

DANCE:
REVIEWS
NEWS
CALENDARS
CRITIQUES
PHOTOS
GOSSIP

DANCE IN CANADA CONFERENCE /77



A Radical is honoured
at the Winnipeg Dance
in Canada Conference | Gwenneth Lloyd
Co-founder of the
Royal Winnipeg Ballet

LOGBOOK

Iro Tembeck

The following is in response to asking Iro Tembeck why she left Groupe Nouvelle Aire to work independently away from established structures.

Logbook of a break-away—or a stream of consciousness irrigation of why I did what I did.

WHAT am I Doing?
What am I doing
What am I DOING?

wasting time...wasting space...wasting energy. Dance is a Time-Space Art. Stop making a fool of yourself. Do something in dance that will have meaning. Answer the urge for the search that is not committed to external structures and systems—that will comment on life as I perceive it. Let me embark on a personal quest and explore the relationship I have with dance and, more important, what dance means to me. Each dance piece I create reflects the point of growth I have arrived at, at that time. Authenticity—keyword of the 1920 literary world—it still holds true today—'significant form' like Bloomsbury would say or to quote Nabokov:—'not text but texture'.

I'm a performer yes but I don't just want to show how high my 'a la seconde' is. Perennially we have to renew ourselves, to shed our old skins and don new ones. It isn't an easy task—but a required one at that. What was it that Yeats used to say? 'we cont'd. pg.2

EDITORIAL

Elizabeth Chitty

This issue of SPILL is largely devoted to reports and thoughts of the Dance in Canada Conference held in August in Winnipeg. It was an explosive, political event. There was much turmoil, and was viewed by many as unfortunate and destructive. I thought it was wonderful. It was completely exhilarating and constructive. The Dance in Canada Association is a weird combination of diverse opinions and interests. Last year at the Conference in Halifax, a feeling of unity and fraternity prevailed which I found disturbing because it was superficial and fake. The reality of radical differences was avoided. This year that exploded apart and I find the honesty of recognizing differences positive.

Dance is an overwhelmingly conservative art. One reason why the experience of the Conferences is so worthwhile to me is that I am placed in an environment where I face that. It is so easy to stay in one's own world, with one's own values and imagine that they are a matter of course—then go to a Conference and find a very different course. You hear dance discussed in the framework of 19th century aesthetics and realize that that mentality is still the mainstay of cultural power.

I am perplexed by the defensiveness of the dance establishment which I have experienced in various situations. It surprises me that the status quo is disturbed by the growth of other things. That's because I don't see cultural evolution as a uni-directional scramble for the king of the castle. There is scope for many directions in simultaneous existence. Freedom of choice. During the Conference, the principal of the National Ballet School called this paper 'disgusting' and said it 'shouldn't be allowed to exist'. The fascism of that statement amazed me and should certainly alleviate any doubts that art is political. It's impossible to be an artist and not be involved with politics, and I'm very glad that the Conference was so political.

Speaking of politics, I was also glad to observe that the Conference operated largely on the energies and talents of Canadians. Hopefully, this will continue with next year's Conference.

cont'd from pg. 1

create out of the quarrels with others, rhetoric, and out of the quarrels with ourselves, poetry'. Obviously this entails a hell of a lot of blood sweat and tears. The 'agonistic' view of life—with art seen as a crystalline means of communication of inner states—as a super-psychological dimension of life.

If art is life organized, selected carefully and highlighted, where do I begin? At the beginning. By defining what dance brings me and what it stands for.

I'm a performer. I cater to some extent to the public. If I needed dance only as a growing experience I wouldn't put it on stage and I'd call it dance therapy. But I need to zero in on things through dance and I need the reflection of myself that the public gives me. To stop putting on a face to greet the faces that I meet, complete with chlorophyll smile et al. Having to acknowledge the public is fine. It stops me from self-indulgence, makes me become frugal with the 'revelations' I'm willing to impart. Economy as the new key word—as opposed to lavish decoration in movement. Recession even in the arts—too much decoration every day does not keep the doctor away. Let's cook it right and not suffer from indigestion!

My ancestors the Greeks used to advise 'Know Thyself'. I answer them: Know Thy Art or profession and by so doing, make it meaningful to others who perceive it through your eyes—as a performer and choreographer.

There is this need for an alternative space for creativity—the need to ensure a two-way dialogue among artists of different disciplines: painters, musicians, actors, dancers, etc. that would work jointly towards a piece.

My duty as a performer? To move people since I deal in movement. To do that I have to gesticulate madly till I can sift the unnecessary stuffings

and get right to the marrow of things. Even if I have to discard what seemed at one time important to me. It no longer corresponds to my present reality. Define—define—define—All the time and as you go along. Each dance piece is a redefinition of myself, life and dance and not necessarily in that order.

And it all comes back to the root of things: Archetypes—what are archetypes and archetypal gestures? They are like an archaic language being echoed through the ages via ritual and ceremonies and still remaining meaningful to us. What Artaud would call 'hieroglyphics signalling through the flames'.

What did dance originally mean in days of old? It was a basic need in antiquity not an entertainment and had a definite social function. One did not watch a dance out of boredom or snobbery—but partook in it either actively or passively. Socially, dance was called for, if not on a daily basis then on a perennial one.

I live in 1977, have danced for some twenty odd years and am hooked on dance for life. It is a drug I cannot dream of refusing it has so become my second skin—so why not do it under better circumstances?

If I could answer the series of Whys that creep into my mind the Hows would naturally follow. The pagans had it good—all the whys were explained through myths and the collective unconscious. Dance was a ritual re-enactment of life's highpoints which though clothed in a stylised way were not committed to one particular era. Dance was archetypal and universal. Today we have to consciously search for these archetypes and universality without slighting the individual journey it is possible to connect to the public significantly—perhaps first of all because one is sincere.

From break-away to break-through? Who knows? My own shell's break-through maybe—but a valid one nonetheless.



Grant Strate, John Julianni, Brian Robinson

JUST MY BIASED OPINIONS

Margaret Dragu

Dear Field,
Hope you survived DIC 77
Sincerely,
Dragu...

So we had this Dance in Canada Conference in Winnipeg. And all the time I was there (which was part time since my partner Enrico Campana and myself stayed off campus with this very nice lawyer friend) I kept thinking—wow! This is like a real McCoy conference type convention like any other—like a lawyers' convention or a plumbers' convention or a hookers' convention. A note of authenticity.

