

# Maria Tallchief: America's Prima Ballerina



## Early Life and Training

Maria Tallchief was born on January 24, 1925, in Fairfax, Oklahoma. Her father was a full-blooded Osage Indian, and her mother was of Scottish and Irish descent. Tallchief began dancing at the age of three, and her early

training took place at the Maria Tallchief School of Dance in Ponca City, Oklahoma.



## Maria Tallchief: America's Prima Ballerina by Maria Tallchief

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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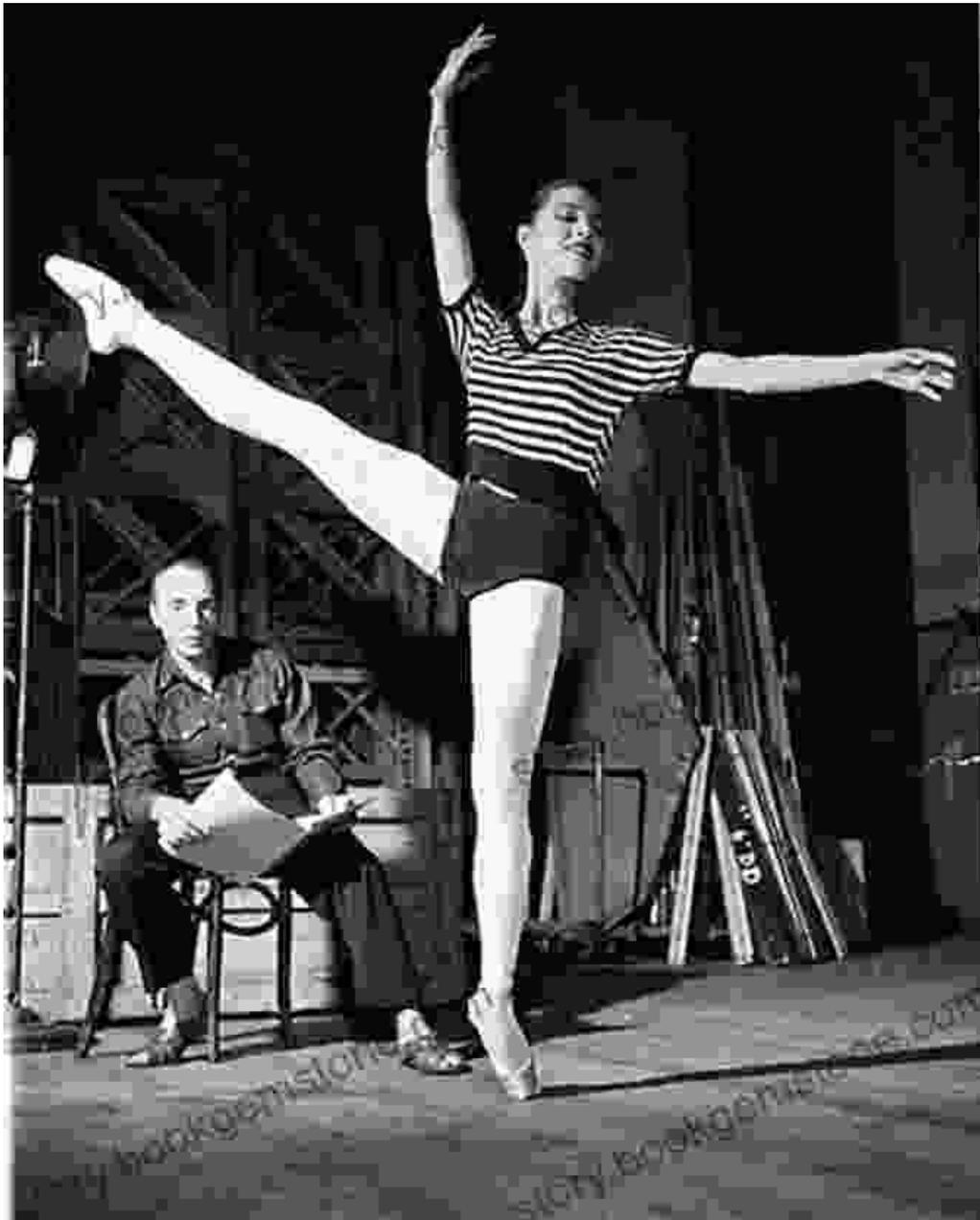
In 1942, Tallchief was awarded a scholarship to the School of American Ballet in New York City. She studied under some of the greatest ballet masters of the time, including George Balanchine, Léonide Massine, and Anatole Vilzak. Balanchine, in particular, recognized Tallchief's exceptional talent and became her mentor.

### **New York City Ballet**

In 1945, Tallchief joined the New York City Ballet, which was founded by Balanchine. She quickly rose through the ranks, becoming a soloist in 1947 and a principal dancer in 1949. Tallchief was known for her technical brilliance, her expressive interpretations, and her ability to embody a wide range of characters.

Tallchief originated many of Balanchine's most famous ballets, including *Serenade* (1940), *The Four Temperaments* (1946), and *Symphony in C*

(1947). She also danced in many of Jerome Robbins' ballets, including *Fancy Free* (1944) and *Interplay* (1945).



### **International Acclaim**

Tallichief's reputation as a great ballerina spread beyond the United States. In 1949, she made her debut with the Paris Opera Ballet, becoming the first

American ballerina to dance with the company. She also danced with the Royal Ballet in London and the Kirov Ballet in Leningrad.

Tallchief's performances were hailed by critics and audiences alike. She was praised for her technical precision, her expressive artistry, and her ability to convey a wide range of emotions. Tallchief's success helped to raise the profile of American ballet on the world stage.

## **Later Career**

Tallchief retired from the New York City Ballet in 1965. She continued to dance as a guest artist with other companies, and she also taught master classes and workshops around the world. In 1980, she founded the Chicago City Ballet, which she directed until 1987.

Tallchief was married to two prominent men in the world of dance: George Balanchine and André Eglevsky. She had two children, a son named George and a daughter named Maria.

Maria Tallchief died on April 11, 2013, at the age of 88. She is considered one of the greatest ballerinas of all time, and her legacy continues to inspire dancers and audiences around the world.

## **Legacy**

Maria Tallchief's legacy is multifaceted. She was a groundbreaking Native American ballerina who achieved international acclaim for her artistry and grace. She helped to raise the profile of American ballet on the world stage, and she inspired generations of dancers with her technical brilliance and expressive interpretations.

Tallchief's legacy also includes her work as a teacher and mentor. She taught master classes and workshops around the world, and she founded the Chicago City Ballet. Through her teaching, Tallchief helped to shape the next generation of ballet dancers.

Maria Tallchief was a true pioneer in the world of dance. Her talent, artistry, and dedication helped to change the face of ballet, and her legacy continues to inspire dancers and audiences alike.

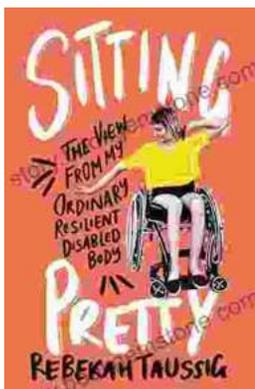


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