entire career, I started off by mounting four works by four different dancers” (1938a, 42). As will be shown below, there was a darker side to this strategy having to do with Balanchine’s poor health, but in any event, Kirstein’s decision was most likely born of necessity given the haste with which the company was organized and the inexperience of his young choreographers.

What is indisputable, however, is that Kirstein had primary artistic purview over the Caravan’s repertoire, and most of the season’s ballets were based on concepts that originated with him. In early June at Ashfield (his family’s estate in western Massachusetts), Kirstein met personally with Elliott Carter to discuss the commission of *Pocahontas* (LK Diaries, June 9) and coached Christensen through its conception and creation (LK Diaries, July 4). The music, décor, and libretto for William Dollar’s *Promenade* similarly originated with Kirstein, who consulted Vernet’s *Incroyables et Merveilleuses* engravings at the Metropolitan Museum in his research on the ballet’s costume designs (LK Diaries, July 2, 9). Christensen’s *Encounter* and Loring’s *Harlequin* were the two exceptions, although both were clearly pursued with Kirstein’s approval and ongoing consultation (LK Diaries, June 5, 11).

On the Caravan’s initial programs at Bennington, these four ballets were to be rounded out by a complement of “divertissements,” comprising “national dances and solos to music of Glinka, Prokofiev, Brahms, Corelli, and many other composers” (Rhodes 1936a). An early promotional brochure describes them as the concluding part of each program, calling them “a series of divertissements demonstrating in national dances and ballet solos the virtuosity of the company.”<sup>27</sup> Nine such dances were created, and as many as seven were to be included on a program.<sup>28</sup> Although none of these short pieces is credited to a specific



choreographer, Kirstein's diaries indicate that company manager Douglas Coudy was responsible for at least some of them (LK Diaries, July 2). Interestingly, this embrace of the crowd-pleasing divertissements as a rousing closing act shows an affinity with the practices of performers such as Pavlova and La Argentina, against whom Kirstein in other contexts would position his own institutional efforts.<sup>29</sup> The Caravan's divertissements were apparently more bewildering than engaging, however, perhaps providing context for Marjorie Church's remark in a *Dance Observer* review of the Bennington performances that the Caravan's dancers "seem a bit lost in eclecticism, at present, both of style and of technique" (Church 1936). (Additionally, this extensive musical repertoire was all performed on the piano.<sup>30</sup> What effect this might have had on the overall ethos of the shows is debatable—lending the performances either a more coherent or more monotonous quality—it remains a virtuosic feat in its own right.)

The Caravan's debut programs at Bennington can be regarded as a template for its eclectic approach to programming during its first year. The first performance paired the classic *Encounter* with the more narrative *Harlequin*, while the second included *Promenade* and *Pocahontas*, the latter of which was incomplete, but performed in part "so we could see what it looked like" ("Dance Notes" 1936; LK Diaries, July 24). The first program was rounded out by a series of seven divertissements, but for the second night, Kirstein decided to scrap the shorter pieces entirely, since "there wasn't enough good stuff to save it" (LK Diaries, July 24) and it is not clear to what extent they were included in subsequent engagements.<sup>31</sup> Variety continued to be a goal for the Caravan, however, with the American-themed and narrative ballets complementing more abstract fare on its programs, with the combinations of ballets remaining flexible.

The Caravan's fifth ballet, added to the repertoire partway through the summer tour, was *The Soldier and the Gypsy*, a "character ballet in seven scenes" with music by Manuel de Falla and choreographed by Douglas Coudy (Lloyd 1936a; Martin 1936g). The ballet was a condensed retelling of *Carmen*, albeit with a different score, and featured costumes by Charles Rain "unconventionally of Spanish flavor" (Lloyd 1936a). Denby praised the narrative quality of the ballet, reporting that it was "an interesting attempt to combine dancing with *parlando* movement, so to speak" (1936, 52). Like *Pocahontas* and *Promenade*, the concept, score, and décor (and in this case even the casting) for this ballet originated with Kirstein, who in mid-July mentions the idea of "a Spanish ballet on *Carmen* for Ruthanna Boris" to be created by Coudy (LK Diaries, July 15 and August 13). Although the Caravan has been characterized as a democratically run organization in which there were no stars and decisions were made collectively (Sowell 1998, 123–4), the addition of this fifth ballet at the insistence of Kirstein provides evidence to the contrary. According to Kirstein's diaries, there was grumbling in the ranks about this particular decision, as several of the dancers thought that the troupe's funds might have been better spent to augment their salaries (August 29). Thus despite his own Popular Front politics, magnanimous labor relations toward the troupe's dancers did not always trump Kirstein's own artistic vision and priorities for the Caravan.

In addition to these five ballets, early press accounts mention a sixth work called *Rondo*, a "ballet in classic style" choreographed by Erick Hawkins to music by Carl Maria von Weber, which would occasion one of the more tumultuous episodes in the Caravan's early history ("Ballet Caravan Forms" 1936; Martin 1936a; Rhodes 1936a).<sup>32</sup> This ballet was in fact abandoned in rehearsal after the dancers revolted against its confusing and overcomplicated choreography, with the situation becoming so dire that Hawkins was briefly voted out of the Caravan by his fellow dancers, to be reinstated later after careful politicking on the part of Kirstein (LK Diaries, June 5, 9, 11, 16, 24, 25 and July 2, 4). Unlike the dancers, Kirstein remained committed to Hawkins's ballet despite seeing its faults as it was under development, at first describing it as "too full of difficulty but may be OK when cleaned up" (LK Diaries, June 16) but later recognizing that the ballet was "impossibly difficult and complex and the kids hate to do it" (June 24). Kirstein felt a keen sense of loyalty to Hawkins, since the dancer had been the first consulted about the idea of the Caravan, and

Kirstein cites this early enthusiasm, as well as his talent, as a reason for keeping him on (May 28, July 2).

*Rondo* is mentioned in two previews of the Caravan's summer activities ("Ballet Caravan Forms" 1936; Martin 1936a), and in an August report in the UK-based *Dancing Times*, which perhaps was written and filed before the ballet was definitively scrapped (Rhodes 1936a). In addition to references in the press, *Rondo* is listed alongside *Encounter*, *Pocahontas*, and *Harlequin* in an early Caravan promotional brochure; however, none of the ballets is attributed to specific choreographers, suggesting that Kirstein may have been hedging his bets.<sup>33</sup> Its contentious backstory aside, *Rondo* is notable as a choreographic credit for Hawkins one year earlier than what is generally regarded as his first ballet, the 1937 *Show Piece* (also created for the Caravan). Kirstein's advocacy for *Rondo* also demonstrates his early belief in the talent of Hawkins, who would ultimately achieve his greatest success not in ballet but in modern dance as the partner (and sometime husband) of Martha Graham, who first became personally and artistically enamored of the dancer in the wake of the Caravan's 1936 Bennington performances.<sup>34</sup>