Coffee/cigarettes/booze/hotel dialogue/secret meetings/political coups/counter coups/memorable speeches/and of course that hopeful but fragile sensation of a small step forward in communications with the structure of the Canada Council. Hopeful but fragile because it will have to be monitored so closely.

And the question arises—Who shall do the monitoring? Two more questions: 1. Why are Canadians so shocked/dismayed to themselves involved in anything political?

2. Why are Canadian 'artists' so shocked/dismayed etc. etc. etc...? Remember the lawyer (the one we stayed with) said he read in the papers about lots of political action at the conference and my my my what a pity dance had to dirty itself in politics and why couldn't all of us nice little dancers just keep on working and doing beautiful things? Hmmmmmmm...

Well, frankly, every Canadian citizen-worker is involved in politics and the workers in and under the ART umbrella are no different. Having gone from Vancouver to Halifax this summer with my partner (Campana plus Dragu equals Campana-Dragu Products) I was amazed to find most Canadian cities have a 50% to 60% civil service force from the population. So if you add in people living from unemployment insurance, welfare, manpower programmes, government



Photo: Rodney Warden

grants to organizations and individuals (health, welfare, community, art agencies, etc.), communications service jobs like CBC Radio and TV and telegrams and post offices, provincial and municipal jurisdiction jobs, ETC. ETC. ETC. I mean REALLY. And the private business sector is heavily monitored—and all together another ominous kettle of fish. We are all involved in this flow of money and power. Artists have so long been stuck in safe garrets (i.e. eg. studios and galleries) that general populace and the artists themselves seemed and felt they were divorced from the big flow and grow and ebb and tide of the whole picture.

Hence easily manipulated by the (dare I say) class that moves

the flow and grow and ebb and tide etc. etc. etc... Manipulated and therefore busy reflecting the values and media and tastes of that class. Why should we kid ourselves? We never had a voice. And the time is ripe and pressing to speak out and for our work to reflect where we truly come from and how we live; culture is how we live (eat, sleep, dress, think behave). Instead of filling the market with cultural history—we should be more like up to the minute cultural thermometers. That's business methods and products both. Personally, I hardly know where to start. I am in a terrific state of flux and confusion. One thing I know. It is time to get out of the closet.

PAULA ROSS

Vancouver choreographer, Paula Ross, has recently been awarded the 1977 Chalmers Award in choreography.

Winning the Chalmers Award, with the recognition it brings from one's peers, that maybe one's work can be understood to a degree, is important. For me it also has brought out more questions than answers.

To ask the question -- what are the influences on me as a modern choreographer? I will reflect historically for a moment. Ballet was very influential in the sense of its dramatics, first shown by the Russians' debut tours to the Western world. The plots or librettos acted as a platform for personalities and technical virtuosity of the day. All modern choreographers who use body line as a vehicle have been influenced by Balanchine and Martha Graham.

Choreography as an art, in the last twenty years has become very serious. Artists in many different ways try to take their place dealing with themselves and the world around them. Presenting the human dilemma to their audiences, they hope to be recognized for their work in our technological society.

To ask the question -- is my choreography a distillation of life? The answer is no. I cannot as a choreographer make a distillation or an essence from life. But, I can see myself and others around me and create visual poetry to be understood by them only through their individual perception. I can reflect choreographically on the day to day living of life, and I do.

I am interested in life as a whole and how we as human beings will make it through the nuclear and technological scare of this decade.

To ask the question -- how can I relate my visual poetry to audiences in a way that they can appreciate? As I said before, audiences understanding of my

work will depend on the level of their own perception. If choreographers choose to grow as artists do in other fields, by definition, they must explore all the facilities at their disposal. If indeed their work comes across to the audience as "entertaining" then fine; but it can't be the final goal of my work. In fact, I imagine I have a large audience if you compare my attendance to the selling of a book of verse by an artist with the same degree of international recognition.

To ask the question -- of what significance is my work politically? Dance is essentially important in a political sense because it doesn't talk. It crosses cultural boundaries and communicates to people of disparate backgrounds and outlooks. You see, dance can create and communicate the feeling of who we are and where we live. In my life style I try to reflect my beliefs in regard to the percentage of poor we have in our



Photo: Miriam Adams

world.

In some cases I try to communicate in my work that I know the poor are there and hopefully the usually affluent audience will also understand that they are there, even if they can't buy a ticket. I'm referring to my work "Coming Together", choreographed in 1975, dedicated to native peoples.

I have chosen Vancouver as a place to work because it is my home. My family has been here for a very long time. I have chosen to work from the ground where I was born in order to be able to reflect in my work the political and cultural changes that have occurred in the twenty square blocks that is my home territory.

My new work reflects all the positive forces of my life in the last year and the questions it has raised. My work plan choreographically always begins by writing. I wrote this as a beginning to my new work:

"To an Unseen Friend

The sensuous communicating of my spirit with forces beyond the reaches of my intellect --

Is the ally, the guardian angel which sits to my right, the truth of a lonely child with no one to communicate to --

The kinship of spirit through genes of past lives and situations that question and have always found instinctually the answer -- dreaming Forminterra, Garcia Lorca or an Indian named Charlie.

The ally is the invisible, there to allow me to search, learn and develop. I flow through what has always flowed so I am, but then again I am not."

Paula Ross

TO THE C.B.C.

The following text is the edited transcript of radio remarks made by Betty Oliphant on the Eric Friesen Show, Friday August 26th, as well as the uncut version of the follow-up editorial by John Julianni taped in Edmonton, August 30th for airing September 2nd on the same program.

As you know I have just returned from the Dance in Canada Conference in Winnipeg. I am still feeling rather angry and glad of this chance to express my feelings and my views.

It was the most totally disorganized and unprofessional conference which I have ever attended. As a guest I was not briefed in any way. In fact at one point I was presented as teaching a class in the Martha Graham method. My main concern however, is that a small faction is using the organization to attack the Canada Council Dance Section and the head of that section, Madame Monique Michaud in particular. It seems ironic to me that the members of the board have spent all their time biting the hand which feeds them.

I believe in the Canada Council system of adjudication. Everybody says that that is because we (The National Ballet School) get a good grant from them. But I feel that we have earned it. We existed for five years without any grants because Peter Dwyer of the Canada Council insisted that Canadians must have the best quality training available even though they had to go abroad. It was not until we had been assessed by all the world renowned experts in the dance field that we got our first grant of \$10,000.

Canada Council grants are given to individuals and organizations after they have been judged and assessed by their peers. It seems that a small faction of the Dance in Canada Conference wants to take over this task but I do not feel that they are representative of our profession and they do not reflect the standards of excellence which I have strived to obtain over the past 25 years and which I feel the Canada Council is trying to preserve.

