



Tony Tanner

Photo: Bob Bayles

**Tony Tanner** returns to New York, playing Sergei Diaghilev, in his brilliant one-man play, "Charlatan: A Memoir of Sergei Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes." It is a very entertaining piece — fun and revealing and educational from a dance historian's point of view. Mr. Tanner acted up a storm and never let the audience drift for a second. Like dance, he had that energy that radiated out of his

## CHRISTOPHER COOK

soul, over the footlights and into our hearts. Aesthetically and artistically speaking, Tony would definitely have been a principal with the Royal Ballet. His pure talent as actor, writer and director were displayed at the Jan Hus Playhouse. It was pure emotion, the kind you get from Swans, Gazelles and Tonys! Let me be the first to say there is probably one in Mr. Tanner's future.

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The Dancers' Magazine

With great care and affection Tony Tanner has written and stars in an elegant one man show, Charlatan, about the great impresario Diaghilev, who changed ballet history by bringing Nijinsky to Paris, with the Ballet Russes. Mr. Tanner is a man of many talents and employs all his skills in making a completely believable journey through that period in ballet history, when fabulous artists were brought together in Paris to create a new artistic statement, that has yet to equaled. In an all to brief 2 hour show, Diaghilev, shows us his charm, his entrepreneurial genius, his temper, his gender preference, and his addiction to beautiful movement. In his relationship to Nijinsky, his understanding of the effect great dancing had on the public, and how to educate and surround his artists with constant stimulation, he provided and generated conditions in which only success was possible. His only failing was in his own behavior, which ultimately made his young protégés leave him. We are charmed and laugh

with him, not at him, as he recalls moments when great theatrical moments were made. The entire show is based upon the premise that he is speaking to us from his heaven or hell, and wishes us to remember him. For adult dancers and members of the profession, this is a lesson in history which should not be missed. For the acting community, this is a lesson in simplicity, and intellectual acuity, in a the most tasteful theatrical manner. The tiny theatre, that is part of the Tenement Museum on Orchard Street, on the Lower East Side, at first seems to be a poor place for a professional of Mr. Tanner's level to be seen. However, as a consummate artist in his own right, from the minute the lights go up, we are transported, by one chair, one mirror, and one goblet of liquid, to Venice at the time of his death. When this comes again, it should be homework for every dancer in the city, to see this show, and then go to read more about the time in which one man's vision created the true Golden Age of Ballet in the 20th century.