Following its Bennington debut, the Caravan stayed in the immediate vicinity for several performances in Vermont, performing on July 20 in Burlington, presented by the University of Vermont's Summer Session<sup>35</sup>, and the following day before a capacity audience in the gymnasium at Middlebury College, at the invitation of Professor André Morize's summer French program.<sup>36</sup> The Caravan would return to northern New England in mid-August, performing in Keene and Claremont, New Hampshire; Dorset, Manchester, and Woodstock, Vermont; and then after a considerable journey up the coast, Skowhegan, Maine ("Ballet Closes Tour" 1936; LK Diaries, August 29). John Martin reported that several of these engagements were part of a larger arrangement with a chain of movie theaters.<sup>37</sup> Kirstein's diary mentions this theater owner by name and reports a generous gesture on his part after a lightly attended performance at a movie theater in Keene: "Mr. Latchi the Greek proprietor of a string of 14 movie houses refused his percentage (some \$10) because we'd made no complaints" (LK Diaries, August 29). Demetrius Latchis was in fact the name of the theater owner, a Greek immigrant whose name still adorns a theater complex in Brattleboro, and whose Claremont, New Hampshire, venue, where the Caravan performed in August, was called the Latchis Theatre.<sup>38</sup>

If the Caravan was practical enough to accept gigs dancing in movie theaters—and well-behaved enough to endear itself to the owners—the group also made itself available to more exclusive clients. On two occasions it scheduled what amounted to command performances in summer enclaves of the East Coast elite. The above-mentioned performance in Manchester, Vermont, on August 18 was one such engagement, evidently not arranged by anyone as recently arrived to America as Mr. Latchis. The Caravan was instead the evening entertainment for a gala dinner in Manchester, reported only in a society column, which, true to convention, is composed almost wholly of the names of couples slated to attend the event and mentions only in passing the "ballet caravan" that was to perform ("Manchester Plans Ballet Caravan" 1936).<sup>39</sup>

The Caravan received more extensive, albeit similarly nominal, coverage for a semi-private engagement in East Hampton, Long Island, on August 9. Mrs. Lorenzo E. Woodhouse was the hostess of the benefit performance, which was held in the gardens of the "playhouse" on her estate (see [Photo 5](#)).<sup>40</sup> No fewer than two additional social events were held in advance of the Caravan's East Hampton performance. First was a July 30 reception and tea "for the Southampton and East Hampton patrons' invitation committee for the Ballet Caravan" hosted by Mrs. Henry Austin Clark at her home, Four Acres ("Brothers to Honor" 1936; "Nancy Van Vleck" 1936). Over thirty women are listed as having attended this gathering, all of whom were members of the "patroness committee working for the success of the performance of the Ballet Caravan" ("T. H. Wrights" 1936).<sup>41</sup> The second advance event was a July 31 luncheon for "several Southampton members of the junior committee who will act as ushers at the performance of the Ballet Caravan," hosted by Miss



Photo 5. Ballet Caravan performance in East Hampton, Long Island, 1936. From the personal papers of Annabelle Lyon.

Elizabeth Clark (presumably Mrs. Clark's daughter) at the Beach Club ("Maureen V. Smith" 1936). What is more, the Caravan's performance held a prominent enough place on the summer social calendar that it merited mentioning amid the byzantine comings and goings of individuals not directly involved in the planning of the performance: "Mrs. John A. Topping of Greenwich, Conn., who is visiting Mrs. William A. Lockwood at Ivy Cottage, will be guest of honor at a luncheon to be given by Mrs. Harry L. Hamlin Sunday at the Hedges. The party will see 'Ballet Caravan,' at Mrs. Lorenzo E. Woodhouse's Playhouse later" ("East Hampton Planning" 1936).<sup>42</sup>

Although the Caravan's East Hampton performance and its ancillary events are mentioned in over a dozen society notices, no details as to the program are mentioned, much less the names of any of the dancers, or Kirstein or Coudy. As was perhaps the case in Manchester, the Caravan was merely the entertainment du jour, not invited due to any special interest on the part of the hosts in their artistic agenda. Although Kirstein's diary does not explain how the engagement came about, it does capture its uninspiring atmosphere, describing Mrs. Woodhouse as "a dreary white woman who was dashed because I wouldn't let her play her Wurlitzer in the intermission" and the assembled audience as "cold and Republican" (August 13). Underscoring the off-the-books status of this engagement is its absence from John Martin's column.<sup>43</sup>

However unsatisfying they may have been, these engagements demonstrate how the Caravan was both willing and able to operate in multiple spheres during its first experimental season. It benefited not just from Frances Hawkins's knowledge and expertise in the ways of modern dance and vaudeville, but also from the Kirstein family's standing among the East Coast establishment—the same kind of connections that had made possible the American Ballet's first performances at the estate of Frieda and Felix Warburg in White Plains, New York, in June 1934. Notably, these engagements are not mentioned in Kirstein's published accounts of the Caravan, not quite in keeping with the populist and politically leftist ethos that he would cultivate for the troupe in later seasons.

The Caravan's adaptability was also demonstrated by the first of its two extended engagements of the summer—an appearance in a weeklong production of Molière's *The Would-Be Gentleman* at the



Photo 6. Posed photo from *The Would-Be Gentleman*, Westport, Connecticut, 1936. From the personal papers of Annabelle Lyon.

Country Playhouse in Westport, Connecticut, beginning on August 3.<sup>44</sup> This English-language production was produced by Theatre Guild co-founder Lawrence Langer and starred vaudeville star and “master pantomimist” Jimmy Savo in his first speaking role as M. Jourdain.<sup>45</sup> The Caravan was credited by name in advertisements for the play, a high-low admixture—Louis XIV meets

Photo 7. Posed photo from *The Would-Be Gentleman*, Westport, Connecticut, 1936. From the personal papers of Annabelle Lyon.





vaudeville—that in retrospect was entirely in keeping with the eclecticism of its summer activities (see [Photos 6 and 7](#)). The engagement also served the Caravan’s mission of providing choreographic experience for its dancers, since the troupe was responsible for four original incidental dance numbers. For music they turned to Lully’s original *comédie-ballet* score, with Lew Christensen’s Mozartian *Encounter* also adapted as an interpolated number (Martin 1936c; Rhodes 1936b). Of the original dances, Eugene Loring created the *Dance of the Tailors* and the *Ballet of the Cooks*, while Christensen was responsible for a ceremonial dance in the play’s Turkish scene, in addition to *Encounter* (Martin 1936c; Rhodes 1936b). The fourth new number, the *Ballet of the Peacock Among the Roosters*, is attributed to Erick Hawkins—like the above-mentioned *Rondo* a choreographic credit one year earlier than his 1937 *Show Piece* (Martin 1936c; Rhodes 1936b). In the end, some of the company’s efforts would be for naught. According to Kirstein’s diary, Loring’s ballets “looked neat” and were presumably given in their entirety, while only half of Hawkins’s *Peacock* ballet made the cut, and only the last movement of Christensen’s *Encounter* was ultimately included (August 7).<sup>46</sup>

The troupe’s second extended engagement of the summer was also its last—a week-long “dance festival” at the summer stock theater owned and operated by Walter Hartwig in Ogunquit, Maine (see [Photos 8–10](#)), beginning August 31 and closing on Labor Day, September 7 (“American Ballet Group” 1936; Martin 1936e; “Summer Theatres” 1936a and 1936b). Unlike its weeklong appearance in Westport, this series of performances included all five works of its core repertoire in three different programs.<sup>47</sup> According to one account, it was “believed to be the first time in this country that a ballet company is playing a week’s series from its own repertoire in the summer season” (“Ballet Closes Tour” 1936). Of its offerings at Ogunquit, *Harlequin for President* was evidently better received than it had been in the Hamptons, and even elicited vocal acclaim from the otherwise quiet theater-goers:

Photo 8. Ogunquit Playhouse, 1936. From the personal papers of Annabelle Lyon.



