

# CANADA'S DANCE NEWSPAPER

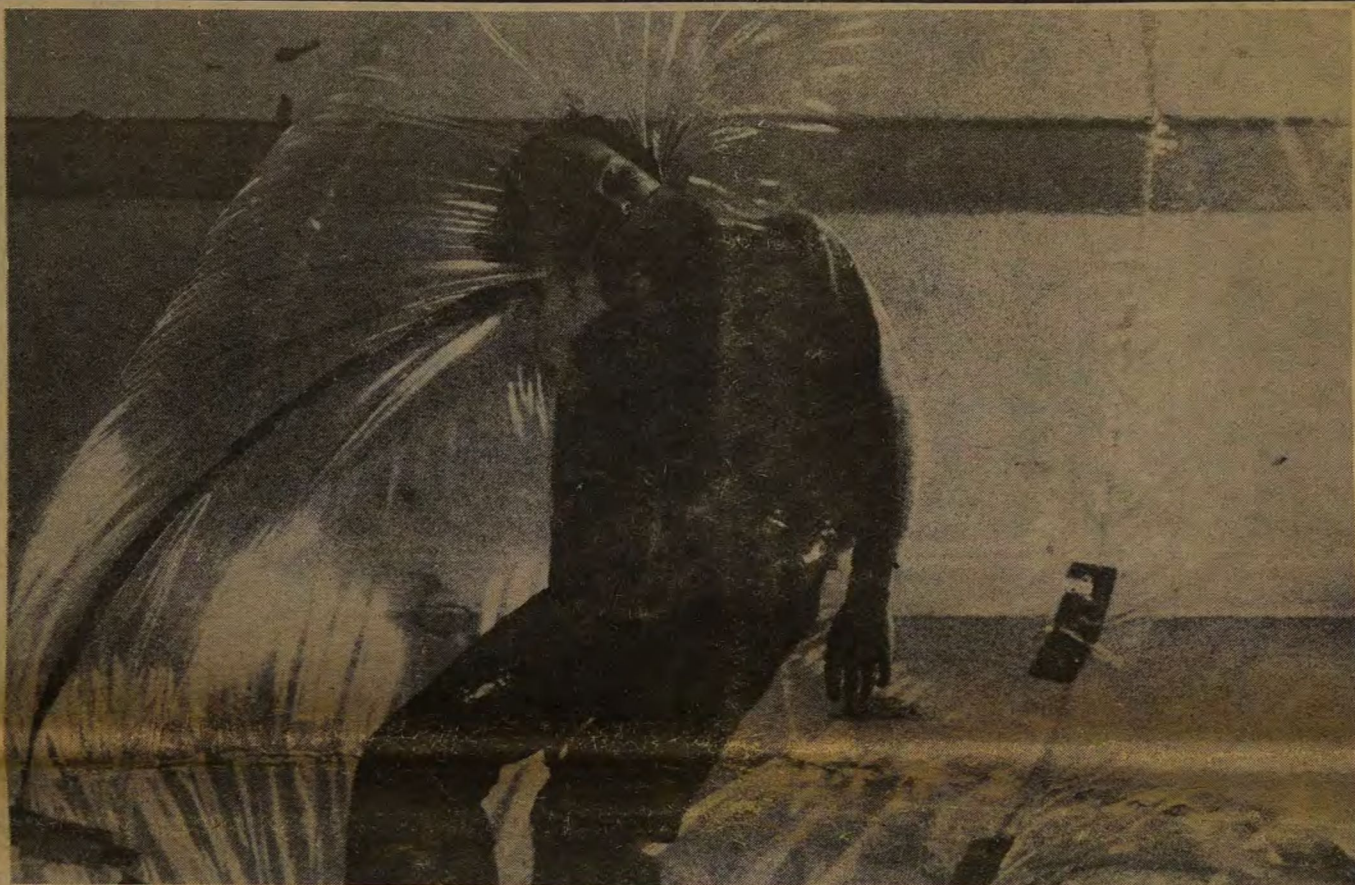
# Spill

new

#11

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**DANCE**  
**NEWS**  
**REVIEWS**  
**PHOTOS**  
**ARTICLES**  
**GOSSIP**



Michael Baker in *Balloon Slices*

photo: Lynn Rotin

## CREDO

J. Groo Bannerman

An exceptionally gifted dance artist presented a gift of her own to a too small group of people recently. The people were those who saw all three versions of *Balloon Slices*, choreographed by Louise Garfield in collaboration with writer Susan Swan. The gift was the opportunity to witness the process of creation: compositional work. The final result was a gift from Garfield and Swan back to their respective Muses: a work of art. With all due respect to a creator's right to describe her work in whatever terms she wishes to, that Garfield and Swan refuse to describe their performance as art is insignificant. Their work is art, whether they say so or not.

Understanding why Garfield and Swan reject the label of "art" being pasted over their work is easy. The word is bastardized to the point of covering the coffee tables of the nation until the plexiglass creaks with pretty picture books of everything from cooking to kites. The concept of art is adulterated to describe any expression of fancy, from Winston Churchill's paintings to Hallmark greeting cards. Art is prostituted to the point where TV advertisements win awards and the successful novel is the one made into a movie.

It's easy to understand why Garfield and Swan want to step off a road that forks at the letter "a" into uppercase and lowercase. Especially since the road continues to subdivide into extremes like "High Art" which apparently must be constantly worshipped with offerings of food, flowers, and sacrificial victims, lest it wither away and vanish into dust, and "popular art" which is apparently

something participated in while drinking beer and eating peanuts, with a hat pulled well over the face. Easy to understand why they wish to escape any categorization whatever imposed by an external viewpoint demanding the limitations of definitions and labels be put upon an internal state that words chase after like a puppy playing with a puma.

Simple, too, to comprehend why they want to detach themselves, with one graceful denial, from a word that entails the ultimate con-job. That Garfield and Swan wish to remove themselves from the ranks of the most hypocritical parasites in human society isn't surprising. "Artist" is more often a euphemism for "criminal" than not, a criminal who deals in fraud, forgery, extortion, blackmail, and robbery.

Rape isn't too mild a word analogous of what is done to the concept of art. Neither is murder. Yet somehow, down all the centuries, again and again the stubborn creature lifts its head and staggers into the fray once more. The glint in its eye has always been the creative fire. The chief enemy of art has always been the spider of technique, crouched waiting in the center of its mathematically perfect web of established standards. The battle of creativity versus technique has raged since we lived in caves.

The man or woman who sat by the cavemouth all day, carving flints into spear and axeheads, was an artist. Criteria for excellence in flintcarving were very simple. If the prey escaped, due to a flint's dullness, or breakage, it was a bad one. Yet flintcarvers were probably very rarely



Paula Ravitz & Irene Grainger

photo: Kathy Richan

killed by frustrated and hungry hunters, because the flintcarvers value to the tribe was something that he/she could prove.

The man or woman who smeared berryjuice on cavern walls to create a painting was also an artist. But his/her painting's value to the tribe could not be proved. And because painting was new, because it was unknown, it was probably feared. Stained hands would be suspect. The cave-painter would work in the early

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**AND THERE'S MORE**

## EDITORIAL

Elizabeth Chitty

**JOIN THE AIR FORCE**  
Sign Up Today for The National Ballet



Now you can become a member of one of the world's leading dance companies and a supporter of its pursuit of excellence.

In case you can't read the fine print, the original of the above says, "Now you can become a member of one of the world's leading dance companies and a supporter of its pursuit of excellence." Pursuit of excellence. The phrase is increasingly being found. Going public. "Standards" and "excellence" are two words often tossed to DanceLand from the Canada Council and predictably wound around the National Ballet. The thin actuality of these words are weighed down by the power of the institutions which sound them out. They are rooted very common-sensibly in the mandates and policies of those who use them; the meaning of the words are perfectly comprehensible in this context. They are closed words, they have endings and goals. Of course standards and excellence exist in an art form in which established techniques, procedures and modes of reception exist. A finite means of communication such as a technical vocabulary obviously carries with the possibilities of poor or excellent execution. Sure.

It is the inability of the users of these words to understand the relationship between the words and their context that's the problem. Their inability to perceive that standards and excellence are words that apply to aims and procedures. Diversity in aims and procedures yields diverse standards and excellences. The use of these words, the significance and the meaning attached to them reflect a single means of approaching an art. A single means alone, without recognition of others, totally lacks perception and awareness of the many possibilities of art and life. It is a point of view that screams of fascism. (Artistic ideas are always political because the idea relates to a human context, an ideology.)

The process of handing out grants is tied to appreciating and judging art. To undertake this process with one direction guiding decisions is nothing but totalitarian. If art has any relationship to life, how can you possibly maintain such complete confidence in entities such as standards and excellence? They are changing. All of us "dancing" aren't all "dancing" the same "dance".

J. Groo Bannerman sincerely and heartily apologizes to Jennifer Mascall for being so incredibly stupid as to forget to put his own name on his own review of her work *Homily Possum*. It was just another fatuous lacunae.

## O.A.C.

The Ontario Arts Council reminds the dance community of the availability of the Choreographic Awards Programme. The next deadline date for applications is August 1/78. Applications after that will be received on January 1/79, March 1/79 and May 1/79.

Under the programme individuals may apply for funds to pursue independent and original choreographic projects. Applicants may apply for grants up to a maximum of \$3000.00 within a calendar year, to cover artistic costs of the project, and where relevant, administrative costs. Although it is hoped that public performances will result from these grants, workshop or studio presentations of works-in-progress will be accepted as projects meeting the goals of the programme. Applications are adjudicated by a qualified panel of accessors.

For further information contact:

Dance Office  
Ontario Arts Council  
151 Bloor St. W.  
Toronto, Ont. M5S 1T6  
Phone: (416) 961-1660

Applications are being accepted through June 13/78 for the 1978 Jean A. Chalmers Award in choreography, established by the Floyd S. Chalmers Foundation, to assist promising or deserving choreographers in improving their choreographic skills through projects and study.

The \$3000.00 award will be made at the Dance in Canada Conference in Vancouver this August. Applications will be assessed by a jury chosen by the Dance in Canada Association.

Write or call:  
The Ontario Arts Council  
151 Bloor St. W.  
Toronto, Ont. M5S 1T6  
Phone: (416) 961-1660

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*The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the contributors themselves.*

*Erratum: The article "Jennifer Mascall Explodes A Space: A Solely Subjective Soliloquy" in Spill #10 was attributed to Jennifer Mascall. The author was J. Groo Bannerman. I apologize for the error and any embarrassment it may have caused.*

Ed.

## LETTERS

Dear Ms. Langdon:

It certainly is a pleasant change to read some intelligent comments about my reviews. You're quite correct, Ms. Langdon. My writing stinks. Why do you think I do it, if not to improve?

Mile-long sentences (which is, by the way, a cliché of literary criticism) are a much-debated point of writing craftsmanship. Wasn't it Victor Hugo who wrote one sentence that was twenty-three pages long? If your attention span cancels out after fifteen words, that's hardly my fault. However, my style of infinite thought progression could certainly use syntactical polish. And my grammar! And my spelling! You wouldn't believe some of the words I have to look up in the dictionary. Or perhaps you would. Incidentally, you were right, Ms. Langdon. Yes, I didn't know what the word "lacunae" meant, and, yes, I did have to look it up. Congratulations and thank you for the word. And, my God, what a beautifully succinct and precise description of my writing, not to mention my lifestyle. "Fatuous lacunae". Believe me, Ms. Langdon, I've been wandering the streets of Toronto muttering those words under my breath for days, awestruck at the simplicity and appropriateness of the phrase. I think I'll make it my epitaph.

If Ms. Nielson has "successfully castigated" me, Ms. Langdon, this is the first I've heard of it. I don't feel castigated, successfully or otherwise. Ms. Nielson is entitled to her opinion. And I am entitled to mine. My reviews didn't question Ms. Neilson's artistry or choreographic talent. I simply postulated the possibility that in the one work under discussion, she had made a simple mistake, out of what was probably naivete. If you consider what I did say to be so offensive, then I call your attention to what I tactfully, compassionately, and with enormous restraint, *did not* say.

As for your comments to Elizabeth Chitty, I'm afraid I can't agree. The article she wrote is a clearly conceived, succinct, and powerful statement of one of the sanest viewpoints we've heard from yet. As for the grammar and syntax—literature, too, is changing and growing, Ms. Langdon. I know that you find some of these changes unpleasant, but don't worry, it'll all work out in the synthesis. To me, the sentence you quoted makes perfect sense as a complete thought and is a definitive description of human reality. Chitty is absolutely right.

I saw Chitty perform at Café Soho's Hallowe'en and at the Dancer's Ball. Needless to say, neither performance offended me. Hallowe'en was good clean fun. Chitty had a role in the play and she performed the role well. The performance of a role was also an element of the short work she did at the Dancer's Ball. There were at least four levels of irony running through the piece and at least five levels exploring human interrelationships. These performances, *Extreme Skin*, and other works by Chitty, are indicative of what I would describe as part of new dance removing itself from the stereotyped role of the dancer as a sex object, instead of perpetuating it.

Chitty is saying something. Goddamn it! She's not just costuming herself to look like an obnoxious "Danskins" ad in order to prance around a performing area with every gesture cooing, "Look at me! Look at me! Aren't I pretty?"

