

Dec. 30/02

Dear Lawrence & Myron,

Seasons' greetings! - Enclosed is my EDELIT video for your probably overflowing archives. - This is a good quality tape supported by the Can. Council. Cast, credits & acknowledgements are on the video.

Wishing you both well for 2003.
Cheers.

Rachel

P.S. I'm still making dances - some good ones too!

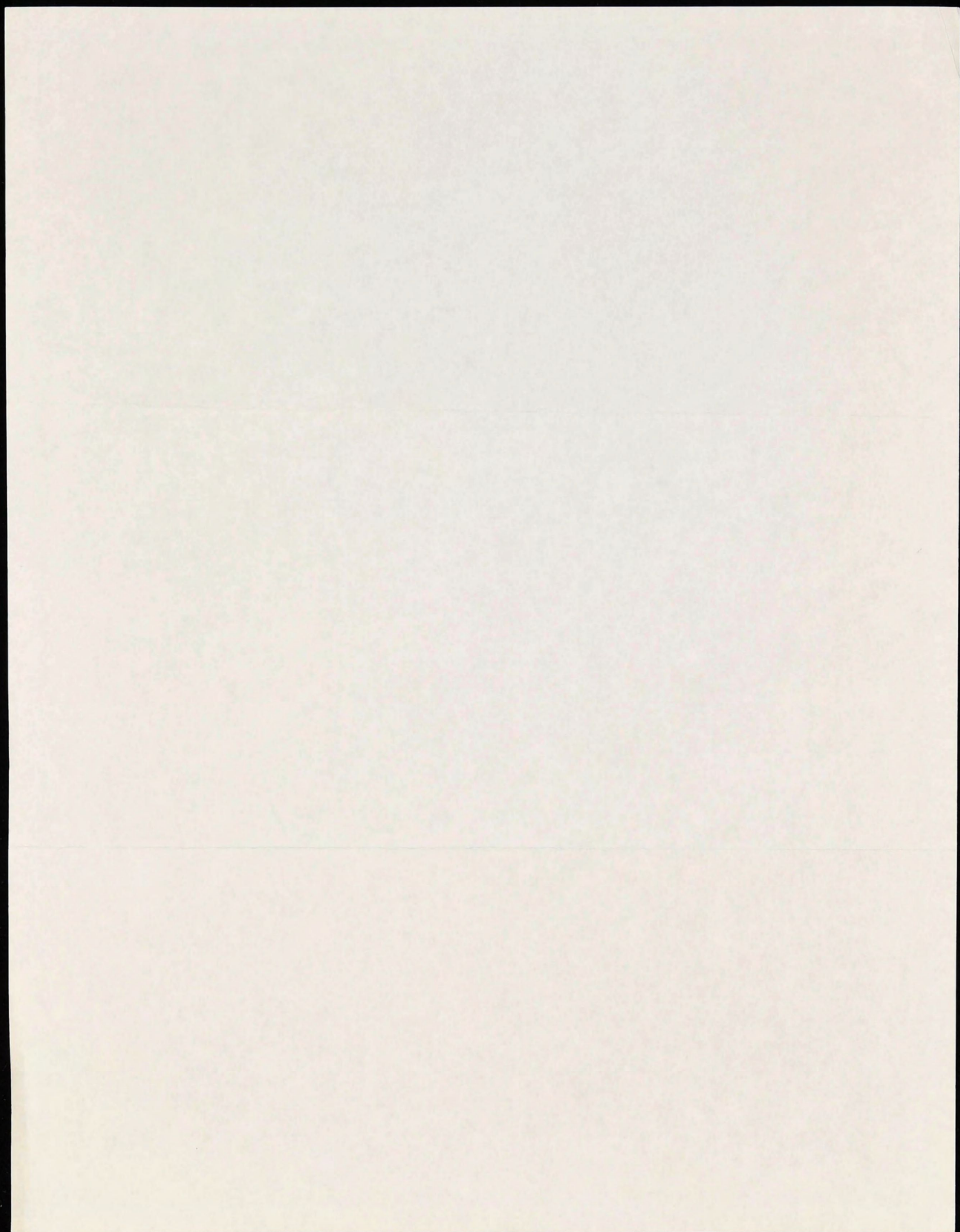
Congratulations on your exceptional ongoing work!!!

166 Cathedral Ave.

Win

R3W 0W9

Love



Program on unmarked tape.

(1)

(There are titles on video.)

1. Continuum (1990)

J.S. Bach

Dancers: Odette Heyn Penner

^{me}
(This dance is on another tape given to you, but this version is better.)

2. Three Haiku excerpt (1993)

music: Bernard Xolotol

Dancer: Pat Fraser

3. K.J. 4 (1994)

music: Keith Jarrett

Dancers: L. Cooper, E. Flegner, S. Rice,
L. Swan

4. Re-Turning (or) The Great Canadian Hoedown

music: Ann Southam (1995)

Dancers: S. Barton, L. Cooper, B. Cross
M. Jobbitt, L. Kuhn, N. Langevin,
F. Moran, A. Hunt, V. Prehbaker,
T. Waddell

5. Six Messages

music: Ann Southam

Dancers: L. Cooper, B. Cross, L. Kuhn, F. Moran,
S. Rice, L. Swan

6. Edgell

music: Ann Southam

Dancer: Davida Monk

over →

Recent reviews have praised Rachel's choreography:

"...elegant, strong choreography, superbly performed..."

Alina Gildiner, *Globe & Mail*

"...fresh, visceral, dynamically varied and emotionally intense."

Michael Crabb, *Dance Connection*

"...hauntingly beautiful, very deep and very rich..."

Paula Citron, Toronto's fFIDA Festival

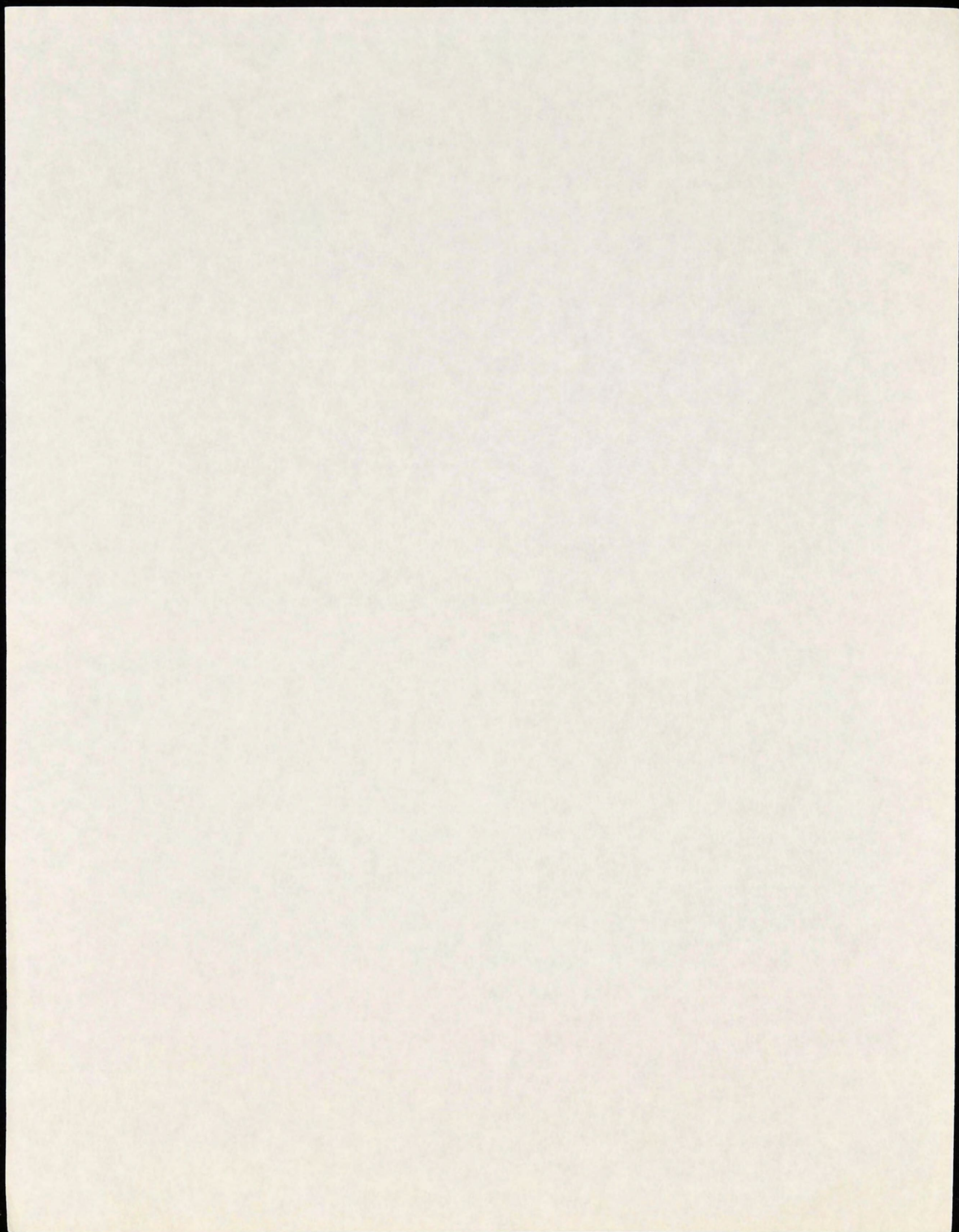
SELECTED DANCE WORKS CHOREOGRAPHED BY RACHEL BROWNE, 1964 - 1978

VIDEO PROGRAM, TAPE # 1

Twelve Dance Works, Total Length of Video, .Two Hours

1. ODETTA'S SONGS & DANCES (1964 & 1971) Excerpts, Length 16½ min.
Remounted 1973, Playhouse Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Odetta
Costumes: Peter Kaczmarek
Performers: Michael Baldwin, Marjorie Borne, Stephanie Ballard,
Rachel Browne in solo section, Larry Brinker, Leslie Dillingham,
John Killacky, Nancy Paris, David Tucker, Holly Anne Savage
2. ODETTA'S SONGS & DANCES (1964 & 1971) Additional Excerpts, 10 min.
Remounted 1983, Gas Station Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Odetta
Costumes: Basia Nitychorak
Performers: Ruth Cansfield, Robert Fung, Chris Gower, Betty Jean -
Harless, Gaile Peturrson-Hiley, Erique Redd, Joel Shwekey
3. ANERCA (1967) Excerpt, Length 2½ minutes
Remounted 1972, Playhouse Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Webern
Costumes & Decor: Taras Korol
Performer: Rachel Browne
Notes: ANERCA is based on Inuit chants. Reading by Renee Jamieson.
4. ANERCA (1967 & 1974) Additional Excerpts, Length 15½ minutes
Rehearsal 1975
Music: Edgar Varese, Webern
Performers: Stephanie Ballard, Marjorie Borne, Rachel Browne,
Leslie Dillingham, Bill Houlihan, Nancy Paris, Holly Anne Savage
Notes: ANERCA is based on Inuit chants. Reading by Renee Jamieson.
5. WHERE THE SHINING TRUMPETS BLOW (1968) Length 6½ minutes
Remounted 1971, Playhouse Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Gustav Mahler
Costumes: Peter Kaczmarek
Performers: Anne Britten, Rachel Browne, Holly Anne Savage

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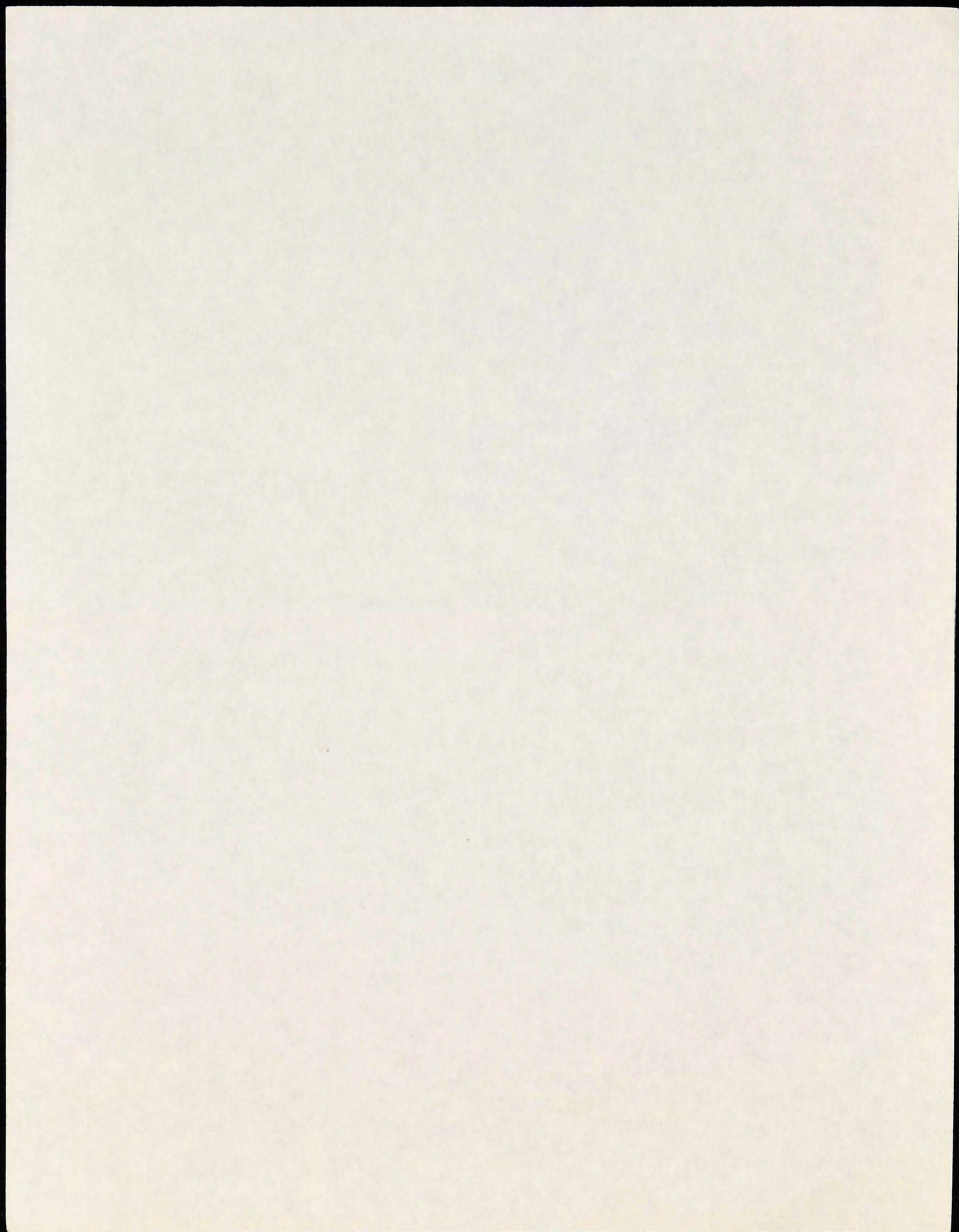


SELECTED DANCE WORKS CHOREOGRAPHED BY RACHEL BROWNE, 1964 -1978

VIDEO PROGRAM, TAPE # 1 continued...

6. VARIATIONS (1969) Excerpt, Length 2 minutes
Rehearsal 1970
Music: J. S. Bach
Performer: Rachel Browne
7. RHYTHMING (1970) Length 3½ minutes
Remounted 1972, Playhouse Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Billy Graham
Performer: Rachel Browne
8. BLUES & Highs (1972) Excerpt, Length 4½ minutes
Remounted 1973, Playhouse Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Laura Nyro
Performer: Rachel Browne
9. CONTRASTS (1974) Length 11 minutes
Remounted 1976, Dress Rehearsal, Playhouse Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Bela Bartok
Costumes & Decor: Peter Kaczmarek
Performers: Stephanie Ballard, Sara Brummel, Jim Davis, Charles Flanders, Ken Lipitz, Grant McDaniel, Fred McKitrick, Suzanne Oliver, Nancy Paris
Notes: Video quality is poor, but it improves as tape continues.
10. THE WOMAN I AM (1975) Excerpts, Length 21 minutes
Dress Rehearsal, Playhouse Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Paul Horn
Costumes: Taras Korol
Performers: Rachel Browne, Sara Brummel, Jim Davis, Raymond Guimond, Ken Lipitz, Fred McKitrick, Grant McDaniel, Nancy Paris, Suzanne Oliver, Seth Walsh
Notes: The dance uses poetry by Dorothy Livesay. Reading is by Renee Jamieson.

continued on page 3...



SELECTED DANCE WORKS CHOREOGRAPHED BY RACHEL BROWNE, 1964 - 1978

VIDEO PROGRAM, TAPE # 1 continued...

11. INTERIORS (1976) Length 12 minutes
Remounted 1978, Playhouse Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Jim Donahue
Performers: Rachel Browne, Ken Lipitz
Notes: The songs' lyrics are based on poems by Dorothy Livesay.
12. THE OTHER (1978) Length 10 minutes
Remounted 1979, Playhouse Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Ravel
Costumes: Kim Hughes
Performers: Rachel Browne
Notes: The dance uses poetry by Dorothy Livesay and Adrienne Rich.

Please note: Lighting Design for all dance works: Hugh Conacher

* THIS PROJECT WAS SUPPORTED BY THE CANADA COUNCIL DANCE SECTION.