The highlight of the evening was the end of the ballet called *Harlequin for President*, a satire on contemporary politics, which a few weeks ago aroused the indignation of certain conservatives in the audience on Long Island. In Ogunquit, where there is an equally conservative audience, the interpretation of the satire seemed a bit different, and there were shouts of “Bravo” from the front rows—the first time this season that the patrons have ever raised their voices during a production. (“Summer Theatres: Ogunquit Playhouse” 1936)

This same review claims that this was the first time that a ballet group had been presented on a summer theater program. Kirstein’s diaries describe the audiences as “sparse but enthusiastic,” and that the weather was “cool and damp” (September 25). Kirstein also maintains that it was the Ogunquit performances that had occasioned the addition of



Photo 9. Members of Ballet Caravan, likely taken summer 1936 in Ogunquit, Maine. From the personal papers of Annabelle Lyon.

*The Soldier and the Gypsy* to the company's ballets, since without a repertoire of five ballets they would not have been able to secure the engagement—a successful and satisfying end to what only two months earlier had appeared to be an uncertain summer of touring (LK Diaries, August 29).

## The Caravan Continues, Fall 1936

Buoyed by its summertime success, the Caravan carried on into the fall, with several performances in New York City and in surrounding regions. In fact, on September 6—the Sunday of Labor Day weekend, while the Caravan was still performing in Maine—John Martin's column announced the troupe's most significant booking to date: the opening performances of the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) dance season, opening a season including Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Anna Sokolow (Martin 1936f). In its two performances, the group presented the five core works from its summer tour: on October 31, *Promenade*, *The Soldier and the Gypsy*, and *Encounter*, and on November 1, *Encounter*, *Pocahontas*, and *Harlequin for President* (see Photo 11).<sup>48</sup> Prior to this New York debut, on October 13 Kirstein and members of the Caravan presented a lecture-demonstration on “the development of the ballet” at the New School, the third event in a series termed “The Dance in the Social Scene” (Martin 1936h; “Music Notes” 1936). These two engagements at key institutional homes of modern dance point to Kirstein's larger ambitions for the group's permanence and aesthetic independence. The Caravan also went back on the road to New England, performing on October 20 in Montpelier, Vermont, at the invitation of the town's Theatre Guild and two days later at Amherst College at the invitation of the campus group the Amherst Masquers,<sup>49</sup> in addition to appearing at Smith College<sup>50</sup> and in Hartford and in Danbury, Connecticut.<sup>51</sup>

Kirstein's decision to continue the Caravan's activities into the fall did not lend much credence to the claim that the troupe was merely a summer adjunct of the American Ballet. And indeed, despite the insistence on the Caravan's collaborative relationship with the American Ballet, there had been rumors of schism from the start, made all the more plausible given how quick Kirstein had been to



Photo 10. *Ogunquit Playhouse Program for Ballet Caravan, 1936. Douglas Coudy Scrapbook, \*MGZRS 00-1604, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. Used with permission of the Ogunquit Playhouse.*

assert the cordial relations between the two entities. John Martin's initial report on the Caravan quoted the organizers as maintaining that the group is "neither a secession from nor a part of the American Ballet, but a collective arrangement of its members, and enjoying the good wishes of the directors of the American Ballet itself" (Martin 1936a). "It represents a round dozen of the youngsters who have danced at the Metropolitan Opera Ballet this season," reported Russell Rhodes in *The Dancing Times*, alluding more directly to contentious politics, "and emphasis is placed on the fact that there is a rift in the ranks of the ballet, but that the directors have wished this little group luck in their summer enterprise" (1936a). Economic necessity was also cited as a practical rationale for the existence of the group, promoted via the innocent cover story concocted by Frances Hawkins: "Its personnel consists of twelve young members of the American Ballet," as Martin reported, "who were anxious to keep at work and earn a livelihood during the long interval when the parent organization was inactive" (Martin 1936g). And in fact, the majority of the fall performances of the Caravan did not interfere with the American Ballet's duties at the Metropolitan Opera, whose 1936 season would not begin until December 21 ("Twenty-One

THE DANCE CENTER  
of the  
YOUNG MEN'S HEBREW ASSOCIATION  
LEXINGTON AVENUE AT 92ND STREET  
NEW YORK CITY  
Presents

## The Ballet Caravan

EDMUND HORN, Pianist

SAT. and SUN. EVENINGS  
OCT. 31 and Nov. 1, 1936  
at 9 P.M. in the  
Theresa L. Kaufmann  
Auditorium

### PROGRAM

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

#### I. PROMENADE—(Classic Ballet in One Act)

Music by Maurice Ravel (*Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*)  
Choreography by William Dollar  
Costumes after Horace Vernet

1. Promenade . . . . . Ensemble
2. Venus and Adonis . . . . . Annabelle Lyon and Charles Laskey
3. The Three Graces with Satyr . . . . . The Misses Asquith, Kavan,  
Moore, and Eugene Loring
4. Apollo and Daphne . . . . . Rabanna Hasburgh and Lew Christensen
5. Hercules and Omphale . . . . . Kathryn Mullooney and Eric Hawkins
6. Echo and Narcissus . . . . . Gisella Caccialanza and Harold Christensen
7. Promenade . . . . . Ensemble

After the French Revolution, the classic ideal in myth, architecture, costume and manners was the model for the ascendant middle class. In a nervous society recovering from one cataclysm and expecting another at any moment, extravagant parallels and fantastic aberrations made affection compulsory and simplicity a final affectation.

10 Minute Intermission

\*MGZB Caccialanza, Gisella

no. 1

Photo 11. YMHA Program for Ballet Caravan, 1936. \*MGZB Caccialanza, Gisella (Programs), Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. Used with permission of the 92 Street Y.

New Singers” 1936). The Ballet’s opera duties thus resumed at the start of December, meaning that Kirstein had to secure a special dispensation for only one of the Caravan’s performances, on December 1 in Hartford, the troupe’s final performance of 1936 (LK Diaries, October 12).

If the Caravan’s schedule worked around the American Ballet’s obligations at the Met, it did begin to assert a more independent status in the course of its summer tour and into the fall. A brochure prepared for the company later in this first season maintains explicitly that the Caravan, despite drawing its membership from the American Ballet, “is a separate entity and its entire repertory is newly composed by its own dancers.”<sup>52</sup> *Musical America* in a November report termed it “a group of thirteen dancers from the American Ballet, but independent from the parent organization,” even as the headline of this same notice calls it a “unit” of the American Ballet (“Ballet



Makes Debut” 1936). Most notably, Edwin Denby’s review of its October performance at the YMHA refers to the group as the “American Ballet Caravan,” commonly regarded as the name invented by Kirstein for the South American tour of the combined remnants of the two companies in 1941 (“Ballet Makes Debut” 1936). That this amalgamation appears in association with the group from its earliest days, and would continue to be associated with the Caravan (especially after the collapse of the American Ballet in 1938), shows how the two branches of the organization remained more or less institutionally contiguous during this first year, two interdependent units of the larger Balanchine–Kirstein enterprise.