Yours sincerely,  
J. Groo Bannerman

## Au Courant

Brian Robinson

After an incredibly busy Spring dance season, a Summer lull has arrived with great weather, low-key energy and more spaced out events. Spring performances and workshops by Marijan Bayer, Miriam Adams, Toronto Dance Theatre, The National Ballet School, Joan Phillips, Linda Rabin, Ace Buddies, Judy Jarvis, Dancemakers, Roberta Mohler, Kyra Lober, Rina Singha, Paula Moreno, Paula Ravitz, the Marchowsky Company, Danceworks/Improv., Ballet YS, and Zella Wolofsky provided opportunities to experience many diverse energies, styles and techniques. Some co-ordination of schedules would help audiences who at times were faced with several events on the same night.

The Canada Council Dance Dept. and the Touring Office seem to be going out of their way to undermine the Dance in Canada Association and the upcoming Conference in Vancouver. The operating funds to DIC were cut back by \$11,000.00 (more than 30% of last year's allotment) and the Touring Office is apparently offering no support to groups or individuals wanting to travel to Vancouver to perform and participate, but are supporting the Toronto Dance Festival to be held in Sept./Oct. Their policy of divide and conquer the Canadian dance community takes one more step in their seemingly isolated definition of the right direction. Are the rumblings at the Canada Council's Dance Dept. fact or fantasy?

The above mentioned Toronto Dance Festival is a highly ambitious project master minded by Roger Jones and will be held at the T.W.P. Theatre with several professional companies from all over Canada participating. Plans to include independent choreographers were projected but so far many local Toronto invitees have since been told that there is no money in the budget for performance fees. C'mon Roger, how about trying to find a few morsels in this heavily grant supported enterprise.

A recent Montreal Multi-Media Collaborative Concert performance including music, dance, visual art and electronic extensions was presented at Pollack Hall, McGill University in Montreal. Independent dancers Dena Davida, Carol Harwood, Louise Pelland and Daniel Leveille as well as musicians Gaston Lemieux, Pierre Gauthier, Yuri Meyrowitz and Robert Bick. Works by Montreal composers Ted Dawsen, and Alcides Lanya were performed.

Dana Luebke and Robert Greenwood have founded a company of theatre and dance called Sun Ergos in Calgary. They offer school programmes, workshops and public presentations. Info. 2205, 700-9th St. S.W., Calgary, Alta. T2P 2B5.

Co-motion the one year old Calgary based group are now gearing up for several activities. Barbara Hankins, Norma Wood, Lisa Doolittle and Mary Jo Fulmer are founding members. They, as well as other new members teach, perform and offer programmes for children and training in creative dance. Further info. - 108 22nd St. N.W., Calgary T2N 2M8.

The First Canadian Festival of Mime was held in Toronto at the Toronto Free Theatre June 5 - 11 with more than 25 different mime companies participating. A National Conference of Mime Artists with seminars, films, workshops and master technique classes were included as part of this busy event. Lindsey Kemp and his company who were in the midst of a sold out run in Toronto with "Flowers" and "Salome" were also able to participate.

Mauryne Allen, Artistic Co-Director of

## LINDA RABIN & DANCERS

Graham Jackson

Toronto Spring Festival  
Holy Trinity Church  
April 26-29, 1978

The first thing that struck me about Linda Rabin's *Women of the Tent* was the meticulous care that had been lavished on it, the loving attention to detail that had been paid it. Certainly, the stylized tent, hemp-woven, the women's black dresses, the copper pots and baskets of wool, the real water, the real flame helped to make Rabin's portrait of desert women all the more credible. But then what struck me was that this was all there was, that the choreographer was interested in the power of the detail to evoke an exotic locale, nothing more. What a waste I thought, that Rabin should spend her talents as stage director on recreating the rather monotonous existence of four women, presumably wives of some Middle-Eastern nomadic tribesmen. (If they weren't the wives of tribesmen, then a sisterhood of nun-like creatures eschewing the real world.)

That Rabin should find these women dance-worthy subjects is, to say the least, surprising. These women are victims, victims of a society that demands they spend their long days carding wool and their nights offering prayers to deities whose harsh decrees are used to enforce and justify their position as victims. Rabin doesn't show these women balking against their heavy yokes, but content (in their solemn, blank-faced way) to carry on the old routines. *Women of the Tent* might have been instructive if it had been a TV documentary produced by National Geographic with a voice-over by some Middle Eastern anthropologist. But, as a piece of dance theatre, it's downright offensive.

To see dancers like Lisette Mertins and the powerful Candace Loubert playing at being humble, god-fearing desert-women is more evidence of the ripest theatrical decadence; it's probably not unlike the charades à la *Turque* that Regency society ladies used to play at when things Ottoman were all the rage 160 years ago. Loubert should be unleashed on space as the truly fierce goddess she is and not pent up like a wounded animal in long skirts and mumbo-jumbo ritual: what did she leave Les Grands Ballets for, anyway?

There are a few other modern and experimental choreographers in Toronto who profess a fascination with Eastern exotica, but at least with a dancer-choreographer like Kyra Lober, one senses that she's exploring oriental mysticism as a means of pushing out, of expanding her consciousness, enriching her dance vocabulary. With Rabin there is no exploration, only imitation. The two extended solos—the fire and water dances—provided eloquent examples of what Rabin might explore further if she wanted; they were forceful, arresting dances, not incongruous with the rest of the moving landscape, but on a much higher level of energy (an energy level that is distinctly North American, I think) so that they almost seemed out of context. They would have been quite enough on their own.

On the same programme with Rabin was a dancer named Kauro Ishi, a diminutive Japanese woman whose approach to dancing and dance-making in two short solos proved more arid-Western than the most cerebral of American choreographers. Still there was real exhilaration in watching her perform. Her body is iron strong and her focus as intense. She is in control of space by always knowing her exact position in relation to it. One senses

that space holds no threat or danger for her. It's only, as she illustrates in *The Silent Point*, being trapped in one spot without the freedom to explore space that is truly frightening and sinister to her—maybe to all dancers, she's saying. In any case, such authority as Ishi's is magnetic.

## the new Spill

### DANCE WORKS/IMPROVISATIONS VI

Chervil Schneier



Martha Lovell, Dance/Works VII

photo: John Oughton

(This review made possible by a grant from FCOP, the Foundation for Comments from Ordinary Folk)

All I done was to go and say thanks to them pretty girls and faster than you foot freezes in an ice hole they told me I had to right a CRITTEEK, witch is what you think about a performants, weather it was good or bad I mean. Well I said I hardly new how to right my own name, let alone a story that ware going to be publisht in some newspaper, but they said the regular fellar was sick on account of someone giving him thare opinion right ware it hurts, but they said nothing like that wood happen to me and not to worry about my righting cause no one wood notice anything different.

Well first they said I shood say what the show was called, and ware it was at and when, so I guest I shood start by saying it was Dance Works/Improvisations VI, witch is Roman Numbers for six, and I saw it at the Music Gallery Sunday night.

First thing right off they turned down the lights so you cood just as well read the program as shake hands with a porkypine, and then two people come out in painters overalls, a girl and a fellar I think, and started mooving around in front of a screen ware they ware showing pictures with a pro-jecter except you cood hardly se what the pictures ware some times cause they ware standing right in front of the screen. Someone neer me said that they ware spost to do that so I shut up right away althow a fellar in front looked at me funny cause I yelled out DOWN IN FRONT cause I didnt no that the

pictures ware spost to shine on thare wite overalls. Once I saw what it was I was spost to see, than I liked it alot aspecially when they mooved very fast across the pictures but somehow it hardly seemed like they did much dancing. The pictures ware buildings and fenses and people and faces and some tmes they shined on thare backs (one more dancer came out late after the others had started) and some tmes they shined on thare fronts and I chuckled a few times cause thare rear ends seemed to make good picture screens. Then they went out and every one clapped and it was called *Overstory* by Irene Grainger.

Then some more people came out and mooved a few things around and darned if they didnt turn out all the lights again so you could hardly see the girl who came out to dance necst. At first thare was just some awful noise from the the corner ware two fellars ware making some music with a ELECTONIC SINTHASIZER but after a while they settled down some and the girl comenced dancing, sort of. Some one realized they fergot to turn on the lights and then we cood see the girl better. I cood tell she was doing her darndest to make some sense out of the music them fellars was doing but they warnt making it it any easy thing fer her and I'm glad I didnt have to do it. Thare ware more dancing in it than before but it warnt like any dancing I ever knowed but I liked it alot and I sure liked her INTENSIONS, and her name was Brenda Neilson and it was called *Intercom*.

Now I thought about the necst show fer all week and if thare ware any more

dancing in it than you cood shove up a black fly's ass then you can let me loose naked in the bush come June. These two girls came out with boxes of booke and then started to shove them all into a bigger box, but any darned fool cood see it warnt big enuff for all of them and they warnt packing em in very neat neither. I just coodnt see the sense of it, but every one else thaught it was funny I guest cause hear they ware playing with books while they they ware spost to be dancing. Now I'm not one to get sore about this but I'm sure glad Miss Hortents our librarian didnt see what them girls did with those books. Maybe they had too many of them at home cause it sure seemed like they had a mess of them, but it seemed a shame to go tearing and cutting them and stapling them all over the place and THEN TRY READING THEM. I cood hardly understand any of the stories they read off each other but no one else seemed to mind. I liked the poses they shaped each other into alot, but I still wished they had done more dancing. The show was called *A Thousand Tiny Pleats* and the dancers ware Janice Hladki and Johanna Householder.

They gave me some cider at intermission but it didnt have to much of a kick to it but I thaught I better clam up about it less they made me pay for it. We all stood around in the hallway looking at some weird stuff in glass cases on the walls that some one had made with a lot of paper lunch bags. I thaught it was pretty funny cause some of them cost THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS, and any donut hole nos you can get a hole lot of paper bags for much less than that, but then I guest

cont.'d from pg. 3

Toronto folks are used to paying more money to get what they want.

The electricity began acting up and I thought for sure I'd never see any real dancing now, but nobody else paid notice but went back in and sat down. Then this girl and a fellar came out and started running into each other like they was freight trains and then fell down, witch I cood tell they had rehursed alot cause the girl was all bandaged up. Every one else seemed to think it was real funny how they were hurting themselves, so I finally figured they must have been fooling. Then they did a hole bunch of things that I hardly remember to some rock and roll music but they still didnt do much dancing, just played with a wheelchair and broke things and the girl mooved around under a hockey net. Then they put on some really great dancing music and darned if they didnt hardly move at all, just leened against each other and picked thare noses witch didnt bother me none but I was sore cause they woodint dance. Suddenly it hit me right in the face like a sack of potatoes, **THEY WARE MAKING FUN OF THE OTHER DANCERS**, witch I thought was pretty low down with all them others right thare and all but every one else seemed to think it was just fine or else maybe they didnt see what was going on and ware being polite. Anyway I thought I'd better stay mum about it in case some one was still out in the woods with no flashlight, if you no what I mean. Once I cood see what they ware doing, I liked it alot and it was called **Beyond Post Modern Dance** by Mimi Beck and Don Mac.

The necst show I felt sorry for cause they had to try and get serious again but the dancing girl didnt seem to mind and her husband read a story about it it being thare fifth anniversary and all and I thought this was the most charming dance of the hole night cause it had more dance than anything else. She mooved very quickly and with great control while he read words into a microfone and it was plane as day that they ware in love. There was no title so I call it **Anniversary Dance** and she was Carolyn Shaffer and he was John Oughton.

The last show was about two more girl dancers moving in a GRID but I looked every ware and darned if I cood see ware it was so I guest you had to make beleaf. There was sound from the machine on the wall about a child learning to read with a teacher, and the dancers mooved back and forth and across the room without paying very much attension to each other. Well maybe they ware watching out of the corners of thare eyes cause I thought for sure they wood bump into each other a couple of times but they never did. It was exciting when they ware closely mooving together and I wished they had danced together but they never did just mooved forwards and backwards and across. Still I liked it alot and it was called **Etude: Pelican Punch Two** and the dancers ware Martha Lovell and Joan Alison Phillips, who had the idea in the first place.

When it was all over every one talked about it and I thought it all had alot to say to each of us and it had alot of variety witch helped make it interesting for a poor sod like me and I wood like to thank all the nice girl dancers again and send them all a BIG KISS. I just wish thare had been more dancing althow I liked it alot and it sure helped get rid of my cabin fever.

cont.'d from pg. 2

**Mountain Dance Theatre** (Burnaby, B.C.) has won the Clifford E. Lee Choreography Award for 1978. The busy Ms. Allen was also one of the guest choreographers at the **Choreographic Seminar** held at York University in June. She will be working at Banff before returning to Vancouver in August.

Vancouver based dancer/choreographer **Judith Marcuse** has returned from working with New York Company "**Dancers**" and is now teaching at the York Summer School.

**Murray Farr** is back in B.C. He's working with the Vancouver DIC Conference Committee and promises "healers" and "tent events" for all those planning to attend this year's festivities. **Foothpath Dance Co.** from Cleveland are holding summer sessions at the Ballet YS Studio.

