

Who Was Maria Tallchief: The Story of an American Ballet Icon



Who Was Maria Tallchief? (Who Was?) by Catherine Gourley

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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Maria Tallchief was an American ballet dancer who broke down racial barriers and became a legendary figure in the world of dance. She was born in Fairfax, Oklahoma, in 1925, to a Native American father and a Scottish-Irish mother. Tallchief began studying ballet at the age of eight, and she quickly showed a natural talent for the art form.

In 1942, Tallchief joined the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, and she quickly rose through the ranks. She became a principal dancer in 1944, and she went on to dance with some of the most prestigious ballet companies in the world, including the New York City Ballet, the Royal Ballet, and the Paris Opera Ballet.

Tallchief was known for her technical brilliance, her exquisite artistry, and her powerful stage presence. She was also a trailblazer for Native Americans in the world of dance. She was the first Native American woman to dance with a major ballet company, and she helped to pave the way for other Native American dancers to follow in her footsteps.

Tallchief retired from dancing in 1965, but she continued to work in the field of dance as a teacher and choreographer. She also served on the board of directors of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Tallchief died in 2013 at the age of 88. She is remembered as one of the greatest ballet dancers of all time, and her legacy continues to inspire dancers and audiences around the world.

Early Life and Training

Maria Tallchief was born on January 24, 1925, in Fairfax, Oklahoma. Her father, Alexander Tall Chief, was a member of the Osage Nation, and her mother, Ruth Porter, was of Scottish-Irish descent. Tallchief's parents divorced when she was young, and she was raised by her mother and stepfather, David Ballard.

Tallchief began studying ballet at the age of eight at the Marjorie Moore School of Dancing in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She quickly showed a natural talent for the art form, and she was soon invited to join the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo's School of American Ballet in New York City.

Professional Career

In 1942, Tallchief joined the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, and she quickly rose through the ranks. She became a principal dancer in 1944, and she went on to dance with some of the most prestigious ballet companies in the world, including the New York City Ballet, the Royal Ballet, and the Paris Opera Ballet.

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Personal Life

Tallchief was married four times. Her first marriage was to George Balanchine, the co-founder of the New York City Ballet. They were married from 1946 to 1950. Tallchief's second marriage was to Henry Fonda, the actor. They were married from 1952 to 1960. Tallchief's third marriage was to Buzz Aldrin, the astronaut. They were married from 1977 to 1981.

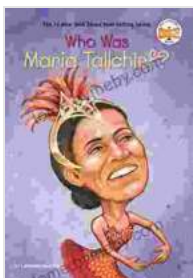
Tallchief's fourth marriage was to Robert Cohen, a businessman. They were married from 1984 until Tallchief's death in 2013.

Tallchief had one child, a daughter named Marjorie Tallchief. Marjorie Tallchief is also a dancer, and she has danced with the New York City Ballet and other companies.

Legacy

Maria Tallchief is remembered as one of the greatest ballet dancers of all time. She was a technical virtuoso, an exquisite artist, and a powerful stage presence. She was also a trailblazer for Native Americans in the world of dance. She was the first Native American woman to dance with a major ballet company, and she helped to pave the way for other Native American dancers to follow in her footsteps.

Tallchief's legacy continues to inspire dancers and audiences around the world. She is a role model for Native Americans and for all those who aspire to achieve great things.



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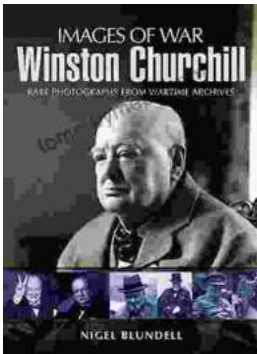
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