



# FAX IN BRIEF

TO: Miriam & Lawrence, Dance Collection  
Danse

FAX: 365-3169

FROM: MOVING PICTURES

PAGES (INCLUDING COVER): 3

Tuesday, August 31, 1999

Hi Miriam and Lawrence, As we discussed several weeks ago (!) I am sending you a draft of my proposal for a documentary film on the life of Maud Allen. This particular version is for a Canada Council millenium grant for Moving Pictures. The Maud film is one quarter of our proposal which includes an aboriginal dancefilm project and some multidisciplinary work. I'm sure we won't win this particular lottery but we will be proceeding with developing some of these projects (and definitely Maud) nonetheless. The deadline for this grant is late tomorrow (Wednesday) and I will be working on it right up to the wire. I would love if you could create a letter of support to go with the package (I know I'm not leaving you much time but perhaps I could submit it after the fact if you're too busy). I would also really appreciate your comments at this point because I will be continuing to work on this through the fall. I have looked up High Road Prods. - they are a legitimate company but they've just been sold and I've heard they are planning to develop the Philip Hoare book as a feature film. I'll keep you posted. Well - that's it for now. Thanx Kathleen

## Creative Team

Executive Producer  
Kathleen M. Smith

Narration (Voice of Maud)  
Louise Lillefeldt

Research and Script Development  
Kathleen M. Smith

Choreographer  
Marie Chouinard

Director  
Gregory Nixon

## Dissemination Plan

Following its premiere at Moving Pictures and appearances as part of the Moving Pictures cross-Canada tour, *Dance with the Devil* will be entered in film festivals and, if possible, sold to television both in Canada and abroad. An attempt will also be made to place the film with educational and cultural institutions that are concerned with dance, history, film, cultural studies and feminist studies. An education kit will be developed for dance, history and cultural studies programmes. This kit will include diary excerpts, bibliographic information and selected readings.

## **Dance with the Devil: The Scandalous Life of Maud Allen**

An experimental 16mm film documentary that examines the artistry and the psychology of turn-of-the-century dance phenomenon, Maud Allen. Born in Toronto in 1873, Allen rose to prominence despite the genuine scandals, innuendoes and aspersions that dogged every phase of her life.

**Dance with the Devil** is a feminist reading of Allen's life and times. As a dancer and as a public figure, Allen was a pioneer - her sexuality was an integral part of her artistry in a day and age where the terms "dance artist" and "whore" were practically synonymous. Like most pioneers she paid dearly for her iconoclastic career path and died destitute and friendless in 1956.

For all her contrary courage in defying mores, Allen is a spectacularly flawed heroine. Her flaunting of social convention, her confidence in her (to many, questionable) artistry, her scandal-plagued personal life (her brother Theodore Durrant was executed in San Francisco for his role in what newspapers at the time dubbed "The Crime of the Century" and she herself was at the centre of a high-profile libel trial involving Oscar Wilde's banned play *Salome* and a crusading MP called Noel Pemberton Billing ) and a difficult sociopathic personality make her a fascinating character study.

**Dance with the Devil** will attempt to draw a portrait of the Edwardian era as well as one of the woman. The years in which Maud Allen (and peers such as Loie Fuller, Mata Hari and Isadora Duncan) was captivating and horrifying audiences around the world with her dance concerts were years in which the world made its head-long plunge into the industrial, technological and sexual/social revolutions.

Central to the production of this documentary are the few extant artifacts of Maud's life. Some of these are archived with Dance Collection Danse in Toronto (see attached letter and photocopies). Wherever possible, these real aged artifacts (such as the original *Salome* costume, souvenir items from the era, hand written diary entries) will be used as a comment on tangibility and longevity. DCD will carefully supervise the shooting of these artifacts and the attached budget reflects the necessity for some restoration and repair work.

Recreations of Maud's choreography will also play a key role in the film and these will be shot using a handcranked Bolex camera in an attempt to suggest the era and its distinctive early cinematic aesthetic. Because little remains in terms of recordings of Allen's dances and music, works such as *The Vision of Salome* will, in effect, be re-interpreted by choreographer Marie Chouinard.