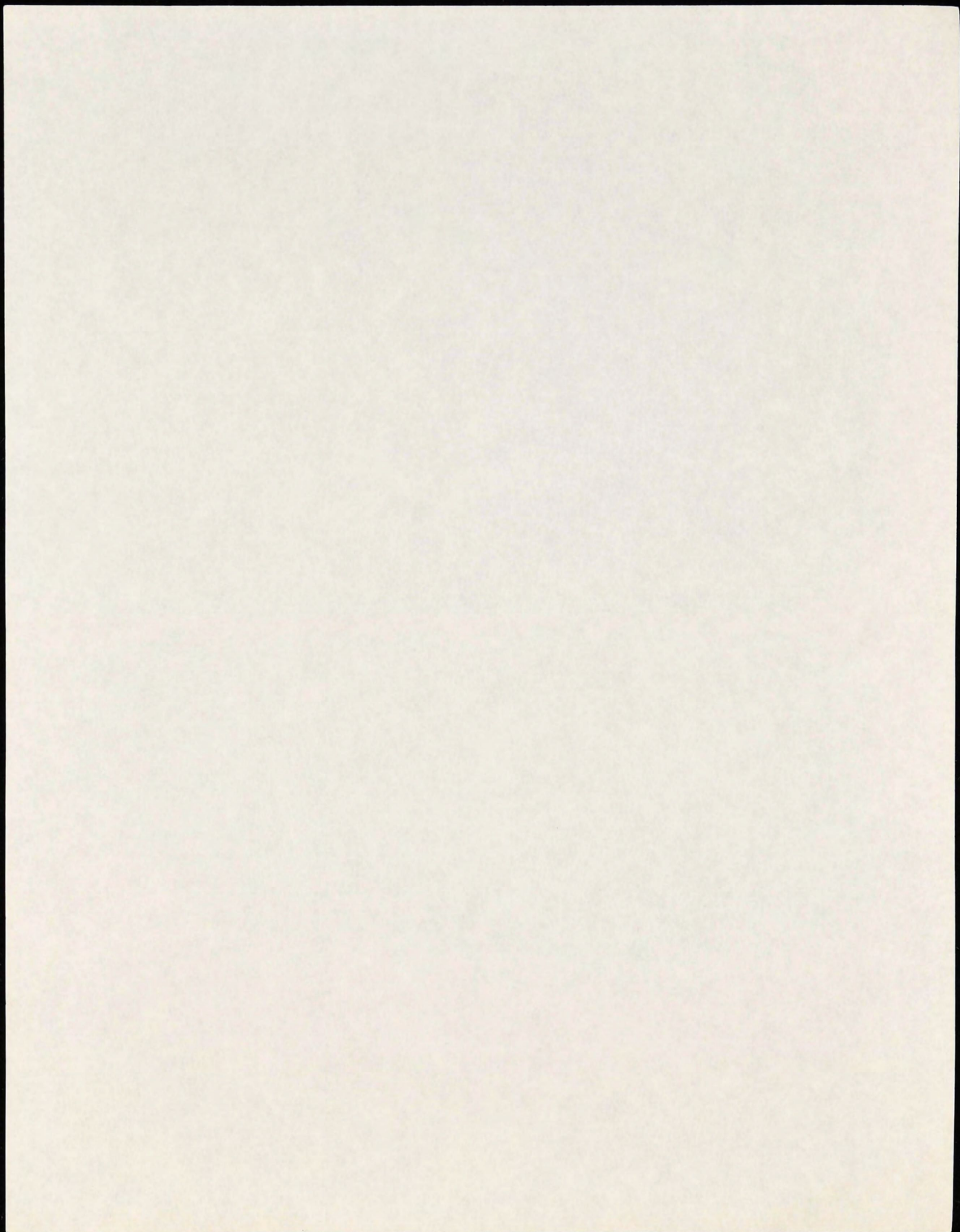
** Additional Notes: Several dance works on this video are of poor quality due to the age of the videotapes from which they were copied. In some instances the video quality improves as the dance continues. Listed below is information on some of the dances which may make viewing them easier:

Dance # 8, BLUES & HIGHS, music starts before dance begins.

Dance # 9, CONTRASTS, several disruptive glitches which finally disappear.

Dance # 10, THE WOMAN I AM, double images give each dancer a shadow.

Dance # 5, WHERE THE SHINING TRUMPETS BLOW, video is very bright.



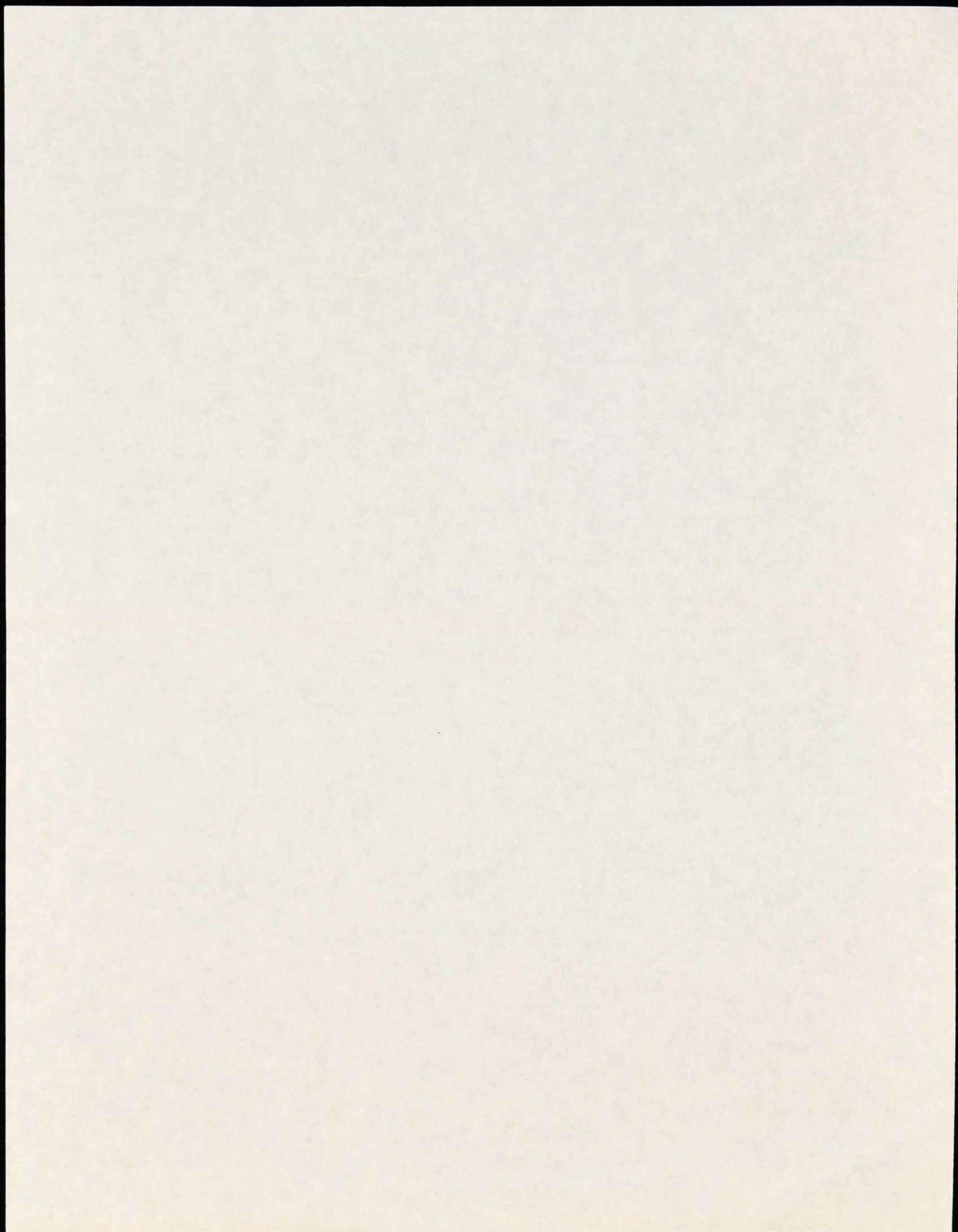
SELECTED DANCE WORKS CHOREOGRAPHED BY RACHEL BROWNE, 1979 - 1989

VIDEO PROGRAM, TAPE # 2

Twelve Dance Works, Total Length of Video, Two Hours

1. SOLITUDE (1979) Excerpt, Length 5½ minutes
Rehearsal video
Music: Brahms
Costumes: Beverly Herd
Performers: Ken Lipitz, Shelly Ziebel
Notes: Video is very bright.
2. DREAMS (1980) Length 7 minutes
Banff Choreographic Seminar
Music: Henry Kucharsyk
Text: Dancers' Dreams
Performers: Karen Duplessis, Susan MacPherson, Unknown
Notes: This sketch was created in a single, three hour rehearsal.
3. RITUAL (1980) Length 5½ minutes
Banff Choreographic Seminar
Music: Wendy , (last name unknown)
Performers: Elaine Bowman, Debbie Brown, Susan Cash, Mark Chambers,
Karen Duplessis, Michael , (last name unknown), Phyllis
White, Two Unknown
Notes: This sketch was created in a single, three hour rehearsal.
4. FAMILY (1980) Length 5½ minutes
Banff Choreographic Seminar
Music: Norma Beecroft, after Mozart
Performers: Sioux Hartle, Two Unknown
Notes: This sketch was created in a single, three hour rehearsal.
5. DREAMS (1981) Length 10 minutes
Premiere Performance, Playhouse Theatre, Winnipeg
Text: Dancers' Dreams
Performers: Vicky Fagan, Siobhan MacLeod, Karen Unsworth

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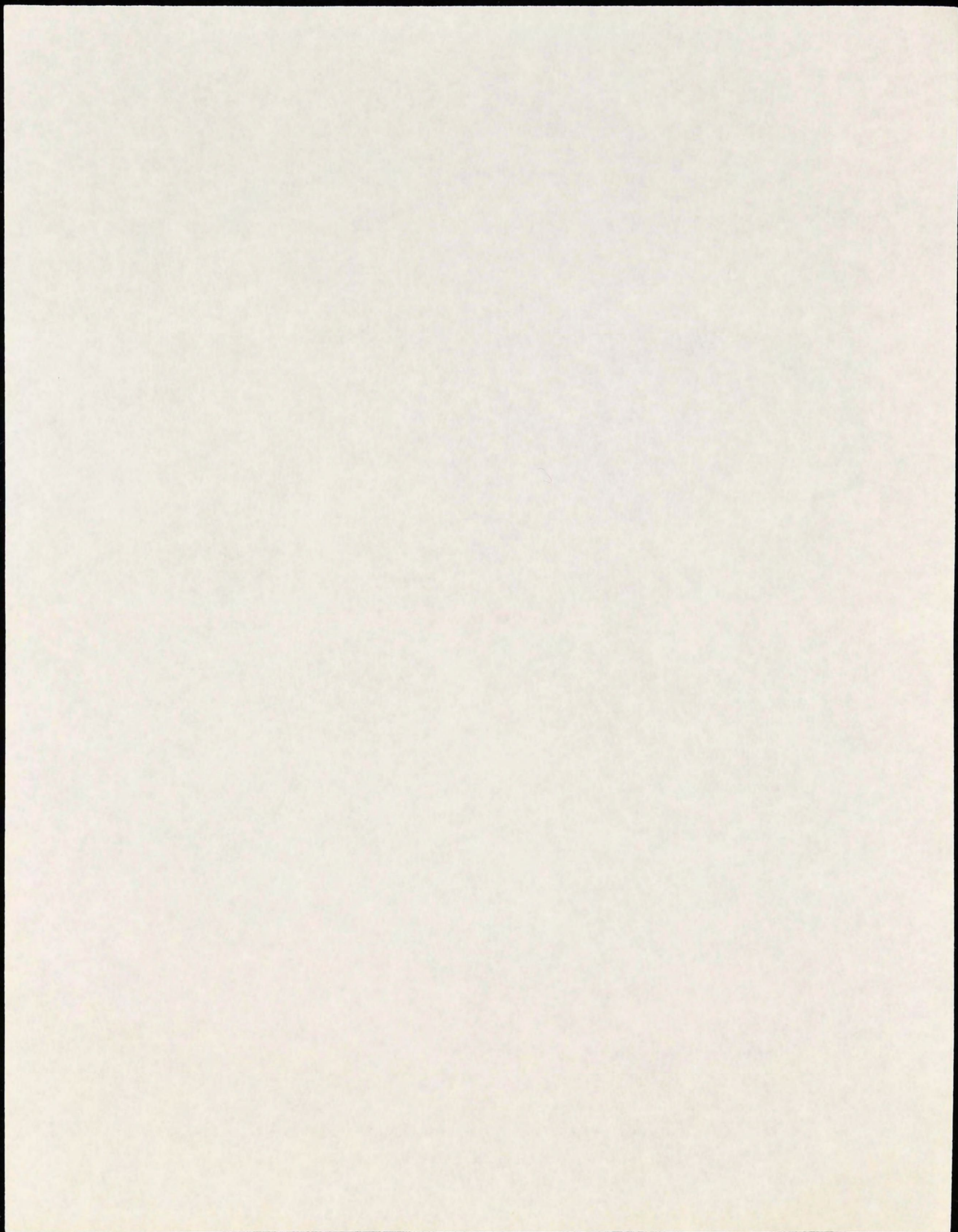


SELECTED DANCE WORKS CHOREOGRAPHED BY RACHEL BROWNE, 1979 - 1989

VIDEO PROGRAM, TAPE # 2 continued...

6. HAIKU (1981) Length 10½ minutes
Remounted 1987, Gas Station Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Owen Clarke
Costumes & Decor: Taras Korol
Performers: Ruth Cansfield, Rachel Browne
7. M.L.W. (1982) Excerpt, Length 4 minutes
Dress Rehearsal, M.T.C. Warehouse Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Mary Lou Williams
Performer: D-Anne Kuby
8. SHALOM (1983) Length 10 minutes
Winnipeg Premiere, M.T.C. Warehouse Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: J.S. Bach, Partita #6 in E Minor, Costume: Taras Korol
Performer: Rachel Browne
Notes: Quality of video improves as the dance continues.
9. CAMPING OUT (1985) Excerpt, Length 5 minutes
Entire Dance & Concept by Tedd Robinson. Contributing Choreography by Murray Darroch & Rachel Browne.
Music: Franz Liszt
Performer: Desiree Kleeman
Notes: Towards the end of the dance the group curses the performer.
10. OLD TIMES NOW (1987) Length 15 minutes
Remounted 1993, Betty Oliphant Theatre, Toronto
Music: Almeta Speaks
Performer: Andrea Nann
11. IN A DARK TIME THE EYE BEGINS TO SEE (1987) Length 10½ minutes
Remounted 1991, R.W.B. Founders Studio, Winnipeg
Music: Vangelis, Pachelbel
Performers: Tom Casey, Constance Cooke, Eve Lacabanne, Brent Lott, Sharon Moore, Carol Prieur, Alana Shewchuk, Julia Zohrab
Notes: Towards the end of the dance, one of the dancers is continually crying. The title of the dance is from a poem by Theodore Roethke.

continued on page 3...



SELECTED DANCE WORKS CHOREOGRAPHED BY RACHEL BROWNE, 1979 - 1989

VIDEO PROGRAM, TAPE # 2 continued...

12. SUNSET SENTENCES (1989) Length 23 minutes

Music: Samuel Barber, Diana McIntosh

Costumes & Decor: Randal Newman

Performers: Julia Barrick Taffe, Ruth Cansfield, AnneBruce Falconer,
Odette Heyn-Penner, Faye Thomson

Notes: The dance is dedicated to my Mother, Eva Minkoff.

Premiere Performance, Gas Station Theatre, Winnipeg.

Please note: Lighting Design for all dance works: Hugh Conacher

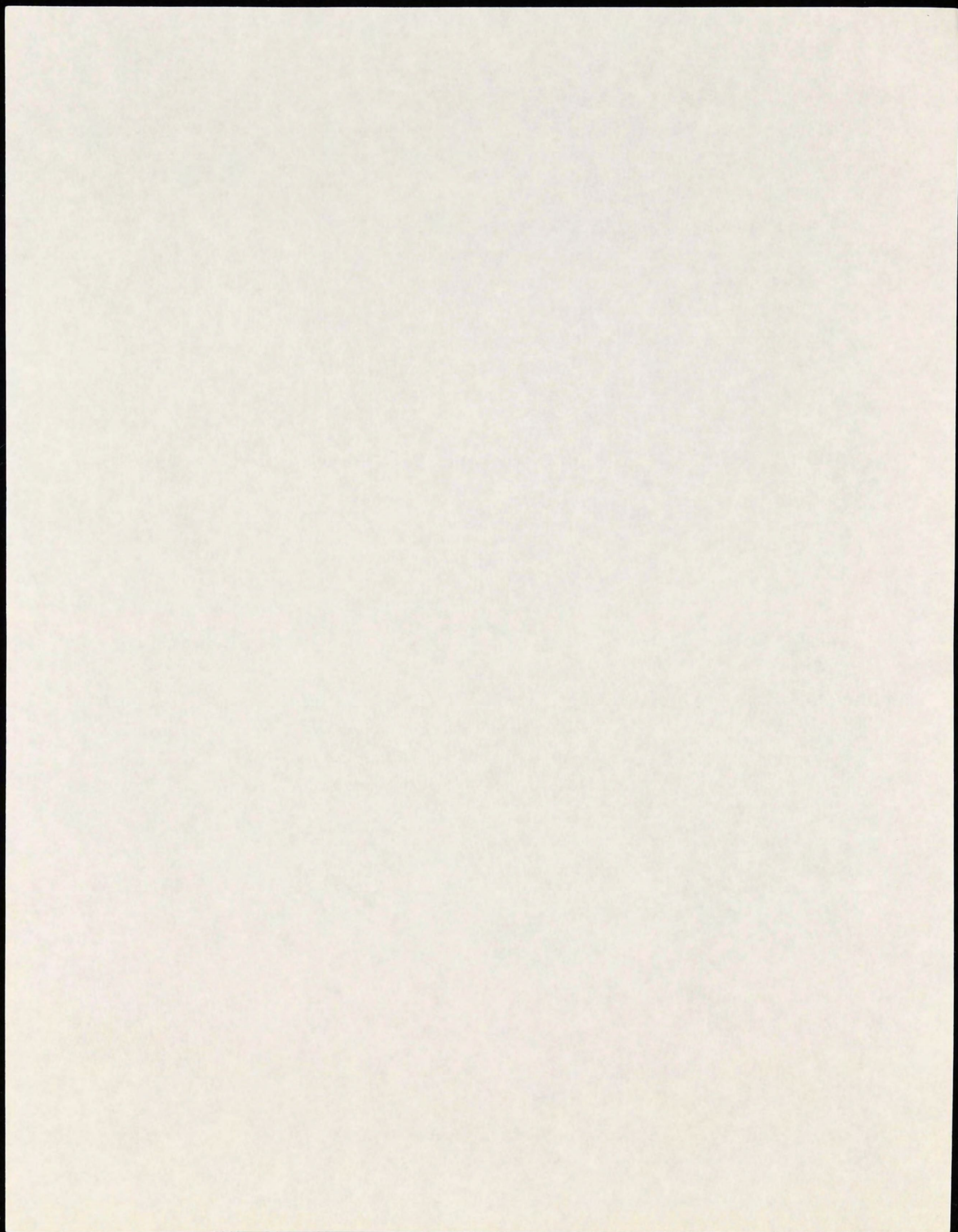
* THIS PROJECT WAS SUPPORTED BY THE CANADA COUNCIL DANCE SECTION.

