

Podtalk: Director Alla Kovgan, Producer Derrick Tseng on Dance Doc ‘Cunningham’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 2, 2020 - 9:26am

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CHICAGO – In the post World War II art scene, when New York City took over the cutting edge while Europe lay in tatters, there emerged a dance creator who influenced the avant garde like no other. Merce Cunningham lived until age 90, and from the time he began in dance to the end of his life, the legacy was his impactful contribution. In an affecting new 3D documentary entitled “Cunningham,” director Alla Kovgan goes over the life and times of the dancer and the artist.



‘Cunningham,’ Directed by Alla Kovgan
Photo credit: Magnolia Pictures

Merce Cunningham began his career with dance legend Martha Graham in 1939, and gave his first solo presentation in collaboration with composer (and life long partner) John Cage in 1944. He broke out on his own in 1953 with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in 1953, and was Artistic Director of that company until his death in 2009.



Director Alla Kovgan of ‘Cunningham’
Photo credit: File Photo

His other collaborators over the years included artists Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol, as well as musicians Brian Eno and Radiohead, and his dance creations were so inventive that it influenced all the art it touched.

It took director Alla Kovgan seven years to bring the “Cunningham” film to the screen, and it was shot in 3D, which injects a vitality for both the archival footage and her modern cinematic interpretations of Cunningham’s dance works. This is her first feature length documentary, after many years in editing and production. Producer Derrick Tseng has credits as diverse as “Chasing Amy,” “Super Troopers” and “Wiener-Dog.”

In PART ONE of a Podtalk wtih Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com, director Alla Kovgan of “Cunningham” talks about the post-World War II art scene that spawned the dance artist, and his position in its creation.

In PART TWO the director speaks of 3D filmmaking and the lessons in her seven year journey of making the film.

In PART THREE it’s producer Derrick Tseng’s turn, as he provides insight to the building of the documentary, and how memories of a film are different from participants on the production side.

“Cunningham” continues its limited release in Chicago on January 3rd, 2020. See local listings for other theaters and show times. Featuring the life and work of Merce Cunningham. Directed by Alla Kovgan. Rated “PG”



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