**Toronto Dance Theatre** will be performing in Toronto at the Royal Alexandra Theatre during the week of the Vancouver DIC Conference.

**National Ballet of Canada** are at Ontario Place July 17, 18 and August 4, 6, and 8. Act III of **Sleeping Beauty** and Act IV of **Bayaderka** are featured. The **Danny Grossman Dance Company** will also be appearing at Ontario Place as well as Lennoxville and Jacob's Pillow.

**Elizabeth Chitty** presented "Demo Model" at the 15 Dance Lab, July 5-8, 12 and 13.

**Ricardo Abreut** presented "Scrap Book" with **Chitty, Margaret Dragu, Susan MacPherson** and **Chuck Flanders** July 14 and 15. **Jim Plaxton** and **Terry Crack** did technical production.

The **Marchowsky Dance Company** has, for a variety of reasons, decided to cease to exist in its present form.

**Mimi Beck** and **Don Macmillan** hosted a Summer Benefit for **Dance Ontario** on July 16.

The **Ontario Dance Conference** will be held in Toronto Dec. 1, 2, 3.

The **Fifth Network Independent Video Conference** will be held in Toronto Sept. 7-10/78.

**LaMamelle Gallery** in San Francisco in a special exchange programme with Toronto's A Space will host separate pieces by some of the "girls", **Paula Ravitz, Elizabeth Chitty, Janice Hladki** and **Johanna Householder** in August.

**Dans Nova Scotia (DANS)** now offers a subscription to their newsletter. Write P.O. Box 3595 S. Halifax, N.S., B3J 3J2.

Introductory and continuing classes in **Contact Improvisation** are being held at St. George's Church between McCaul and John St. in Toronto. Contact **Marc White** at 653-3543 for details.

Comments and news of upcoming events are invited c/o **SPILL - 155a George St., Toronto M5A 2M8**. More news, views and update next issue.

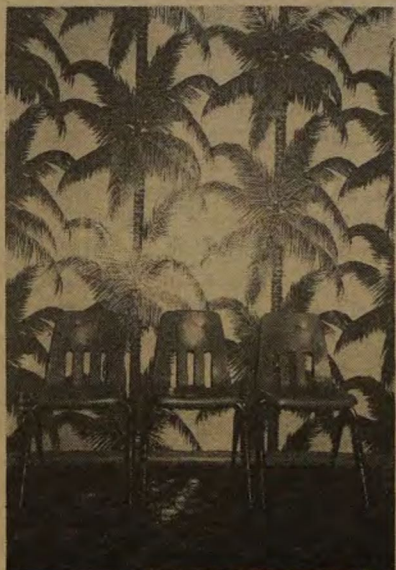
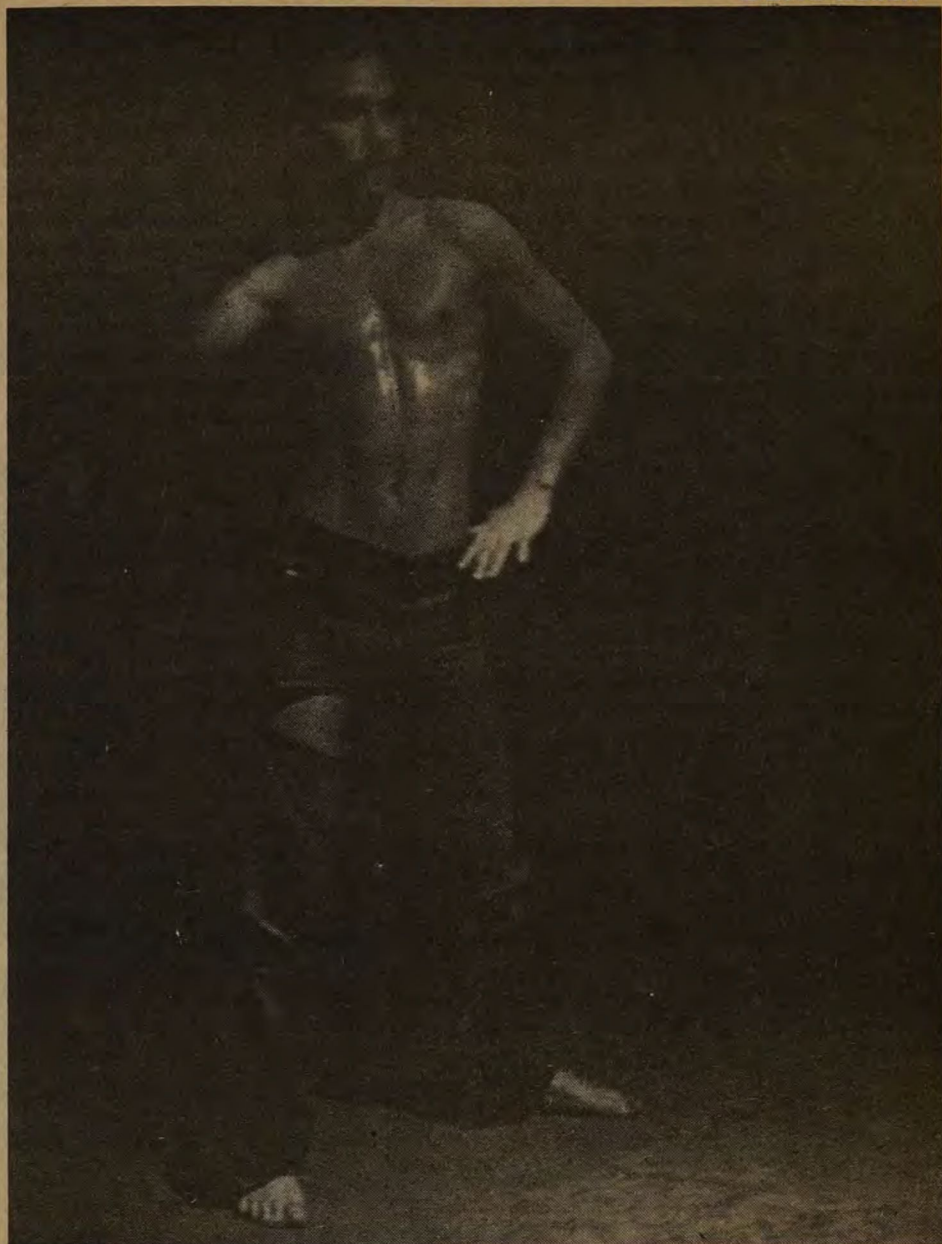


photo: Ben Holzberg

## DAVID TIPE AT SOHO David Leach



David Tipe

photo: David Leach

David Tipe would not mind, I think, if you got up and danced with him. He'd prefer to see tables empty, the dance floor hopping. Better, perhaps, if you didn't have a lot of formal dance training. He doesn't, and his dance in no way comes from there. It comes more from dance floors and discos stretching back fifteen years. So it can be real to some in a way other dance is not, coming as it does from a shared dance experience. He's also very fine to watch.

David sits motionless at the edge of a large, threadbare, Persian rug, listening. He waits in the moment, the music fills out the space. Synchronizing his form to the moment, sliding in across the rug, he marries the music and the space in his concentrated image. Disco, Jarret, Shakti, Reggae, Roberta Slack: each piece of music defines a new space; Tipe slips into it like an erection. No other simile seems quite as appropriate, for David's is an archetypically Masculine image, and dance: taut, piercing, frenetic, an energy at once one-pointed, and explosive. It is the Masculine within each of us, man and woman. His space, defined mostly by his carefully chosen,

powerfully amplified music, but also by the locale, a cube of space and Roger's amorphous blue backdrop, a faded rug, these together form the Feminine into which he penetrates...the ultimate symbol of creative relationship.

Later, on the crowded disco floor, he soaks in energy from the throbbing crowd, and his dance explodes. Streetdancer.

"The labyrinthine path one is walking is created and articulated by the relationships one develops with space. Because one is fundamentally alone, space becomes one's partner. Tricky, elusive, yet promising growth and richness, space becomes the seeker's bride. In this cosmic drama that occurs within each of us, the feminine challenges and invites the masculine to be heroic and compassionate. Inseparable, feminine and masculine are expressions of the same indestructable reality. Skillful and compassionate masculine behaviour is born from opening to the spaciousness and intelligence of the feminine."

from **The Feminine**,  
by Miriam and José Arguelles

## NEXT ISSUE

- Dance Books: where, what and reviews of new books by John Faichney and Graham Jackson
- Tournesol in Turkey
- reviews by Graham Jackson, Elizabeth Zimmer, Iro Tembeck and others
- interview and notes with Janice Hladki and Johanna Householder
- response to Canada Council's 20 + 5 paper

## AND MORE

hours before dawn, in secrecy, and if discovered, would be stoned to death. The flintcarver would throw the first stone.

Art criticism didn't begin with the first exasperated hunter who buried his faulty axe in the skull of the flintcarver. Art criticism began with the first cave-dweller who dared to drop his stone and defend the painter, with the first fellow tribe member who paused, arm cocked back to aim halfway between the artist and the critic, and grunted an interrogative "why?", and with the first critic who managed to think up good reasons fast.

The *raison d'être* of art criticism has never been the denouncement of that art which is "bad". The primary function of art criticism has always been to defend that art which is "good". The rejection of poor art is merely a by-product of this purpose, a continuation of the need to support creation in any way possible.

Unfortunately, the negative by-product of art criticism is its most visible side, because as Theodore Sturgeon first put in print, "96% of everything is shit." In a further extension of gross estimates defined for convenience, from 96 to 99% of everything is good, from 99 to 99.8% of everything is excellent, and from 99.8 to 100% of everything is great. Life—life is a dull, tedious series of days, ticking off a mundane span of awareness from birth to death. Those peak .2% moments on intense, meaningful experience are what all of life, art included, strives ceaselessly to attain. One value of art to human society is that it expands that top .2%, not upwards, into the never-never realms above 100%, but downwards, into the day-to-day existence below 99.8%, to purposefully encompass and influence as much of human life as it can.

Standards of excellence for art have never changed. That art which moves us, which increases the intensity of our experience, which expands our awareness, which reveals to us ourselves, has always been that art which is excellent. The shitty art, the garbage art, the conjob art, the bastardized, adulterated, and prostituted art, in other words, that art which attempts to hide emptiness behind a facade of established technique, have always existed. Since the first lazy cave-dweller discovered that he/she could also be fed to do nothing but smear berryjuice on walls, the mindless ability to perform a rote task has attempted to conceal inner vacuity. What survives the gamut of history is sieved from the vastly larger totality of what was made in art's name, with 96% of it left behind, and only 4%, at the most, remaining.

The top 4% has never been classified as such by comparing it with poor art. The reality is the reverse. It is impossible to recognize what is bad until better is visible. Poor art is seen to be so in comparison with what is good. What is good is seen to be merely good only by comparing it to what is excellent, and what is excellent is seen to be merely excellent only by comparing it to what is great.

Great art, the peak of human expression, is distinguished from other kinds by exactly that quality of standing alone, not only with no other frame of reference necessary, but with no other frame of reference possible, to make it instantly and universally recognizable as great. Comparative analyses of periods of art history, "isms", schools, groups, and even the stages of an individual's career, are meaningless explanations for the emergence of great art, because they are after-the-fact effects rather than causes of the

creation. Lesser forms of art can't reveal why great art is great. Great art demonstrates why lesser forms are lesser.

Whatever classification of quality is applied to an individual creator's individual work, the central issue of whether or not the word "art" is applicable hinges on what art is: a definition of the term. The most eminently qualified communicators have "dropped their tails in the water" trying to define art. As with any other human activity worth defining, the very effort can transform boundaries intended to keep other human attributes out, into limitations intended to keep art in, imprisoned and enslaved. Lazy expressions of deceptive honesty epitomized by "I haven't the slightest idea," aren't much help. Neither are rhetorical tricks of sophistry epitomized by defining art as undefinable, or even worse, as an activity undertaken by that group of people who most resent their activity being defined (definitions applicable to anything that is human, from love to law). I'll take temporary (about a year or so) refuge in the words of someone else—Suzanne Langer—"Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling." (**Feeling and Form**)

Langer considered this definition to be tentative when her work was published in 1953, and she thought the term "creation" to be particularly problematic. As vague as the definition is, at least it eliminates most of the coffee-table-pretty-picture-books. Unfortunately, Hallmark greeting cards still seem to sneak in under the wire. Adding one word obtains "Art is the evolving creation of forms symbolic of human feeling."

"Evolving" eradicates a lot of the extraneous creepers and clinging vines. The process of evolution, of course, isn't a reciprocal action in the elimination of the unfit while the strongest survives, which leads to the development of new forms. This is a typical example of reflection-perception, by which whatever's left looks right. It is the creation of new forms which causes the survival and the elimination which leads to evolution. Without the spontaneous creation of new forms, the process of evolution would not exist. Elimination and survival are by-products, side-effects, and relatively trivial and insignificant results of creation. Just so, *classification of quality developed in the evolution of art are relatively trivial and insignificant off-shoots contrasted with the importance of the act of creation.*

Yet evolution, although only a natural result of creation, defines what aspect of creation is art. If an individual work contributes to the process of evolution in encouraging the elimination of the unfit and the survival of the fittest by its own example of improvement over what has gone before, then it is a work of art. If it doesn't, then it is not art. In simpler terms, if art didn't get better, there would be no point in doing it. This definition is hopefully self-evolving, not a static, robotic limitation, but a channel for the infinite potential of progression. And perhaps it should be stated again that the definition is not given to condemn that which is not art, but to support that which is. The critical knack, of course, is to develop the ability to instantly recognize which works contribute to artistic evolution and which don't. Either that, or to develop the ability to admit ignorance.