** Additional Notes: Listed below is information on some of the dances
which may make viewing them easier:Dance # 7, M.L.W., video is dark in the beginning, but it becomes
brighter as dance continues.

Dance # 9, CAMPING OUT, music fades in and out.

Dance # 11, IN A DARK TIME THE EYE BEGINS TO SEE, music begins before
dancers are seen.

Dance # 12, SUNSET SENTENCES, music begins before dancer.



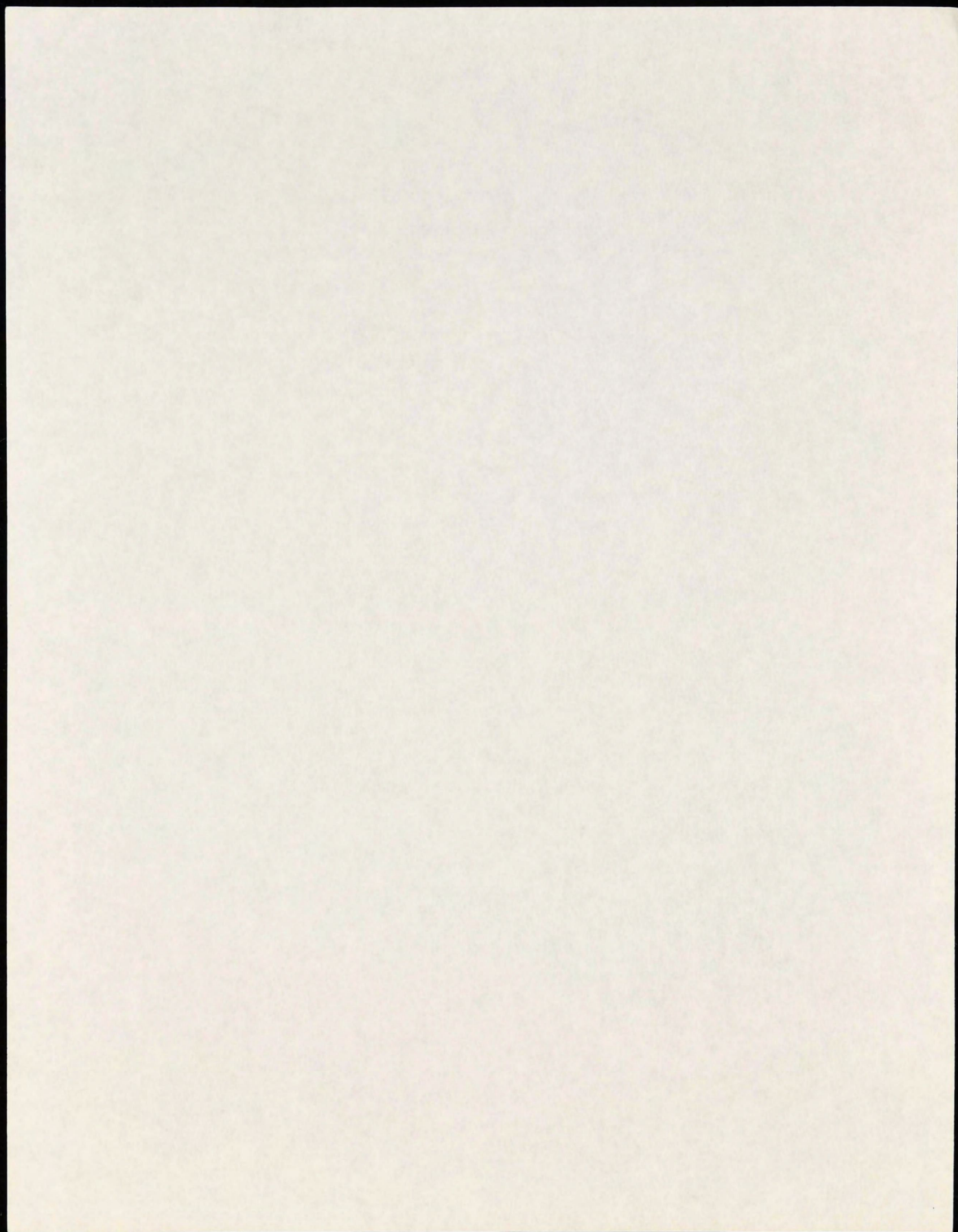
SELECTED DANCE WORKS CHOREOGRAPHED BY RACHEL BROWNE, 1990 - 1992

VIDEO PROGRAM, TAPE # 3

Eight Dance Works, Total Length of Video, One Hour, 50 Minutes

1. MY ROMANCE (1990) Length 6½ minutes
Remounted 1991, R.W.B. Founders Studio, Winnipeg
Music: Almeta Speaks
Costume: Megan LaTouche
Performer: Sharon Moore
2. CONTINUUM (1990) Length 16 minutes
Premiere Performance, Gas Station Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: J.S. Bach, Ciaccona, Partita #2 in D Minor
Costumes & Decor: Randal Newman
Performers: Odette Heyn-Penner, Rachel Browne
Notes: Odette is circling the chair on which I sit while the lights fade up. Dance begins in silence.
3. FINE, THANK YOU! (1990) Excerpts, Length 9 minutes
Premiere Performance, Gas Station Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Odetta
Costumes: Wanda Farian
Performers: Jennifer Dressler, Julia Barrick Taffe
4. FREDDY (1991) Length 14½ minutes
Remounted 1991, R.W.B. Founders Studio, Winnipeg
Music: Kurt Weill
Costume & Decor: Randal Newman
Performer: Sharon Moore
5. PAT'S BACH (1991) Length 13 minutes
Premiere Performance, Winchester Street Theatre, Toronto
Music: J.S. Bach, Partita #5 in G
Performer: Pat Fraser
Notes: Music begins before the dancer is seen.
6. DREAM RITE (1992) Length 23 minutes
Premiere Performance, duMaurier Theatre, Toronto
Music: Created & Performed by Diana McIntosh
Costumes & Masks: Randal Newman

continued on page 2...



SELECTED DANCE WORKS CHOREOGRAPHED BY RACHEL BROWNE, 1990 - 1992

VIDEO PROGRAM, TAPE # 3 continued...

6. DREAM RITE (1992) continued...
Performers: Julie Drzymala, Sharon Moore, Carol Prieur,
Alana Shewchuk, Julia Zohrab
7. SHARONBLUE (1992) Length 14 minutes
Premiere Performance, Winchester Street Theatre, Toronto
Music: Cole Porter
Performer: Sharon Moore
8. MOUVEMENT (1992) Length 8 minutes
Premiere Performance, Gas Station Theatre, Winnipeg
Music: Bernard Xolotol
Performer: Alana Shewchuk

Please note: Lighting Design for all dance works: Hugh Conacher

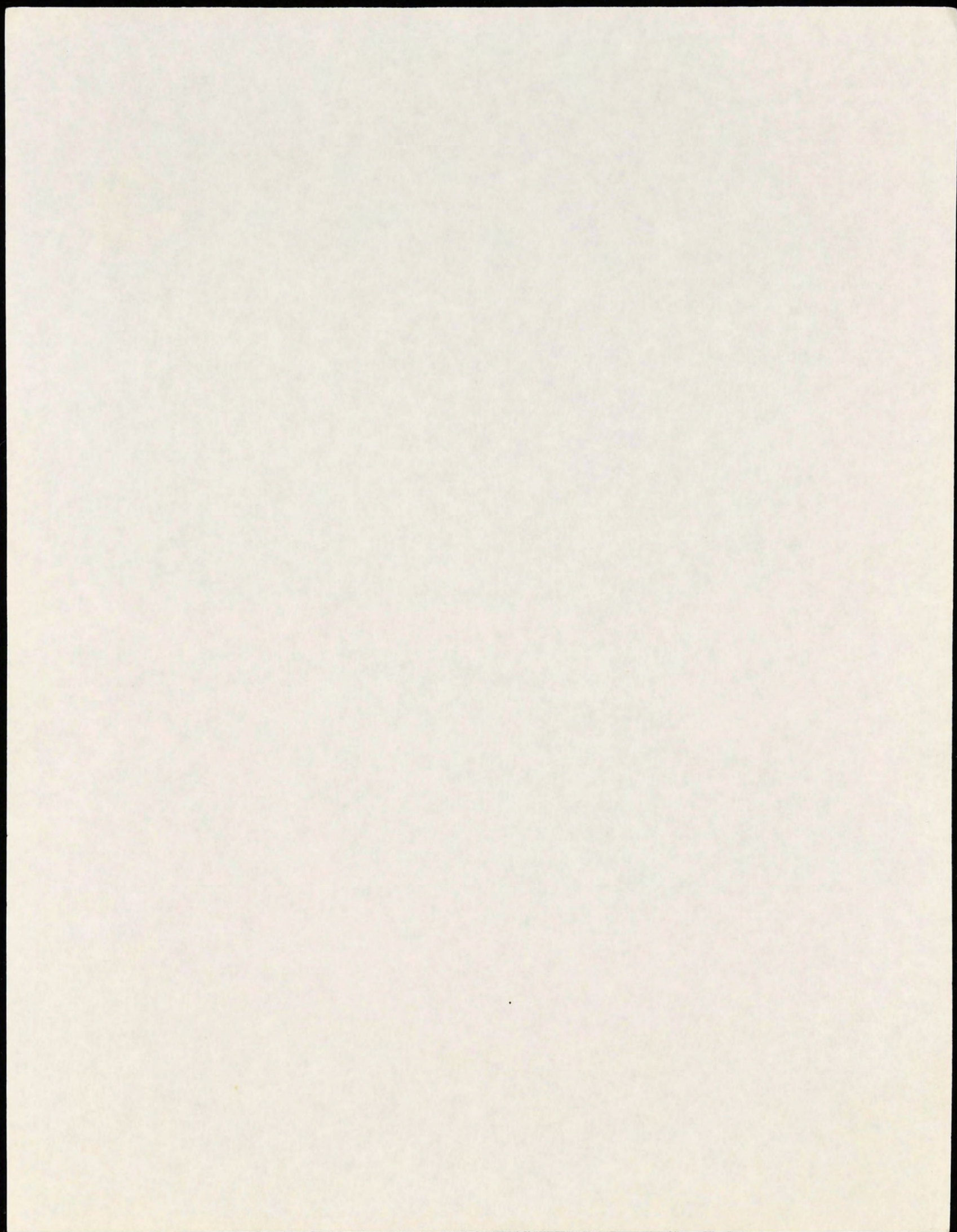
* THIS PROJECT WAS SUPPORTED BY THE CANADA COUNCIL DANCE SECTION.

** Additional Notes: Listed below is information on some of the dances which may make viewing them easier:

Dance # 3, FINE, THANK YOU!, music begins before dancer.

Dance # 4, FREDDY, dance begins in silence.

Dance # 8, MOUVEMENT, dance begins in silence which lasts for 1½ min.



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A TRIBUTE TO RACHEL BROWNE

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TOWARD LIGHT

A TRIBUTE TO RACHEL BROWNE

TORONTO

January 12, 2013

SHOWTIME 8PM

FLECK DANCE THEATRE

HARBOURFRONT CENTRE

After the tragic passing of Rachel Browne at the Canada Dance Festival in Ottawa this summer many in the Canadian dance community were left reeling. Rachel was a true icon whose life and art had a huge impact on the scores of dancers, choreographers and students with whom she worked. In honour of her incomparable contribution to dance in Canada it was decided to form The Rachel Browne Trust. The purpose of the Trust will be to preserve and disseminate her legacy; the many dances she so carefully crafted. In order to launch this Trust nationally we have programmed a tribute show that will showcase the depth and breadth of her significant body of work.

TOWARD LIGHT, A Tribute to Rachel Browne, will highlight a range of Rachel's work including a short excerpt from *Odetta's Songs and Dances* (1964) to Rachel's most recent and very poignant work *Momentum* (2012).

THE RACHEL BROWNE TRUST

To preserve and disseminate the legacy of Rachel Browne c.m.

<http://bit.ly/TeaLOy>

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Toward



Light



**A WORLD PREMIERE
FULL-LENGTH WORK
BY 1995 CHALMERS
AWARD WINNER
RACHEL BROWNE**

**ORIGINAL MUSIC:
ANN SOUTHAM
SET DESIGN:
AGANETHA DYCK
LIGHTING DESIGN:
HUGH CONACHER**



Toward

Light

Toward Light, premiere

Choreography: **Rachel Browne**

Original music: **Ann Southam**

Additional music: J.S. Bach, Suite No. 5 in C minor for Violoncello, performed by Anner Bylsma

Lighting Design: **Hugh Conacher**

Set Design: **Aganetha Dyck**

Costume Design & Construction:

Wanda Farian, Alana Shewchuk

Additional construction:

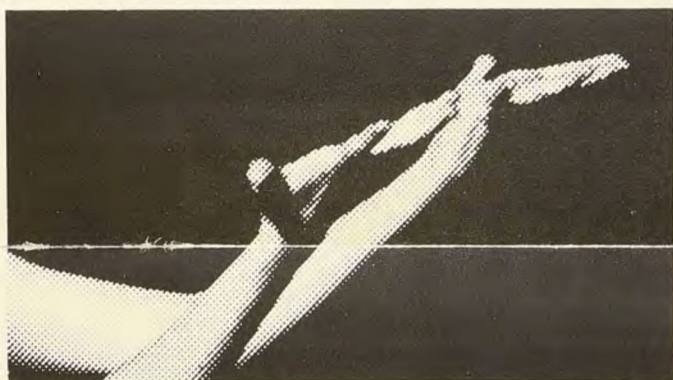
Monkey Business Designs

Performers:

Davida Monk, Dance #1; **Karen Kuzak**, Dance #2; **Alana Shewchuk**, joined by **Liz Cooper**, **Erin Flynn**, **Sherri Rice**, **Cathryn Romaniuk**, Dance #3; **Sharon Moore**, **Odette Heyn-Penner**, Dance #4; **Pat Fraser**, Dance #5; **Rachel Browne**, **Odette Heyn-Penner**, **Davida Monk**, **Liz Cooper**, **Erin Flynn**, **Sherri Rice**, **Cathryn Romaniuk**, Dance #6.

"While movement exploration is at the core of the dance, some of the images I use are inspired by the book WOMEN WHO RUN WITH THE WOLVES: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype by Clarissa Pinkola Estés." R. B.

Please note: This hour long dance work will be performed without an intermission.



