

## Meet The Host, Chita Rivera

Meet the Universally regarded as an American national treasure, Chita Rivera is Broadway's most accomplished and versatile dancer/actress/singer.

A recipient of the prestigious Kennedy Center honor, Chita has won two Tony Awards as Best Leading Actress in a Musical and has received six additional Tony Award nominations. In addition to a Rolex Dance Award, Chita is a member of CTFD's National Advisory Board.

She most recently appeared on Broadway in *Chita Rivera: the Dancer's Life*, the story of her own life in the theater, written by Terrence McNally and directed by Graciela Daniele. She received a Tony nomination for this performance. Her most recent Broadway appearance

previous to this was in the Tony Award winning revival of *Nine*, starring Antonio Banderas.

Born Dolores Conchita Figueroa del Rivero in Washington, D.C., on January 23, 1933, Chita's parents were from Puerto Rico.

Then in 1957, Broadway history was made when Chita's electric performance as Anita in the Broadway premiere of *West Side Story* brought her stardom. Chita's talent enabled genius, Jerome Robbins, to realize his groundbreaking choreographic vision for the production. She married Tony Mordente, a dancer from the *West Side Story* cast, on December 1st of that year. (The couple divorced in 1966). Chita's performance as Anita was so central to the success of *West Side Story* that the London production was postponed until after she had given birth to her daughter, Lisa Mordente.

The starring role in *Bye Bye Birdie* followed *West Side Story*, and Chita returned to the West End in 1960 to reprise her performance in that role as well. Around the nation or on tour, Chita subsequently starred in *Born Yesterday*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Call Me Madam*, *Threepenny Opera*, *Sweet Charity*, *Kiss Me Kate*, and *Zorba*. A national tour of *Can-Can* with the Radio City Music Hall Rockettes took her to Japan as well. Chita also played Nicky in the film version of *Sweet Charity* with Shirley MacLaine. In a wry tribute to Nicky, Chita's character for her most recent screen appearance, a cameo in the film version of *Chicago*, is also named "Nicky." Chita is currently preparing for the Signature Theatre production of the Kander, Ebb, McNally musical, *The Visit*.

Despite the many highlights of her stellar and historic career, Chita always maintains that her most treasured production is her daughter, singer/dancer/choreographer Lisa Mordente.



Chita Rivera - Awards Host