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| Apollon Musagète |
| Apollo |
| *Apollon Musagète*, premiered by Serge Diaghilev’s *Ballets Russes* in 1928, and best known since the 1950s as *Apollo*, is the oldest work by choreographer George Balanchine still in active repertoire. For its age alone the ballet is significant, but it also marked a new phase in the development of Balanchine’s artistic philosophy. In 1945 he wrote, ‘*Apollo* I look back on as a turning point. In its discipline and restraint . . . the score was a revelation. It seemed to tell me that I could dare not to use everything, that I too could eliminate. I began to see how I could clarify [...] by reducing what seemed to be multiple possibilities to the one which is inevitable’ (Balanchine qtd in Lederman 81). Such was Balanchine’s influence that what was a turning point for him was also a turning point for ballet in the twentieth century. The score that so influenced Balanchine was composed, by Igor Stravinsky, for a small string orchestra. Diaghilev described it as ‘an amazing work, extraordinarily calm, and with greater clarity than anything he has so far done, [with] filigree counterpoint [a]round transparent, clear-cut themes, all in the major key; [it is] somehow music not of this world, but from somewhere above’ (Diaghilev qtd in White 342). |
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| Further reading:  (D’Amboise)  (Joseph)  (Kirstein)  (Taper)  (The George Balanchine Foundation)  (The George Balanchine Foundation)  (The Balanchine Library)  (Jacques d’Amboise: Portrait of a Great American Dancer)  (Lederman)  (Reynolds)  (White) |