Production:

Production Manager/Stage Manager: **Hugh Conacher**

Assistant Stage Manager: **Sharon McIntyre**

Lighting Operator: **Todd Drader**

Sound Operator: **David Wallace**

Stage Hands: **Arlo Bates, Larry Clark, Chris Seida**

House Manager: **Paula Blair**

Box Office: **Nancy Nolan-Rogers**

Promotion:

Marketing: **Nadine Delisle**

Graphic Designer: **Geoff Hayes**

Photographer: **Bruce Monk**

~~~~~  
**Rachel Browne**, Founding Artistic Director of Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, is active as an independent choreographer, teacher and performer. She presents her work on a regular basis in Winnipeg and in other Canadian centres with the support of the Manitoba Arts Council and the Canada Council. Rachel was recently awarded the 1995 Jean A. Chalmers Award for Creativity in Dance.

**Ann Southam** has created music for some of Canada's major modern dance companies and choreographers. While a great deal of her work has been electroacoustic music on tape, she has become increasingly interested in creating concert music for acoustic instruments, the piano being a particular favourite.

**Aganetha Dyck** is a Winnipeg-based visual artist who exhibits her work nationally and internationally. The recipient of numerous awards from the Manitoba Arts Council and the Canada Council, her beework is presently on exhibit at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

**Hugh Conacher** has been Resident Lighting Designer and Production Manager for DANCE COLLECTIVE since the Company's inception in 1989. He has designed extensively for Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers and for numerous dance companies, theatres and festivals throughout Canada.

**Pat Fraser**, Principal of the School of the Toronto Dance Theatre, is a solo dance artist who commissions and performs work by leading Canadian choreographers. She is also active as a teacher, choreographer and independent performer and was formerly the Co-Artistic Director of Dancemakers.

**Odette Heyn-Penner**, teacher, choreographer and performer, is Co-Director of Contemporary Dancers' Professional Program. A graduate of York University's Dance Department, Odette has had a long association with Contemporary Dancers as an apprentice, dancer, choreographer and Assistant Artistic Director.

**Karen Kuzak** has performed with Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, Le Groupe de la Place Royale, O'Vertigo Danse and with choreographer Tedd Robinson. She has enjoyed touring throughout Canada, Europe and the United States. Now Karen continues her work as an independent choreographer/dancer in her birth city of Winnipeg.

**Davida Monk** performs, creates, dances and teaches in communities, universities and professional venues across Canada. As a solo artist, Davida Monk danced, choreographed and toured with Le Groupe de la Place Royale for five years and served as Assistant Artistic Director for two years.

**Sharon Moore**, formerly with Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, is an independent dancer and choreographer and a member of the Bridge Performance Group. Sharon will be presenting an evening of her own choreography in the upcoming season.

**Alana Shewchuk** is in her tenth season as a dancer with Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers. She has performed with the Company in Mexico, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and other Canadian cities and teaches in the School of Contemporary Dancers. Alana also performs independently with Rachel Browne and Karen Kuzak.

**Liz Cooper, Erin Flynn, Sherri Rice** and **Cathryn Romaniuk** are students in Contemporary Dancers' Professional Program and have worked extensively with Program Co-Directors Odette Heyn-Penner and Faye Thomson. They have performed the dance works of many of the Program's guest choreographers including Tom Stroud, Stephanie Ballard, Tedd Robinson, Gaile Petursson-Hiley, Pat Fraser, Sharon Moore and others.

~~~~~  
Acknowledgements: My gratitude and thanks to all who made this project possible: Richard Rutherford, The Canada Council, the Manitoba Arts Council, Ann Southam, Hugh Conacher, Aganetha Dyck, Linda Rabin, Paula Blair, Nadine Delisle, Geoff Hayes, Gas Station Theatre, Riverborne Community Development Assoc., Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, School of Contemporary Dancers, Tom Stroud, Alanna Keefe, Odette Heyn-Penner, Faye Thomson, Darlene Williams, Nelsia Edwards, Todd Drader, Jason Broadfoot, Karen Hamm, Bruce Monk, Production Staff, Front of House, Ushers, Ben Sokoloff, Miriam Browne, and especially, the superb dancers.



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Rachel Browne 1934-2012

A Tribute

Deborah Lundmark

Carol Anderson

Dance Collection Danse
photo presentation

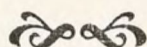
Old Times Now (1987)

Danced by Andrea Nann

Choreography by Rachel Browne

Music by Almeta Speaks

Stephanie Ballard



THE
JOURNAL
OF
THE
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
VOLUME 10
PART 1
1880

**** PROGRAM CHANGE ****

Due to circumstances beyond our control,
the world premiere of "A Book of Questions"
by Marie-Josée Chartier and Linda C. Smith
has been postponed.

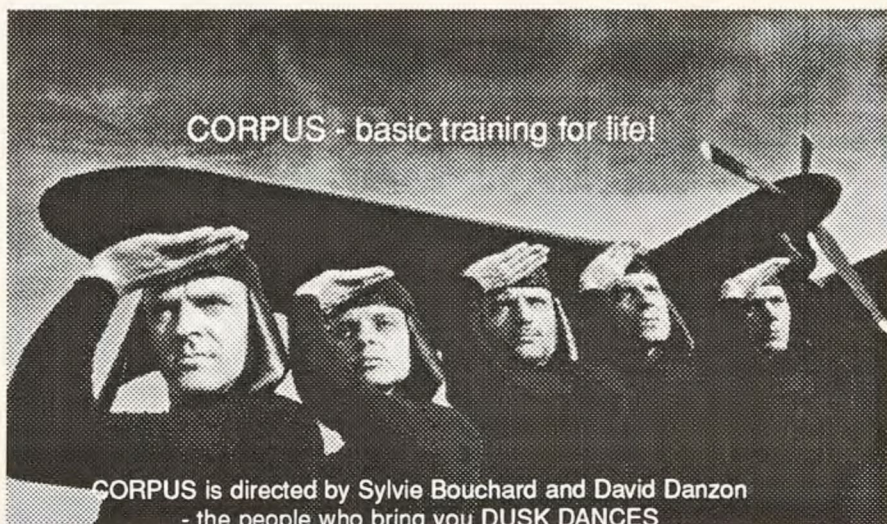
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Join us in *"a universe where the absurd reigns supreme and
where foolishness is contagious"!*





DanceWorks

presents the choreography of

Rachel Browne



DW122

Edgelit

Mouvement

K.J. 4

Willow Island

Winchester Street Theatre

Oct 19-21, 2000 @ 8 pm

Edgelit

PROGRAMME

EDGELIT

[created from 1996 to 1999]

choreography: Rachel Browne

composer : Ann Southam

lighting design: Hugh Conacher

First Solo

performer: Patricia Fraser **music:** *Fluke Sound*

Second Dance

performers: Susan Macpherson with Stephanie Ballard,

Rachel Browne, Odette Heyn-Penner

music: *Slow Music*

Quartet

performers: Stephanie Ballard, Rachel Browne,

Odette Heyn-Penner, Davida Monk

music: *Music For Slow Dancing*

For Ann

"Edgelit is part of an ongoing project, Older Women Dance. As the work unfolds the dancers are drawn to two chairs placed on opposite sides of the stage. To me, the chairs symbolize that which I long for: a person, a sound, a place, or a state of being".

Rachel Browne

*Edgelit is a subtitle from the poem, Inscriptions, from *Dark Field Of The Republic: Poems 1991-1995* by Adrienne Rich. New York: W.W. Norton, 1995.*

The creation and production of *Edgelit* were made possible by support from The Manitoba Arts Council, The Canada Council for the Arts, the Professional Program of the School of Contemporary Dancers, and Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers.

INTERMISSION

MOUVEMENT

[created in 1992]

choreography: Rachel Browne

music: Bernard Xolotol

lighting design: Hugh Conacher

costume design & construction: Alana Shewchuk

performer: Linnea Swan

Sections of this dance refer to Frida Kahlo's painting *The Little Deer*.

My gratitude to Alan Shewchuk for whom this dance was created. Alana acted as rehearsal director in passing this solo on to Linnea.

Edgelit PROGRAMME

K.J. 4

[created in 1994]

choreography: Rachel Browne

music: Keith Jarrett

performers: Mairéad Filgate, Brianna Lombardo,
Kerri-Ann Paradis, Masumi Sato.

Many thanks to Andrea Roberts for her perceptive rehearsal assistance.

K.J. 4 was created for the Canadian Children's Dance Theatre with generous assistance from the Laidlaw Foundation

WILLOW ISLAND

[created in 1997]

choreography: Rachel Browne

music: Simon Jeffes, performed by the Penguin Cafe Orchestra

lighting design: Hugh Conacher

costume construction: Lori Trez Endes

performers:

Tawny Andersen, Denise Giancola, Kate Holden,
Nagisa Inoue, Susan Kendal, Hea Suk Kim,
Natasha Lutz, Elizabeth Smyth,
Carla Soto, Heather Ware, Lindsay Zier-Vogel

Willow Island, near Gimli, Manitoba, is my favourite prairie haven.

Willow Island was created for the 25th Anniversary of the Professional Program of the School of Contemporary Dancers

3rd Year Graduating Class of the Professional Training Program of the School of Toronto Dance Theatre

Tawny Andersen, Mairéad Filgate, Denise Giancola, Kate Holden, Nagisa Inoue, Susan Kendal, Hea Suk Kim, Brianna Lombardo, Natasha Lutz, Kerri-Ann Paradis, Masumi Sato, Elizabeth Smyth, Carlo Soto, Heather Ware, Lindsay Zier-Vogel

My sincere thanks to Patricia Fraser, Artistic Director and Susan Macpherson, Artistic Associate of the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, and to Mimi Beck, Curator and Rosslyn Jacob Edwards, General Manager of DanceWorks and to the Canada Council for making these performances and this residency possible.

And finally my heartfelt thanks to Ann Southam for her music, Pat Miner for her eagle "outside eye" and to all of the gifted performers who bring these dances to life.

ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

Rachel Browne founded *Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers*, Canada's first professional modern dance company in 1964, and served as the company's artistic director, resident choreographer and teacher for twenty years. Under her direction the company grew from a local amateur group to a nationally recognized repertory company. The repertoire included dance works by acclaimed Canadian and international choreographers such as David Earle, Judith Marcuse, Jose Limon, Doris Humphrey and numerous others. Priority was given to the development of new choreography from within the ranks of the company. Several major talents emerged including Tedd Senmon Robinson, Stephanie Ballard, Ruth Cansfield and others. During Rachel's tenure WCD toured provincially, nationally and in the U.S.A., including appearances at the renowned *Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival* in Massachusetts, the *Delacorte Dance Festival* in New York City and the *Wolf Trap Festival* in Virginia. Currently active as an independent choreographer, teacher and performer, Rachel has received numerous awards from the Canada Council and the Manitoba Arts Council to support the creation, production and presentation of her dance works on a regular basis in Winnipeg and other Canadian centres. Her choreography is frequently presented in Canadian dance festivals and she continues her association with WCD and its Professional Training Program as a choreographer and teacher. Rachel has served as Artist-In-Residence in the Dance Department at York University, has been a frequent guest teacher in Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary, and has conducted master classes throughout Canada as Artistic Director of *Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers*. She was appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada. She was the recipient of the 1995 Jean A. Chalmers Award for Creativity in Dance, and was named "Woman Of The Year" in 1977 by the YWCA in recognition of her contribution to Winnipeg's cultural life. Rachel frequently serves as an assessor and juror for the Canada Council for the Arts, the Manitoba Arts Council and the Ontario Arts Council. *Rachel Browne: Dancing Toward The Light*, a biography and exploration of Rachel's work, written by Carol Anderson, was published in November 1999 by J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing Inc.

Ann Southam, composer, has created music for some of Canada's major modern dance companies and choreographers. While a great deal of her work has been electroacoustic music on tape, she has become increasingly interested in creating concert music for acoustic instruments, the piano being a particular favourite. Two new recordings of Ann's compositions have recently been released: *Seastill* on the Furiant label and *Glass Houses*, on a CBC Records label.

Hugh Conacher, lighting designer, has been designing lighting for *Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers* since his arrival from Toronto in 1983. In addition to this he works regularly with choreographers, musicians and theatre directors across Canada and the U.S. High lives in Winnipeg, and is lucky enough to have his work take him all over North and Central America, Europe and Asia. He is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada.

Stephanie Ballard is an independent choreographer, dance educator and performer whose work has garnered the prestigious Clifford E. Lee Award, the Jean A. Chalmers Award and the Jacqueline Lemieux Prize. Formerly Associate Artistic Director for *Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers* and Artistic Advisor and choreographer for Margie Gillis, Stephanie continues her affiliation with WCD and the Professional Program of Contemporary Dancers as a guest choreographer.

Pat Fraser is a senior independent dance artist, teacher and arts advisor. Formerly Co-Artistic Director of Dancemakers, she is currently the Artistic Director of the School of Toronto Dance Theatre.

Odette Heyn-Penner is Co-Director of the Professional Program of Contemporary Dancers. She had a close affiliation with WCD and the School of Contemporary Dancers for over twenty-five years as teacher, choreographer, Assistant Artistic Director and dancer.

David Monk is a performer, choreographer and teacher whose work has been seen in theatres and festivals across Canada. Currently on the faculty of the Dance Program at the University of Calgary, David formerly danced, choreographed and served as Assistant Artistic Director with Le Groupe de la Place Royale in Ottawa.

Susan Macpherson. After dancing for many years with Toronto Dance Theatre and Danny Grossman, Susan Macpherson created her own solo program, performing commissioned work by Robert Cohan, Paul-Andre Fortier, James Kudelka and others. Recently she has appeared in works by Peggy Baker, Elizabeth Chitty, Jan Komarek and Laura Taler, and has been pursuing voice work with Richard Armstrong. She is Artistic Associate at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, and also works in porcelain and earthenware in her own ceramic studio.

Linnea Swan. Originally from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Linnea is a graduate of Main Dance Place in Vancouver, and the Professional Program of Contemporary Dancers in Winnipeg. She was a member of Ruth Cansfield Dance for three years, and is looking forward to beginning her second season with TRIP Dance Company in November. She has also worked independently with Rachel Browne, Lesandra Dodson, Brent Lott, and Sharon Moore. She received a Manitoba Arts Council grant to study with Bill Evans in Indianapolis this past June. She then spent five weeks at the International Tanzwochen in Vienna, receiving both a dance web scholarship and a Canada Council grant to attend.

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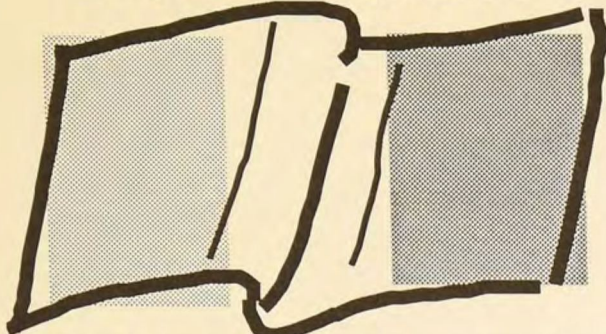
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COVER: Robert Motherwell, *Night Music Opus No. 13*, 1989, collage on rice paper and acrylic on canvas, 32 1/4" x 26 1/4", Collection the Artist.

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Singing the Song of Myself

by Robert Enright

"Something like a diary, a pseudo-memoir, autobiographical apocrypha."

(Tadeusz Konwitski,
Moonrise, Moonset)

I AM AN inveterate, unapologetic lover of autobiography and I'm not very discriminating in my affections. I can be equally seduced by the high-minded and the trashy; my tastes run from obscure journals scratched out by arctic explorers to the pop superficialities of stop-watch fame. Samuel Hearne and Warhol are grist for my autobiographical mill. So are letters, diaries and the entrancing hybrid of essay, criticism and meditation that writers as different as Annie Dillard, John Berger and William Gass have published in the last ten years. The age has seemed to grant artists and essayists a series of permissions that allows much more of themselves into what they write, paint, build or describe.

It is admittedly an ambiguous enterprise, one that smacks of arrogance and vulnerability. In one sense it takes an unusual degree of self-absorption to sit down and decide what details of your life should be revealed. Acts of public disclosure are uncomfortable for anyone who harbours a sense of privacy and we have a residual suspicion of anyone who seems too eager to talk about themselves. It isn't good manners. As polite children we were taught to listen to others and it's only occurred to me as an adult that this outwardly focussed attention meant that someone *else* was continually talking. Invariably, they were talking about themselves.

But as I said, the song of oneself isn't all bluster and rudeness. It also takes courage and sometimes a degree of

recklessness. It's easier to have a novel criticized because the characters and the story can act as a buffer between the writer and a hostile audience. But when you write an autobiography—or any of the other personal genres—there's nothing and no one between you and that audience. If readers don't like a memoir then they don't like the memoirist either. It strikes me that writing about ourselves is among the most desperate and vulnerable things we do and yet humans have always done it and, I trust, always will. Long before Albrecht Dürer executed his meticulous, exquisite self-portraits a scribe named Eadwine, living in Canterbury around 1150, wrote around a picture of himself the following message: "I am the prince of writers, neither my fame nor my praise will die quickly. . . . Fame proclaims you in your writing for ever." I like Eadwine's *chutzpah* and the tradition it initiates. His style of self-telling turns up repeatedly throughout the next eight centuries right up until the present day. It's a lyric of oneself that possesses the hypnotic pleasures of a mantra.

I don't know if it's just me but I've noticed an unusually large number of autobiographies, memoirs and journals on the book stands over the last few years. It's as if everyone were suddenly compelled to jump on the I-train as it negotiates the perilous landscape of self-revelation. It's hard to say what has provoked this flurry of self-telling: perhaps a combination of society's interest in the cult of personality, an uncertainty about knowing anything outside of ourselves, a flirtation with narcissism and other more acceptable forms of self-obsession. "I dote on myself, there

is that lot of me and all so luscious" is the way Walt Whitman, America's most expansive egotist, sings the song of himself. His "barbaric yawp" was a calculated advertisement for the persona he created and then fell in love with. And you can't blame him; there is something gorgeous about the breadth of his imagination, something irresistible about his inclusiveness. Whitman is this continent's prototypical narcissist, travelling across North America, reviewing his own book (favourably, it goes without saying), becoming poet *and* critic, artist *and* audience all rolled into one complex human weave. "The puzzle of puzzles," he writes in the *Song of Myself*, "and that we call being."

We do indeed and what remains most puzzling are the numerous ways artists have devised to tell their audiences things about themselves. While Walt was cock of the open walk, crowing his androgynous lungs out, Emily Dickinson, his fellow sojourner in the 19th century, took her poetic breathing for a considerably more restrained walk. At first glance it seemed a constitutional on the discreet side, but on closer looking there was something positively voluptuous about the intensity of her withholding, as if life and poetry were one long act of foreplay between Miss Emily and her mysterious gentleman caller. It should be clear enough that Dickinson's unorthodox suitor was her own imagination. No spinster, Emily, she was ravaged by her own muse, a wolf in sheepish clothing. It makes sense that she kept her poems in packets, like love letters. Whitman mass-produced his in edition after edition of the *Leaves of Grass*, the long poem that was his life.