Kirstein’s *Blast at Ballet* ascribes both nonchalance and intentionality to the formation of the Caravan and parrots Frances Hawkins’s talking points to emphasize the interest of the dancers themselves in pursuing a new kind of ballet: “So I organized a small troupe of dancers from our own school, which had been incidentally very successful, and from among those of the American Ballet proper who were dominantly interested in classic ballet choreography applied to native themes” (Kirstein 1938a, 41). Kirstein even posited larger ambitions for the group, calling it “in microcosm a permanent laboratory for classic dancing by, with and for Americans” (1938a, 42). As Kirstein’s own diaries reveal, however, his decision to form the Caravan did not in fact arise purely from his own interests or those of the dancers. The Caravan was a venture thrust upon him by necessity—a response to a constellation of dire circumstances suddenly facing the American Ballet.

These challenges facing the American Ballet centered first and foremost on Balanchine’s ongoing ill health. In July 1934, Balanchine had suffered a shocking seizure-like attack in Kirstein’s presence, which was never definitively diagnosed and perhaps resulted from the lingering effects of tuberculosis (LK Diaries, July 12, 1934).<sup>53</sup> Balanchine’s health was a continual source of consternation, not the least during the period leading up to the American Ballet’s official company debut in March 1935 at the Adelphi Theater. In the months prior to the formation of the Caravan, Balanchine’s condition took another turn for the worse. On May 25, 1936, Kirstein recorded that Balanchine was home sick for several days “with fever and a flare up in his lungs,” such that William Dollar had to oversee the Ballet’s rehearsals at the Met, “rather sloppily though they seem to come out ok on the stage” (May 25, 27). Balanchine’s health episode was severe enough, especially in light of previous incidents, that it sent Kirstein “into pitch of how to organize for activity without him,” and even prompted him “to think of what to do if Balanchine died: Loss of Met. Dispersal of the troupe” (May 27).

At the same time that Kirstein saw Balanchine’s life in danger once again, the American Ballet’s summer performance schedule was also looking bleak. Following its Adelphi debut in 1935, the company had been relatively active during the summer months, with performances at the Lewisohn Stadium in upper Manhattan, the Robin Hood Dell in Philadelphia, and a benefit performance in Westchester County. Prior to the summer of 1936, things were looking similarly promising, as the troupe had been tentatively slated to appear not just again at Lewisohn Stadium but also at Jones Beach for several weeks of performances. In late May, however, just as Balanchine was falling sick, this engagement fell through because the Lewisohn management insisted that the group not reprise its existing repertoire but rather present new work, which the company was not in a position to do (May 25). “The Stadium, Jones Beach etc all seem to be dubious for some reason or another,” Kirstein wrote in his diary, and was in ongoing discussions with Warburg about how to deal with this situation (May 25, 27). By May 28 the Lewisohn engagement was also out of the picture: “Stadium doesn’t want us. Hence 3 w[ee]ks of work in July is out: rather depressing for the kids” (May 28).

This loss of work would not have been so devastating in and of itself had it not been for another related challenge, that is, Edward Warburg’s increasing disinterest in the American Ballet. “The kids w[oul]d go and come back,” Kirstein noted after the July engagements fell through, “but I hate to

let them go for the whole summer as I fear Warburg w[oul]d lose interest” (May 28). Warburg for his part was not just losing interest in the American Ballet, but was resistant to the idea of the Caravan and even cited trumped up legal concerns to delay the signing of Frances Hawkins’s contract, which only made Kirstein’s resolve stronger: “Warburg thinks up all sorts of possible horror for the Amer[ican] Bal[let] in the Caravan but in spite of him I shall continue even if it am[oun]ts to a break” (June 11). Kirstein soon after managed to get Warburg to admit that he wanted out of the Ballet, that his involvement amounted to “being screwed without pleasure,” and he only continued to remain involved out of a sense of guilt (June 24). Despite his ambivalence, Warburg remained with the company for the summer and into the following year, and only deepened his financial investment, acquiescing in August 1936 to Balanchine’s request for a \$5,000 Stravinsky commission for the coming season, which would result in the ballet *Jeu de cartes* (August 1).

Even if Kirstein was increasingly frustrated with Warburg and to a certain degree wanted the Caravan to himself, the troupe did not represent a definitive break with Balanchine. And even though Balanchine’s bad health had been one of the precipitating events that had led to the creation of the Caravan, he was healthy enough to be consulted regularly about the Caravan’s activities over the course of the summer. Only a week after Kirstein had been contemplating the choreographer’s imminent death, Balanchine was again on the mend and wasn’t “as sick as we feared. Mainly a question of rest” (LK Diaries, June 4). Soon after, Balanchine was back in the studio for the Caravan’s initial rehearsals and, notably, advised Erick Hawkins not use Debussy but rather the sonatas of Weber for his new ballet (LK Diaries, June 5). Balanchine decamped the following day to Westport, Connecticut, to convalesce but would remain involved in the planning of the Caravan’s season (LK Diaries, June 6). In mid-June, Kirstein and Coudy made a special trip to Westport to update him on the progress of the Caravan, in a meeting at which William Dollar was also present. Balanchine had “mental reservations” about the Caravan, specifically about whether “the boys can do choreography,” and was reserved in expressing this opinion owing to Dollar’s presence (LK Diaries, June 17). At the end of June, Balanchine returned to the city to observe the progress of the Caravan’s first three ballets. He apparently concurred with the growing concerns about Hawkins’s *Rondo*, deeming it “too confused,” but like Kirstein saw greater potential and declared that, “in four years he would be excellent choreographer” (LK Diaries, June 25). Christensen’s *Encounter*, by contrast, “had taste and brilliance and was complete,” and while he was not taken by Loring’s *Harlequin* ballet, he thought it would be a popular success (June 25).

When the Caravan came to Westport for its appearance in *The Would-Be Gentleman*, Balanchine was again back in the mix, but still not fully recovered. On the one hand he was “full of necessity to have Stravinsky and Gershwin ballets and two months of rehearsals,” but at the same time declared himself too weak to sign a first edition of Noverre he had purchased as a gift for Kirstein (LK Diaries, July 28). Kirstein and Balanchine met on August 1 in Westport to discuss the future of the Ballet, and both were evidently at peace with Warburg’s potential defection, in part because they agreed that “as soon as [he] has no responsibility will give twice as much cash” (LK Diaries, August 1). As he had done earlier in the summer, Balanchine came to rehearsal and provided a good deal of “useful criticism” about the incidental dances for the play and “was very nice with the kids” (LK Diaries, August 7). Kirstein still had concerns about his health, however: “Doesn’t seem terribly well. He coughs and is not a dry atmosphere here” (August 7). These lingering worries lend some credence to Kirstein’s claim to have recruited multiple choreographers for the Caravan so as not to depend entirely on one figure, albeit for practical and not necessarily artistic reasons.

