

## **RIVERA, CHITA (1933– )**

Dolores Conchita Figueroa del Rivero better known as the very talented actress, singer, and dancer Chita Rivera, loved to perform as a child. She was encouraged to study singing and dancing and at seventeen won a scholarship to George Balanchine's School of American Ballet in New York City. For the rest of her career, she proceeded to set records on Broadway. Appearing in a string of critically acclaimed theatrical production, Rivera was well prepared for the role of Anita in *West Side Story*. The musical ran for 732 performances and the role, which garnered her a Tony nomination, became synonymous with Rivera. In 1959 she played Rosie Grant in *Bye Bye Birdie* and received a second Tony nomination for Birdie and a third nomination for her next role as Anyanka the gypsy princess in *Bajour*. In the late 1960s, she performed in *The Threepenny Opera*, *Flower Drum Song*, and *Sweet Charity*. On tour once again in the early 1970s, Rivera's appeared in *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*, *Born Yesterday*, *The Rose Tattoo*, and *Kiss Me Kate*. In 1975 Rivera opened as Velma Kelly in the extraordinary Broadway production of *Chicago* and received a fourth Tony nomination but it was the musical *The Rink* created especially for Rivera by Ebb and Kander that brought Rivera the Tony as outstanding actress in a musical. *Kiss of the Spider Woman* garnered a second Tony. She was honored by the Kennedy Center in 2002, and the following year appeared opposite Antonio Banderas in the musical adaptation of *Nine*. In her seventies, Rivera continues to light up the stage.