EDITORIAL

It remains one of the curiosities of American poetry that two of its seminal figures embraced attitudes and experienced personal circumstances that made them mirror opposites: male and female; Brooklynite and New Englander; epic and lyric poet; democrat and blueblood; primeval and rarefied. It's in this oppositional sense that they embody what Al Purdy happily calls "the eternal 19th century of the mind."

And yet somehow Dickinson tells us more about herself through her smouldering, epigrammatic poems than Whitman ever revealed in his indiscriminate wanderlusting. Dickinson tells it all, it's just that, to use her own delicious indirection, she "tells it slant."

There are subtle ways, then, to tell our selves into time and place. T.S. Eliot regarded art as an escape from personality; he was altogether too fastidious to engage willingly in what he regarded as the messy process of self-exposure. He felt that the self was too trivial to write about, that any personal complaints he might have were best objectified in some character or circumstance in his poetry. As a result, Eliot was allusive and wanted to be elusive to boot. Even so, he couldn't play Houdini to our encircling, inquisitive minds.

Today we read his poetry as a massive, impersonal diary stitched together out of fragments from the civilized and the uncivilized worlds. It's clear that when the American painter Jasper Johns says, "I don't want my work to be an exposure of my feelings," he has bought stock in the company of objectivity that Eliot established in the hey-day of Modernism.

At the other end of the spectrum of revelation from Eliot is someone like Klaus Kinski, the Polish actor whose portraits of uncontrollable outsiders—from Aquirre to Nosferatu—are pale shadows compared to the role he casts for himself in his own life. Kinski's autobiography, *All I Need Is Love*, is an excessive romp that has all the discretion of a bawdy joke in a brothel. Its revelations of incest, lust and contempt are compulsive and it ranks as the singularly most damaging autobiography I've read in years. Whether he wanted to or not, Kinski wrote a portrait of the actor as an aging monster. It belongs in a category of apocalyptic autobiography occupied by the confessions of Céline, Genet and William Burroughs.

There is always the possibility that you can write a memoir so unblinkingly honest that the reader will come to despise the

character you've documented. Ingmar Bergman's *The Magic Lantern* is so uncompromising in its psychic self-analysis that it repels us. It ends up being an essay in self-loathing, a fascinating summary of the filmmaker's discontent.

Bergman's dilemma is comparable to the problem visual artists face when they paint self-portraits: the focus and concentration necessary to look carefully enough at yourself in the mirror to get a likeness often produces an image more severe than the subject intended, or than would be apparent in quicker, less absorbing forms of description, including photography. In his book Bergman looks so hard at his life that the writing seems ungenerous, pinched. It's writing that describes—and causes—abdominal pain.

There is a kind of lust out there for telling the truth—or some variation of that elusive condition. (Whenever I contemplate the truth I'm reminded of the title of Terry Heath's first book—*The Truth and Other Stories*—and take the phrase following the conjunction as a cautionary tale.) Part of its origin is a recognition that brief, tangential and otherwise insignificant encounters with the rich and the famous are marketable events. Groupies, hangers-on, celebs-by-association are all anxious to reveal the most intimate details of their psycho-sexual lives, sometimes with the added encouragement of an allegiance to a good cause—whether abused children, AIDS or famine. We are faced with the ironic situation of people lining up on the side of the angels to document some fairly devilish tales.

While there are writers who are prepared to play Salome to their own John the Baptist, offering their heads to readers on a platter, not everyone is prepared to anatomize themselves in print. Memoirs and autobiographies, the genres of self-speaking, are complicated forms with no less complicated motivations. One of their functions is as an apologia for a life badly lived, an attempt to justify behaviour by way of explanation. The logic is simple enough; if I lay out the facts and conditions of my life, then the reasons for my behaviour will be clear and, so goes hope, I can then be forgiven. And depending on the charm, intelligence and style of the penitent, that may actually happen. Who can hold Dirk Bogarde responsible for anything after he takes us across his own personal River Styx? But Bogarde's elegantly written memoirs raise one of the central problems in the combined art of self-telling

and science of truth-finding that makes up the act of contemporary reading: can you trust the source? How can we believe the writer? Who can corroborate their version of their life story? If you're to trust the teller and not the tale, then as a reader you can find yourself in trouble, because with autobiography and memoir the teller and the tale are one and the same person.

Another admonition comes to mind. Gertrude Stein, in commenting on the operations of the epistolary life, said that "the letter writer writes what the hearer wants to hear." It's an astute observation, as anyone knows who has recounted the same incident in a letter to a lover, a business partner or a mother. Each correspondent is likely to get a wildly different account because the one written to has as much to say as the one doing the writing. A letter—like an autobiography, journal or memoir—is always a dialogue. The speaker and the spoken to constantly move around. The self and the truth it tells is a chameleon and the artist, as Cindy Sherman has so convincingly demonstrated, is the heroine with at least a thousand faces.

This special issue of *Border Crossings*—our sixth—is full of faces as well. Since it's an issue that reflects on the intersections of self and art, I'm especially pleased to include an interview with Robert Motherwell, one of the most extraordinary painters of his generation. It was almost ten years ago that I first went to Greenwich, Connecticut to ask my fumbling questions of a man whose paintings—most dramatically *The Elegies to the Spanish Republic*—had moved me to silence, and then, tears. Robert received me graciously in 1980, as he did again this summer. His frankness, his willingness to answer wayward questions and, most of all, the gravity of his feeling for the aliveness of mark-making were (and remain) humbling. Surrounding him in this issue is a constellation of artists, writers, choreographers—Rachel Browne, Jack Butler, Dennis Cooley, Lorna Crozier, Modris Eksteins, Ivan Eyre, Bruce Ferguson, Eric Fischl, Richard Henriquez and Meeka Walsh—who each bring to these pages a recognition of the various complexities of their being, together with an awareness of their maskings and unmaskings, their excesses and their felicities. Each brings a special presence, a sense of self that moves, inexorably, towards some fuller version of grace, towards what Whitman so neatly called "the knit of identity." ♦



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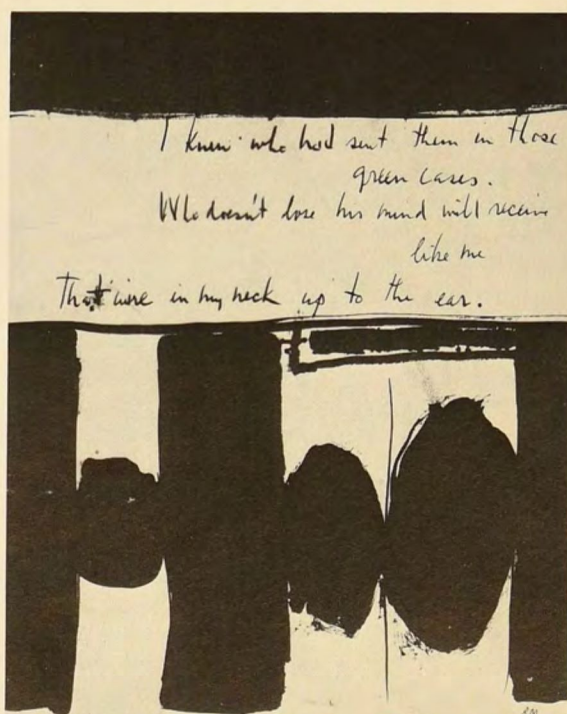
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AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT MOTHERWELL
by Robert Enright



ROBERT MOTHERWELL IS the only painter I've ever talked to who understands fully what ravishing means. The word comes out of his mouth with the "r" almost growled, as if his throat had a serrated edge, and then, as his understanding gives over to wonder, it rises to a voluptuous prayer. He also knows what the word looks like and is able to make that look in his art. The dazzling beauty of *The Red and Black* series, or the stately presence of the *Night Music Opus*—both bodies of work Motherwell has completed in the last two years—give the viewer important insights into the state of ravishment. Any contemplation of his work involves being taken over, led

by the eye to an encounter with our most elegant and most brutal selves. In this sense he is Spanish by adoption and certainly so by artistic temperament.

He also understands the multiple dimensions of black, a pigment that in his hands seems less an absence of colour than the presence of *all* colours. "It's possible," says Motherwell, "to think of black not as simply the darkest tone but as a colour as vivid and luscious in its way as lemon yellow or magenta or ultramarine blue or alizarin crimson." And then he goes on to describe black by way of an analogy which underlines the workings of his eclectic imagination.

"If you thought of the picture as being a string quartet, then in a sense the black is the cello. And in most of my work, the cello is necessary."

The composition of Motherwell's life is well known: he was educated in philosophy and art, studying at Stanford, Harvard and then at Columbia under the legendary art historian Meyer Schapiro, who encouraged him to make art rather than study it. He arrived in New York in the early '40s and became associated with a number of leading European artists in exile, including Fernand Léger, André Breton, Piet Mondrian and Max Ernst. Motherwell immersed himself in the culture of modernism, becoming its most devoted acolyte and its most articulate spokesman. He had his first one-man exhibition at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery in 1944 and the same year the Museum of Modern Art purchased an early painting called *Pancho Villa: Dead or Alive*.

He was the youngest member of the Abstract Expressionists, a myriad group of artists including Mark Rothko, Franz Kline, David Smith, Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning, which was to steal the distant thunder of pre-eminence from French art and to make the New York School the most influential group of artists in the 20th century. But Motherwell's sense of modern art was discrete and not tribal. "What modern art is, both its greatness and its limitations, is an art of individuals," says Motherwell. "A modern individual is faced with inventing a whole culture by himself and, in some ways, it is impossible."

This attention to his self-limitations is characteristic—"what I would like to emphasize is that I don't know how to paint," is how he sums up his ability—a judgement that seems perverse in the face of his extraordinary achievement. His *Elegies for the Spanish Republic*, some 200 paintings and drawings in all, constitute the most significant body of work in the history of American art. The *Elegies* are monumental, elegant and chthonic at the same time, contemporary paintings that inexplicably have about them a patina of timeless dread. Motherwell has also turned his exquisite sensibility to making automatic drawings, collages and prints which are unequalled by any artist of his generation.

His collages are his most personal works to the extent that they come out of fragments of earlier work. "Collage is my lucky medium," says Motherwell before he goes

on to insinuate an element of the primitive. "One behaves like a raider in collage." He is by this measure a raider of the lost art: the echoes in his work connect less to the pastoral lawns of Connecticut where he actually resides than to the caves of Altamira where his imagination lives. Here is the essence of Motherwell's modernism: he speaks a language of refined violence and he is a masterful linguist.

Motherwell's work is compelling because he possesses the rare gift of sensate intelligence. He is a thinking man's painter who would no doubt agree with Stanley Kunitz, his friend and fellow Provincetowner, that "a tear is an intellectual thing." Kunitz is, of course, borrowing his epigraph from that wily innocent, William Blake. But for Motherwell the reverse is equally tempting. "Or," and here I'm duplicating his favourite rhetorical device, "let me put it another way." An idea, for Motherwell, is a visceral thing; it has a body and a pulse. Everywhere in his work I catch intimations of what Baudelaire called "the universal ecstasy of things"; it is his openness to the realm of sensation, to what the artist has elsewhere called "the skin of the world." "The picture is finished," he says, talking like a satiated lover, "when the original emotion has exhausted itself."

The emotion might be over but the work that comes out of it isn't. The consistently high standard of what Motherwell achieves, on blank canvas or page and out of the litter of fragments that serves as the raw material for his collages, is astonishing. In his 75th year to heaven Motherwell is again predisposed to change direction. He continues to produce art that pulls inexorably, and in an almost primal way, to that secular netherworld, "the foul rag and bone shop of the heart" that Yeats so ravishingly describes as the place "where all the ladders start."

The following interview was conducted in Provincetown, Massachusetts, in Motherwell's summer home. It was a three-hour-long conversation punctuated by phone calls and by a tour bus which intermittently drove by on Commercial Street. Even inside the house you could hear the bus guide saying, "On the left is the house of Robert Motherwell, the internationally respected Abstract Expressionist." It was an unambiguous reminder that Motherwell is not only "a walking witness to history" as he describes himself, but an integral part of the history to which he so eloquently draws our attention.



previous page: *Elegy to the Spanish Republic No. 1*, 1948, India ink on paper, 10 1/4" x 8 1/2" (27.3 x 21.8 cm), Collection the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of the Artist.
above: *Elegy to the Spanish Republic No. 34*, 1953-54, oil on canvas, 80



er, 10 1/4" x 8 1/2" (27.3 x 21.8 cm), Collection the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of the Artist.
"x 100" (203.2 x 254 cm), Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, Gift of Seymour H. Knox, 1957.



BC: I'm curious about what provoked your initial interest in art.

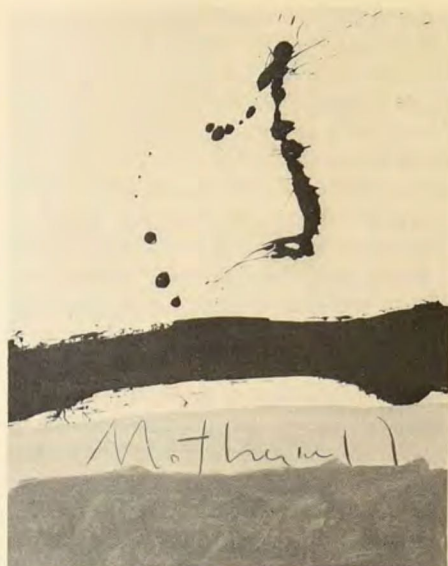
RM: It was always there. When we moved from Aberdeen, Washington where I was born to Seattle, I was put into kindergarten. I'm physically very awkward and tone-deaf. I can't recognize a tune although I've listened to classical music all my life. I can, for example, tell who's conducting but I can't recognize the tune. In kindergarten there was much dancing and I couldn't dance because I couldn't hear the beat of the music. There was singing and I couldn't do the singing, either, and when I was four or five some lovely teacher said to me, "Bobby, you seem to like painting and colouring books. When the others are singing and dancing, would you rather paint?" I said, "Would I!" and I started painting. Also, the Pacific Coast of Washington is very rainy and one of the rituals in this kindergarten was to depict on a blackboard the sun with orange chalk, or blue rain with grey clouds in front, and these abstract symbols were more real to me than if they had been realistic.

BC: Do you mean at four years old you had a recognition of the language and shape of Modernism?

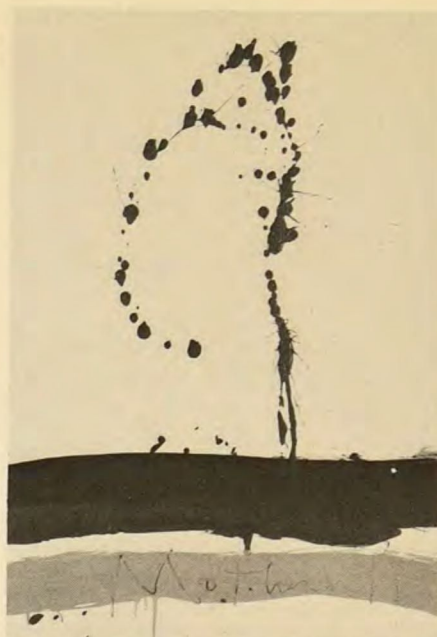
RM: Absolutely. Shortly after we moved to southern California into a housing project, I met some kids two or three houses away who had Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy dolls. I remember one of my first pitched battles with my parents—by this time I was six—was because I wanted to have them. Again, Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy were much more real to me than girls' dolls—largely from Germany—which were porcelain and had eyes that moved. They repelled me while I absolutely went for the abstraction of the Raggedy Ann things.

We had been living in San Francisco then and with the fog and the dampness I became violently asthmatic, and was sent to a prep school in central California where it was very dry. Actually, it was very like Provence or Catalonia. From there I went to Stanford University. I was a very good tennis player when I left prep school and one day after a game the fellow I had been playing with said in a most casual way, "I'm going to a cocktail party, would you

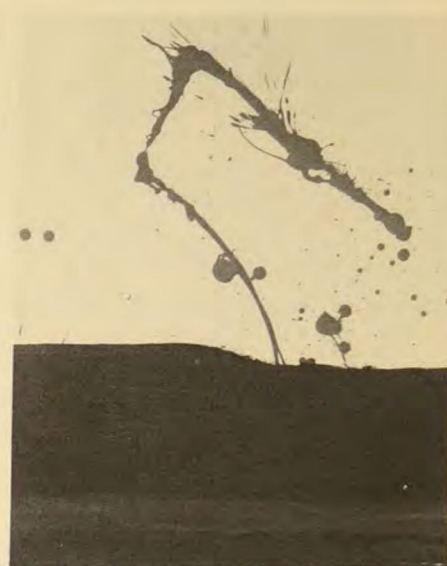
The Homely Protestant, 1948,
oil on composition board, 96" x 48 1/4" (76.2 x 61 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Gift of the Artist, 1987.



Beside the Sea No. 2, 1962, oil on rag paper, 29" x 23" (73.7 x 58.4 cm), Private Collection.



Beside the Sea No. 5, 1962, oil on rag paper, 29" x 23" (73.7 x 58.4 cm), Collection the Artist.



Beside the Sea No. 13, 1962, oil on rag paper, 29" x 23" (73.7 x 58.4 cm), Private Collection.

like to come?" And I said, "Oh, I don't think so." I've never been very sociable and parties mostly either bore me or torment me. "I've heard you're interested in pictures," he said. "Well, these people have some pictures," I said. "In that case, I'll come," because in San Francisco in those days there were no pictures at all. Behold, it turned out to be the Michael Stein collection. I saw Matisse's and they went through me like an arrow and from that moment I knew exactly what I wanted to do.

BC: Did you get much encouragement at home to move towards art?