Balanchine’s involvement, however sporadic, gives lie to the status of the Caravan as an exclusively Kirstein-driven vehicle and entirely separate from the American Ballet. While the Caravan’s dances were still in preparation, moreover, Kirstein readily noted the influence of Balanchine: “Choreography will continue straight through from George Bal. but it must have this chance” (LK Diaries, June 11). This influence was obvious not just to Kirstein but to some critics, showing how also with respect to its initial choreographic style the Caravan remained closely aligned with its

parent organization. A review of the Caravan's Hartford performances captures the Balanchine ethos that pervaded the repertoire:

As for the choreography itself, no one is going to deny that it shows the impress of the troupe real maître, George Balanchine. It is not to be otherwise expected. It has much of his free style, in which the classic restraint is rather unlaced, but in which the classic manner and form is always there. It has his penchant for continual movement, particularly of the ensemble as a whole; his sense of build-up and climax; his partiality for the athletic. The neo-Romantic touch is continually there, in the spirit of *Promenade* especially. ("Ballets Are Brilliantly Performed" 1936)

Not only had the dancers internalized their master's technique, however, they had also gleaned the better qualities of his style, eschewing his more experimental inclinations. As one critic noted, approvingly, their choreography "happily does not employ the grotesqueries to which Balanchine has been too often drawn" ("Ballets Are Brilliantly Performed" 1936).

## The Caravan and the American Ballet

Ballet Caravan has often been posited as the most explicitly American of the several antecedent companies of the New York City Ballet. "At first our ideas were disjointed and vague," as Caravan dancer Ruthanna Boris recalled, "but gradually they connected themselves and emerged as a beautiful, possible dream—a dream of American ballet dancers dancing America!" (Boris 1937), and in reviews of its debut season, Edwin Denby called the troupe "pleasantly un-Russian" (1936, 52). Such enthusiasm aside, it is evident that there was very little that was explicitly American about Caravan's first season, aside from the nationality of its dancers, choreographers, and designers. This should not be regarded as a failure of the organization, for Kirstein's belief in an American ballet company was rooted in the eminent adaptability of the *danse d'école* in new contexts. And to be sure, the makeshift quality and hodgepodge venues of the Caravan's first tour certainly distinguished it from its more established European forebears and its contemporary competitors, most notably de Basil's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

Nevertheless, it is remarkable to what extent the repertory of the Caravan's first season remained within the aesthetic comfort zone of the Franco-Russian tradition consolidated and cultivated by Diaghilev and his followers. Even as Kirstein's Caravan sought to shed the pejorative "ballets américains" label that had dogged the American Ballet since its first performances, it was for all intents and purposes still heavily indebted to the aesthetics of the "Russianballet," for which the Caravan was supposed to be the antidote, as Kirstein maintained in *Blast at Ballet*. Its ballets featured repurposed classical music by Scarlatti, Mozart, Ravel, and de Falla, and were based on material from the French Revolution to *Carmen*. Despite Kirstein's claim of pursuing stripped-down production values, each of the Caravan's ballets included an explicit credit for costumes, whether for the actual designer or the artist who had inspired them, in keeping with Diaghilevian practice, and all works were in the one-act format long codified by the Ballets Russes. The earliest days of the Caravan confirm in a very direct way Nancy Reynolds's observation that Kirstein quite consciously modeled his aesthetics and career as an impresario on the great Diaghilev (Reynolds 1999). In another respect, Kirstein's mentor-like (and sometimes erotic) relationships with the Caravan's young and exclusively male choreographers should similarly be understood as an implicit if not explicit emulation of Diaghilev.

Diaghilev aside, the Caravan's repertoire in its first year was not appreciably different from the initial offerings of the American Ballet, and certainly not much more American, except in its being choreographed, danced, and designed by Americans. Following the American Ballet's example, the Caravan presented only one work with an explicitly American subject and a newly

commissioned score by an American composer, Christensen and Carter's *Pocahontas*—the same way that the collegiate satire *Alma Mater* had been the American Ballet's only native calling card. Loring's *Harlequin*, with its American political subject matter, only partially passes muster on this account, given its commedia dell'arte aesthetic and score by Scarlatti. It might seem odd that the Caravan reproduced the very aesthetic that it was trying to break free from, virtually replicating the Europhile model of its parent organization. But in light of the internal politics discussed above, however, in which the Caravan was not an independently conceived organization but rather an insurance policy designed to keep the American Ballet from collapsing, this convergence of style is perhaps less surprising.

If in its repertoire the Caravan had produced an aesthetic alignment with the American Ballet, in other respects the troupe emerged as a more successful foil to its parent organization, especially in the modest scale of its productions values. Margaret Lloyd of the *Christian Science Monitor* explicitly praised the Caravan as a more satisfying kind of American ballet than had been attempted by the first seasons of the American Ballet. Although both organizations excelled in the youthful exuberance of their performers, it was the Caravan that had leveraged its talents and acknowledged its limitations appropriately, and had more fully lived up to the name of its parent organization:

The American Ballet, having only youth and vivacity to work on and being pushed too far ahead of its capacities, has not yet risen adequately to its assignment. Having for chief choreographer the Russian, Georges Balanchine, and being mainly of American constituency, it was unable to blend the opposing psychologies. But that was only one trouble. The larger difficulty lay in their being rushed to a task they were not ready for.

The Ballet Caravan was organized last summer soon after the close of the opera season, for the purposes of developing a truly American ballet, giving the young dancers a chance to compose for themselves and an opportunity to work together in that cooperative spirit which makes for unity. . . . During [the summer season] they have built up a repertoire, strengthened their resources, while earning their own way, and probably enlarged their visions for the future. (Lloyd 1936a)

Like Lloyd, Denby similarly praised the naïve and genuinely American ethos of the Caravan, whose charm and commitment compensated for any apparent faults in technique or execution:

There is an American freshness and an American modesty that is charming. There may be as yet the usual faults of beginners—lyricism, too timid a dramatic attack, too little concentration choreographically, and occasionally by some dancers more projection than the moment warrants. But the important thing is that young talents get a chance and that the enterprise as a whole is lively and real and part of us. (Denby 1936)

Kirstein in *Blast at Ballet* downplayed the successes of the Caravan's first summer tour, calling it "more of a hard vacation than work, a feeling-out of our future" and that it was "of not much interest except to the dancers and myself" (1938a, 42). But somewhat ironically, the Caravan in fact represented the best and most consistently successful offerings of the Balanchine–Kirstein enterprise as a whole. By not attempting to emulate the large-scale, high-budget, cross-country touring of the de Basil company—as the American Ballet had unsuccessfully tried the previous fall—the Caravan became something of a sleeper hit. Despite the congruence of their aesthetics, the different institutional footprints of the American Ballet and its Caravan are striking. The American Ballet had made its debut in a Broadway theater and subsequently aligned itself with the Metropolitan Opera, one of America's most establishment performing arts organizations, and one in which dance was treated as subordinate. The Caravan, by contrast, was more independent and adaptable, and had improvised an organizational model out of a variety of institutional resources in a structure that,



if somewhat makeshift and fragile, placed dance, more specifically original choreography, in the foreground. Its tour boasted several innovations with respect to the institutional positioning of ballet performance in the existing cultural infrastructure, performing in venues previously not hospitable to ballet, whether city halls or summer stock theaters.