I cannot stand injustice. I respect the Dance Section of the Canada Council and its officers.

I feel that certain members of Dance in Canada would like to take over their jobs and if that happened it would be a sad day for our profession.

My initial response to the remarks made by the Principal of the National Ballet School on this program last week was one of dismay tinged by a certain sadness. To have reduced, as Ms. Betty Oliphant did, what happened at the recent Dance in Canada Conference in Winnipeg to a mere pre-determined conspiracy of sabotage by a 'small faction' against the Canada Council in general and the Dance Officer in particular was unfortunate, unjust, to some degree irresponsible, and certainly it is not what I would have expected from a personality of Ms. Oliphant's stature.

To be sure, there can be no denying that the conference was an explosive event, that it contained crisis after crisis, confrontation upon confrontation, that tempers were short and that personalities and politics were in constant conflict. But then, it has been no secret that the Canadian dance community for the past three years has been in a state of turmoil. This conflict has been most obvious among the leaders of the large, heavily-subsidized companies like the National Ballet, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, to a lesser degree between these organizations and the smaller emergent dance groups, and between the Canadian dance world in general and the Dance Division of the Canada Council. This friction has been a fact. Another fact is that dance is the fastest growing artistic discipline in the country. Both these facts are interrelated.

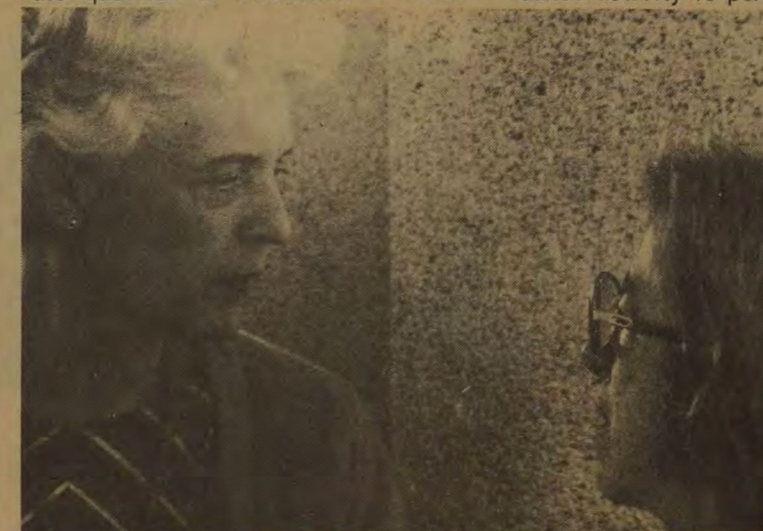
Most recently the frictions have been aggravated by the remarkable proliferation of smaller dance groups many of which are beginning to stake claims on the limited financial assistance available from the Canada Council. Given these limited resources, the question of allocation of funds

has become increasingly crucial to the smaller companies. Questions of standards and assessments have been raised, as well as the cardinal issue of the criteria for such evaluations. Lately, many smaller companies have expressed concern that they were not being adequately represented in the Canada Council's decision-making or by the funds made available from the Council's Touring Office. Predictably then, the most recent problems have had to do with money--its availability and allocation. But underlying this practical concern has been an active and articulate challenging, particularly by the smaller companies, of the philosophy behind such allocations.

It was over this issue that the Winnipeg confrontation with the Canada Council occurred. Given the history of the past three years that collision was inevitable. However, despite the passionate outbursts, and at times impeccable but stifling diplomacy, the meeting came to represent a sane, compassionate challenge to both Council and the Dance in Canada Association to begin, finally, to listen to, hear, and understand one another.

What Ms. Oliphant fails to appreciate, or perhaps appreciates only too keenly, when she dismisses the Winnipeg conference as mere power-politicking, is that the tide is clearly changing in the Canadian dance community, and that this phenomenon in which she and others are being enmeshed cannot be stemmed by resorting to innuendo on the one hand, or to an arbitrary defence of artistic excellence on the other. The undeniable growth of the dance in Canada is either healthy or it is not. If it is healthy it must and will be supported somehow. But if this proliferation of dance activity is perceived by estab-

cont'd pg.6



Betty Oliphant & Monique Michaud

Photo: Elinor Rose

ISLAND DANCE ENSEMBLE

The Island Dance Ensemble is, at present, in the throes of its annual fall reorganization and reaffirmation of its aims and ideals.

Briefly, what this means is that we plan to operate on a year-round basis, presenting a variety of productions in both small and larger theatres, continuing our teaching program, and carrying on with our creative movement classes in the schools.

In the past the Ensemble has been able to survive due to funding from Canada Council Explorations and the LIP program. With this funding we have managed to present a number of original dance productions and to keep dancers here on the Island that would otherwise be obliged to leave to try their luck in one of the major cities. For the immediate future we are once again seeking funds, but from several different sources. While we would of course, like to stand on our own feet financially, the present state of the arts support here on the Island necessitates some government involvement—a familiar story across Canada (Alberta possibly excepted!)

In the Fall, we plan to offer classes in jazz, modern, principles of choreography and creative, jazz fitness and theatre arts. We have a small, but well-appointed studio in Charlottetown in the Trinity United Church Hall and, from time to time access to other rehearsal space as and when required.

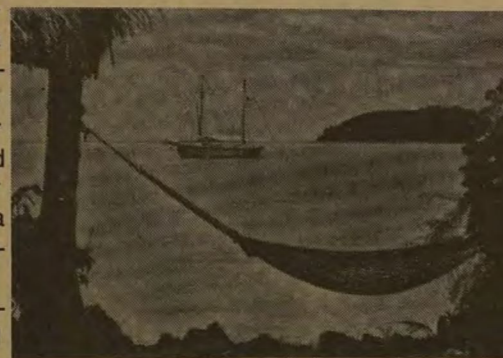
In keeping with our policy of community involvement, we are planning to tour the Elementary Schools in PEI over the winter with a combination workshop/performance with a follow-up movement class for teachers and students if requested. Hopefully, a similar type program can be presented at the National and Provincial Parks during the summer months and, if all goes well, we'd certainly enjoy touring the other Maritime Provinces with maybe a sneak trip to Toronto and Montreal, funds permitting.

We have recently been working with video in our programs and have found that it is of great assistance to us in correcting technique, recording choreographies and, of course, is highly successful when working with kids. Another area open for exploration is the use of video in remedial/therapy movement classes with the handicapped, i.e., the deaf, speech impaired and 'special development',

and we hope to have something concrete to show later this year when this program is off the ground.