Since art was created, it has evolved. The new forms of art, the forerunners of that evolution, have

always been the unknown, and have always been feared. When the first small mammals scurried about the earth, they were often eaten and stepped on by dinosaurs. The dinosaurs were a threat to the mammals, until the dinosaurs died. It has always been this way.

Louise Garfield and Michael Baker stand facing each other from opposite sides of a nine-foot high, cone-shaped, clear, vinyl bubble. They peer at each other through the two layers of plastic between them as they press against the skin, which is kept taut by the inrushing air from two plastic tubes joined to the bottom of the bubble and feed by a quietly humming airpump. Their arms reach around the middle of the bubble and each grasps in each hand one end of two scarves of which the other ends are held by the other, so that a ring of arms and scarves circles the bubble. Both wear white: Down one side of the bubble is a thick zipper approximately five feet long, which is opened approximately six inches from the upper end. The work is entitled **Bubble Drama**.

Garfield and Baker simultaneously begin to press into the bubble towards each other after that first brief look, pulling together on the scarves and driving themselves forward with all their strength and weight against the pressure of empty air, which hisses out the hole of the partially opened zipper. Their faces are flattened by the plastic and their struggle to reach each other is prolonged, powerful, and painful. The skin of the bubble slowly bellies around the scarves and indents around their lunging bodies. They meet in the center and, with two layers of vinyl between them, kiss.

funneling in around his head, the white balloon growing to conceal his face, and his breaths are harsh pants. The balloon bursts in his face with a climactic crack.

Baker falls, back into the centre of the bubble, his body stiff and his arms dangling, the vinyl collapsing around his head like a closing flower, until he drops limp to the bubble's floor.

This is art. The sequence described with Garfield and Baker is merely the battering-ram ending of a longer and much more meaningful section. The described section soloed by Baker is merely the chest-surgery opening of a section that steadily grows more and more intense. Both contain, of course, a hundred thousand more nuances of content and performance than is shown in these precis. Every action and non-action in these sections is perfect. That is not an exaggeration. It is a statement of fact.

That Garfield is concerned with form is self-evident in her presentation of three different versions of the same work. That each version was a vast improvement over the one before is only a pleasant after-effect of the importance of the concern itself. Yet in the final presentation the after-effect of pleasure was overwhelming.

The most brilliant example is a transposition. In the first two presentations, the work ended with the playing of a tape-recorded conversation between a woman and a man. The dialogue develops from the description of the beautiful rug each has covering the interior of their respective rooms into the glories of rug-rolling, the greater glories of shared rug-rolling, the difficulties of merging rugs, and the greater difficulties of merging rugged egos.



Michael Baker and Louise Garfield in *Balloon Slices*

photo: Lynn Rotin

They pause briefly and renew their struggle against emptiness to press their bodies as closely together as possible. Then they retreat, bouncing the bubble by lifting it on the scarves, until it has returned to its original fullness.

This is art. Michael Baker crouches on his hands and knees, everything but his head inside the bubble, the zipper pulled up tight to the scarf around his neck. The half-full bubble swells up behind his head like the huge, transparent abdomen of a gigantic insect. From his mouth dangles the limp sack of a white circus balloon. Across one-third of his temple, a thick vein throbs. As he blows up the balloon with deep, slow breaths, he examines the faces of the audience, scanning and staring. The bubble fills and swells and he rises to his feet, lifting his hands to press the vinyl from both sides of his head in towards the growing balloon. He leans backward with stiffened body against the pull of the bubble, the skin

As the tape began, the airpump had its plug pulled and as the tape played out, the vinyl bubble slowly collapsed flat. In the third composition, the tape began the work, the bubble began flat, and as the tape played, the bubble grew, lifted, swelled, was created, the plastic unfolding, uncrinkling, stretching taut as the tape ended. Once again, and consistently, the objective skill of the change pales in the light of the intrinsic impact of the result alone.

Another example is the sharp delineation between scenes by blackout and raised lights, instead of a slight, sustained dim and rise of light. The example is mentioned because to say the Jim Plaxton's lighting for *Balloon Slices* is worth mentioning is a colossal understatement. Given the materials at his disposal (i.e., not St. Lawrence Centre), Jim Plaxton created the best lighting I've ever seen. 15-Dance Laboratory might as well have been St. Lawrence Centre, judging from the masterful craftsmanship and

Michael Baker in *Balloon Slices*

photo: Lynn Rotin

creative evocation wrought by the hands on the lightboard. And the subject matter Plaxton lit was vast in potential.

What Garfield does with the choreographic tool of space by the expediency of enclosing some in a nine-foot vinyl bubble is breathtaking. Almost the entire scope of space's physical potential is explored and demonstrated with clarity and vision. The meaning of space in human terms is expressed in its physical alteration with vivid strength. The emptiness of space, especially between people, aloneness in space, sharing of space, entering and leaving space, the smothering effect of space, emotional shrinking and opening within changes in space, and many others, are concentrated and vitalized by the seamless structure of the composition. Almost all the major sequences are presented three times, in altered and increasing intensity of emotional over and undertones.

As ever when Garfield attaches her fertile mind to a balloon, the innovations in shape exploration are thick-paced and fast-paced, ranging from the beautiful to the horrible with seemingly casual ease. Greg Parks moving along the side of the bubble, literally checking the structure for leaks, before he crawls underneath it for his solo section of bubble-bouncing, is an added fillip of Garfield's attention to form.

Perhaps the most important factor of *Bubble Drama* is that it is a drama. The work tells a story of conflict and contrast between characters brilliantly. Time (and therefore, event) compression and expansion are manipulated with dexterity, the characters (the bubble included) are fascinating, and the story is exciting and powerful.

What would seem to be hyperbole and superlatives are actually insufficient to describe Louise Garfield's talent. Her work must be seen. For whatever reason; to be awed by the consummate craftsmanship of a superb artist, to perceive another human's expression of humanity that can seem to pick you up by your throat and shake you with its power, because you've got three bucks in your pocket and nothing else to do: her work must be seen. There are perhaps a triple handful of choreographers in Canada who can excel Garfield's best work. And she is just beginning to really work.

It's therefore unfortunate that two works done in collaboration between Garfield and Susan Swan were presented on the same program as *Bubble Drama*. Both *Mrs. God Unchained* and *Satellite Telecast to God* were blatantly inferior to

Garfield's independent work. The scripts of both pieces (presumably written for the most part by Swan) improved greatly over the three sets of performances, mainly by being reduced, but by the last performance they still contained all the original mistakes. The major ones are that both scripts contain an excess of flat, physical description (as opposed to any other kind of dialogue), and that the majority of it is presented in parallelism sentence structure. Parallelism is difficult to carry off with the most interesting of subjects (perhaps Shaw has done it best), because it must run on a simple one-two, one-two rhythm which can quickly become tedious. To use a lot of simple parallelism for simple physical description is a simple, silly mistake.

*Mrs. God Unchained* is a fairly complex piece that contains ideas that may be new to dance. It begins with an excellent prayer to Mrs. God, "the sanitary engineer of the galaxy" played over the loudspeaker as Garfield stands with one foot hooked into a loop in a black elastic band hung from the ceiling, playing Mrs. God. When the prayer ends Garfield performs a minimal dance with her foot still suspended in the loop, mostly of arm and upper back movements, to the accompaniment of a roared song by Ellen McIlwaince (sic). The movements are executed with vast force and the final performance resolved a major problem of the first two sets of *Balloon Slices*. For some reason, or combination of reasons, an upward shift in Garfield's focus, an increased clarity of her movements, a more open projection of her strength; Garfield is suddenly believable—this is a goddess—and what she is expressing is thus suddenly meaningful.

Swan enters and plays Garfield's mother as they discuss their preferences in men's genital sizes. Garfield opts for the small, Swan for the large. The script, aside from the deficiencies already pointed out, is even more self-destructive to Garfield and Swan's purposes by being repetitious and leading absolutely nowhere. A terrific idea that could have been used as a springboard to really lift off for somewhere is just repeated, and repeated, and repeated. Swan's description of a famous basketball player as "you one-eyed Cyclops" is especially disappointing. Not only is this phrase redundant, it's also a cliché. Assuming that Swan is aware that it is a redundant cliché, her use of it must be purposeful, which leads to the unavoidable conclusion that she is being deliberately boring. Something can be done with this piece above the level of a giggling-

school-girl stereotype.

The separation between *Mrs. God Unchained* and *Satellite Telecast to God* by a pause in the performance and different titles is pointless. *Satellite* is simply a continuation of the idea expressed in *Mrs. God*. It would be far better to join the two pieces together, with one title, and give up this transparent attempt to con the audience into thinking they're seeing two pieces when the presentation is only a quarter of one.

*Satellite* begins with another excellent prayer, this one from Garfield to God. A brief flash of wit occurs when Baker describes her impassioned, exasperated, and heartfelt plea for God to reveal Himself as "feminist garbage". The quintuple level of irony in the statement is immediately nullified by Baker proceeding to demand that Garfield be "rational" and "present facts", a satirical viewpoint of a male stereotype that was a cliché in the days of Jane Austen. The rest of the dialogue in this section of the piece is equally old hat.

Parks enters during their conversation and is presented as a typical, blase god-about-the-universe. The chief hindrance to this section's flow is that Parks seems too nervous to project a believable God. At the end of the talk, he proceeds to roll a huge, ungainly ball about the performance space. Aside from admiring Parks' strength and courage in treating the heavy ball as if it's a toy, what he does with it looks silly, and not just because it's supposed to. Either because of a lack of technical feasibility, or a lack of choreographic ideas, there is obviously a great deal left out of the original concept. The limitation would have been alleviated if the ball had been rounder and lighter, as it was obviously supposed to be. Whose fault is it that a prop is poorly made, if not the director's?

Parks finally stops and Garfield and Baker begin a list of contrasting god sizes, Baker describing God as huge, Garfield describing God as tiny. This section is the culmination of the inanity of the two works. As soon as the thought is received (right, contrasting images of God as large and small) which, of course, it is in the very first exchange, the work becomes stupendously dull. The lists

go on and on, even into silence with such poses as Baker standing with his head thrown back, his arm upstretched, and his gaze upwards into seeming infinity, while Garfield leans over the ball, staring quizzically at the narrow space between her finger and thumb.

Part of the difficulty I have with reviewing this piece is that I cannot force myself to believe that Garfield and Swan are actually wasting their time in presenting such stupidly self-evident ideas as that the viewpoint of God as huge, omnipotent, etc., is essentially a masculine one and indicative of a masculine obsession with genital size, or that the conception of God as huge colours all our perceptions, including those concerned with sexual sizes, etc. These are truisms that any six-year-old could deduce from the physical superiority of an adult. It's possible that they are trying to express some sort of concept contrasting a male and female viewpoint of God (i.e., everything) based on the contrasted sizes of a penis and a clitoris, but I doubt it. It's a far-fetched idea, but at least it is an idea, which is more than the surface presentation of *Satellite* contains. Actually, I suspect that my search for an idea in *Satellite* is just as futile as Garfield's and Swan's presentation of it.

Yet all three pieces of *Balloon Slices* are unquestionably art. The deficient quality of the individual works are trivial in comparison with the fact that they were created at all. All three contribute to artistic evolution by encouraging the elimination of the unfit and the survival of the fittest by their own example. All three, in more familiar terms, expand the boundaries of dance. And, of course, *Balloon Slices*, does a great deal more than that. The solitary, or even primary, purpose of "expanding the boundaries of dance" would be an extremely limited perspective. *Balloon Slices* contributes to the expansion of all of theatre, by communicating within the structure of a developing artform which is completely new. By increasing the realm of human expression, Louise Garfield and Susan Swan are increasing the depth of human experience.

