
Perfect Partnerships between two arts

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Ismene Brown picks out some other alliances between different artistic media

Marius Petipa and Pyotr Tchaikovsky

One magnificent complete collaboration, *The Sleeping Beauty*, attests to what was possible in an equal partnership between musical and choreographic genius in an age when music was expected to be no more than a charming floor on which to dance. Tchaikovsky's kaleidoscope of colour, deep emotion and otherworldly enchantment inspired Petipa to an unsurpassed display of balletic goldsmithery, finally developing ballet to a serious aesthetic art.

George Balanchine and Igor Stravinsky

A marriage of similar minds, both as interested in sexual drama as in engineering new angles in notes or steps. "Stravinsky understood ballet," said Balanchine. "He told me: 'Ballet is a performance. People watch! A boy sits in the first row, he wants to look at the girl onstage. It should be interesting for him!'"

Merce Cunningham and John Cage

A paradoxical partnership that set out to uncouple music and dance, but succeeded in reinforcing the two arts' equality. Cage delighted in using silence, random rhythm and real noise to disorient and unhitch audience expectations. But Cunningham's exquisitely flowing body-sculpture, though resolutely not choreographed "to" music, gave physical punctuation and emotional argument to Cage's airy mental experiments.