

CHIARA AJKUN – Artistic Director



Choreographer, Ballet Mistress, Principal Dancer, Albachiara Lomellini Ajkun was born in Mantova, a historic city in the northern region of Italy, Lombardy, in the prestigious landmark Palazzo Valentini, built in the 18th century and home to her family. Her mother, Daniela, a Dance Professor and University's Chancellor and her late father, Demetrio, an Academic Teacher, inspired and supported her throughout her career. Chiara has a sister, Valentine, History Professor and Author at the University of Padua, and two sons: Wolfrantz and Alexej. Chiara lives in New York City and travels to many countries to choreograph new ballets. Chiara enjoys to travel, to meet new people, to learn about different cultures and is especially interested in history, philosophy, law and scientific innovations. Chiara also likes fashion, horseback riding, movies, diverse cuisines and to spend time with her family and friends around the world.

LEADERSHIP: Dr. Ajkun became Artistic Director in 1985, appointed by the “Università degli Studi di Danza e Teatro” where she is currently a Guest Artist in residence, therefore serving the company “Balletto Regionale di Mantova” until she returned to the USA. Since 2000 she serves Ajkun Ballet Theatre as Artistic Director. The company performs traditional and contemporary creations for thousands of audience members across the world

and has opened the professional avenues for hundreds of emerging dancers and choreographers. Today, Ajkun Ballet Theatre is known as one of the most comprehensive organizations in the performing arts, counting patrons and industry partners in 5 continents for its innovative repertory, the excellence of its artists and the exceptional training of its programs.

ACCOLADES:

“You are preserving our culture and heritage and demonstrating that our diversity is our greatest strength.”

Hilary Rodham Clinton – Former Secretary of State of the United States

“It is empowering working with Dr. Ajkun during the choreography process. Her enthusiasm in the studio, especially as she explains her artistic vision for the ballet inspires dancers to accurately portray character qualities. I enjoy the high energy and ferocity of the roles I portray, which, though challenging, it is thrilling to dance choreography that is somewhat more outgoing than classical or common contemporary ballet and my own personality. I believe most dancers and audience members would find the same thrill I do, experiencing and becoming a part in her creation.”

Bridie Connors-Schwartz – AjkunBT Company Artist

“I completely enjoyed Chiara Ajkun’s version of Dracula, performed by Ajkun Ballet Theatre. The story was very intense and told beautifully through the choreography and exceptional dancers. It really just took my breath away. I’m excited to see future performances.”

Jeanie B. – Audience Member

CHOREOGRAPHER: "As a Ballet Teacher and a Choreographer, I was fortunate to be able to work with magnificent Dancers. Some trained with me all the way from pre-professionals to principal dancers while others - already at the top of the career - honored me with their trust as a ballet coach and choreographer. The personal and professional contribution of the many Artists I cherish as friends constantly improve and inspire my creativity.

Pictured are some of my favorites in photos by R. Neville and G. Gold."

-Chiara Ajkun



(Brittany Larrimer – Principal Dancer Ajkun Ballet Theatre; Ramon Thielen – Principal Dancer Dance Theatre of Harlem and Ajkun Ballet Theatre; Altin Kaftira and Natalia Hoffman – Principal Dancers Het National Ballet)

Chiara Ajkun choreographed more than 40 ballets, from Pas de Deux to full-length productions such as *Romeo & Juliet*, *Cinderella*, *Le Corsaire*, *Swan Lake* and *Carmen*. Chiara's acclaimed creations originate from her outstanding technique and ability to act as a dancer that give her ballets a dramatic grip equal to the cinema. Chiara's analysis of each character's facets, her everlasting interest in music and reading make each of her choreographies one of a kind. Chiara created for foremost national companies and theaters in Albania, Australia, France, Gran Canaria, Italy, Netherlands, Malta, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States for movies, national televisions (ABC, Rai, Bbc, Fox), and for preeminent dancers of companies such as American Ballet Theatre, Royal Ballet, Paris Opera, Het National Ballet, Australian Ballet, Moscow Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet.