Access to proper performing facilities and resource persons, have been problems in the past. The facilities and people do exist in abundance on the Island, for example, Confederation Centre theatre and its adjunct, the McKenzie Building, an old converted movie theatre. To date there has not been enough use made of these facilities by local arts groups, but with some luck and a great deal of good management, the situation may change this year. The retention of good resource people and dancers to implement our programs is another very serious problem—rather like the horse and cart or chicken and the egg—which comes first—the salaries and performances OR the performances and then funding??? As you folks in upper Canada may be aware, jobs here—any kind, are very hard to come by in the fall and winter, and so to ensure any kind of consistency, quality, etc. funding is very necessary. Once again, at this time of year, we put on our optimistic hat, man the typewriter and hope like hell that we will be able to provide the bread, stimulation and performing opportunities for those who have shown their enthusiasm, talent and commitment in the past.

All in all, it looks good for 1977/78 and we'll stay in touch as things progress. Oh yes, we'd love to receive news from the outside world too!



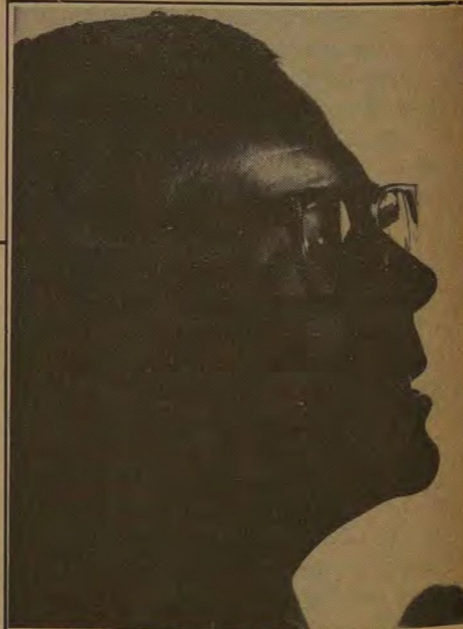
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lished dance figures to be an unhealthy manifestation, then steps will be taken, especially in times of financial austerity, to curtail or to attempt to curtail the spread of what can too easily be seen as a disease—the spawning of mediocrity. One way to curtail such growth is to worry publicly about and to impose standards of excellence that make innovation, research and exploration if not impossible, then at the very least impractical and disheartening.

No one in Winnipeg was seriously suggesting that growth should be equated with lack of standards. Nor was anyone denying that proliferation at the rate at which it is currently occurring in dance could result, at least temporarily, in an apparent dilution of standards. But what was being expressed, and expressed very strongly indeed, was the conviction that one must be vigilant about legislating the growth of small, unorthodox companies and of the so-called 'new dance' merely because of predominantly financial considerations.

So, with all due respect to Ms. Oliphant, I believe that for very understandable, human reasons, she may have misread the significance of the Winnipeg conference, and in the process may have unwittingly misled members of the public who listened to this program last week.

John Juliani



William Littler at the Conference.

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AU COURANT

Brian Robinson



Hibernation has set in early this year with the tres damp atmosphere and early furnace weather, but still worth the effort to get out and about.

Dragu/Campana finished their "Canajan Burgers" at CEAC with a live taping. The next chapter is in the works.

Paul Gaulin and Company had a 'held over' success at the recently re-cycled 'Theatre du P'tit Bonheur' space now newly painted and called 'the Unlimited Space' at 95 Danforth Ave. It is ideal for small dance theatre works.

Those that recovered from the Manitoba madness at the DIC Conference in August can look forward to more next year in beautiful B.C. (Aug. 13 - 17 U.B.C. Vancouver).

"The Chchettes" (Elizabeth Chitty, Louise Garfield, Janice Hladki and Johanna Householder) are now in rehearsal!

If anybody is (14 - 22) years of age it's free travel time if you stay 5 days anywhere in Canada. Part of the 'get to know your country' routine.

The Hummer Sisters great new piece (downstairs at Aspace) hopefully will find another home soon. They're getting better all the time.

The Toronto Theatre Alliance are hosting a Hallowe'en Bash & Benefit at the St. Lawrence Market North, Oct. 31, 8:30 pm - 1:00 am. Music, costumes, prizes, buffet, - more info. - 368-0386.

The Ontario Region of the Dance in Canada Assoc. is planning a 2 day meeting for members of the Ontario Dance community. Location to be announced.

Contact/77 has many groups and people from all over performing and booking tours. Don't miss this year what you can see next year.

The new issue of General Idea's FILE, "Punk 'till you Puke" is full of photos documenting summer /77 in Toronto. Does anybody remember Crash 'n Burn?

Toronto Theatre Review's (edited by Connie Brissendon) fall issue has an overview of future events reviews of current and past events and much content.

The long-awaited birth of Video magazine (published by LAMA labs) has occurred - the first in the great North. Articles, events, reviews - more info at '15'.

No Toronto Dance Festival this year. Maybe Spring /78? Too bad, it was a great highlite last fall.

Marie Marchowsky, Tournesol, Cafe Soho, Marijan Bayer and the A.G.O. all have performances and events coming up as well as the National Ballet and Les Ballets Trocadero.

For listings in future issues and other eventful news, send the info to SPILL - 155a George St. Tor.

CONTEMPORARY DANCERS PRESS RELEASE

KENNETH LIPITZ APPOINTED ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Rachel Browne, Artistic Director of Contemporary Dancers, has announced the appointment of Kenneth Lipitz as Associate Artistic Director to the Company for the 1977/78 season.

In his professional career, Mr. Lipitz has accumulated an impressive list of credentials including soloist positions with the San Francisco and Pennsylvania Ballet companies, as well as the National Ballet of Canada. His teaching experience includes instructorships in Dance at the State University of New York, Lake Erie College in Ohio, The Lois Smith School in Toronto and The Winnipeg School of Contemporary Dance. In addition, he has danced with the San Francisco and New York City Opera companies and various repertory and summer stock musical companies in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. This summer, Mr. Lipitz served on the Planning and Organizing Committee for this year's Dance in Canada Conference in Winnipeg.

Mr. Lipitz joined the Company in 1975 as a dancer and Assistant to Ms. Browne. There is no doubt that his vitality and expertise will continue to prove of enormous benefit to Contemporary Dancers in the future.

Ricardo Abreut



The whole idea of the conference has appealed to me since the beginning; getting together with other dance artists, playing all the roles required to make the theatre work, one night you are the performer and the next day you are the audience.