## Toronto Dance Festival

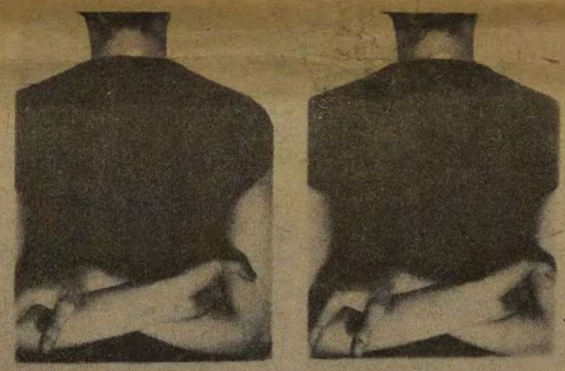
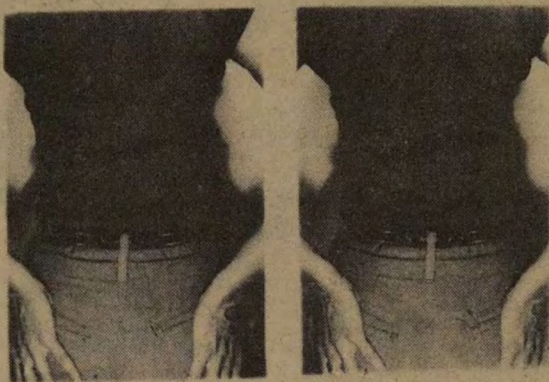
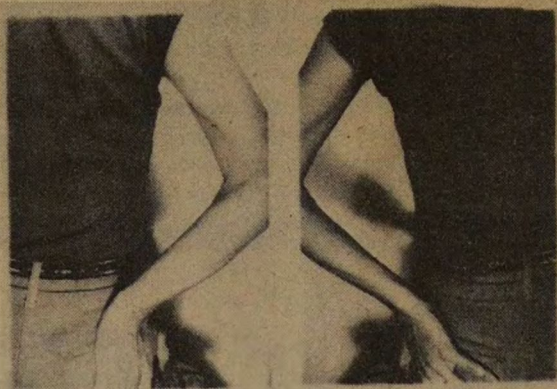
For five weeks in Toronto beginning on Sept. 18/78 at the Toronto Workshop Productions Theatre, the Toronto Dance Festival, billed as Canada's first National dance Festival, will be held. Companies from across Canada participating include Halifax Dance Co-op; Regina Modern Dance Works; Les Ballets Jazz, Entre Six, Nouvelle Aire from Montreal; Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers; Paula Ross Dancers and the Anna Wyman Dance Company from Vancouver; Le Groupe de la Place Royale from Ottawa; Toronto Dance Theatre, Danny Grossman, Judy Jarvis, Dancemakers and Ballet YS from Toronto.

The Touring Office of the Canada Council has allocated up to \$50,000 to assist companies invited to perform in either or both The Toronto Dance Festival or the dance Festival to be held in Montreal this fall.



**OVERSTORY**

Irene Grainger



Overstory was a piece that I choreographed for Jim Gronau and Kathy Richan with a bit part for myself. They wore white and moved in front of coloured slides of New York City Scapes, mannequins, and pictures of myself hanging from a garage with a pink turtle neck over my head. I used music from Tailand, Stephen Grappelli and Village People. These photo booth pictures were a form of choreographer's notes.



## 2 CHOREOGRAPHERS OF THE SAME SCHOOL

Peter Dudar

"If I've given you a role and you do the movements for that role **exactly** the way I tell you to do them, you will master that characterization. You can't fail." Tudor is emphatic—and almost perversely optimistic—on this point: "Yes, I mean that. If the dancers do the movement as I want it, they can't fail. But they must do it **exactly** as I want it." Regarding teaching one of his ballets to dancers, Tudor says, "I don't like to give explanations. I don't like to communicate anything to a dancer through the mind, especially—" (and here the malicious glint returns) "—especially considering what some of the dancers' minds are like."

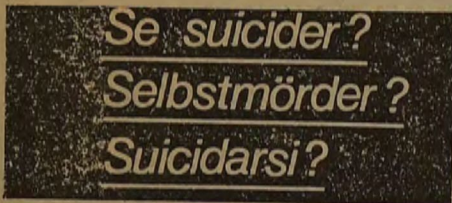
Like the woman, whose psychic state is determined less by abstract reason than by an indefinable emotional longing for a force which will complement her nature, and who, consequently, would rather bow to a strong man than dominate a weakling, likewise the masses love a commander more than a petitioner... In their overwhelming majority they are so feminine by nature that sober reasoning determines their thoughts and actions far less than emotions and feelings.

It belongs to the genius of a great leader to make even adversaries far removed from one another seem to belong to a single category.

Peter Dudar

"Art performance" is becoming very big now because it's passé—very Canadian.)

This is suicide in several languages:



I came across Hara-Kiri? eine groteske publication at a Dada exhibit in Berlin last October.

By 1894 most sympathizers realized that the defiance of the anarchists exceeded defensible bounds, and the outrages died out quickly. But their effects remained. Anarchism served not only to unsettle the political smugness of the Third Republic, but also to challenge any formulated aesthetic. The dynamism of prewar artistic activity ran a close parallel to anarchism; postwar Dada and Surrealism look like its artistic parodies. By acting on their ideas, the anarchist "martyrs" inspired artists to demonstrate as boldly.

Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years*

This is sort of a quicky explanation of anarchism:

Anarchists come from the most varied backgrounds. But a specific mentality links them—the spirit of revolt and its derivatives, the spirit of examination and criticism, of opposition and innovation, which leads to scorn and hate of every commitment and hierarchy in society, and ends up in the exaggeration of individualism. Decadent literature furnished the party with a strong contingent; in recent years there has been, especially among young writers, an upsurge of anarchism.

Maurice Boisson, *Les attentats anarchistes*

But the Dadaists were by no means the first bad boys of twentieth century art. Dada may have "exploded like a well-timed bomb" in Zurich, 1916-17, but the militant art of the Futurists came up snarling in the pages of *Le Figaro* (Paris) on Feb. 20, 1909.

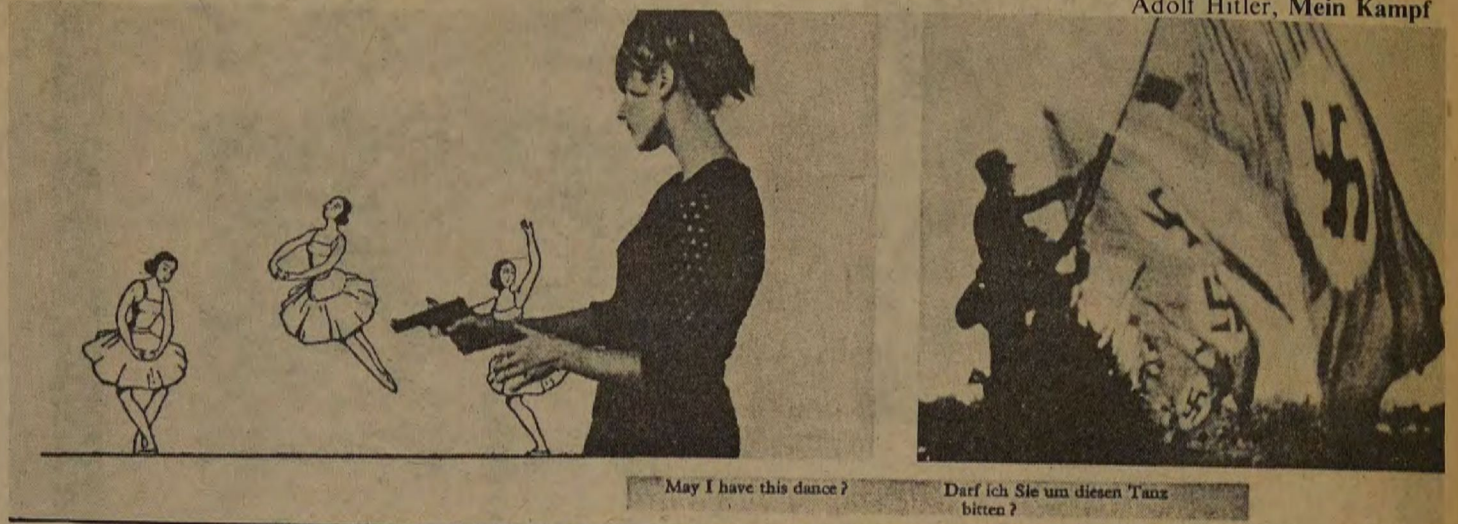
### MANIFESTO OF FUTURISM

1. We intend to sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and fearlessness.
2. Courage, audacity, and revolt will be essential elements of our poetry.
3. ...We intend to exalt aggressive action, a feverish insomnia, the racer's stride, the mortal leap, the punch and the slap.
4. We affirm that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed...

7. Except in struggle, there is no more beauty. No work without an aggressive character can be a masterpiece...

9. We will glorify war—the world's only hygiene-militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers,

Anthony Tudor, *Talk About New Ballets*  
Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*



## POST-PERFORMANCE PRECEDENTS

beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for women.

10. We will destroy the museums, libraries, academies of every kind, will fight moralism, feminism, every opportunistic or utilitarian cowardice...

...So let them come, the gay incendiaries with charred fingers! Here they are! Here they are!

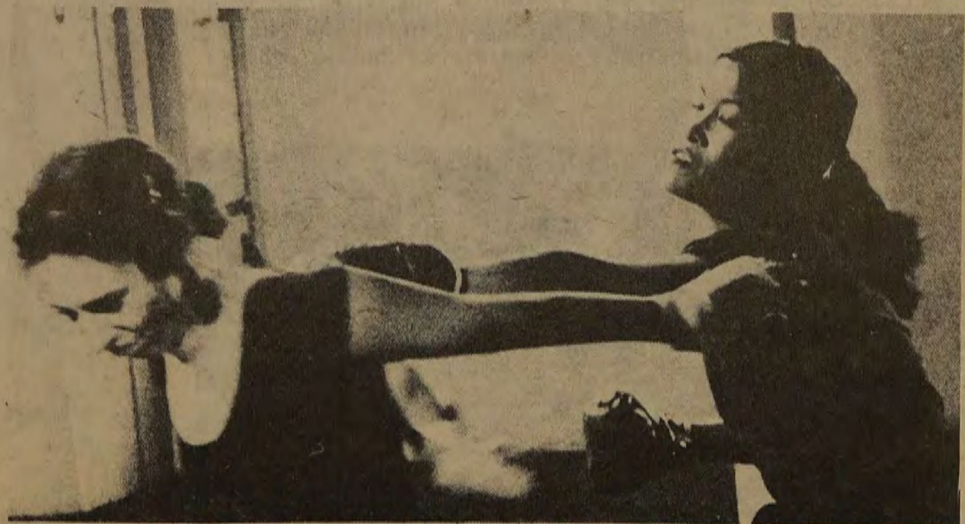
F. T. Marinetti



Arnaldo Ginna  
Ginna and Marinetti engaged in Interventionist Fisticuffs, frame from the film 'Vita futurista' 1916

7. Semi-equality of man and woman and a lessening of the disproportion in their social rights.

F.T. Marinetti, *Destruction of Syntax—Imagination Without Strings—Words-in-Freedom* 1913



There is another type of hero in the complex Japanese tradition, a man whose career usually belongs to a period of unrest and warfare and represents the antithesis of an ethos of accomplishment. He is the man whose single-minded sincerity will not allow him to make the manoeuvres and compromises that are so often needed for *mundane success*. During the early years his courage and verve may propel him rapidly upwards, but he is wedded to the losing side and will ineluctably be cast down. Flung himself after his painful destiny, he defies the dictates of convention and common sense, until eventually he is worsted by his enemy, the "successful survivor", who by his ruthlessly realistic politics manages to impose a new, more stable order on the world.

Ivan Morris, *The Nobility of Failure*

You know that we are creating surrounded by the cowardice and despicable apathy of Italian (so called Canadian) artists.

Umberto Boccioni, *Futurist Dynamism and French Painting* 1913



## ARTIST IN THE SCHOOLS Judy Jarvis

My roots in Canada lie in Kingston. When 12 years old, I enrolled at the Royal Academy of Dance Summer School, under Marjorie Haskins, held at Victoria Public School, Kingston. We all lived in residence at Queen's Ban Righ Hall. One of my girlfriends asked my little brother why I was going there, and he answered, "Because she feels it's her duty". In 1961 I entered Kingston's Queen's University, as a first year Arts student. In 1967 I began my first year of teaching Modern Dance at Queen's, in the gym paddleball room. At Kingston's Grand Theatre on Princess St. in 1968 I gave my first concert. Well, such is a history of events—this and this, followed by that, and all connected by one's own existence.

February 20-24, 1978, I returned to Kingston, as an "Artist in the School", at Kingston Collegiate Vocational Institute. Jane Good, one of my students at Queen's, organized the week, and the Ontario Arts Council helped with finances.

O.K. Now here I am in a gym, teaching a third generation. At first, my "background" weighs heavily on me—I had long forgotten that Grade 11 students are shy, long-legged, awkward. I think sometimes of ducks. And that Grade 10 can be messy, skeptical,

myself—and never have. Once a lawyer told me that by incorporating in my name, I was selling my name. Strange. I've always wanted to change my name—and once did—to Anne Brae. Even had a programme printed with that name on it.

In the Grade 11 class, my confidence grows as we work along with actual things. The students are stiff-legged—feet inarticulate. I try to help—and in 5 days, it does help. From my years of teaching teachers at O.C.E., I found out that the teachers want: 1. Lesson Plans, 2. Steps. This isn't what the students want. The students want and need to learn how to use their bodies first. The exercises prove to be fun for them—and they apply themselves. Music? I pull out primitive drumming, spirituals, some classics—and we work on themes I've chosen: balance, rhythm, falls, swings, large spatial movements, steps to go quickly, slowly, sideways—and we count and clap and beat together. I make mistakes, they make mistakes. Jane says to me, "You are working with them, not imposing a plan on them". Yes.

I think of what Mary Wigman said to me, "It takes many seemingly unnecessary tasks to create a large building." I think of Canadian Culture.