The Caravan's institutional models were indeed not entirely new, having been employed successfully by Pavlova and numerous modern dance companies. But John Martin saw the Caravan's innovations as something distinctive and hailed the company's summer season as an example that others should emulate to fill the otherwise fallow months of the summer. Given Martin's previous antipathy toward the American Ballet more generally and bad blood with Kirstein in particular, his unqualified praise is worth quoting at length:

Starting out the middle of July with very little advance preparation, the company has managed to play twenty-five performances in seven weeks. This seems to constitute a record of sorts, for available statistics reveal no other instance of a Summer tour of anything like so extended a character by any company of dancers hereabouts. . . . That such a courageous venture should succeed is excellent on its own account, but its principal value lies rather in the possibilities which it has uncovered for the field at large. If so much can be done by an unknown company and a booking method known technically as "wildcatting," it becomes at once apparent that there is an extensive Summer territory for dancing to be opened up, and profitably, if the matter is approached in a more formal matter. It would seem to be a matter well worth looking into. (Martin 1936g)

With his experiment thus deemed a success, Kirstein was eager to keep the Caravan going. Even before the 1936 summer tour had concluded, he was busy brainstorming ideas and setting his own goals for the group's 1937 season. During the Maine engagement, he wrote in his diary that he saw the first season the "foundation for 8 weeks of solid work next summer and 2 months in the fall" (August 29). The coastal atmosphere of Ogunquit—"with the rollers of the Atlantic dashing in all along the miles of beach" as Kirstein later recounted (1938b, 56)—inspired him to begin planning one of the Caravan's ballets for the coming season, *Yankee Clipper* (August 29). And if the American Ballet and Metropolitan Opera still remained part of Kirstein's overall strategy, by the end of 1936 he was beginning to regard the Caravan as his primary professional affiliation. In correspondence from Kirstein to his father, letters sent through October appear on letterhead for the School of American Ballet, on which he was listed with the catch-all title of "Treasurer-Secretary." Beginning with a letter dated November 4, Kirstein's preferred writing stock would be letterhead for Ballet Caravan, of which he was the "Director."<sup>54</sup> Although it had begun as a practical, perhaps short-term response solution to long-term challenges facing the American Ballet, the would-be summer Caravan was here to stay.

## Notes

1. Scholarship on the Great Depression and New Deal is vast, but for a concise overview of the period, see Badger (1989).

2. On modern dance, its relationship to ballet, and its dramatic growth in America in the early twentieth century, see among others Graff (1997) and Franko (2002). On ballet instruction in the United States prior to the opening of the School of American Ballet, see among others Sowell (1998) and Zeller (2011).

3. On Kirstein and his family's background, see Duberman (2008, 1–71).

4. On the mixed reception of the American Ballet's early repertoire, see Garafola (2005a, 262–5).

5. "Meanwhile," as Nancy Reynolds introduces the Caravan in her narrative of the pre-history of the New York City Ballet (NYCB), "to provide summer employment, a group of twelve [dancers]

organized a touring ensemble called Ballet Caravan,” stressing its simultaneity with the work of the American Ballet. “Kirstein immediately became interested,” Reynolds continues, “and began providing scenarios, composers, and scene designers; with his encouragement, the subject matter was mainly American” (1977, 34). In an anthology of Kirstein’s writings, Reynolds recounts a comparable story in prefatory remarks to two articles on the company: “In 1936, to give his dancers summer employment—and to test a thesis about ‘American’ ballet—Kirstein formed Ballet Caravan, a company of twelve. The idea was that a group of American dancers would perform new repertory based on American subject matter, with choreography, scores, and decors commissioned from American artists” (Kirstein 1983, 53). Lynn Garafola has similarly described the Caravan as a “short-lived chamber company founded by Lincoln Kirstein” and “an experiment in creating a repertory that was American in theme and modernist in form” (1999, 4).

6. Douglas Coudy Scrapbook, \*MGZRS 00-1604, Jerome Robbins Dance Division—New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (JRDD—NYPL), hereafter “Douglas Coudy Scrapbook.”

7. Correspondence quoted in this article is from the Louis E. Kirstein Collection, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School, hereafter “LEK Collection”; the portions of Lincoln Kirstein’s diaries quoted are from the Lincoln Kirstein Papers, (S)\*MGZMD 123, Box 5, Folder 25, Jerome Robbins Dance Division—New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (JRDD—NYPL), hereafter “LK Diaries.” Previously unpublished material by Lincoln Kirstein is © 2015 by the New York Public Library (Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations).

8. *Filling Station*, chor. Lew Christensen; music Virgil Thomson; décor Paul Cadmus. *Billy the Kid*, chor. Eugene Loring; music Aaron Copland; décor Jared French. On these and other similar ballets in the Caravan’s later repertoire, see Franko (2002, 119–23), Garafola (2005c), Crist (2005, 111–32), Campbell (2010, 123–224), Levy (2012, 318–50).

9. On the influence of Popular Front and left-leaning political movements on American culture, see Denning (1997/2010); on regionalism in American art, see Doss (1995); on dance and politics in the 1930s, see Franko (1995) and Graff (1997).

10. One notable exception is Garafola (2005b).

11. Undated Ballet Caravan Brochure, Douglas Coudy Scrapbook. Although undated, this brochure is evidently from the earliest days of the Caravan, since it mentions the Erick Hawkins ballet *Rondo*, which was scrapped while still in rehearsal and never performed by the troupe (see discussion below). This brochure will subsequently be referred to as “Ballet Caravan Brochure 1936a.”

12. In subsequent reports on the group, Martin identifies the Caravan as “the cooperative group from the American Ballet” (1936b) and “the summer company recruited from the ranks of the American Ballet” (1936c).

13. Kirstein’s diaries indicate that he and Coudy had begun spending time together outside of the studio in March 1936, and by the time of the summer tour were lovers, sharing rooms for many of the troupe’s stops (LK Diaries, March 6, May 26, June 9, 16, 24, July 24, August 29, 1936).

14. Dollar’s ballet *Promenade* is discussed below. On his appearance in Lincoln Kirstein’s 1936 lectures, see Kriegsman (1981, 54).

15. A preview of the Caravan’s October 1936 performances at the YMHA makes this distinction explicit: “The choreographers, except for Mr. Dollar, are members of the company” (Martin 1936i).

16. Interview with Annabelle Lyon. 1979. Conducted by Elizabeth Kendall. \*MGZMT 3-1861 (transcript), Jerome Robbins Dance Division—New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (JRDD—NYPL). Hereafter referred to as “Interview with Annabelle Lyon.”

17. “To the list of summer dance activities already announced must now be added a postscript of particular interest. This is to do with a little ballet company which is planning to tour the summer theatres under the name of the Ballet Caravan” (Martin 1936a).

18. Word of the debut did not spread especially quickly, since brief items on the Caravan published in the *New York Herald-Tribune* make no reference to Bennington (“Ballet Caravan Forms” 1936; “Dance Notes” 1936).

19. Lincoln Kirstein to Rose and Louis Kirstein, July 9, 1936, LEK Collection.

20. In Sali Ann Kriegsman's chronologies of the festival the Caravan's performances of 1936 (and 1937) are classified among "Lectures, Special Events, Recitals, and Student Demonstrations," distinct from the official "Bennington Festival Series" [Kriegsman 1981, 53–62 (1936 season) and 63–73 (1937 season)].