We see each other's works. We take each other's classes and workshops. We listen to artistic directors and the administrative branch of the theatre. We eat together, we share our privacy a great deal, in some cases we meet in the bathrooms, showers, changing rooms. We are there for the same reasons and yet out of all the questions that came up in the conference, only one question was in my mind—Why are we doing this?

Of course, there are all these things that I've just listed. And looking back at the whole event, I would have to say that this conference in Winnipeg was without a doubt the most intelligent, interesting and exciting ever. The conference appeared to me as the perfect relationship, the love orgy of beginning years and time to talk about whether we want to live together any of these years.

One strong point in this year's conference was the theatre. Every group or individual across the country proudly presented their works, every one of them with dazzling energy and in some cases, like that of Linda Rabin's 'The White Goddess', with touching beauty. Appropriately enough, Ms. Rabin's piece was performed on the first day of the Canadian Dance Festival at 2 o'clock in the afternoon in Tache Hall of the University of Manitoba (soon to be renamed by the dance artists as Tacky Hall).

In this building, a confirmation of residence registration office dance studios was bubbling

with hundreds of delegates running around confused and tired (some people travelled for thousands of miles). Luggage was all over, more hysteria and more confusion. At 2:00 in the afternoon a quiet chanting worked its way through the mess of people. Linda Rabin managed to change a hysterical registration room into a peaceful environment.

One does not talk about the White Goddess in terms of a dance piece for when the performance is over, all is forgotten but one knows that something very good has just happened to you. I believe that she has been invited by Peter Randazzo of the Toronto Dance Theatre to bring the White Goddess to the Toronto Dance Festival next fall; let us hope that she does for we all should see the uncluttered beauty of this great work.

The standards of the White Goddess were followed by many. Among them the Mountain Dance Theatre of Vancouver, an exciting group with some of the most beautiful looking people in the conference. And of course, the Paula Ross dancers (winner of the 1977 Chalmers Award), beautiful dancers and moving choreography. Only the bartender in the lobby stopped me from shouting my pleasure when he told me that he would not sell me a beer until I admitted to him that the Royal Winnipeg Ballet was the best ballet company in the world; of course, I accepted.

Good things were happening at the Conference and bad things too—none so bad and silly as Margaret Dragu's hoo-haas in the lobby during intermission. She didn't have a piece, she was very tired (she's on tour now), and totally confused; she did not just make a fool out of all of us there, but she also ruined the audience's chance of getting a most needed drink in such a short intermission.

It will take many years before the name Margaret Dragu is mentioned in Winnipeg. All these poor people choose not to comment on it; Margaret's work in the lobby became the most un-commented work ever performed. I think she should stay away from that province for at least ten years and if she does go back, she had better change her name to Olga Romero, bring her pointe shoes and her favourite Maguska with her as a disguise.

I was particularly happy to see that everyone looked good at the Conference—better lighting, better costumes, better and clearer ideas, and perhaps more understanding of the formalities of the theatre as we know it.

OH, CONTACT

or do you wanna see what I got!

Terry McGlade



CONTACT 77 — a 3 day affair sponsored by the Ontario Arts Council for the benefit of agents bookers and sponsors in Ontario. Basically a marketplace for the performing arts. Being that, it was decided this year to put things in the proper context by having independent dancers and larger companies stage commercials of 90 seconds or mini performances no longer than 10 minutes.

Great idea, especially because it shows that dance is really a marketable commodity and with the right packaging can go far. The audience really was prepared for commercials in any form, but I saw a few heads nodding-out during the mini-performances.

Except for two, all of the commercials were presented by the company managers or their own booking agents. (David Haber appeared, did a plug for Entre-Six and himself, of course.

Then you had your big companies, les Grands Ballets doing a wonderful K-TEL style announcement saying they're big, they're good and they're expensive.

Your medium size, Ballet Ys — talking about past glories and future triumphs, to Winnipeg's Contemporary's dry recital of attracting such notable choreographers as Norman Morris, plus adding lines from the Washington Post dance critic, to Marchowsky really using her 35 years in the business as a major selling point.

There were the unknown companies — Marijan Bayer Dance Company, Dance Plus Four (only three performed, where was the fourth?) and the Ottawa Dance Theatre presenting the regular dance schtick.

But wait a second, these bookers are looking for anything to fill

cont'd pg.9

SMALL TOWN BALLET THEATRE COMPANY

Elizabeth Chitty

SMALL TOWN BALLET THEATRE COMPANY—a work in progress choreographed by Leslie Link; dancers Grindl Kuchirka, Leslie Link, Sam Walton; pianist Lubomyr Melnyk playing from his 'Endless Book of Unending Songs, Hymns and Prayers' Sept. 22-24, Toronto Free Theatre

Small Town Ballet Company made its debut at Toronto Free Theatre. I wonder why they call themselves a ballet company? I mean, they don't wear shoes. Anyway, I don't often enjoy a lot of dancing around but I wasn't bored this time. I like things with distinction; I don't mean graying at the temples, but definition/uniqueness/identity. This had perversity. It was curious. The characterizing feature for me was Les Link's appearance. Now, androgynous/feminine men are not exactly novel and homosexuality does not seem noteworthy for perversity—I live in Toronto. (Did you know that Toronto has the highest per capita gay population in North America?) But his homosexual bird/spirit was a curious variation.

Anyway, the piece began with the ceremonious entry of the composer/pianist, Lubomyr Melnyk, who played at a piano with a big, white clock on the music rest. His music was repetitive, rich and resonant. At first I was tempted to liken it to Steve Reich. It was smaltzy here and there, though. He really gunned the old pedal. I liked watching his arms moving all over the place from his relaxed, upright back. (I wish I could typeset that relaxed.)

After fifteen minutes, Grindl entered in a long white dress, walked through the space and left. Then Sam and Les came in, Sam in a white shirt and tie and suit pants, Les in a jock-strap affair with a bare ass. His hair was in a tight bun and he wore dangling earrings. They did a romantic pas de deux; romantic in the sense of your regular romantic pas de deux vocabulary complete with turns and lifts. But they didn't relate theatrically that way. His appearance was anything but subtle but their dance relationship was. This gave the movement a certain distillation and separateness.

