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BACK ON THEIR AFTER THE FLAMES

Revival of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet from the ashes of their burned-out studios is a triumph of brave hopes over bleak prospects

Yugoslav ballet master Nenad Lhotka rehearses Jill Alis and Bill McGrath.



RE destroyed the building housing the subjoint of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet on the set 1954, and with the flames were up not only costumes, scenery and musical scores but the hopes of a devote carged to put Canada on the ballet may. The company, despite the grand title bestowed on the daways operated on a shoestring and carried no subjoint the Royal Winnipeg Ballet had reached the end of the road. However, its founders, Gweneth Lloyd and Betty fundteds of dancers who have passed through the Betty hand se an youch. They set to work to raise \$50,000 from the public and, despite some cliff-hanging

moments, finally succeeded. A company of 20 dancers was assembled, built around a cadre of a few members of the previous company led by Carlu Carter and Bill McGrath. By

company led by Carlu Carter and Bill McGrath. By last November they were sufficiently ready to stage a triumphant comeback, first in the home town of Winnipeg and then on a tour which took them to Brandon, Edmonton, Vancouver, Victoria, Vernon, Saskatoon, Regina, Port Alberni and Seattle. "We were warmly welcomed everywhere," says Betty Farrally, now artistic director, "and it put heart into us. Attendances were good, too, except in Regina where we had to compete with a bingo game where the prizes were automobiles and which attracted 6,500 people. Then, in Vancouver we all had to set to and clean up the theatre which was thick in dust. One of the stagehands was so decremit that our stage manthe stagehands was so decrepit that our stage man-

ager, Peggy Green, had to help him up and down steps. However, the dancers responded wonderfully with everyone pitching in to help."

Another person who thinks the dancers respond Another person who thinks the dancers respond wonderfully is Ruthanna Boris, famed dancer and choreographer commissioned by Winnipeg's Junior League to create a ballet, Pasticcio, with its world premiere in Winnipeg on Feb. 28. "They are so young and eager and hard-working," she says, "that it is a pleasure to create something for them." She adds smillingly: "They are really on their toes."

Ruthanna Boris, Betty Farrally and ballet master Nenad Lhotka prepare the young dancers for the ballets they present. Six days a week they practise and rehearse for five hours a day, and it is rarely that they are told to "take five."



Royal Winnipeg's prima ballerina Carlu Carter and principal male dancer Bill McGrath in costume for Clasico, a ballet by native son Paddy Stone.



Marilyn Young and Lawrence Haider also dance in Clasico, commissioned by Lady Eaton and her family after the disastrous fire in June, 1954.

WEEKEND Magazine Vol. 6 No. 8, 1956

TOES

Photos by Louis Jaques WEEKEND Staff Photographer

For such efforts they are paid salaries ranging from \$25 to only \$45 a week for the September-to-April season. Mainly, the girls manage to survive by rooming together.

"We have a real United Nations in our apartment," says Marina Katronis, who is of Greek descent, "with myself, Gloria Contreras from Mexico; Barbara Lee Spinner from New York, and Kit Copping from Vancouver."

With the end of the present season in sight Betty Farrally is now faced with raising \$30,000 to keep the Royal Winnipeg Ballet going next season. However, now that it has once again proved that it can play its part in Canada's cultural life she is not unduly worried and is already planning a tour that will take the company across Canada and through the U.S. West and Mid-west.

Lethbridge-born

Marina Katronis in

the tutu she wears

for the Pas de Deux

from Don Quixote.

Of one thing she is sure, and that is that whatever happens there is always an insurance man. The new studios of the company face on to Winnipeg's Marlborough Hotel. One day a man rushed in and said: "Is this the Royal Winnipeg Ballet? I've been watching you rehearse."

"I though he was going to say something nice about us," says Betty Farrally, "instead of which he asked: 'Can I sell you some fire insurance?'"

David Willock WEEKEND Staff Writer



Winnipeg's own diminutive ballerina Carlu Carter and British Columbian Bill McGrath are now teamed off stage as well as on. They were married last summer. WEEKEND Magazine Vol. 6 No. 8, 1956 (More Pictures on Next Page)



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Back On Their Toes (Continued)



Guest choreographer Ruthanna Boris conducts rehearsals of her new ballet, Pasticcio,

Life is highly-disciplined and lowly-paid for the 20



Daily stint is one gruelling hour at practice bar and five hours of rehearsals.



Dancers relax between rehearsals; oldest is only 24, youngest 16.



Company is 60 per cent Canadian; others hail from U.S., England and Mexico. WEEKEND Magazine Vol. 6 No. 8, 1956



in readiness for its Winnipeg premiere on February 28.

dedicated dancers in the company



Choreographer Ruthanna Boris goes through score for Pasticcio with R.W.B. musical director Eric Wild.



New company was largely built around Bill McGrath and Carlu Carter after fire dispersed old company.



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Life with R.W.B. isn't all work and no play. Witness Roger Fisher, Edmonton, and Barbara Lee Spinner, New York.

Back On Their Toes (Concluded)

Youthful zest and never-say-die direction bring new hope to Canada's oldest professional ballet



Artistic Director Betty Farrally (centre) discusses sets for the ballet Pasticcio with Miss Boris, John A. Russell (left), production director, and scenic artist John Graham.



Mrs. Constance "Sindie" Officer, wardrobe mistress with the R.W.B. since its birth in 1938, outfits newcomer Kit Copping, of Vancouver. 10