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*"If there is any other work that can give satisfaction to the individual who has thought about a career, then by all means do it. But if there isn't, there is no work [show business] more rewarding, and no people more wonderful, and no field in which there can be greater satisfaction."*

- Robert Haddad, 1957 Interview

Born in Waterbury on January 19, 1928, Robert Haddad, the son of George B. and Martha (Atalla) Haddad, grew up at 343 West Main Street, the "Haddad Block".

A graduate of Driggs Grammar School, Crosby High School (1946) and New York University, he participated in school plays and was active in the Waterbury Civic Theater.

He began his lifelong career as a summer stock apprentice and moved from chorus and dance leads in numerous stock and Broadway musicals and television shows to become a director-choreographer for a wide spectrum of New York theater activity.

He choreographed upwards of one hundred or more productions of America's best known musicals in a dozen or more of the country's top summer theaters and directed a variety of musical reviews. He brought his director-choreographer skills to television and corporate industrial shows as well.

He became associated with La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club, an off-off Broadway theatre founded in 1961, where "Big Charlotte" was his biggest hit. He also taught there, influencing numerous young people aspiring to careers in the theater.

He was eclectic in his interests, active in the experimental Off-Off Broadway theaters from Jean Erdman's Theatre of the Open Eye on the East Side, to St. Clement's Church on the West Side, and from the uptown Lincoln Center Library to the celebrated Edward Albee/Richard Barr/Clinton Wilber Playwrights Unite at the Village South Theater.

Way off Broadway, he directed a number of productions in the Middle East, including work in Iran and Jordan. He worked in Yugoslavia and brought a troupe from La MaMa to Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), Russia to participate in a workshop for the Theater of the Young. He brought ballet youth groups abroad to perform and interact with other young artists.

He was also part of a group of professional performers who introduced New York City's public schools to music and dance.

He was closely associated with Martha Graham, the world renown dancer and choreographer and worked on various programs with her.

Haddad choreographed the Manhattan School of Music's "Salute to American Musical Theater" which was presented on April 5, 1967 at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. Mrs. Lady Bird Johnson was the Honorary Chairman of the occasion which marked the first time musical theater had ever received such a tribute for its contribution to the nation's cultural life. The Guests of Honor were forty outstanding composers, lyricists and librettists responsible for this American art form.

The climax of the evening's success was achieved when the troupe was invited to repeat the program at the White House on June 1st and 2nd for the visits of the prime ministers



of Great Britain and Australia, creating history by being the first production ever to be staged on two consecutive nights at the White House. President Lyndon B. Johnson led the standing ovation at the June 1st performance and Haddad enjoyed the honor of dancing with the First Lady.

He also choreographed a show in honor of Senator William Bradley (D-NJ) at Carnegie Hall.

Apart from his artistic endeavors, he was chairperson of the New York Chapter of Artists and Writers Protest against the War in Vietnam.

He retained his Waterbury ties, often staying with his brother on weekends.

Robert Haddad died on February 24, 1987. He had been writing a history of American ballet.