One choreographer likes punching space, one likes intricate steps and lifts, one likes human drama, and so on. One says the body is all, one says the mind, one says spirit, one says it's all in contrasts, etc. The IT is in each, differently. There is no overall IT. And if there is, we have a dictator.

I prefer Canadian Culture to be a quilt, not a melting pot.

The students. K.C.V.I.—pink-cheeked, bright-eyed. Theatre Arts. Grade 11. 40 students. 7 boys—how they can improvise! I'm stunned. Some voice behind my voice gives me the words to give this class. 40 students waiting for my direction. Small space—everyone in shoes, Levi's. They respond. We form into smaller groups. I tell them about *Clouds*. They're with me—I perform both parts for them. Gina, where are you. Yes, Windsor. The night last year at "Yellow Fingers" you tell me you're leaving. I'm surprised, sorry, sad. Am I slain? Yes. Gina Lori, 6 years previously a first year bubble of energy—and now 6 years later you're on your own—married—and in a hurry! I again feel so old, so broken. What's the use? The use is only in the doing. And here I am at K.C.V.I. The laughter is still there. What lived? The piece. And so the class embraces me,

painted differently. Even the swimming pool where Til, ever eager, tried to learn to swim. The faces of those times are there—Gabrielle Schweiger (last year teacher at University of Waterloo), Cathy Lee (Vancouver, once teacher for Anna Wyman), Lesley Bowland (now in Economics), Carol Anderson (once Dancemakers), Christopher Britton (now an actor at Shaw Festival) and of course, Janko Jezovsek, our eccentric Frankfurt-imported-genius pianist, who learned English by watching T.V. commercials, and shared with all of us, in a tiny Kingston house, the first man-landing on the Moon. Ay-ay-memories—but are they not too a piece of this big building?

Jane Rodgers, 15 years a teacher at Loyalist Collegiate, invites me to her place after dinner. We watch a 1969 film she made of the Queen's Workshop and Concert. On it, we see again as from a thread of the past—the classes taught. Who is in the front row? Someone I had never met—Maria Formolo, Regina. We never did meet until the D.I.C. conference in Halifax. There, too, Hugo Romero, Montreal, teaching, drumming, and myself dancing my solo, *Hunt*. How young I looked. I can't believe the change in 9 years.

Next morning 8:30 Grade 11. The Kingston Whig-Standard sends a photographer. It's the same photographer as the one who took our pictures in 1967, Neil. The girls are shy, self-conscious.

Grade 10 Theatre Arts. New faces. Discipline problems. In a school what does that mean? I found out. Lack of concentration. Everything I would say, followed by their mimicking and nervous, harsh laughter. Do I feel angry? No. I watch, and turn pale, I'm sure. I begin an exercise, several young boys don't respond. I pursue the moment, then go on to others in the class. We progress slowly. I am drained, but not hurt. I pity their teacher, who lives with these uncontrollables. One of the students comes after the class and apologizes for them to me. She whispers, "I think what you are doing is important." I am saddened. A very few can indeed ruin everything. Almost. I wonder about the home life of these already-tough youngsters. The biggest joke between them is who can belch the loudest. There were only 5 of them—but 5 belchers in a single class can be overwhelming. Were they born loud? Their behaviour in a normal dance class would be impossible for most dance teachers. The contrast is worth considering. Are dancers 100 confined, refined, defined?

The last day. I give an extra session to 2 of the school's teachers. I enjoy it, and wish we could work together for a month. The brand new Physical Education teacher knows a lot less about her body than the brand new Theatre Arts teacher. They are both nervous about being "observed" by their peers next week in classes. They are grateful for the session, and I realize that even though they have taught for only 6 months, and I for 12 years, I am

cont'd pg. 10



Judy Jarvis and class

bursting with energy, undirected. Also, overbrimming with ready worship. one girl came to me and said, "Please, could you do a dance for us?" So much. So much has gone by.

The second day I feel younger, and begin to steady myself for an 8:30 a.m. class. I have the awful feeling that these young people know so much more—I feel my life has been 100 directed—and then I start the class, and they relax and so do I. All around the gym are posters a student made with my name and picture—but I don't relate the print to

It will come of many hours and years of applying ourselves before the big building will emerge. None of us can just make it up. It is being formed, and will stop growing, if we stop. Someone will create this, someone will create that. **It all forms part of the whole,** which is the sum of its parts.

I have read of those who search for "the great Canadian choreographer". If and when such a one does come along, what do we do? Copy him or her? Bow down? Give up? There will always be dances that some prefer and some don't.

and there is a warmth which they cannot yet know. The groups create pieces on their own. New ideas. I'm swept away by their enthusiasm. Canadians are talented.

The city—town of Kingston is small—and in the 23 years I have known it, not much has changed. The people point out this new building or that one—but it's still the same feeling. Limestone. The Lake. Great trees. Grant Hall. Even the Hockey Hall of Fame, where Til Thiele and I ran a Summer School in 1969. Not even

photo: William O'Neill

## SCANNING THE FLAT HORIZON (cont'd from #10)

J. Groo Bannerman

Balanchine has said, "Ballet is a woman." I would paraphrase that as "Ballet is beauty." The use of an ever-finer honed technique to create an ethereal, transitory type of beauty, commonly called grace, remains the core of ballet's contribution to the theatre arts. Ballet is beautiful as Japanese calligraphy is beautiful, or as Durer's paintings and Emily Dickinson's poetry are beautiful. Beneath a certain esoteric refinement of surface beauty, ballet is essentially an empty media.

This is a major reason for a critical analysis of plotting or other incidentals of classical and romantic ballets being such a pointless pursuit. Only a person seriously deluded in their conception of reality would attend a ballet expecting to find an intelligent plot. All the intelligence of ballet is channelled into the technique of the dancing and choreography, with plots and characters a reflection of the ethics of the time expressed in pure fantasy. Whether ballet remains a relatively empty form of theatre because it rests on fantasy, or rests on fantasy because it is superficially gracious, is a moot point.

For ballet's beauty contains an essence that is found in no other form of art. That beauty is solitary and intrinsic. It can stun. It can elevate the senses to a level of rapture that exists in no other place. It can drive you to your feet, bravos flinging from the pit of your gut. As long as the dance is there, so are the dancers, and they can create living art.

The question is whether or not the dancers of the National can. The answer is apparently not. The twenty-three (out of twenty-seven) performances I saw was a plodding trek through an arid desert towards a featureless horizon. The few peaks invariably, upon close inspection, turned out to be red anthills. Flat, dull, lifeless performance succeeded flat, dull, lifeless performance and as week faded into week my search for a spark of flair in the dancing became desperate.

It's bitterly ironic that the best performance (by a National member) I saw all season, Sergiu Stefanschi's Don Juan, was his last appearance in a major role. In even more bitterness, I was told that after I had been uniquely inspired to go backstage and congratulate him. All I knew was that from the opening scene he had transformed an egocentric womanizer into a human of grandeur and tragedy, driven with inextricable undeviation towards his fate. The effortless nonchalance swirled together with the burning passion of his pas de deux work and the lyrical elegance in his solos glared "trapped" to the last row. He dominated the stage, whether moving or still, by the sheer intensity of his presence. Each step of his dancing seemed drawn in a timeless space where it remains, as real as the instant he made it.

And I pound my fist on the desk and swallow the poison of knowing that Stefanschi knew. As he pushed himself backwards along the stage in the last pas de deux, not all the wetness on his face was sweat. As Jago ran around her grip on his uplifted arm and pushed him down to the floor for the final time, not all the etched agony on her face was for Don Juan. A performance that revealed form and motion as a living, breathing being was real. Part of Sergiu Stefanschi died when Don Juan died that night. And I pound my fist and curse an art I love.

I sat in row H, watching Clinton Rothwell's portrayal of Juan's servant, Catalinon, and marvelled at how dull he made such an exciting role. Then I sat in the second row the next night and heard his, "whoosh—a—whooooooh!" as he leapt, poised, and leapt again into

the upsweeping arms of the Devils. Fine, Rothwell is enjoying himself. Good. I, who paid \$17.50 for my seat in row H, didn't. I had to sit close enough to hear Rothwell's voice to be thrilled by his dancing.

In a purely character role, Rothwell can be brilliant. His Tybalt, in *Romeo and Juliet*, drew, with sneer, stance, and long, lean walk, the essence of the man Mercutio calls the "Prince of Cats". He is a strong dancer with a moderately polished technique. Yet his dancing is flat and insipid, even from row H, because there's so little attack to his movement that there's not even a spark in his dancing, let alone fire. It's all "whoosh, awhoosh" to Rothwell.

This element of artistic and technical ambiguity runs through the entire company. Karen Tessmer, a second soloist, is an excellent example. A dancer of exceptional musicality, beautiful line, and vigorous yet graceful phrasing, she stands out like an alien in the National. In the group sections of *Four Schumann Pieces* she was almost the only dancer who could be seen, her movement shone so brightly, and in *Collective Symphony* she was living music. Yet in a classical or romantic ballet, Tessmer appears to merely self-indulge, as if she is upstaging everyone else constantly, adding superfluous accents to her phrases, anticipating the music, and playing everything up to the audience. The reality is that Tessmer isn't upstaging anyone, nor is she a phenomenally gifted dancer. She simply has flair. Her skill and feeling isn't making the other dancers look bad; they're lack of them is making her look good.

Gizella Witkowsky can keep up to Tessmer. Witkowsky's soaring leaps and flamboyant, whiplash phrasing can keep up to anyone on the turns and pass them on the stretches. Until her rolling feet, flopping pelvis, uncontrolled back or reliance on balletic tricks rather than a solid technical foundation gives her an injury she can't recover from. Gloria Luoma, Sonia Perusse, and Mavis Staines are polished and ebullient dancers. To my admittedly untrained eye, never having been a professional ballet teacher, they all seem to share the same training defect of a swayback, which will undoubtedly shorten their careers as dancers, but they're doing it well while they can. Susan Keen is a strong dancer with a beautifully controlled attack. And Esther Murillo is a constant joy to watch, her musicality and her cloud-like lyricism a ceaseless astonishment.

Among the men, Miguel Garcia is notable for his clean line, smooth lyricism, and cultivated nobility on stage. Albert Forister was gently expressive in *Collective Symphony* and is beginning to show a precise and exuberant drive in parts that do more than show off his high, loose extension. Paul Jago may be a strong and graceful dancer when and if he learns to loosen up a little. And, of course, there's Luc Amyôt, whose sweat contains the magic ingredient X-83, called talent.

These dancers are the exceptions. The vast majority of the company dance in a flat, dispirited, bored manner that contributes nothing to a production but by filling up another space on stage. Also running through the company is a general technical shoddiness. Rolled feet, swaybacks, poor turnout, raised hips, misaligned torsos, and incredibly sloppy footwork are everywhere. The port de bras of the corps looks like a hayfield being mowed down. In any given group dance, up to twelve dancers will be moving at twelve different speeds, not one of whom will be moving at the speed of the music. (Above twelve the law of averages seems to even it out

slightly.)

There isn't enough space to discuss the unmentioned principals of the company, with the exception of Peter Schaufuss. Peter Schaufuss epitomizes the artistic ambiguity of the National. A superb technician of almost flawless virtuosity, he couldn't act his way out of a parking ticket. In pas de deux work, he is the opposite of Augustyn, performing his solos with stunning skill and prowess and partnering in the most selfish, egocentric, and inconsiderate manner I've ever seen. His walk summarizes Schaufuss; the dragging, hesitant, uncertain step, the hunched shoulders with forward craning neck and chin thrusting, uptilted head, his face carrying his single stage expression of fatuous confusion. In these moments he bears an uncanny resemblance to Elmer Fudd.

It would appear that the management and artistic direction of the National are going to have to make up their minds as to what it is that they want. They're eventually going to have to decide which comes first, the individual production or the company's potential. If they want a stable, second-rate company that presents a mildly diversified repertoire with an extremely firm foundation in the classics and can safely ride the coattails of the growing popularity in dance as a pale sister of The Royal Ballet, then nothing further need be said. If they want an international ballet company of high repute, then they have a lot of work to do. It's perfectly possible for The National Ballet of Canada to be built up into one of the greatest ballet companies in the world. The raw material is there. It simply needs direction.

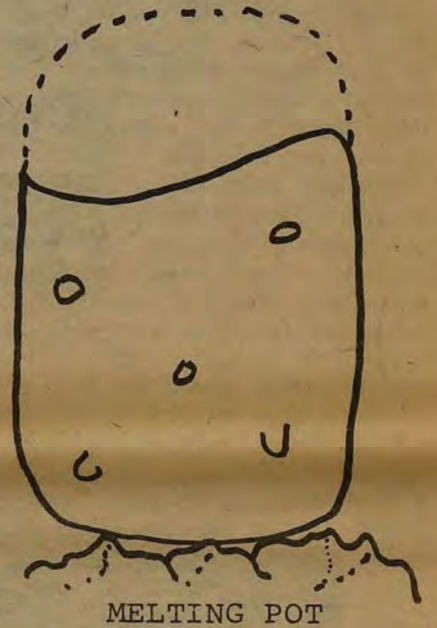
### Jarvis cont'd

more nervous than they are about how to pay for my rent, food and clothing—and if I ever had a child, how could I afford to support him? It again saddens me. The priorities of this society. It's better, financially, to work for an Institution. Reduces fear of survival. At the pit of our stomachs aren't we "artists" always just a little afraid? I think of the golden-green leaf I once saw, at a time when I had only 6 cents, and was 10,000 miles away from Canada. No chance to work. No work permits. Nothing. Only the leaf. Then was I afraid? No. It was the leaf, and in the leaf a sense. The leaf didn't need 6 cents to go on growing. It didn't then occur to me to ask the people around me for money. In the early days of Kingston summer school, I had asked my room-mate to lend me 25 cents. She replied, "My father said, 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be'". That was Dawn Suzuki, since, a member of the Martha Graham Dance Co. Well, O.K.

