

Childs, Lucinda

(b New York, NY, June 26, 1940).

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American dancer and choreographer. Born in 1940, Childs grew up in New York City. In her teens she studied with such dancing legends as Hanya Holm and Helen Tamiris. Childs majored in dance at Sarah Lawrence College, where she received a Bachelor's degree. There she studied with Judith Dunn, Bessie Schonberg, and Merce Cunningham, whose iconoclastic approach to dance was of particular importance. In 1963, at Cunningham's studio, she met Yvonne Rainer, another dancer who became a renowned choreographer, who told her about the dance, performance and art activities at the Judson Church in New York City. Childs became one of the founding members of the Judson Dance Theater. There she had the opportunity to investigate and experiment. As an original member of the troupe, she performed with Robert Morris and Yvonne Rainer. She would incorporate elements from everyday life, evident in such works as *Pasttime* of 1963 where she performed a solo in three parts showcasing the movements of the body. By 1968, she took a break from choreography to focus on developing her individual style, which has strong conceptual elements. By 1973, she had formed The Lucinda Childs Dance Company. Starting in 1979, she began collaborations with experimental visionaries including director Robert Wilson and composer Phillip Glass, Steve Reich, Frank Gehry, and Robert Mapplethorpe. With them, she performed and choreographed their breakthrough opera, *Einstein on the Beach*, and participated in the 1984 and 1992 revivals. Childs has subsequently worked with each separately, as well as choreographing for many other avant-garde composers and directors. She is considered one of the foremost proponents of postmodern dance because of her embrace of alternative approaches to the integration of movement and sound. Her commissions from important ballet companies include Pacific Northwest Ballet and Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo, among many others. In recent years Childs turned her attentions to choreographing for the opera for such directors as Peter Stein, Peter Sellers, and Luc Bondy. In 1995, she directed her first opera, Mozart's *Zaide*, which she debuted in Belgium. Childs received the rank of Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the French Government in 2004.

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