Les was very bird-like, his long arms following that good old curvaceous, fluid swan pattern. Much of the movement was outspread and expansive, especially with the arms and now and then things would snap

together when a more balletic vocabulary would appear. Sam was very capable but never having to try and overstep himself so it was fine. The movement flowed along quite calmly and then sometimes would abruptly end in a Fear and Trembling number. Anyone who's seen modern dance must know what I mean by a Fear and Trembling number, (he's quivering, he's seeing snakes, etc.) Sam loosened his tie and snapped his fingers at which point Grindl entered (!?) minus her white dress, in pink leotards and tights.

Her solo was introspective, she touched her body, she was on the floor a lot, there were holds and stillness. Much of the movement was very stretched-out, in the graceful, seductive style that characterized the whole work. During one part, Lubomyr touched the keys so lightly that no sound except for the occasional high note came out, but you could hear the keys clicking.

Les joined her, minus earrings and with his hair out, long and frizzy but still seeming un-human, this time more like a super-natural creature than a bird. There was insinuation now and then that he was to be admired, as when she touched his leg reverently. Generally speaking though, there wasn't too much play on the dancers' roles, even though the costuming seemed to indicate roles in the usual theatrical, narrative context. I liked that, it allowed you your own decision as to whether you wanted to get involved on that level or not. I don't, so I appreciated not having that way of perceiving it rammed down my throat. Part of the programme note said, 'What you the audience read into the relationship between the music and the dance as well as between the dancers themselves has a potential to be as varied as our own.'

Everyone danced together at the end. There was a very weird entry used throughout the piece; the dancer would walk with stylized, long steps, with one arm held to the forehead and the other outstretched. Very sci-fi. There was a bit towards the end in which they all took poses against the evergreen boughs which were attached to the sand-blasted brick walls of the theatre which was silly.

So that was Small Town, good old modern dance choreographed and danced competently enough, but with a curious twist that held my attention.

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their auditoriums and school halls, and really want to present culture to their fellow citizens.

Therefore, what I see as the state of the art, has nothing to do with what they perceive as being saleable.

It was interesting to note that some of the presentations by company managers were more imaginative than some of the dance pieces being performed. I found Terrill Maguire, Carolyn Schaffer, Kyra Lober and Menaka Thakkar's performances a little too precious, long and tiring, considering there were 21 presentations. Rinmon's mini performance was better in some respects than their environmental pieces have been in the past. Elizabeth Chitty's 'Looking Good', utilizing a billboard slogan was funnier than most and since it was timed to 90 seconds, was well received.

Judy Jarvis, inside a television set also took the commercial idea into its natural environment. Has dance really reached the Marketable stage? — I wonder if the next Contact will feature Young & Rubican adverts?



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rather than by supporting antique visions of ethereal loveliness. One choreographer says she wants to do things that come from where we are, for the people who are here.

In another forum, called Dancers to Dancers, an interesting split emerged between ballet and contemporary dancers. There was much discussion of pension plans for dancers, a subject complicated by relatively early retirement and high rates of disability. Dancers raised the question of their own relation to company direction, the quality of their participation in artistic decision-making. Political lines seemed very clearly evident when one member of the National Ballet observed to a crowd of mostly hungry, mostly contemporary dancers, that he'd almost like to be unemployed for a while just to see what it was like.

It will be interesting to observe the future direction the Dance in Canada Association takes. My hunch is that the so-called New Dancers will find it more and more important, the more traditional dancers less so, and that will be a pity, because the entire community has enormous amounts to learn from each other. They are scheduled to meet in Vancouver next summer, if the money can be found to cart everyone out here. If you're out in some corner of the province, and interested in dance, start saving your pennies and come along next year; it may be the most stimulating vacation you've ever had.

D.I.C. '77 CONCERT REVIEW

Elizabeth Zimmer

August 28, 1977

Performances by 38 different companies and independent choreographers demonstrated the full range of Canadian dance activity, last week at the Manitoba Theatre Centre. Being on the program is one way of getting a cut rate registration to the Dance in Canada Conference, and just about everyone who offers to perform is scheduled. Only illness, injury, poverty or enormous distance prevented representatives from appearing; there was no one from east of Montreal, the two major Alberta companies were absent, and the British Columbia contingent was small, though remarkably well received.

I'll begin at the beginning, with a performance that did not take the stage, but rather stairways, anterooms and a gymnasium at the University of Manitoba, Linda Rabin, a Montreal-born choreographer who has lived and worked all over the world. Taking as her text Robert Graves' work on The White Goddess, she mounted a kind of ceremony of femaleness, using several female dancers and an actor, directing them through songs and chants and processions. In spite of the absence of the male

actor, the work had a striking presence, and served as invocation to the meeting.

Five evenings of dance, loosely segregated into categories, capped the five days we spent in Winnipeg. Opening night featured the Chai Folk Ensemble, a Winnipeg-based Israeli dance group, and the Pavlychenko Folklore Ensemble, beautifully-prepared Ukrainian dancers from Saskatoon. It also included a fascinating if bewildering dance study by Iro Tembeck of Montreal, an evocation of a critical moment in the life of Isadora Duncan. Unfortunately the program got lost, and none of the audience quite understood why those two women kept stalking one another around the stage.

Dramatic dance seemed to be the rubric for that first evening, which included startlingly effective and original mime work by the Paul Gaulin Company, and the delightful Bella, a work by and for Judy Jarvis and Danny Grossman. The two performers, accompanied by operatic selections from Puccini, danced, played and flirted on a huge flowered horse, combining gymnastics and lyricism, humour and eloquence and electrifying the audience. Visually the piece looked like a Hallmark Card; the movement within it was so striking, so fully exploited, that one is tempted to declare Jarvis and Grossman a national resource.

Also on the first-night card was Jupiter's Moons, by Andrea Smith of Don Mills, Ontario, a swirling, meditative work to the music of Steve Reich.

Saturday was to my mind the least interesting concert. A collection of mostly modern dance, it included work by Terrill Maguire of Toronto, Muna Tseng and Zella Wolofsky, both former Vancouver residents, the Contemporary Dancers of Winnipeg, Mountain Dance and Prism Dance Theatre. Concerto Grosso, by Vancouver choreographer Mauryne Allen, was given a smashing performance, and delighted the audience; it was funny, and easy to understand, full of choreographic in-jokes and musical gimmicks. The evening closed with a stark, tension-filled ballet by Larry Mckinnon; people around me were having trouble deciding

cont'd pg.15



whether the rigid, beat-punching choreography was intended seriously or not.