RM: My father was a very prominent banker and when I graduated from Stanford he said to me, "Is it going to be law or business administration?" My heart froze because I'd never thought of the future. When I was in prep school there was a huge study hall in which we were forced to work for two hours every afternoon. I could literally do the work in five minutes, but I was not allowed to leave. The library there was a non-library—the school was very new, having started in 1928 at the peak of the stock market. Then in '29, with the crash, it was suddenly in a very precarious position and couldn't buy books. It couldn't do anything. In those days there used to be little pocket books published in Rome: the great masters, the Sistine Chapel, Rubens, Rembrandt. They were a dollar a copy and I would save up and when I had a dollar I would buy one and

then simply copy it from beginning to end. But always my own temperament would come through. I spent three years drawing all the time. And when I ran out of my little books, one of the few books the library had was the latest edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. I looked up art and there were more Rubenses and Michelangelos. And at the end it said, "See Modern Art, Art Modern." So I went and got the volume and pulled it out, and there was a colour plate of a late Cézanne and it went through me like an arrow. I should also say that in the '20s—when it was almost unheard of—my mother was a collector of French Provincial furniture. She used to take me to auctions before I was 14 and there was a moment where I could tell what region and within 15 years the date of any piece of French Provincial furniture. It was a tremendous training for my eye because, in one sense, the subject was always the same—a chair or an armchair—but in another sense it taught me to look for discriminating differences.

BC: You seem to have had from the beginning an almost epiphanic relationship to art. You talk about seeing first a watercolour by Cézanne, then the paintings in the Stein collection and about the electrifying effect they had on you. Has your interest in art always been generated out of other art, rather than out of life?

RM: Well, yes and no. All culture comes from other artists. But equally important is to get at core experiences by stripping

away all visual influences from everyday life. In the *Times* today there's an article about brain research. They're beginning to think that the brain doesn't work quite the way they thought it did. In mammals there is an emotional response before there's a signifying response, and that's why there are certain psychoses because the emotion goes into action before rationality does. In that sense I've always bet on the "before reflection" response.

BC: In the making of art too, not just in reflecting on its making?

RM: When I paint, I don't paint in front of the canvas all the time. I walk around it or stare at the ceiling or whatever. Most often the inspired elements come when I'm doing something else and out of my peripheral vision I suddenly see something, pick up a brush and do what I see.

BC: One of the things that fascinates me about your work is the constant dialogue between gesture and structure. Has that been an informing notion for you, finding some kind of balance? How do you know when you've got it?

RM: I don't. Once every ten days I have 15 minutes of clarity and can make a judgement, and otherwise I'm simply making marks or not making marks. My ultimate heroes are Zen masters on one side and Piero della Francesca on the other. Obviously Zen calligraphy is the acme of inspired gesture and it's almost instantaneous. A Zen masterpiece takes anywhere from five minutes to 40 minutes to

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compose and it's wrecked if one brush stroke is wrong. But Piero is the opposite; he's so systematic. At the end of his life he gave up painting altogether for writing treatises and perspectives on mathematics. And yet in Piero and in Zen, there's equally something mysterious.

BC: *Have you consciously tried to orchestrate a dialogue along the gesture/structure spectrum or is it something that just happens? I guess I'm trying to get inside the creative process itself.*

RM: Well, everybody tries but nobody succeeds, including artists. But maybe because I was trained as a professional philosopher I've guarded too much against rationality. Nevertheless, there's a part of rationality that is built into my eye. I think people investigating creativity look too much for a one-to-one correlation and it's not that at all, any more than a physicist's character is involved in the problem of physics. But that's too extreme. The medium is both a collaborator and an enemy, and the ultimate judge. And it's not about you in the sense that you felt inspired that day or felt melancholy that day or whatever. An artist is in one sense the authority on his work and in another sense he's the one who least knows what he's doing and what its general effect is.

BC: *I wanted to ask you about the whole notion of locale. Have there been highly significant places for you in the making of art? I would guess we're sitting in one now.*

RM: Well, except for the light, Provincetown has nothing to do with the way I paint. This place is on a meridian with Barcelona, with the Côte d'Azur and Rome so I would say maybe latitude has something to do with it. But all of that was ingrained in me in California which was a kind of arid, sunlit landscape.

BC: *I'm thinking of the splash works which you called the Beside the Sea series. They clearly came out of your perception of what happens in this place.*

RM: Actually, those splash drawings came when I was trying to buy this house. It was the summer that Helen Frankenthaler and I were painting in Day's Lumberyard. The house was unoccupied and sometimes after the day's work I would come and sit on the step and look at the sea, and also look at the building and begin to figure out what I would do with it. On several occasions on a very windy, stormy day the waves would pound at high tide and spray

up. Normally, I never look at landscape in the sense of thinking how to use it but that did strike me. Maybe I was also thinking of the practical difficulties—it probably would need a bulkhead. Anyway, the story of my trying to paint it is well known. I realized I had to use the same activity as nature and really hit the paper with my full force, like a hammer blow, and when I did that the English and French rag papers would split. Then I discovered five-ply, American rag paper, which like plywood is glued in layers and is so strong that I can't even tear it.

BC: *I hear in the way you approach the making of art a kind of sensate intelligence or, to come at it another way, it seems to me that you have always engaged in passionate thinking. It's that you care desperately for the physical act of painting and you also care for the process that allows you to think through the painting. You respond with the gut and the brain.*

RM: Above all, it's physical and then it's sensuous. When I talk about painting, I mean literally breast strokes on the surface with brushes, and from that standpoint illusionism or representation is totally irrelevant. The great lesson I learned from my prep-school copying of the old masters was that at a certain moment one didn't look at a model and then evolve Baroque-ness, for example. It was the opposite. Painters were schooled in Baroque drawing and applied it to the model. I realized how simple-minded it was for students to sit in front of a jug or a plate and copy it and try to evolve some kind of a style. You start with style, you don't end with it.

BC: *You've talked about your painting being of two kinds: the kind where you get down on your knees like an animal and enter the cave of painting, and about painting in what you call your "street clothes." Do they actually happen at separate times?*

RM: At separate times and in separate moods. I'm something of a manic depressive and in my manic "phase" everything pours out. In my depressed phases, sometimes it will take a month for me to make three or four marks.

BC: *I want to talk a bit about your enigmatic titles. What was the source of the Plato's Cave painting?*

RM: The origin of that title comes from several things. As you know, they're very dark, shadowy pictures and there is something womb-like or cave-like about them.

It so happens that at the time I was painting them I was also reading a novel by Saul Bellow, who is exactly my age, about a poet named Delmore Schwartz who died disastrously, at exactly my age as well. He wrote a poem called "In Plato's Cave." And the picture came out of nowhere. I was trying something technical that I'd never tried before and literally cradled the picture—it was a very fluid picture—on the floor, rocking it back and forth, hoping it would dry before it would drip too much. And the first one caught exactly at the magical moment so it was a totally unpredicted picture. I always name my pictures afterward, trying to give them a title that may be a lead into the kind of universe that they belong to. But certainly never as the Surrealists often did in giving titles that lead you in the opposite direction.

When one's a so-called abstract painter, then one can't say it's a still life or give it a mythological title. The real secret is to have a title that is a metaphor, that is not literal but is some indication of the realm or feeling that the picture belongs to. The rule of the game is to give a title that is not misleading. I remember being in the Museum of Modern Art one day with André Breton and there was an Yves Tanguy called *Mama, Where's Papa?* or vice versa. I remarked what a stupid title it was and Breton looked at me and said, "I gave it." I also remember Matta telling me once that the Surrealists were looking at a show of Miró's at Pierre Matisse's Gallery. They were looking at some picture and trying to give it a title and they couldn't come to any conclusion. Breton's daughter, who was six or seven, was tagging along and one of them turned to her and said, "What do you think this picture's about?" And she said, "Oh, it's easy, it's the way it is when it's sunny inside when it's raining outside," or something to that effect. She was so on the beam about the general character of Miró's simple, direct perception. Something that's not generally known is that the Surrealists in New York in the early 1940s were still very dubious about Miró.

BC: *Was he too decorative? Why would the Surrealists initially have responded unfavorably to him?*

RM: Most of them had no painterly sense but had a literary sense, really. And Miró is a radical painter, much more radical than Matisse or Picasso were in the beginning. Cubism still carries a lot of tradition too, but Miró is a bolt out of the blue. Now, of course, we're very used to him.

BC: Let me ask you about the first of your Elegy images. Did you have any idea at the time that it would have the kind of visual resonance, both personally and culturally, that it's turned out to have had?

RM: No.

BC: Where did it come from?

RM: Harold Rosenberg and I were working on publishing in a magazine, of which only one issue ever appeared because one of the two publishers was killed in a trans-Atlantic plane crash. I was to illustrate a very savage poem called "The Bird for Every Bird." I was making an automatic drawing and I wanted it to carry the same violence as Rosenberg's poem, and I was also thinking in terms of black and white because the magazine couldn't afford to print in colour. I did the drawing and it was printed and then I forgot all about it. I was living in East Hampton, Long Island when I did the drawing and a couple of years later I moved to New York. I'm the sort of person who, when I move, takes two years to unpack. After a couple of years I pulled out a little package and here was the original drawing for the Rosenberg poem. At first glance I realized that, clumsy as it was, there was something remarkable about it, and I realized too that it was not intimate. It was a monumental thing from conception.

BC: Even in small scale?

RM: Yes. One of the few gifts I have is a sense of scale. I can make a small thing that is meant to be big, or a big thing that could be smaller. So I made a second one—twice as big—and then I made a much larger one and it was more and more right. And I realized that my instinct was correct. And at a certain moment the problem became—what is it? I thought to myself, what public things do I really care about? You see, to western intellectuals and artists the Spanish Civil War had a universal quality of empathy, sympathy and frustration with a tragic undertone. I was exactly 21 in 1936 when the Spanish Civil War began, living in California, a place as remote from Europe as North America can be. And I think it was the first time it had ever occurred to me that the ideas of democracy and progress and a better life for western civilization could be stopped absolutely dead. And then, as the war developed and one saw the Germans and the Italians trying out new military techniques, it also became very clear to us



A Rose for James Joyce, 1988, acrylic on canvas, 78" x 38" (198.1 x 96.5 cm), Collection the Artist.

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Robert Motherwell at the Metropolitan Museum. Photograph by Renate Ponsold.

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that this was the rehearsal for the Second World War. I'm sure there've been other situations, but I really can't think of another period where there was a three-year prelude to a World War that we thought would be as ghastly as the First World War, which in many ways broke the back of western civilization and from which I think continental Europe never recovered.

BC: *What intrigues me is that you've continually been involved in extending the unique formal language of the Elegies.*

RM: After I discovered the image I realized it was the most important image that I had ever discovered, and I think maybe even half suspected (though one never likes to think that as a young man), maybe the most important one I ever would. It had an extra aesthetic quality. I know from personal experience that there are many people who are moved by those *Elegies to the Spanish Republic* who are indifferent to modern art in general and who often actively dislike abstract art in particular. To this day I don't know why, which is one of the reasons I can still paint them. I'm still trying to find out why, and sometimes make bad ones because I don't understand it. But they do have a special significance in relation to my own body of work. They're my private Stonehenges, if you want to put it that way. A lot of my work is very personal, very private; a lot of it is almost a diary, but these were more public, more monumental, something outside of myself. In naming them I tried to generalize and externalize my experience and make it more public, out of one of the deepest concerns of my life up to then, which was the defeat of the Spanish Republic. So the *Elegy* series is tragic: it is filled with death and it is also filled with sexuality. In those days I used to think that those were the two major themes, not only of painting but of life itself, and I still do to some extent. Lots of critics describe the *Elegies* in sexual terms but the first complete one was called *At Five in the Afternoon*, after Federico Garcia Lorca's "Lament for the Bullfighter." Also there was

something Spanish about them: the blackness, the death quality, the directness of the paint.

BC: *Yours is a career that spans a considerable number of decades now and I was interested to hear you say that last year was the most productive you've had in that long career. What compels you to make art?*

RM: It's the only thing that interests me. In the '20s the Surrealists had a mock contest about what led one to create and they gave the prize to Knut Hamsun who replied that he created out of boredom. To put it in more positive terms, painting interests me more than anything else does. I think one of the reasons my wife, Renate Ponsold, is so marvellous is that she's so creative herself and I don't mean only as a photographer. She's creative in everything and understands perfectly that my whole psyche is dependent upon how my work is going. So although I passionately love her, at times I am oblivious to her existence and she regards it as perfectly normal. She divides the world into creative people and diplomats, has total contempt for diplomats and is absorbed by creative people of whatever medium.

BC: *You've never been accused by anybody of being a diplomat, have you?*

RM: Maybe not. A critic who knows my work and knows me very well remarked one day, "You know, everybody's always talking about your culture and that you were reared as a gentleman. They don't seem to see that underneath is a real Nordic barbarian." And there is. Maybe painting is a way that barbarism can come out. What I mean is there's a streak of Celtic caveman in me that would just as soon have Lascaux as the Sistine Chapel. And I regard them the same way—as whole matrices.

BC: *One of the things that has fascinated me in your work is the central place that James Joyce has occupied. What is it in his work that you respond to so completely?*

RM: Well, it's the texture of his writing. It's also that even though it's Thomistic,

he had a first-rate philosophical mind, the operation of which he regarded as natural as going to a whorehouse. And of course my basic creative principle is what the Surrealists call psychic automatism, which in everyday lingo is doodling of one kind or another. I can give 30 psychoanalytic arguments for the validity of it and Joyce, instead of beginning automatically, ends that way. He starts with a straight narrative and slowly whittles at it and transforms it. But I suppose it's the sheer beauty of the surface. I agree with Kierkegaard that art *qua* art is the purely sensed, what I call the skin of the world. Another thing that I identify with in Joyce is belonging to something and yet being in permanent exile. I understand perfectly how he could leave Ireland while writing the greatest Irish epic. Of course, it's also true that he took his Nora with him. We could say that he took Ireland right with him. If you read her letters, they're Joycean—without punctuation, just straight out.

BC: *T.S. Eliot said that art was an escape from personality. It was about some larger project, some form of transcendence. He clearly was trying to get away from self-indulgence, but his comments also set the tone for a lot of great Modernist literature. Is that a notion that you would subscribe to as well?*

RM: The only way one can describe these things is negatively. Sensibility, sensitivity, subtlety—many of the most valuable human feelings—are expressed in furniture or in automobiles or in walking habits. And from that standpoint most people's lives are essentially gross and I simply don't feel at home with them. At the same time I'm not at all an aesthete, in the sense of an interior decorator or something of that sort. Everybody thinks I've been influenced by Baudelaire's Theory of Correspondences but that's simply a way of making legitimate my perception that everything "speaks." Chairs speak, sidewalks speak, dresses speak, and either one is very sensitive to those things—on many levels and to many degrees—or one is not. And yet a world in which there were not objects that expressed genuine sensibility would

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Robert Motherwell's Greenwich studio with *Primal Image*, 1988.

be almost like the animal world. You strip away the aesthetic and what is there left but the survival of the species? I suppose the only aesthetic experience that is fairly universal is sexuality.

BC: *It's hard to sustain the ecstatic. One of the things that I see in the best art is the maintenance of some kind of balance, the search for something solid, that seems to hold.*

RM: But one could say exactly the same thing about sexuality.

BC: *That it's just transitory . . .*

RM: But at the same time it will come again.

BC: *What I'm saying is that the natural impulse for a poet is to have the greatest*

lovemaking he's ever had and then immediately get up and write a poem about it because the experience has somehow got to be saved from this fleeting thing called time.

RM: But it's not a poem about it, it's *itself* and in that sense the subject matter is not the issue. It's the domain of feeling that also brings in lots of knowledge and perception. I once wrote a speech for a psychoanalytic association, saying that a work of art is the only thing that is as subtle, complicated and meaningful as a human being himself. And it's in that sense that all other human activities are essentially impoverished. When you listen to Mozart or read Joyce you're totally satisfied. Human life in many ways is an endurance contest and if it weren't for those

kinds of things I think it is certain one would get fed up. There's some dogged faith in me that is indestructible. The human expression when it's transcendent is what makes life endurable. It can even be something childish, for example. I remember when my daughters were four and six. I'd come home exhausted from teaching and they used to love me to throw them up in the air and catch them. They came running up and said, "Daddy, throw us up in the air!" And I said, "Oh, I'm too old for all of that." And in unison they said, "That's right, you're old and we're new." And it suddenly occurred to me that if instead of young the word "new" were used in contrast with old, then reality itself would be much more clear.

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BC: You've sometimes been accused, not of being too new, but of being too elegant.

RM: In North America I'm often criticized as being too tasteful. I never am in Europe. It would never occur to a Spaniard that my work represents good taste. To them it's sheer aesthetics, like everything else that they admire.

BC: Has the North American continent some innate suspicion of the whole notion of taste and refinement? Surely we've grown up enough to not let that bother us.

RM: No. American culture is still populist.

I can't fake a picture, really. It either authentically comes out or it's nothing and I just throw it away. So in that sense painting remains an eternal challenge to me. I think that partly keeps me going. But I would think probably in the end most people simply could not take this amount of anxiety over a lifetime. Who would want to live the life of Franz Kafka and become immortal? It's too great a price.

BC: That anxiety never really leaves, does it? Is there doubt about every canvas as it's being done?

canvas itself, not there's no such thing. There were even where Rembrandt minor, uninterest-

blank page or canvas n?