Could there not now be genuine schools of Art in Canada—not just merely tokens to the talented?—a course here, a course there. I found some students with an aptitude for Dance—at the age of 13 or 14. And not necessarily in Ballet. In fact all indicated a preference for Modern Dance. At this age, could they not already start training? At present they are grouped 'til they're 17 or 18 with others in High School—unable to pursue their natural talents. Kingston Modern Dance Schools are non-existent. Ballet is inadequate. These "special" students asked me what they should do. Could I say to them, "Run away from home and study at Toronto Dance Theatre—or Anna Wyman—or Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers, etc."? Are they not too young? And yet, why should they wait? We have so few Academies of training for young artists. Students are still having to generalize when some are ready to specialize.

Frustrated, what becomes of these young talents? And, when they do reach University level, aren't they forced to diversify their interests—a little language, a little science, a little dance, etc. Why not specialize from the beginning, if they want? Are the present Modern Dance schools capable and willing to develop the minds and bodies of its young students? Are the students mindlessly being taught the movements useful to the company, or are they being genuinely taught—as potential dancers, teachers, choreographers, designers,—in short, "artists".

I'm only questioning. I wish and long to do something—but am trying to unwind the maze of limitations and deceptions. I long for clarity. TO SEE! Oh, so helpless—but be patient. PATIENT. All this, as I'm walking along to "staff lunch". Staff is chatting, eating, reading, waiting. A general feeling of boredom among them. Oh



MELTING POT

God. I'm thankful to be on the edge of the cliff. One teacher says, "Physical Education should be cut". Another teacher says, "Jogging is the best exercise". Another says, "I had the highest marks of the staff in the physical fitness test this year, even though I never exercise." I look on, not bored. Just watching and waiting. Maybe 300 years.

The last day. Grade 11's make tiny speeches of thank-you to me on behalf of the classes, and I'm given a silver-blue glass ornament. More photos.

I'm on the bus to Toronto, reading again Japanese history. Fascinates me. Thinking about my performance next week at Ryerson Theatre. Have told no one in Toronto about it. Sometimes I have so little confidence—be bold I say to myself, but I expect the worst. I am neither weary nor not weary.

On the phone my Mother asks, "How was it?" and I reply, "I enjoyed it. Yes. I'm glad I went. It was good to be there". She is happy, as she always is, when it's been good. I think of my Father, who would have been a super actor. He used to stand at the front door of our house, as guests were leaving, chatting, and roar softly, "Stand not upon the order of your leaving, but go at once!" An honest man. I asked him once why he didn't become an actor, and he said, "because it's too confining". A curious remark.

I wonder if, by the confines of the Dance, I will be able to grow, or will become stifled? Which of us will be able to burst through it all, with joy. Yes, even joy.

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## PHOTOGRAPHER'S BALL

Margaret Dragu

The following is a loose transcript of the "Photographers' Ball" presented at Arton's in Calgary, by artist-in-residence Margaret Dragu.

**Preset:** Five Beautiful Girls—long Laura Ashley Skirts and long hair prints/pastels/eyelit lace/camisole tops—innocent & sexy...(Norma, Lisa Kay, Mary-Jo, Barb)—and me in my green suit with too-much-make-up looking and feeling 36 yr. old...We have tea like a picnic with beautiful china and silver service—a see thru plastic wall and a window covered by a see thru plastic curtain. David Hamilton section (I guess I'm David.)

Lisa and Norma sing Lawrence Welk style in the musical break.

**The sci-fi samba zoom dance:** Down the ramp, we act the zoom one at a time. Slides show me sesame street style being the letters z-o-o-m with my body in sync with the slides (colour). Then my face saying it sound by sound. The girlz join in in body and we dance it on the ramp travelling travelling travelling like models up the ramp but dancing the letters with our bodies. I pick up my glasses and we settle at the end of the sci-fi samba zoom song: in front of the monitors.

**Zoom Project Video Tape:** A seven minute tape of people singing "all I do the whole night thru is zoom on you". David in his darkroom, the potters, the weavers, the nurses, ten people on the street, the hairdressers, the french nursery school, etc....Plus me running from big business zooming slow out of the courthouse, out of manpower, trapped in one of Calgary's skywalks.

**The Trailer Camp Dance:** I dust out in my housewife get-up. Two slide projectors: of the trailer—bl/wh—a tunnel effect. When I change a slide the tech. changes the end of the hallway slide. All bl/wh/environments mostly, a few of me making breakfast, at the t.v. for the soaps and contests, eating fattening foods crouched at the fridge door. I do the enclosed monologue at the piano with mike like a cocktail piano bar on third ave. in new york... Harlequin Romance slides from the Don Mills/Gr. Britain movie *Leopard in the Snow*.

(Leop. in snow soundtrack) The Comotion dancers (still beautiful) but dressed in dressing gowns (raggedly), hairnets and curlers, slippers, and carrying harlequin romance books...A satire complete with umbrellas and ivory snow for the snow—a broad farce. I do the stand-up comedian routine but still-dressed as a housewife.

(Paper Doll by the Mills Bros.) **The Executive and Sexretary Dance:** Peter as business executive. Girlz with typewriters. Slow typing for into and looking dazed. Like dolls. Then up dancing—tap dancing...Sort of. Then they try and teach Peter...By the end of the dance they are all very office again...

## Untitled Nancy Shieber

I have never been renowned for my great love of children or dogs and I still panic at the sight of a group of children on a class outing entering a streetcar, bus or subway. I detest parents who allow their children to run around in restaurants (other than family restaurants which I avoid like the plague). I am distracted by a young child at a "serious" performance by the fear that the child will make noise during a "moment", yet I believe they should be exposed to good theatre—a dilemma.

I taught children (creative movement, dance) up until 5 years ago since I was

**A little Bordello Dance:** Me in my other black evening gown (off the shoulder one) I go to the white theatre set—white risers, white angled huge screen, white stairs, white telephone. I am the madame. I make calls to Jack Daniels saying that next week is taken care of. New girlz are in—got them at UIC and Manpower. Not the bus station (only for distress merchandise and only ! pimps go there). Enter the girlz in mens' shirts and sexy underwear with pillows. Lisa is only speaking French. I call Zegfried over (alias Segurd) an eccentric little grey haired man in a blue leisure suit tht doesn't really fit and a briefcase. I tell him we have a new girl. He says very nervously that he doesn't want to embarass anyone. I reassure him and he gives me the \$\$\$\$. They go to the ramp. Zeigreid takes his pillow out of the briefcase and they pillow fight. Everyone into it but Norma and I take her away with me to the street after I finish my phone calls. Everyone exits except Lisa who is without a doubt confused, nervous, and unsure. But she gives Zeigreid a business card. He exits. Lisa very tear-y and confused. Exits. Enter Peter as the man/on/the/street looking for...I try and get the girlz to take him on but one by one they leave—Norma and I confer—she'll keep a lookout for Lisa and I'll take on the stranger.

(My momma done told me) A duet. Sex come-on dance. Very Astaire and Rodgers but shade over into a hint—a hint of sex. I get him we go back to the white set...Mickey Spillane scene. Then he puts on bracelets with fisherman's wire attached and manipulates me like a puppet. Then I put a sheet of white over me (a bl/wh slide of the hotel room has been on all this time) and we project colour. Last dialogue.

Peter and I sit like at a movie—we watch bl/wh slides in silence of the bare hotel room. Then with the music (There's a Small Hotel)—we watch the story in slides. All bl/wh Peter after working on site (boots, flannel shirt, measuring tape) and me in woman of the night satin cowboy shirt, stockings, garters, heels and too much make-up. He nervous, me bored and probably with an aching jaw already at seven p.m., me too pushy and matter-of-fact; castrating; we are very separate. We talk a little and bit by bit we both open up at the same time and altho the characters do not fall in love and go off to the castle together—they do for a space in time, both suspend their pre-conceptions and go over that rough barrier together—and they are really vulnerable together. A sweet beauty of the couple together sleeping...

(Wish You Were Here Music) **The Titan of Mediocrity Pageant:** We introduce the girlz and Miss Closet Baptist Wins...

(Stayin' Alive): The Highlights of the Zoom Project for the Photographers (a re-cap of the entire show)...With the new disco step choreographed by Margaret Dragu..... Ending with the entire cast with cameras taking pix of the audience.....

15. I liked it at first and then was completely run over by a class of 3rd graders at P.S. 189 in N.Y.C. and swore never again.

It takes great talent to teach children well—one which, if I'm lucky, I have for maybe a week each year—the ability to walk the fine line between teaching them certain technical aspects of dance (theatre, etc.) and the creative experience. Children really do get tired of being seeds and fairies and need to develop an awareness of proper mechanical use of their bodies in preparation for more difficult tasks to come later (i.e. pliés, tendus, etc.—yes



photo: Ben Holzberg

they are difficult for young children to do properly).

I admire anyone who can affect a large number of children—guiding them toward their own discovery and be able to cope with discipline problems.

I have found that coping and keeping up with one child is all I can manage. That one child is Andrea. She came to me 2 years ago as a very shy 6 year old to take acrobatic lessons. When I say shy I mean that her whole body was shy—even a somersault was a chore.

Somehow, through trial and error, we have made progress and both seem to be learning a great deal.

We did an improvisation at Dance Works Seven at the Music Gallery and Andrea proved to me that young children can understand the difference between showing off in front of people and exploring a physical reaction to a problem, space, another person, etc. for an audience.

I want to thank Andrea for her hard work and attention and to thank her parents for allowing me to proceed slowly and in a direction I feel will best prepare Andrea for whatever she may decide to do in the future. Too many parents push their children and their teachers (instead of choosing teachers wisely) which, consequently, results in little real progress.

In my search for classes for Andrea to supplement my time with her, expand her exposure to different forms, and to keep her working while I am gone for the summer, I became sadly aware of the lack of good children's classes. Too often they are given over to young or less experienced people who work with or study under someone who teaches more advanced classes. Children are harder to teach properly than adults. I lack the patience to deal with groups of

children and know how hard it is but couldn't someone take it upon themselves to try to start some good children's classes? I'm sure that some do exist but am not aware of them so maybe in some cases it is a lack of proper advertising. Also, bad or inadequate teachers are often kept in business because they are close to the child's home or because parents look upon the classes as something to keep the child busy and out of their hair.

One final word. We cannot educate only the children. Too often parents are not allowed to watch classes at least once in a while. If parents don't know what is good for young minds and bodies how can they know if what people are doing to their children is good for them. I have been appalled at things some children are asked to do in the name of flexibility. Help!

### How We Dance Together

By Andrea Shepherd

Hi I'm Andrea, I'm in grade three and I'm eight years old. This is the third year I've been dancing with Nancy. There are lots of different kinds of dances like jazz, tap, acrobatics, ballet and modern dancing. Dancing is one of my favorite hobbies. Dance is good for you and it is very good exercise. On Sunday April 9, I did an improvisation performance with Nancy at the Music Gallery. It was movment improvisation. We did it to a tape Nancy and I made the tape. First we had a little conversation. Then I read a book that I wrote. Then we had a little more of a talk then it was finished. When we started I felt a little bit funny and I knew that the audience was there but after a little while I did not feel that they were there. Then Nancy sat down and about a minute after, I sat down.

## BEYOND THE BODY BARRIER: SEXUALITY IN DANCE

J. Groo Bannerman

Sexism is like cynicism. A person expressing either attitude isn't really qualified to judge its validity. A cynic doesn't describe his attitude with the word "cynical", he uses terms such as "realist", "practical", "non-deluded", etc.. A sexist does the same. Words are tricky little buggers all-around.

Words, and the vast array of meanings that each one may have, are just as much subjects of this article as are sexuality, sexism, exhibitionism, and dance. These are words, and each one has many different meanings. None of the sentences in this article mean just what the combination of words mean and nothing more. Many contain the double level of irony. Many have three levels; what the sentence appears to mean, the ironic reversal of that meaning, and a second reversal to show the surface meaning as the true one but in a different light. Some sentences contain as many as seven levels of meaning. I'm cramming a subject fit for a Phd. thesis into a 2000 word essay. I emphasize this element of the essay's construction because I am about to walk out onto a very frail branch, and I don't want to leave any hatchets of misunderstanding conveniently stuck in the trunk behind me.

