

# WABASH VALLEY

P R O F I L E S

*A series of tributes to hometown heroes who have made a difference.*

## Elise Reiman



**A**n original member of the American Ballet Co. of New York, Terre Haute native Elise Reiman was a prominent dancer and dance teacher for six decades.

Christened Olga Elise Reiman, she was born Oct. 17, 1911, at 520 S. Fourth St., the youngest daughter of Ewald E. and Olga (Paulini) Reiman. For many years Ewald was proprietor of Reiman Lime & Cement Co. at 901 Wabash Ave. and Reiman Warehouse & Storage Co. Elise's sister Helen, a 1916 graduate of King Classical School with dancer Ernestine Myers, eloped Sept. 6, 1917, at age 18 with "Count Jacques Alexander Albert U. von Murik de Beaufort," an international journalist. Myers

became Elise's primary dance tutor until she was nearly 16 years old. The Reimans, who relocated to 831 S. Center St., also enrolled Elise at Bertha Pratt King's school but, in 1926, took her to Chicago to study under Russian-born choreographer and ballet master Adolph Bolm. She lived in Chicago with sister Helen, who severed her relationship with Jack M. de Beaufort soon after he was jailed in San Francisco for impersonating a military officer.

When Bolm choreographed Igor Stravinsky's *Apollon Musagete*, he chose Reiman to create the role of Calliope, one of the Three Muses, in the U.S. debut on April 27, 1928, at the Library of Congress. Stravinsky then offered all rights to impresario Sergei Diaghilev, who assigned them to ballet master George Balanchine. Though Elise performed for Balanchine, she was chosen by Bolm to be the female dynamo in the world premiere of the ballet *The Spirit of the Factory* at the Hollywood Bowl on July 28, 1931. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, her performance "approached the sensational." Later she appeared in *Alma Mater* at the Adelphi Theater on Broadway with the American Ballet Co., opening Mar. 1, 1935, and was dance soloist for the Metropolitan Opera Co. when the American Ballet became the Met's resident company. She was a soloist at Radio City Music Hall for the Feb. 11, 1937, benefit for Ohio and Mississippi valley flood relief, sharing the stage with Lily Pons, Jack Benny, Billy Rose, Cole Porter, Sonja Henie and Fred McMurray.

A member of the New York Ballet Society during its initial production on Nov. 20, 1946, Reiman created roles for Balanchine in *The Four Temperaments* (1946) and *Divertimento* (1947) and was a vital cast member in the New York presentations of *Transcendence* (1935), *Liberty Jones* (1941), *Rosalinda* (1942), *A Highland Fling* (1944), *The Spellbound Child* (1946), *Symphony in C* (1947) and *The Minotaur* (1947). When prima ballerina Maria Tallchief joined the American Ballet Co., Balanchine placed her under Elise's guidance. The women became such close friends that Tallchief later named her only child Elise. Reiman wed Charles W. Hotchkiss Jr., a principal in Falcon Seaboard Drilling Co. of New York, but he died at age 48 in November 1963.

During 1949 Balanchine trekked to Terre Haute by auto while Elise was visiting her ailing father at home. Widower Ewald Reiman died on Nov. 19, 1951. Elise taught at the American Ballet Co. until 1992, receiving the May L. Wien Award for distinguished faculty service in 1991. While vacationing in Maine during the summer of 1993, she suffered an aneurysm and died in a Boston hospital on Aug. 27, 1993.



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