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st is to communicate n that's as expressive is a human being. problem, and also

an inexhaustible interest. What could really be more interesting, or in the end more ecstatic, than in those rare moments when you see another person look at something you've made and realize that they got it exactly, that your heart jumped to their heart, with nothing in between? ♦

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is almost intolerable. It's as difficult to make a painting now that satisfies me as it was the first year I painted. I have no virtuoso capacities at all. I was never schooled in technique. In one sense of the word, I work quite primitively, quite directly—as directly as a child. But there's a compensation in not being a virtuoso. I

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INTERVIEW

BC: You've sometimes been accused, not of being too new, but of being too elegant.

RM: In North America I'm often criticized as being too tasteful. I never am in Europe. It would never occur to a Spaniard that my work represents good taste. To them it's sheer aesthetics, like everything else that they admire.

BC: Has the North American continent some innate suspicion of the whole notion of taste and refinement? Surely we've grown up enough to not let that bother us.

RM: No. American culture is still populist. This whole topic is so loaded. It goes back to Rosenberg's essay on "Coonskins and Redcoats." I would say the issue is not at all populism versus elitism. It's about civilization, again a sensibility of subtlety and complexity. On the damn TV everything is resolved by a shoot-out or by a car crash. Well, that's not how human life is resolved. It's sometimes resolved by one person looking at another person and there being a sudden comprehension of what really happened, of what both endured.

BC: There was a period when your work wasn't very popular, wasn't there?

RM: The other day I was talking to my accountant and he said, "Do you remember 1971?" and I said, "Very well, it was when I met Renate." And he said, "I didn't mean that. That was the year I became your accountant and you sold one picture that year."

BC: You're not very comfortable under public scrutiny, are you?

RM: Well, my myth is a counter-myth and it's an unappealing one because, on the surface, it appears a privileged background. But the anxiety of making something living and true never leaves a creative person and is basically so deep, so insatiable that after years of it—and again I say this partly jokingly—I can imagine a person very well saying to himself, "I've had it. I can't face another ten years of wondering if what I'm doing even makes sense, let alone whether it's any good or whatever." The private life of a creative person is almost intolerable. It's as difficult to make a painting now that satisfies me as it was the first year I painted. I have no virtuoso capacities at all. I was never schooled in technique. In one sense of the word, I work quite primitively, quite directly—as directly as a child. But there's a compensation in not being a virtuoso. I

I can't fake a picture, really. It either authentically comes out or it's nothing and I just throw it away. So in that sense painting remains an eternal challenge to me. I think that partly keeps me going. But I would think probably in the end most people simply could not take this amount of anxiety over a lifetime. Who would want to live the life of Franz Kafka and become immortal? It's too great a price.

BC: That anxiety never really leaves, does it? Is there doubt about every canvas as it's being done?

RM: Always, about the canvas itself, not about the audience. There's no such thing as a permanent history. There were even a couple of centuries where Rembrandt was regarded as a very minor, uninteresting painter.

BC: You still look at that blank page or canvas with the same trepidation?

RM: Absolutely. No more than everyday life is easier, or my relations with my wife or with a friend. At times everything goes haywire, at times everything is as smooth as honey. But there's no way I can control any of it, except in social relations. I'm more peaceful than I used to be. But being peaceful is no help in painting, because painting is supposed to be the opposite, an act of passion.

BC: I want to end with a large question. Why does art matter to you?

RM: The importance of it is to make one feel less mad, less alienated and less ill-at-ease in the universe. I mean, if one hears an early divertimento by Mozart, one immediately feels, "Yes, I'm sane, I understand what he's talking about, there's another person in the world whose feelings match mine, I'm not some isolated creature wandering around in a foreign, uncomfortable, frightening, unreal universe."

Basically my interest is to communicate and to have a medium that's as expressive in its complexity as is a human being. It's an inexhaustible problem, and also an inexhaustible interest. What could really be more interesting, or in the end more ecstatic, than in those rare moments when you see another person look at something you've made and realize that they got it exactly, that your heart jumped to their heart, with nothing in between? ♦

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The Embryology of a Journal

I. Introduction

by Robert Enright

JACK BUTLER IS working hard at telling us a lot about the way his imagination functions. The journal entries that you are about to read and look at are an unusual combination of personal revelation and formal distancing. The writing is theoretical but straightforward, becoming more textured and more urgent as it progresses. The drawings are another matter altogether; even though they have come out of objective research their finished form is raw and troubling. They are also exquisite, sometimes breath-taking.

Butler himself suggests this kind of ambiguity is not off the mark when he refers to the "plurality of significations" and the "contradictory meanings" that emerge from these complicated visual entries. The quoted phrases are part of a journal accompanying a drawing called *Dream Image-Instar* which the artist made in 1975. The drawing shows a female, legs drawn up at the knees, contained within a skeletal shape, which in turn is comprised mostly of skull and rib-cage. She is nude but her anatomy is indeterminate; it's either in the process of breaking down or gathering itself together into a new arrangement of muscle and flesh. I'm reminded of a hybrid oyster in a dark shell and when I think about the birth analogy it makes sense; in the mid-'70s Butler was working on a number of large paintings called *The Venus Series* that showed a single female figure concentrated in a huge expanse of canvas, her body open to the viewer's eye and penetrating imagination. As with *Instar* the woman was often held in the lowering embrace of a skull with an unmistakably phallic character. These works were painterly emblems of a special relationship between love and death, or, if I'm sticking to my mythological guns, between Eros and Thanatos.

I mention all these associations because it seems evident that despite the scrupulous medical research and precise

documentation, the effect of these drawings is explosive. They set off a chain reaction of possibilities that I want to say is a scientific reaction rather than a poetic one. But then I catch myself mouthing an old bias: science is reductive, its language is denotative and limiting. What Jack Butler is doing is conducting an intense investigation into the aesthetics of science (or the logic of art), an inquiry governed by transformation and carried by the catalytic language of metaphor.

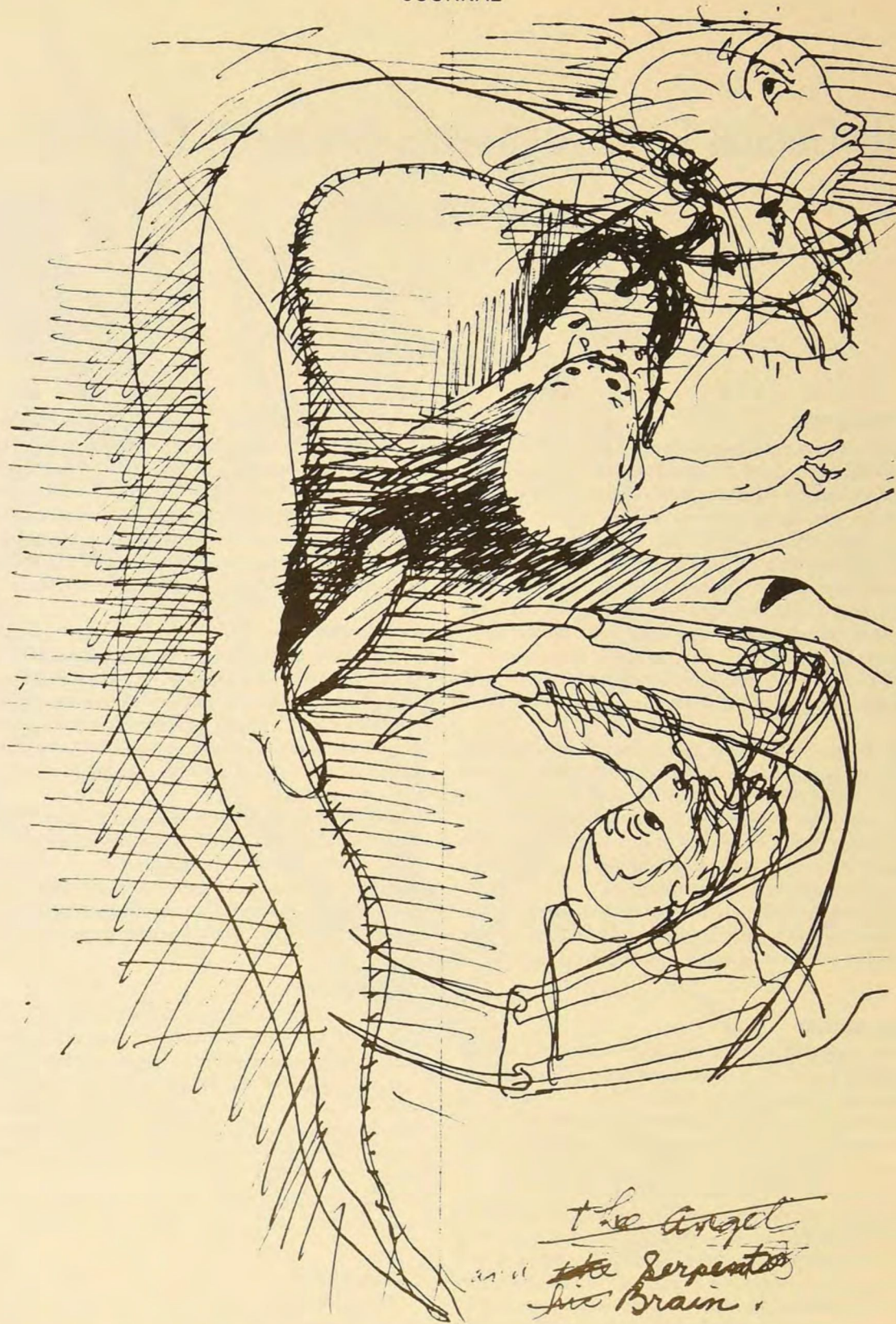
As far back as he can remember Jack Butler has always been interested in the connections between art and science. He was sufficiently accomplished at both to have a choice between two scholarships when he graduated from a Pittsburgh high school: he could go to Temple University to study medicine or to Carnegie Tech to study art. He chose art and—it's since become apparent—science chose him.

Over the last three decades the interactions between these two structures of thinking have been a constant fascination. Out of this twinning have come a touring exhibition in 1983, called the *Art Science Tables*, and a position in the Department of Pediatrics as a medical artist and a research associate. In this latter capacity he worked on heart, lung and genital embryogenesis. It has also attracted him to writers like Michael Polanyi, who taught him that "science is an activity of learning to trust intuition," and Stephen Hawking, whose theoretical model of the universe from *The Brief History of Time* Butler extracted and slightly modified to become an art theory for human experience.

These are not arbitrary conjunctions for Butler; he sees them as "expressions of the combined languages of creativity-generativity which will lead to an understanding of the larger paradigm of change and transformation." That's the theory and it makes itself evident in his journals.

Looking at these drawings and models made from specimens is an exercise in "irrational confusion," to use Butler's term for the effect working on aborted fetuses had on his own sensibility. A drawing of female genitalia resembles a hooded cobra; there are tracings of legs spread every which way; the black kernel of the sex is like a stone in a fresh lichee nut. Quick studies exploring male and female differentiation begin as a surrogate for a helpless, upended frog and end up looking like an abstraction from Robert Motherwell's *Dedalus Sketchbook*; in one drawing a little blue mandrake emerges as an exacting doodle; in another an intricacy of scribbles takes on the sinister character of the scaffolding in a Piranesi prison. This crossing over from the generative to the destructive—or at least what corresponds to these conditions in conventional thinking—is realized in a drawing like *The Serpent Brain*, a visual note that Butler makes to himself to capture the contradictions of a language that is articulate in two directions. The snake is twice-told—as itself and as a phallus; it is also an umbilical cord and the carrier of the infant who is wrapped in a skein of black lines. Its head becomes a human head and its head swallows a human head. In Butler's visual world we are laid to rest inside our fears and we rise up out of them. And just in case all this visual legerdemain is too much, Butler adds a playful and irreverent text from a Doug Melnyk performance piece in which the Serpent Brain is blamed for everything from bedwetting to inappropriate erections.

A final entry: it's worth noting that the original title for this piece, a word which has been crossed out to make way for the blue and deliberate letters that spell out Serpent Brain, is a word that comes from the other side of Butler's startling language. The first title for what ultimately became *The Serpent Brain* was *The Angel*. ♦



HE TOUCHED THE BASE OF HIS SKULL, THE TOP OF HIS NECK. IT'S THE SERPENT BRAIN THAT'S RESPONSIBLE FOR BASIC FUNCTIONS LIKE BREATHING AND THE BEATING OF THE HEART. IT'S THE SERPENT BRAIN, TOO - THE MEDULLA OBLONGATA - THAT'S RESPONSIBLE FOR SO MANY THINGS THAT ARE UNCONNECTED TO OUR CONSCIOUS THOUGHT AND OUR MORE ETHICAL WAY OF DECIDING ON APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR. FOR THE BEDWETTING, AND FOR ALL OF THOSE INAPPROPRIATE ERECTIONS - IT'S THE SERPENT BRAIN THAT WE BLAME FOR ALL OF THESE TROUBLES.

II. Genital Embryogenesis Research Drawings and Models

by Jack Butler

The Scientific Project 1978

The development of normal human embryonic genitalia was the subject of a research project commissioned by the Children's Hospital of the Winnipeg Research Foundation in 1978. The initial purpose for this documentation was to explain normal genital development in the context of a film about "the child with Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia" by Dr. Jeremy Winter.

When I accepted this project, I began by researching the information readily available in embryology texts. I pondered over and tried to distil some information from a curious set of damaged, heat-distorted wax models in the collection of the Department of Anatomy at the University of Manitoba School of Medicine, and also made drawings from preserved specimens in that same collection.

This was the beginning of complex research from which the work proceeded in stages. I built a plaster and plasticine model of a fetal pelvis, about 20 times actual life size. On this large model, specific details were modelled in malleable plasticine and changed 23 times to depict a series of stages in the maturation of the genitalia. Each stage was photographically documented to explain the process of growth and development.

The original working drawings and trial photographs of the clay models have been collected in one bound volume for the Reference Library of the University of Manitoba School of Medicine.

The Journal Project 1989

Now, I am in a position to consider a body of medical research drawings spanning a ten-year period. Over time, my interest in them has deepened; I have come to value them as seminal works which suggest creative possibilities in form and content, beyond their use as scientific evidence. The journal has become, for me, the ideal format for an investigation of these aesthetic extensions. The journal freely permits candour, cross connections of ideas and a tense relationship between images and text. In technical terms, I have discovered in the colour photocopy process a medium that can translate the original medical drawings, which are deteriorating, into a new form of journal. Translation seems the appropriate word here, because the photocopy process does not merely copy, it translates the image via laser-scanning and digital computer into a new graphic medium composed of up to four layers of coloured toner. It resembles a printmaking process as much as a photographic one, and is similarly printed on acid-free fine papers of various weights and textures. The ability to reduce and enlarge images, change their proportions, intercollate images

and texts from different sources and, most important to me, to adjust and select colour changes from the original has enabled me to redirect the intention of my research drawing. Through the strengths and limitations of 8½" x 11" colour photocopy I am exploring the connections between genital embryogenesis and human sexuality in many of its aspects. I am reconsidering sexuality as it has been represented as a theme in my work in past years, in large-scale drawings, paintings and installation pieces.

About Content

Working from tiny (as small as the last joint in my little finger) human embryos, clear as glass, creates an irrational confusion, a rush of emotion for the dead child-that-was-to-be. The perfect, transparent toes and partially formed bones visible inside perfect fingers are more like an unimaginably beautiful human invention, more like art than like life as I know it to be—large in size, fast-moving, hot.

I feel a great urgency to be clear, to draw clearly, accurately, objectively, to keep myself out of the process. I want to record, to show just exactly the configuration of volumes, contours of the genital structures of these perfect little humans. But the excitement of seeing this secret information revealed tugs at the drawing lines and pulls them into expressive speeds and weights.

A Religious View

It may be that art has a biological function. Visual art may function biologically to extend our perceptual/conceptual boundaries in order to permit life (a force similar to gravity, the electromagnetic field and the strong and weak forces in the atom) to work through us as its medium. Thinking this, it seems quite natural to me to try to step back, back, back from the specialists' views of both art and science and search for the wholeness of the thing.

By means of a visual language I organize and enact the search, and report to you on its progress.