21. "The present season is marked by a doubling of these activities and the addition of a pair of performances outside the regular festival series of the newly formed Ballet Caravan, which made its début here in the little college theatre" (Martin 1936d); "In addition, the newly formed Ballet Caravan staged an unscheduled appearance" (Parks 1936); "This last season [the festival] unexpectedly presented two programs by the Ballet caravan, a summer offshoot of the American Ballet" (Lloyd 1936b).

22. On the ways in which Kirstein self-consciously embraced the aesthetics, politics, and larger ethos and institutional infrastructure of modern dance through the Caravan, see Garafola (2005b) and Banes (1999).

23. On Kirstein and Graham's correspondence and relationship around this time, see Garafola (2005b, 22–4) and Soares (2009, 85–6).

24. On the touring activities of Denishawn and Martha Graham, see Soares (1992).

25. "The daughter of a distinguished labor lawyer in Denver, she had absconded from Bryn Mawr to perform for several seasons in vaudeville in an acrobatic adagio act. There was little about vaudeville she didn't know; American vaudeville was at once her preparatory school and postgraduate course in theatrical administration. She knew more about touring conditions across the entire continent than I would ever learn; she had excellent taste, and loved dancing. With little to go on—no newspaper reviews to sell us at the start, small capital, and wildly overoptimistic program—she found some forty engagements for our first season" (Kirstein 1978, 68–9).

26. LK Diaries, June 11, 1936.

27. Ballet Caravan Brochure 1936a, Douglas Coudy Scrapbook.

28. *Mazurka* (Glinka), *Morning Greeting* (Schubert), *Pas de deux* (Liebling), *Gitana* (Torré), *Can-Can* ([Johann?] Strauss), *Pas Classique* (Benjamin Godard) and *Rhapsody* (Liszt), *Valse* (Ravel), and *March* (Prokofiev) Kriegsman (1981, 57).

29. On the ideology of Kirstein's drive to distinguish ballet from popular dance performance and similar efforts on the part of John Martin and modern dance, see Franko (2002, 107–23).

30. Two pianists, David Steimer and Edmund Horn, are credited in the Caravan's 1936 performances. See programs in Douglas Coudy Scrapbook.

31. This evidence contradicts the performance chronology of Kriegsman, which lists seven divertissements for each of the Caravan's performances. This could be due to the fact that she was working from the printed programs, which would not have reflected this last-minute decision (Kriegsman 1981, 57).

32. Duberman (2008, 317–19) recounts the story of *Rondo* but does not include the ballet's name and identifies the composer of the music as Anton Webern.

33. Ballet Caravan Brochure 1936a, Douglas Coudy Scrapbook.

34. On Martha Graham and Erick Hawkins's partnership, see Franko (2012), esp. 28–30 on their initial meeting in 1936.

35. Lincoln Kirstein to Rose and Louis Kirstein, July 9, 1936, LEK Collection; LK Diaries, July 24, 1936.

36. Ibid.

37. "Among the more interesting aspects of the tour was the reaction of the manager of a chain of moving-picture theaters in New England who, feeling the rivalry of the numerous summer theaters in his territory, introduced the ballet into his own programs with a most cordial response from the audiences. This seems a most practical kind of friendship to have established" (Martin 1936g).

38. Program, Douglas Coudy Scrapbook.

39. It is not clear whether this performance by the Caravan actually took place, however, since no program survives, nor is it mentioned in any other report or in Kirstein's diaries. If the troupe did perform, it would have amounted to a doubleheader of an evening, since several sources verify

that the troupe performed in Dorset on that same evening, seven miles away from Manchester (LK Diaries, August 29, 1936; “Ballet Closes Tour” 1936; Program, Douglas Coudy Scrapbook).

40. By most reports, the event’s beneficiary was the scholarship fund at Smith College, which suggests that Kirstein’s sister Mina may have had a hand in its planning (“Maureen V. Smith” 1936). Other accounts report that it was a benefit for both Smith and the scholarship fund of an acting studio directed by Mr. Leighton Rollins, who assisted in the organization of the event itself (“Brothers to Honor” 1936; “Studio Party Held” 1936).

41. Mrs. Clark is also reported to have hosted the “distinguished Smith graduate, Miss Anna Hempstead Branch of Hempstead House, New London” for the weekend of the Caravan performance (“Guild Hall Dinner” 1936).

42. This same news is reported in “Notes of Social Activities” (1936).

43. On the same day that his newspaper was reporting on the benefit, Martin’s column of August 9 makes no mention of the performance, instead discussing the past and upcoming activities at Bennington, including the Caravan’s July debut (Martin 1936d). His later account of the Caravan’s summer activities also makes no mention of these special events, despite his praise of the troupe’s nimble institutional flexibility (Martin 1936g).

44. Lincoln Kirstein to Rose and Louis Kirstein, July 9, 1936, LEK Collection; “Ballet Numbers at Westport” 1936; Martin 1936c; “American Ballet at Westport” 1936; Rhodes 1936b. Duberman does not mention the theatrical context of the Caravan’s Westport performances, nor any of the individual ballets created. See Duberman (2008, 319).

45. Both Langer and Savo would cross paths with Kirstein and Balanchine later: Langer as a co-founder of the short-lived American Shakespeare Festival with Kirstein, and Savo as the original Dromio in Rodgers and Hart’s 1938 *The Boys from Syracuse*, for which Balanchine was choreographer.

46. Duberman cites this diary entry outside of the context of the Westport engagement and claims that the shortening of these two ballets was an instance of Kirstein’s asserting his artistic authority over the troupe. More likely is that the ballets were shortened out of theatrical exigency, a decision that was not necessarily Kirstein’s alone to make (Duberman 2008, 320).

47. Program, Douglas Coudy Scrapbook.

48. Program, \*MGZB Programs (vertical file), “Douglas Coudy,” JRDD–NYPL.

49. “Current Happenings on College Campuses” (1936); Lincoln Kirstein to Louis Kirstein, October 6, 1936, LEK Collection; Programs, Douglas Coudy Scrapbook.

50. Program, Douglas Coudy Scrapbook.

51. Lincoln Kirstein to Louis Kirstein, November 4, 1936, LEK Collection; “Ballets Are Brilliantly Performed” (1936); “Ballet: Caravan” (1936).

52. Undated Ballet Caravan Brochure, Douglas Coudy Scrapbook. This brochure will be referred to as “Ballet Caravan Brochure 1936b,” to distinguish it from the previously mentioned “1936a.” Its later date is corroborated by its inclusion of all five of the Caravan’s initial ballets, including Coudy’s *The Soldier and the Gypsy*, which debuted in the course of the summer tour (see discussion above).

53. This particular incident is described in Duberman (2008, 251–4), and previous concerns over Balanchine’s health are discussed in passing on pp. 216–233.

54. In the LEK Collection correspondence, the last letter from Lincoln to Louis on School of American Ballet letterhead is dated October 6, 1936, and a letter of November 4, 1936, is the first to use Ballet Caravan letterhead.

## Works Cited

“American Ballet at Westport.” 1936. *Musical America*, August.

“American Ballet Group Completes New England Tour.” 1936. *Musical America*, September.

Badger, Anthony. 1989. *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933–1940*. New York: Hill and Wang.