The complexities that arise from the single, simple difference of female and male sexes encompass the planet we live on. Dualistic conditioning in human society is buried in the bedrock of our bodies: two legs, two arms, two eyes, etc.; one on each side. Duality is so much a part of our perceptions that it's barely noticed. Yet it is, perhaps, the second-most important factor of physical existence after physical existence itself. Before we are left-handed or right-handed, we are two-handed. Before we are female or male, we are people.

Sexism is generally construed as the predilection (usually unconscious or uncontrollable) towards relating to one's self and one's environment from a predominately or purely sexual standpoint. A sexist reacts to any stimulus with what is, essentially, a sexual reaction, be it positive or negative, and perceives the environment within the limits of solely sexual terms.

In writing and speech, words can be a tremendous barrier to communication. In dance, the body can be a barrier. Perceiving past the body barrier to the

dance within is sometimes extremely difficult. It's especially difficult if the dancer cannot dance past his body. In many cases the body barrier is sexual.

The subject of sexuality in dance is a very sensitive and dangerous one. And well it might be. The field of discussion is fraught with conditioned preconceptions, biased value judgements, and taboos that go back to before history. Because sexual energy is an extremely powerful force, a lot of conditioning is required to keep it under control. So the theory goes, in any case. And dance is burdened with another taboo, that against exhibitionism.

Every performer requires a strong element of exhibitionism in his character in order to be able to perform. By exhibitionism I mean an overwhelming urge, which is usually a compulsion, to show oneself to an audience. For many performers, the fear that they are only an exhibitionist, with nothing else to offer an audience to justify showing off about, is the reef upon which their waves of artistic self-doubt break. In dance, the word is taboo. Exhibitionism is a word so emotionally loaded with negative connotations that it's impossible to react rationally to its use. I will substitute terms such as "confidence", "exuberance", "vitality", "stage presence", or "charisma", and so on. But these terms are surrogates for the word that's dictionary definition is accurate.

The confidence of a performer is one element of a performer that is considered from the critical standpoint of whether it is well or poorly expressed. That is all. There is no negative implication placed on the confidence itself whatsoever, because if the performer didn't have it, he wouldn't be up there on stage. Criteria of well or poorly expressed are based on the artistic maturity of the performance. For instance, if a performer jumps up and down in the center of the stage, waving his arms and shouting, "Look at me! Look at me! Aren't I wonderful!?" and the performer isn't satirical, or ironic, or vitalistic, or any of the myriad other things it could be, but simply infantile egotism, then this is generally regarded as being poorly expressed confidence.

The upper levels of artistry are more complex. In a narrative role, is the

performer capable of channeling his vitality into the character, so that it's the character who is vital, not himself? How well can he sublimate himself? Can he immerse himself to the point where we no longer realize he is there at all? In other words, what degree of control does he have over his performance energy? In an abstract role, is the performer capable of abstracting himself? How far? In a personal performance, such as in realism or literalism, how objectively and with what degrees of clarity does the performer portray himself? And so on.

The central point I wish to make clear is that pizzazz is a major element of any performer's craftsmanship. What degree of mastery the performer has over this outlet for his energy will contribute a great deal to whether the performance is a "good" one or a "bad" one.

Controlled projection, and the lack of it, creates difficulties in all the performing arts. Type-casting is a notorious example. In dance, the tightrope walk of controlled exuberance is even more delicate, because the enthusiasm is expressed physically. The question of control, or the lack of it, is demonstrated by the dancer's body, and what he does with it. Inevitably, in some cases, the dancer's performance makes this a question of what degree of control he has over his sexuality.

Dancers vary widely in their projection of sexuality. Most dancers' control over this element of physical communication is finely and surely tuned. This is a matter of degree, however, and there are poorly controlled dancers on both sides of the spectrum. At one extreme are those dancers whom appear to be dead and transformed into zombies, and at the other are those dancers whom appear to be constantly in the throes of orgasm.

It's possible for a performer to be uncontrollably demonstrative in other modes, of course. Emotionally, narcissistically, intellectually, and so on, through the gamut of human experience. This creative trap is commonly lumped altogether under the label of self-indulgence. The scope of this essay is limited to sexual self-indulgence.

Most dancers work through their physical enthusiasm in the studio while

undergoing technical training. If a dancer is shy in class, he won't progress until he overcomes it. If he is excessively flamboyant, he'll have to tone it down to control his technique. By the time they reach a salaried, or independently supported, position most dancers have learned how to channel their exuberance into a mature level of expressive vitality. Some dancers never learn. When they appear in front of an audience, their artistic expression becomes uncontrollably directed into a projection of sexuality.

This type of performance is open to criticism for several reasons. In the first place, such a projection interferes intensely with what the performer is actually doing. It casts a fog over the movement. Secondly, there is the perhaps unfortunate traditional fact that sex is cheap. The old sex-sell is the easiest con in the world, and art has had ages of it. A sexually exploitive performance is purely parasitical in relation to the audience, rather than symbiotic. And, of course, it is indicative of a lack of artistic maturity in the performer.

Having taken so many words to explain what I do mean, I'll use some more to clarify what I don't mean. I am not entering objections to sexual movement, or sensual movement, or erotic movement. I am not uttering condemnation of sexually orientated dance compositions, or sexy dances, or sexy dancers. God forbid. Such a viewpoint would be anti-life.

I'm discussing the individual performer and isolated works of choreography which demonstrate sexual immaturity and naivete.

In such a performance or work, a reviewer is responsible for taking this element into consideration, as with any other element in what was viewed. Naturally (or hopefully), a reviewer will attempt to be tactful and make his comment humorous rather than hurtful if he can. And luckily, the instances of sexual immaturity in dance are rare.

It's a criticism that very rarely needs to be expressed. Even in works or performances that descend to a Hustler level of sexual infantilism, there's usually something else that can be mentioned instead. Therefore, when a dance contains so little choreographic imagination and movement creativity, and so much blatant, unadorned, sexual exhibitionism that there's nothing else to say about it, then it is inexcusable.

It is one of the functions of a critic to say so. Sexism is not related to this function. It is not sexism to call a sexist performance sexist. It's simply an occasional and unfortunate comment that must be made.

### POEMS

by MARGARET ATKINSON

I am crazed with our love  
patterns that we make change with the light  
speeches begun yesterday  
mishap into misunderstanding in the  
winter twilight

rich and warm  
I am crazed  
ice rims the ocean, teeth hanging from the  
ocean

I build upon pictures  
compose endless fragments;  
into the rippling water I breathe fur-breathed air

I am crazed with our love  
patterns that I make change with the light  
speeches begun yesterday  
mishap into misunderstanding in the  
winter twilight

\*\*\*\*\*

### OMEN

people have been giving me gifts lately,  
when I combed the backyard's hair  
alley  
he gave me a clear, blue marble.

vegetable  
hieroglyphics  
there is no question I love you

do you love me  
intensity threatens me  
I love you

dwelled silences

### THE LAST WALK

Fedor was finally falling. Falling the fall he'd been falling for fifty years. Holding on tight and falling forever. Holding onto his pole, his balancing pole. Feeling his feet slipping over the thousands of tiny threads that made up the rope on which he walked, he heard the whispers from the sidelines carried to him by the wind. "Bend down, crouch down" the voices said. The voices of people with two feet planted firm: earth held, cement held weight. Carried to him by the wind that grabbed at the tiny folds in his T-shirt, the merest crease in his pants.

His toes thought rapidly. His torso floundered. "Bend down" wafted the voices. His body began to fold upon itself. Chest reached for bending knees while the toes grappled onward, clawing for the magic space on a swaying rope, hundreds of thousands of inches high, twenty five head to toe people high. His weight shifted and the rope swayed into

### Dianne Korchynski

a jerk. His hands held fast the balancing pole. The jerk of the rope thrust his foot from it, repelled it, and the wind shoved him upright. Push into the chest. The left foot tried to grab on by an arch, slid over the rope as if greased. Then the whole body lunged and he began his fall.

Down through hundreds of thousands of cubic feet of air. Down through hot dry air, steamy humid air, cold damp air. The air of spring and summer and fall. Down through air saturated with the haze of a thousand words in a hundred tongues. Down onto grass and wood and concrete. Down through before, when he never knew that it would happen. When he thought he could walk forever, walk without that weight always beneath you. Although pulling you, slow but sure as an old cow that drags its plough across the land. Coming down. Returning to potatoes and winter colds and not quite enough money.

\*\*\*\*\*



photos: Lynn Rotin

## ROBERTA MOHLER IN CONCERT

15 Dance Lab  
May 4-7, 1978

Mimi Beck

**Peter's Coat** - choreographed by Peter Boneham March, 1978  
coat donated to performer at no loss to choreographer

Enter Roberta  
singing "Just in time, I found you, just in time...  
Now you're here...  
I found my way  
Just in time/puts on coat  
found my lonely love  
that day.

Roberta shrinks into a barefoot fur-dwarf and begins tap riffing  
Scoobie doobie doo.

Roberta grows into sleeve-trunked brown fur elephant

La dee da, shoo be doobie doo la dee da.

Dancers unfolds lascivious under-coated leg from laying on side position

Roberta disappears off stage.

**La Dame Aux Vaches** - Jean Pierre Perreault, March, 1978  
one of 10 or so cow pieces for female dancers

Cow slides are projected onto a screen at rear of space  
Roberta occupies space in front

Liked the loose hand/arm postures; gathered sheet garment - wrapping hand

Fading and melting of pastoral (pastoral?) scenes

Slide pacing evocative of dreamy remembrance of drive through countryside

Steady, unchanging facial expression - a beingness.

Music - gamelan altering patterns, steady dynamics  
tape slowed to the timelessness of the cow fields.

**Jesus on the Mainline**—"Time is money."—J.C.

Revelation of the dancer's clean technical vocabulary  
Roberta as up tempo, self-assured performer/choreographer.

Joyous, dancey revival-like section; hand shaking and spinning  
kicks, to a phun phone sequence....

Mimed requests to the Lord. All those luscious dreamy favors  
You were too humble to pray for, culminating with "a friend  
for every occasion and BIG TITS."

Jesus seems impartial to either push button or dialed requests.

**Three Chakras**—Choreographed by Roberta Mohler

Chakras in question—1,4,9  
Time travel: rolling walking standing

Dancer slo-descends from standing to floor  
I feel I'm watching a slow motion reconstruction  
of the fall of Pompeii.

In multicolour  
The chakras  
Dancer rising; pedalling and paddling  
light plays  
tiny movements, sustained quality  
consciousness fades

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 December 1, 2, 3, 1978  
 Toronto  
 more info soon

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#8

This Is Not About Dance But Is Rather About Pictures, Moving and Otherwise

A Look at Lawrence O'Toole

Looking at Leaving  
 Portrait of La Dragu

E.C. at A Space

Dig in Sweet Caroline  
 A Casual Glance from a Clouded Retina Talking About the Marchowsky Company  
 Mary Aslamazova

Borders, Boundaries & Thresholds  
 Au Courant  
 Dance Works/Improvisation

Various Way in Which Charlotte Hildebrand and Le Groupe de la Place Royale (and etc.)  
 Reflect the Diseased State of Canadian Dance  
 I Don't Know if You Believe This Could Actually Happen in the Art Gallery of Ontario

Jennifer Mascall—Dancing

#9

In Talking to David Adams

Paris Dance  
 Editorial  
 Call for Papers  
 Dance Works/Improv. V

Christmas Oratorio  
 Extreme Skin & True Bond Stories

Theory and Encounters  
 Au Courant  
 Registration, 2 dances  
 Homily Possum

Dancemakers Choreographic Workshop  
 Dance Lives! Part Two Impressions Recorded from Audiencespace

Thoughts for '78 Letter  
 (responses to above)

Untitled  
 A Space: Friday, Jan. 18

6 Dec. '77  
 Sex Think

#10

Dance Lives! an interview with Victor Coleman & Paula Ravitz of A Space

Scanning the Flat Horizon

Editorial  
 Barbara Dilley Workshop

J.M.P.—Homily Possum  
 New Directions in Mime  
 Museum Dance Shows Different Exploration  
 response to "thoughts for '78" letter

Only 280 Shopping Days Till Christmas  
 Catpoto

Rinmon  
 Reference Sources For The New Choreography

Jennifer Mascall Explodes A Space  
 The Sleeping Beauty  
 Meredith Monk/The House  
 Au Courant  
 untitled

Arts Loan Fund  
**Watch Me Dance You Bastards**  
 Postlude to Androgynous Art or S&M, M&B, and all that's left: No More  
 Ballet Y's  
 Canada Council Dance Priorities for 1978-79 Budget Restraints  
 response to above  
 David Tipe at Café Soho, Feb/78

Jennifer Oille  
 photos: Fletcher Starbuck  
 Miriam Adams  
 photo: Spill staff  
 Mimi Beck  
 Ricardo Abreut  
 photo: uncredited  
 Graham Jackson  
 photos: Lynn Rotin  
 Jennifer Mascall  
 Jennifer Mascall  
 Jennifer Mascall  
 photo: uncredited  
 Graham Jackson  
 Brian Robinson  
 J. Groo Bannerman  
 photos: Peter MacCallum & Ian Stuart  
 Peter Dudar

Peter Dudar  
 photos: Peter Dudar  
 Jennifer Mascall—Writing

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 Rhonda Ryman  
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 Mimi Beck  
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