Intermission that evening saw an additional performance by Margaret Dragu of Campana-Dragu, and assorted recruits. As the audience filed out of the theatre, they were confronted by a bunch of punks squabbling in the lobby, beating each other up. As they were herded out of the space, a series of small tableaux continued unfold-



the Lobby

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ual artists: now the dancers have got in there, and it's post-modern dance, or minimal dance; ordinary behaviour transformed by the setting, and the quality of attention from both performer and audience. A program note called it dance as tactile painting. I thought it was fascinating.

Sunday, a group of mostly young, independent choreographers presented more experimental, post-modern dance, extending definitions of dance about as far as they presently go: I'll expand that program another day. It was followed

their new, larger setting. This year's Chalmers award was presented to Vancouver choreographer Paula Ross; in her absence, it was accepted by her assistant director,

Leslie Manning, who also performed selections from Ross' work.

The concert concluded with Ernst Eder, formerly of Vancouver, now of Edmonton, proceeding across the stage and up the aisle and out of the theatre, trailing a seemingly infinite length of fabric. As he made the right-angle turn from



Mary Liz Bayer, Brian MacDonald, Iris Garland

stage to house, the fabric brushed diagonally over the heads of the audience, creating a ripple of reaching hands and enthusiasm. Several people got up and left. Others cheered.

On Tuesday, the final night of the festival, we saw Toronto Dance Theatre in an elegant spoof on concert audiences, choreographed by Peter Randazzo; two rather strained modern-ballet pieces by Ballet Ys, a solo work by Danny Grossman called Curious Schools of Theatrical Dancing, executed in a wooden ring, and performances by two of Canada's major ballet companies. The National brought Ashton's Monotones II, and the Royal Winnipeg closed the evening with Oscar Araiz' version of Le Sacre Du Printemps. I found it interesting that the ballet companies did not choose to perform the work of Canadian choreographers.

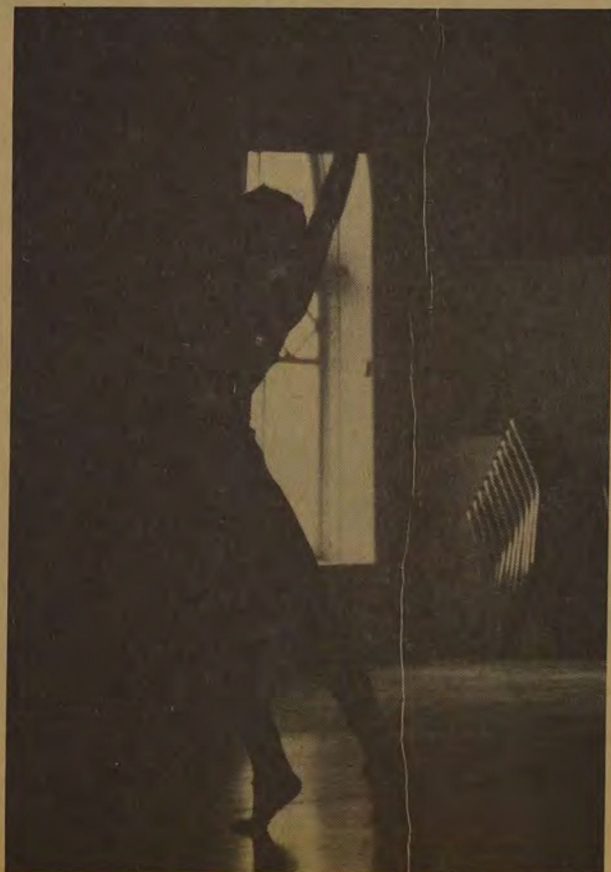
Although it was an astonishing buffet of dance offerings, most encouraging to those of us who've been observing the development of the art in this country. As interesting as the performance was the generation gap in perception between the dance audience, made up of conference delegates, and the local people; between the Winnipeg critic and the performers. People who came to the Festival expecting lots of pretty dancing and conventional form were often disappointed; those who brought open minds took home plenty to think about.

Elizabeth Zimmer's review of the Sunday concert will appear in the November issue of SPILL.

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Intermission that evening saw an additional performance by Margaret Dragu of Campana-Dragu, and assorted recruits. As the audience filed out of the theatre, they were confronted by a bunch of punks squabbling in the lobby, beating each other up. As they were herded out of the space, a series of small tableaux continued unfolding: two people kissed each other goodnight, lay down on the floor as if to sleep, awoke, arose, kissed again, the man walked off, encountered a wall, returned, kissed again, lay down again, and so on for about twenty minutes. Meanwhile, alongside them, a young woman in leotards did ballet exercises, a man sat in a chair with a television set in his lap, apparently absorbed in it, and Dragu herself climbed a ladder to a balcony over their heads, where she did a series of karate kicks and then sat down to smoke and read the newspaper. All around me people seemed faintly uncomfortable, uncertain as to whether they had to watch all this, or could drink, go to the bathroom or pursue other intermission activities. Ten years ago they'd have called this a happening, and theatre folk would have done it, or visual artists: now the dancers have got in there, and it's post-modern dance, or minimal dance; ordinary behaviour transformed by the setting, and the quality of attention from both performer and audience. A program note called it dance as tactile painting. I thought it was fascinating.

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In the Lobby

by a reception in the lobby, hosted by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, to which no one thought to invite a stereo; performers and audience stood edgily around, wishing they were dancing.

Monday was a fascinating collection of diverse dance styles, from pure-movement dances to Keith Jarrett by Toronto's Dance-makers, to Indian classical dance, to some reflective, politicized choreography about housing problems by the Regina Modern Dance Works. Judy Marcuse performed some works which premiered here last year, they really sparkled in their new, larger setting. This year's Chalmers award was presented to Vancouver choreographer Paula Ross; in her absence, it was accepted by her assistant director,

Leslie Manning, who also performed selections from Ross' work.

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LA GROUPE DE LA PLACE ROYALE

Mimi Beck

La Groupe de la Place Royale will perform 'Nanti Malam', a work choreographed by artistic director Jean Pierre Perreault, on November 10 as part of the Art Gallery of Ontario's 'Looking at Dance' series. 'Nanti Malam' represents Perreault's concept of dance company as a self-contained unit capable of instant performances. There is no set, costumes are leotards, and most importantly, the dancers provide their own musical accompaniment.

La Groupe pioneered this form in two previous works, 'Dilios', choreographed by Peter Bonham, and Perreault's 'Danse Pour Sept Voix'. 'I wanted the dancers to be more self sufficient—to provide everything in the performance...dance was always relying on another art form for accompaniment. This arrangement removes the expense and logistics of coordinating performance dates with non-company musicians.