“Ballet Caravan Forms to Give Performances.” 1936. *New York Herald-Tribune*, July 5.

“Ballet: Caravan.” 1936. *Dance*, December.



- “Ballet Closes Tour, Will Fill Week’s Engagement in Ogunquit, Me.” 1936. *New York Herald-Tribune*, August 30.
- “Ballet Makes Debut.” 1936. *Musical America*, November 10.
- “Ballet Numbers at Westport.” 1936. *New York Herald-Tribune*, August 2.
- “Ballets Are Brilliantly Performed.” 1936. *Hartford Courant*, December 2.
- Banes, Sally. 1999. “Sibling Rivalry.” In *Dance for a City: Fifty Years of the New York City Ballet*, edited by Lynn Garafola with Eric Foner 73–98. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Boris, Ruthanna. 1937. “The Ballet Caravan.” *Dance Herald* 1(1).
- “Brothers to Honor Maureen V. Smith at Dance Friday.” 1936. *New York Herald-Tribune*, July 30.
- Campbell, Jennifer L. 2010. “Shaping Solidarity: Music, Diplomacy, and Inter-American Relations, 1936–1946.” PhD diss., University of Connecticut.
- Chujoy, Anatole. 1953. *The New York City Ballet*. New York: Knopf.
- Church, Marjorie. 1936. “The Bennington Dance Festival.” *Dance Observer* 3(7).
- Crist, Elizabeth Bergman. 2005. *Music for the Common Man: Aaron Copland During the Depression and War*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- “Current Happenings on College Campuses.” 1936. *The New York Times*, October 11.
- “Dance Notes.” 1936. *New York Herald-Tribune*, July 12.
- Denby, Edwin. 1936. “With the Dancers.” *Modern Music* (November–December): 49–53.
- Denning, Michael. 1997–2010. *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Verso.
- Doss, Erika. 1995. *Benton, Pollock, and the Politics of Modernism: From Regionalism to Abstract Expressionism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Duberman, Martin. 2008. *The Worlds of Lincoln Kirstein*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- “East Hampton Planning Benefit Fashion Show.” 1936. *New York Herald-Tribune*, August 7.
- Franko, Mark. 1995. *Dancing Modernism/Performing Politics*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- . 2002. *The Work of Dance: Labor, Movement and Identity in the 1930s*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- . 2012. *Martha Graham in Love and War*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Garafola, Lynn. 1999. “Dance for a City.” In *Dance for a City: Fifty Years of the New York City Ballet*, edited by Lynn Garafola with Eric Foner 1–51. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 2005a. *Legacies of Twentieth Century Dance*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- . 2005b. “Lincoln Kirstein, Modern Dance, and the Left: The Genesis of an American Ballet.” *Dance Research* 23(1): 18–35.
- . 2005c. “Making an American Dance: *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring*.” In *Aaron Copland and His World*, edited by Carol Oja and Judith Tick, 121–47. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Graff, Ellen. 1997. *Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City, 1928–1942*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- “Guild Hall Dinner at East Hampton.” 1936. *The New York Times*, August 9.
- Kirstein, Lincoln. 1930. “The Diaghilev Period.” *Hound & Horn* 3(4): 468–501.
- . 1931. “Dance Chronicle: Kreutzberg; Wigman; *Pas d’Acier*; The Future.” *Hound & Horn* 4(4): 573–580.
- . 1938a. *Blast at Ballet: A Corrective for the American Audience*. New York: Marstin Press.
- . 1938b. “Our Ballet and Our Audience.” *The American Dancer* 11(9). [Reprinted in Kirstein (1983).]
- . 1978. *Thirty Years: The New York City Ballet*. New York: Knopf.
- . 1983. *Ballet: Bias and Belief: Three Pamphlets Collected and Other Dance Writings of Lincoln Kirstein*, edited by Nancy Reynolds. New York: Dance Horizons.
- Kriegsman, Sali Ann. 1981. *Modern Dance in America: The Bennington Years*. Boston: G. K. Hall.
- Levy, Beth. 2012. *Frontier Figures: American Music and the Mythology of the American West*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- Lloyd, Margaret. 1936a. "Ballet Caravan—Farewell, Hail." *Christian Science Monitor*, November 10.
- . 1936b. "On with the Dance: Bennington the Focus of This New Movement." *Christian Science Monitor*, November 10.
- "Manchester Plans Ballet Caravan for Summer Visitors." 1936. *New York Herald-Tribune*, August 9.
- Manning, Susan. 1993. *Ecstasy and the Demon: Feminism and Nationalism in the Dances of Mary Wigman*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Martin, John. 1936a. "The Dance: A New Troupe." *The New York Times*, June 28.
- . 1936b. "The Dance: Importations." *The New York Times*, July 5.
- . 1936c. "The Dance: New Literacy." *The New York Times*, August 2.
- . 1936d. "The Dance: Festival." *The New York Times*, August 9.
- . 1936e. "The Dance: A Pantomime." *The New York Times*, August 30.
- . 1936f. "The Dance: Miscellany." *The New York Times*, September 6.
- . 1936g. "Odyssey of the Dance." *The New York Times*, September 13.
- . 1936h. "The Dance: Jooss Ballet Appearance." *The New York Times*, October 11.
- . 1936i. "The Dance: Events Ahead." *The New York Times*, October 18.
- "Maureen V. Smith Is Guest at Dinner." 1936. *The New York Times*, August 1.
- Morris, Gay. 2006. *A Game for Dancers: Performing Modernism in the Postwar Years*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- "Music Notes." 1936. *New York Herald-Tribune*, October 13.
- "Nancy Van Vleck Honored At Party." 1936. *The New York Times*, July 28.
- "Notes of Social Activities in New York and Elsewhere." 1936. *The New York Times*, August 7.
- Parks, Wallace J. 1936. "A New Center of the Dance." *Baltimore Sun*, September 13.
- Reynolds, Nancy. 1977. *Repertory in Review: Forty Years of the New York City Ballet*. New York: Dial Press.
- . 1999. "In His Image." In *The Ballets Russes and Its World*, edited by Lynn Garafola and Nancy Van Norman, Baer, 291–311. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Rhodes, Russell. 1936a. "New York Letter." *The Dancing Times*, August.
- . 1936b. "New York Letter." *The Dancing Times*, September.
- Soares, Janet Mansfield. 1992. *Louis Horst: Musician in a Dancer's World*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- . 2009. *Martha Hill and the Making of American Dance*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Sowell, Debra Hickenlooper. 1998. *The Christensen Brothers: An American Dance Epic*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- "Studio Party Held At East Hampton." 1936. *The New York Times*, July 26.
- "Summer Theatres." 1936a. *Boston Globe*, August 23.
- "Summer Theatres." 1936b. *Boston Globe*, August 30.
- "Summer Theatres: Ogunquit Playhouse." 1936. *Boston Globe*, September 1.
- "T. H. Wrights Hosts At Southampton." 1936. *The New York Times*, July 30.
- "Twenty-One New Singers Are Announced by Metropolitan." 1936. *New York Herald-Tribune*, November 16.
- Zeller, Jessica. 2011. "Shapes of American Ballet: Classical Traditions, Teachers, and Training in New York City, 1909–1934." PhD diss., The Ohio State University.