PRESS QUOTES:

"(Ajkun's) interpretation of Carmen is superb an outstanding success...[her choreography is] a masterly application in technique... wonderfully more elaborate buildings up and much finer characterization of the various personalities."

-*London Times* – M. Ghirlando

"This is no ordinary Cinderella. It is a revelation, a truly stunning show and you cannot help but laugh and clap."

-*Gazzeta di Padua* – F. Vezzani

"Steps that defy physics effortlessly sewn together characterize Ajkun's works"

-*DanceTrain Magazine* – D. Brown

"The key is the choreography by Chiara Ajkun, which is among the finest and most innovative I have seen. [Ajkun's choreography] is a work of genius, combining beautifully coordinated motion with astute interpretation of the composer's intention."

-*Portland Press Herald* –C. Hyde

BALLET MISTRESS: Dr. Ajkun specializes in teaching professional dancers and ballet teachers and is credited for the technical and artistic achievements of many notable dancers. Professional dancers, Dance Students and Dance Teachers travel every year from all over the world to benefit from Chiara's outstanding training.

Click to read about the AJKUN (C) Methodology.

Chiara's methodology encompasses Vaganova and studies in ballet's related pathologies as well as her personal experiences with some of the greatest Artists, to include: Mme Tatiana Gramtzeva, Mr. Serge Peretti, Mme Ninel Kurgapkina, Mr. Rudolf Nureyev, Mme Maya Plisetskaya, Mme Ekaterina Maximova, Mr. George Balanchine and Mme Alexandra Danilova.

Chiara's classes are founded on a scientific approach to movements, offer the learning tools for the challenges of past and current repertory and are tailored to maximize success and minimize injuries of one and all participants.

At certain times of the year, Chiara enjoys sharing her extensive knowledge with young generations of dancers through master classes offered in various dance institutions, while continuing to coach professional dancers for their performances and reconditioning periods.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Chiara Ajkun danced in over 200 outstanding performances as a principal dancer of a uniquely wide repertory in Opera Houses, International Festivals and Ballet Galas in Italy, France, Belgium, UK, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and The USA, before being seriously injured in a skiing accident that ended her performing career. Chiara holds an Educational degree in "International Literature", specializations in Pedagogy and Business Administration, a Master in "Performing Arts" and a Ph.D. in "Pathology of Ballet". During her tenure as Artistic Director, Chiara directed several important festivals, celebrations, and broadcasted choreographies including: "Premio DanzaEuropa", European Dance Competition (1986-1996), "I Promessi Sposi" choreographies for the BBC's movie (1988-1989), "Gran Premio", "Uno Mattina", "L'Amore è una cosa meravigliosa", "Piacere Raiuno", "Domenica In", choreographies for the Italian National Television RAI (1989 - 1994), "Premio Katia Ricciarelli" for the soprano in Italian-Albanian-Hungarian National Opera Houses (1989-1996); "E allora, Luigi?", musical for The Pope of The Rome Vatican(1991), "Compagnia Lombarda d'Operette con Arturo Testa" (Seasons 1991-1996), "Rodolfo Valentino", musical for The County of Taranto and Tour for Puglia County (1994). Dr. Ajkun served as a panelist for the Boards of Education in Lombardia, Lazio, Puglia, Calabria (Italy, 1986-1994) and currently serves as an expert of public schools in the New York City and Westchester County areas. Chiara is the recipients of many awards, including: Best Choreography in "Malta Festival" by The London Times (1991), Best Choreography in "Fiuggi Europa Platea" (1995), Best Choreography in "Manfredonia Awards" (1996 & 1997), "Dame of the Grand Cross of Malta" appointed by Grand Master H.R.H. Prince Humbert Ferdinando the Third (1999), Honorary Membership to "New Rochelle High School –PAVE" (2008).