

USPS HONORS FOUR 20TH-CENTURY CHOREOGRAPHERS

Extraordinary Artists Commemorated on U.S. Postage Stamps

WASHINGTON – Four outstanding choreographers of the 20th century—Alvin Ailey, George Balanchine, Agnes de Mille and Martha Graham—were honored by the U.S. Postal Service today when the American Choreographers 37-cent commemorative postage stamps were issued at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center’s Victoria Theater. The School of American Ballet, Ailey II, the American Ballet Theater and Martha Graham Dance performed live, showcasing each choreographer’s style.



“The stamps we are dedicating today pay tribute to four American choreographers who had the passion to create new forms of dance,” said Linda Kingsley, Vice President of Strategic Planning for the U.S. Postal Service, who dedicated the stamps. “They sometimes took leaps in the dark, but they landed before audiences that embraced them.”

Also participating in the ceremony were Dr. Bob Lee, Director of Community Affairs, WBLS Radio, New York City; Jonathan Prude, son of Agnes de Mille and Professor of History, Emory University, Atlanta, GA; Sylvia Waters, Artistic Director of Ailey II; David Lindner, David Lindner Photography, New York; Lawrence Goldman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center; and Marvin Preston, Executive Director of Martha Graham Dance.

Alvin Ailey was one of the leading choreographers of his era. His work incorporated elements of jazz, modern dance, classical ballet, and African and Caribbean movements—different styles that made tremendous demands on his dancers—and helped popularize dance in America.

A graduate of St. Petersburg’s Imperial Theatre School, George Balanchine’s choreography blends the classical with the modern and is intensely musical. Balanchine, who founded the School of American Ballet, created more than 200 ballets as well as numerous dances for theater and film, and he made the New York City Ballet into one of the finest companies in the world.

The genius of Agnes de Mille lay in her ability to blend the language of classical ballet, the expressive quality of modern dance and the traditions of American folk dance. The result was superior choreographic entertainment that appealed to a broad audience.

The principal founder of modern dance in America—Martha Graham—created dances distinguished by their expressive qualities—their sharp, angular movements and blunt gestures imbued with tension and pathos.

To see the American Choreographers stamps and other images from the 2004 Commemorative Stamp Program, visit the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop and click on “Release Schedule” in the Collector’s Corner.

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 800-STAMP-24. A wide selection of stamps and other philatelic items is also available at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. Beautifully framed prints of original stamp art for delivery straight to home or office are on display at www.postalartgallery.com.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to more than 141 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$68 billion, it is the world’s leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today’s postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 43 percent of the world’s mail volume - some 202 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year - and serves seven million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.

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