Montreal composer Claude Vivier wrote the score for 'Nanti Malam' and taught the dancers how to play the Balinese gendings used in the piece. Vocalizations are in

and dynamics to the dancers and directed them to find something in themselves to dance with. 'Dancers were constantly making choices and creating within my choreography, which was only 50% of the total work...the works belonged to the dancers, not me.'

He is now moving away from looseness within the structure—'Nanti Malam' was entirely choreographed, working from the style of individual dancers. 'I don't try to make one move like the other. I talk to the dancers rather than showing the movements so they don't copy me.'

When asked if studying formal dance technique might inhibit the evolution of a dancer's personal style, Perreault replied, 'You should have a good technique in order to be able to forget it. A French and English, but the musical universe of 'Nanti Malam', according to Vivier, '...is based upon the almost continuous use of an invented language whose phonetic content causes us to focus on a variable message.'

Both Perreault and Vivier studied in Bali. Perreault's two and a half month stay was supported by a Canada Council grant. 'I realized that the Balinese dance with, not on the music; we danced beside the music. In 'Nanti Malam' I wanted the music to live with the dance. I explained the structure of the sections to Vivier who wrote his music independent of the choreography, section by section.'

Perreault seeks simplicity in his choreography. In past works he explained his ideas of quality

company is not a work. In a company you need to be able to do anything. A dancer needs a wide vocabulary to dance for someone else, and for this there is only formal technical training. You can self train, but you'll be your own specialty. The important thing is to discover yourself and know your own body.'

Dancers in La Groupe are discovering their voices as well; they perform voice warm-ups daily and enrolled in a music course at the University of Ottawa to learn sight reading. 'A dancer who is tone deaf,' says Perreault, 'cannot be a member of this company.'

Projections for future works include using music, choreographing for non-dancers, and moving closer to theater. Perreault finds most dance performances boring—'I don't need to see dance to stimulate me'—but likes the work of Toronto independent choreographers, '...people who do things from themselves experiencing dance as a medium in their own way without competing'.

Perreault believes that dance needs to be more a part of the community. He sees avant garde artists who want understanding but perform in obscure galleries for a specialized public. 'People are withdrawing into artistic ghettos; they isolate themselves and apologize for their work. They should break out from the elite avant garde and perform all over; open more, apologize less. A work of art exists when people look at it. No matter how new an idea is, it should be clear for everyone.'



From the Lobby Balcony

Elizabeth Chitty

I wrote the following after a bad case of Dance Nausea at the Conference and read it in a forum called 'New Dance.'

Art is not decoration, it is not a pastime to make you feel good, it is not a collection of signs that you already know and know how to put together to make something that you already know. It is not a well-executed and crafted thing made by the rules you learned in technique and composition classes.

Art is something you have not been programmed for because there is no program. Art is discovery, exploration, risk and change. It is gut not only emotionally but intellectually.

The things done under my category of non-art can't do a thing to the world. Art means something because if it changes your perceptions, expands your thought-processes then you are going to see and act in the world affected by those changes. Art and culture are important not because they allow us to ignore the world but because it is part of the world.

Art exists in a social and political context; artists do not create in a vacuum, unshaped by the outside world. For art to have life and relevance to life it has to be in the context of the world that exists this very moment in August 1977. How can there be significance and input into the world without the context of that world as it exists now, not 10 or 20 or 100 years ago? The art of the past was created in social and political contexts, to perpetrate that art it to perpetuate those contexts. To work in a pre-established mode is to reinforce the values and criteria of that mode. And pasting a political slogan or soundtrack on top of the same old thing isn't enough, you can't present content that suggests change in a form that is content not to change.

Dance technique movements are part of a vocabulary, a language. I understand and can appreciate the craft of mastery over a language to express and communicate. But there are two dissatisfactions with it for me. We have instinctual and educated responses to language. I know what a specific dance movement conotes, so these responses exist in a mode for which I have been programmed. The possibilities of my experience of response are therefore very limited and ex-



Photo: Elinor Rose



ist in a situation of perpetuation and stagnation of previously established information. There is no change or growth possible for me. 'The second problem is that the theatrical dance language is unreal and dishonest to me. Language is a system of signs (there is a study of it called semiotics.) But long before I ever heard of semiotics I had a gut reaction to the distillation of life and fakery of signs. I do not want to create a representation of X, I want to be more direct and real, I want to create X. I despise symbols. Symbols are nothing but an academic cheap trick—I'll disguise my intention by having this and this and if you've learned your lessons you'll be able to decipher what I mean and can feel really clever.' I'm not interested in disguise and illusion. So the two dissatisfactions I have with dance technique are pre-programmed response and the distilled dishonesty of sign systems.

The very first thing I remember as being important to me when I started to choreograph in my last year of school was that linear thinking was no longer enough for the world we live in. I did not want to create dances that were linear in their construction—start,

build, climax; everything connecting in a complete whole that takes your perceptions along one narrow path and bingo the jackpot, the 'meaning'. I would rather create a system of reference points, not strung together in the familiar way that is recognizable to all, that facilitates a wider scope of experience of the piece. I don't think that making things easy for an audience is doing them any favours and that giving people a situation for which they have been programmed is allowing them significant experience.

Dance is so often discussed in the framework of the heart, soul, spirit. For so long dance has usually overlooked the mind.

Art is life. I don't mean that as some cutesy, artsy-fartsy, insincere excess—I really fucking mean it. Life is changing, growing, taking chances, laying yourself on the line. Art is not decoration, it is not a pastime to make you feel good, it is not a collection of signs that you already know and know how to put together to make something you already know. It is not a well-executed and crafted thing made by the rules you learned in technique and composition classes. How dare anyone insult life so.

CALENDAR

OTTAWA DANCE THEATRE

Ottawa Dance Theatre begins its Spring /78 season with a tour of Ottawa schools in February and March.

April - Performances in Ottawa and South - Eastern Ontario

REGINA MODERN DANCE WORKS

Fall Term Classes - modern, ballet, composition/improvisation, creative dance for parents and preschoolers

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DANCE IN CANADA ASSOC.

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Day 1 - Community and association business
Day 2 - Meeting with the Ontario Arts Council
Location to be announced.

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- New York Dance Festival - N.Y.

Oct. 27 - 29 - Playhouse Theatre, Winnipeg

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Chorechange 1 Nov. 4 -6
Nov. 4 - Tournesol & Groupe Nouvelle Aire performance

Nov. 5 - open class & experimental workshop

Chorechange 2 Dec. 4 - 6
Dec. 4 - Toronto Dance Theatre Performance
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