Journal Entries

To me, the question of creativity, appropriate to the vocabularies of psychology and philosophy, requires only a slight shift to arrive at the question of generativity. How does the human embryo generate its own brain, its own creativity-making organ? I think we should look to the combined languages of creativity/generativity to understand the larger paradigm for change and transformation. ♦

JOURNAL

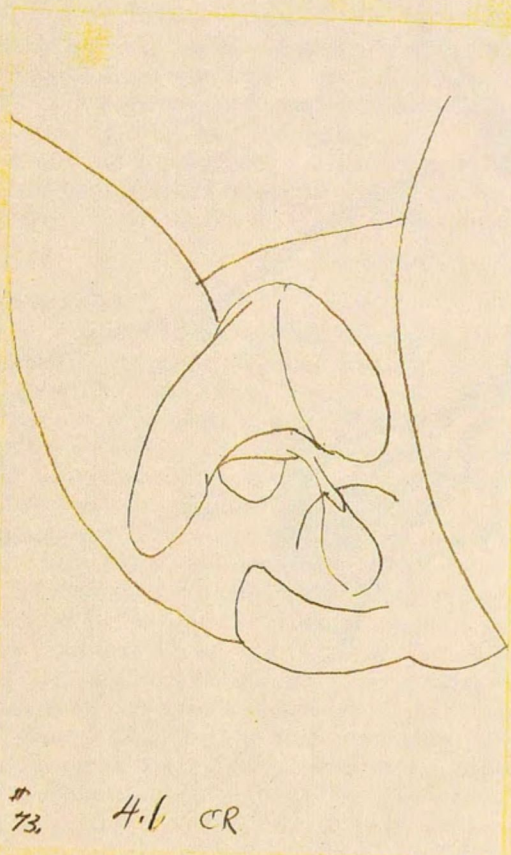
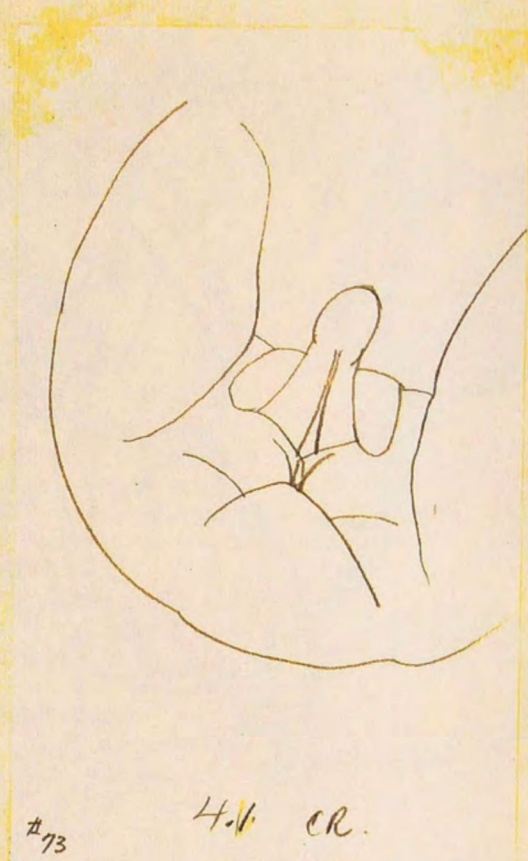
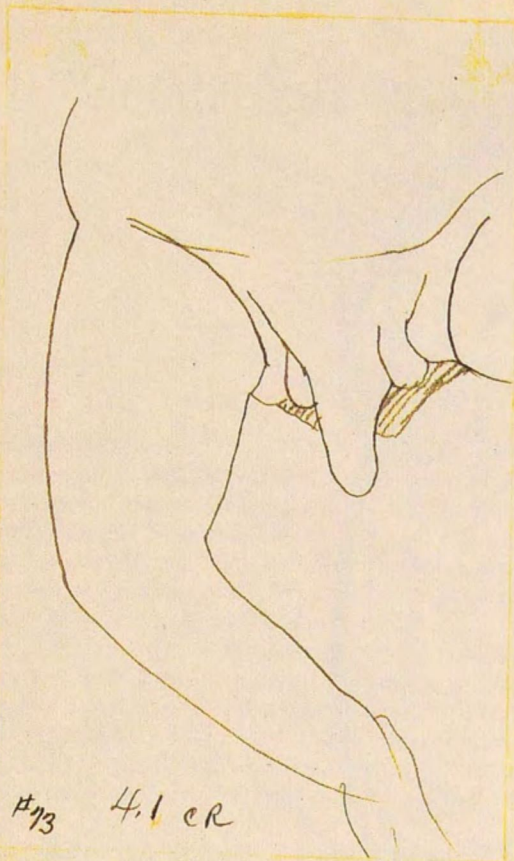
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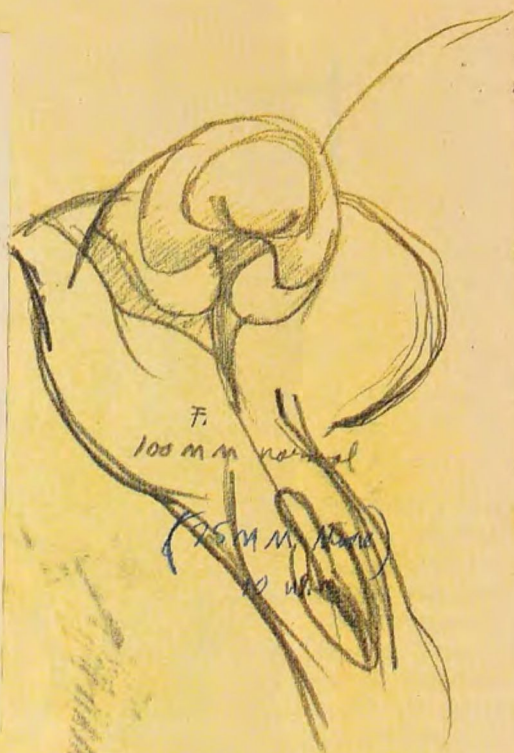
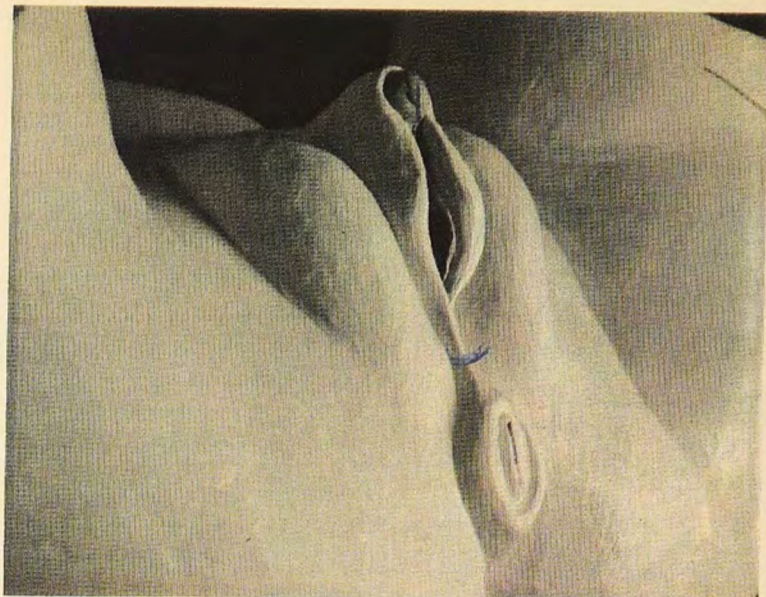


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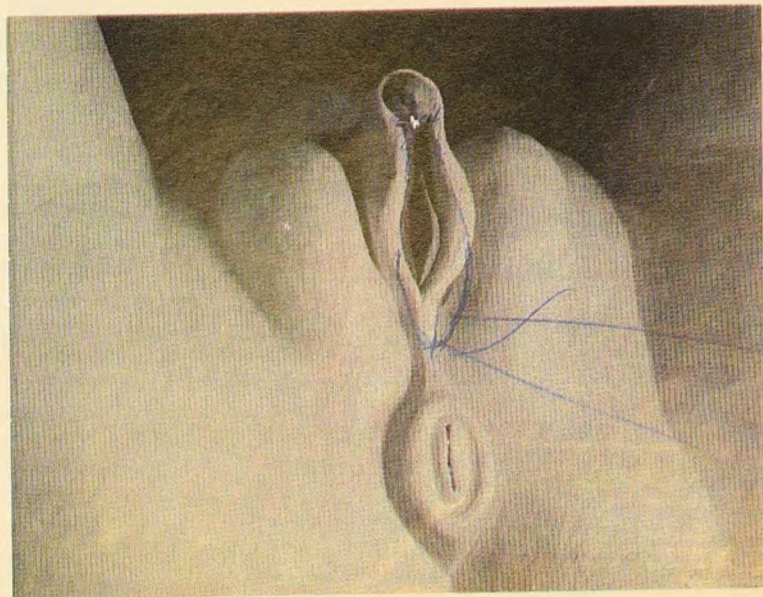
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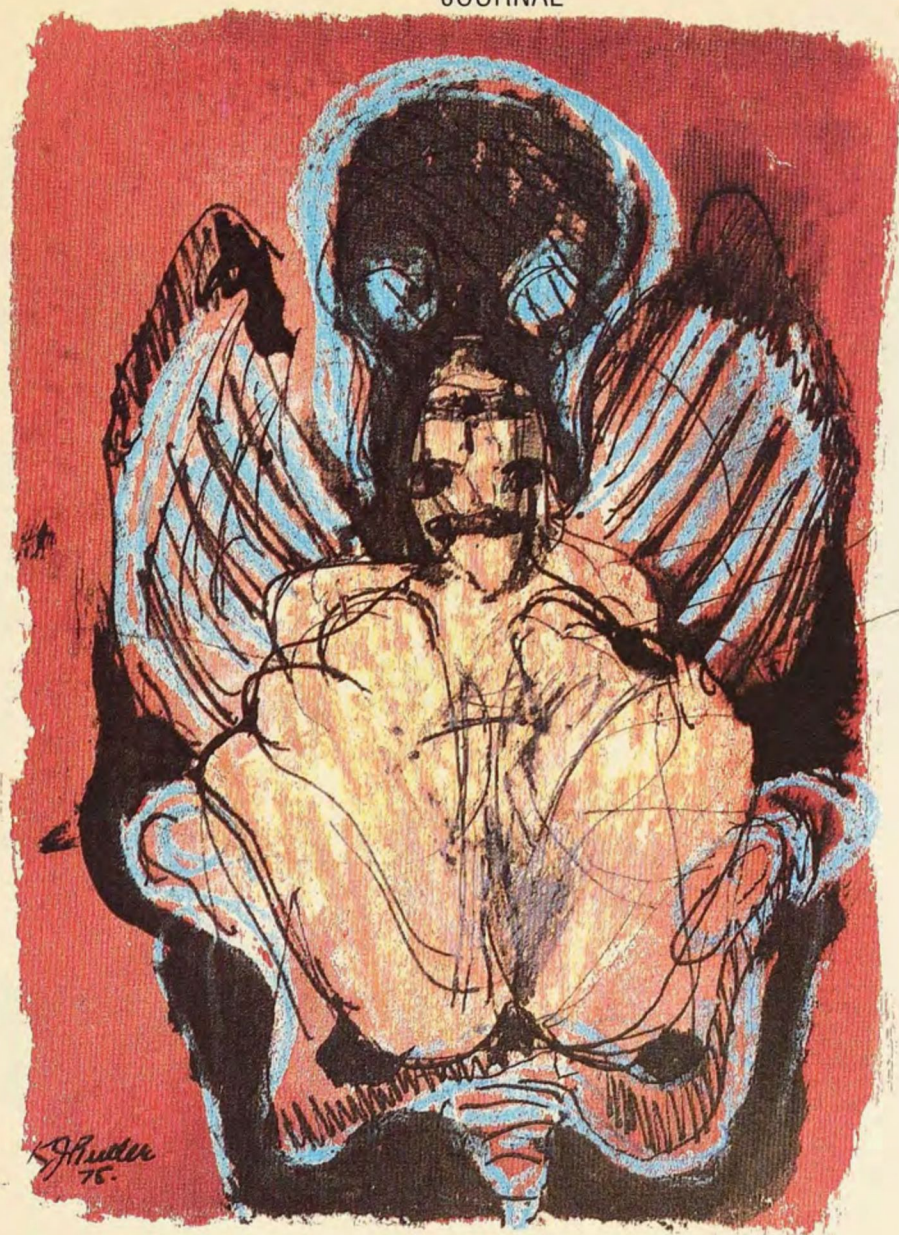




would well represent
60-80?

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for 82 mm.





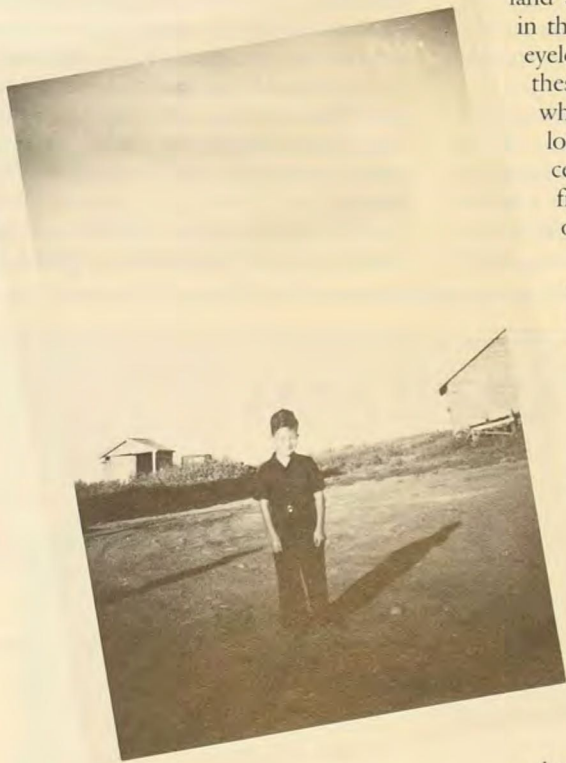
Genital Embryogenesis

♂ = indifferent
♀ = pre differentiation

- plurality of significations
- * equivocation - contradictory meanings
- Compelled to look. Deeply moving
(the death of an unborn infant)
- terrifying - human? - not yet human?
- Sex-
- the shaping plan - the unfolding
of the blueprint
- * instar - draws my mind away
from death to speculate about life

Matching the Word to the World

by Dennis Cooley



Dieppe and as a child I heard with horrified fascination what happened to those young men. Many of them were still in high school when they went to some strange land and died, alone and violently, in that terrible raid. Or came back eyeless and legless. I grew up with these stories and it was only later, when I was adult actually, that the loss really hit me. There is a simple cenotaph in Estevan, and it is filled with their names, columns of them.

Now when I see that list and especially when I think about it, it moves me to tears. Those young kids were going to show the world—the knowledge they would live forever hung in sunburns on their necks—and the older men too—wiped out one unremarkable early morning, August 19, 1942, before their lives barely got started. Life startled out of them like a partridge. And that list of names the survivors on Remembrance Day marched from, time taking over their faces and

bones, their minds somewhere in between where we stood, watching, and where once they stood and their friends fell.

Earle Birney has written a small poem, "Can lit," in which he gently laments of our country, "It is by our lack of ghosts we're haunted." Perhaps. In one sense not at all. My childhood was full of ghosts. Those soldiers, they were kids much like me, kids like I would have been. There they were: farm boys strong with their farms in them, shyness uniforms could not cover, openness they could not protect;

kids torn from town (but such a small town, gentle town too it must have been, even with its brands of malice) who swam in the Souris I swam in ten years later, kids who dreamt of . . . what? feeling up girls and sneaking a beer on Saturday night, who played baseball, took their dreams to the Orpheum, the same theatre I brought my childhood to a decade later? They went over and under and now they are names.

And memories. And myths. When I told a friend, years later, about the South Saskatchewan Regiment he said why didn't I tell their story. And I want to and if I can someday I will. When this happened, his urging, I hadn't written anything—nothing that would count that is.

Not that I wouldn't liked to have, I suppose. I liked when people told stories around the table, or wrote them in books you got from the small town library pinched under the brick water tower on 4th Street, just across from the cenotaph really. Pinched is the word: Estevan has never worked up much enthusiasm for libraries. Curling rinks and cars, sure, but libraries . . . It's hard not to think of that column of water as protection against what might come out of those books. Column of stone, column of water. We went there, the whole family when we were kids, beneath the water tower.

And I liked to hear my dad and my uncle Walter tell stories about their baseball days, about Satchel Page and Clarey Wier and how one guy would jump over the outfield fence and catch balls they thought were homers. And years later I wrote about my uncle Walter and I wrote about baseball. I listened in amazement as my uncle Gordon told outrageous stories about his run-ins with just about everybody. Listened as the women talked among themselves. And read odds and ends; the Hardy

I GREW UP in Estevan, Saskatchewan, young enough to have escaped the tragedies that had in recent decades struck the place. Some of them—most of them—hit elsewhere too (World War II, the Dirty Thirties), but some were local (the Estevan miners' strike in 1931), and all of them took on a special edge in that town on the lip of the Souris valley. Estevan boys were part of the South Saskatchewan Regiment that went into

boys, *Reader's Digest*, Lash Larue, Scrooge (a favourite), *Mechanics Illustrated*, sports magazines. No great shakes, I guess, except I also read a crazy assortment of magazine articles. Where I found them I don't know (we did subscribe to *The Saturday Evening Post*), but I remember knowing at one time the names of the ships lost in Pearl Harbour. When I was in public school I read a lot, actually, but there was no discernible direction in what I was doing. My parents enjoyed reading and we all picked up the habit, though nobody in any way tried to direct us.

Except my gramma. Those winter afternoons "after four," as we called the time we were jettisoned into smells of apple cores and baloney crusts, lunch pails with scabs like scabies in them and snowballs and runny noses and threats of violence. "I'm going to ge'cha after four, Cooley." One of those days when sometimes you would negotiate the gauntlet of fear and permission a bit early or your dad was supposed to be there early only he wasn't. He was squeezing in an extra game of pool. Some of those days my gramma Cooley—this was where we went after four to be picked up—my gramma Cooley would take and plunk us down by the radio. She'd

say this is Tommy Douglas and we'd better listen. I couldn't have understood much but I knew these were matters I should know. I now know my Protestant gramma knew this cut to the soul. And I remember—or seem to remember—the wonderful passion in his voice, one of the many voices I later found—Riel, Diefenbaker, Aberhart, Saint Sammy, Johnny Backstrom—fervent, outlandish, indignant, eloquent voices full of our yearning. "Goddam the hot bitch Goddessa profit ye worship whilst ye ride yer jigglin' little black tractor over the land, jigglin' yer little black soul for the rest of yer graspin' little black days." That's what Uncle Sean says in W.O. Mitchell's *Who Has Seen the Wind*, a wonderful curse, and though Tommy Douglas would not have used quite those words he would have known them. They told us the bastards were screwing us, us folk on the prairies, all the poor folks, and we better damn well do something about it.

They were and they still are, and I believe it to this day. As I believe in the decency and courage of Tommy Douglas, the poetry of what he said and what he wanted for us all, a man who as he was dying from cancer planted trees. That's

there too, stirring what a friend calls a moral truculence and a belief that maybe we don't have to sell out the country, or our best selves, maybe we can make things better than what at our meanest and glibbest we are willing to accept. It's good to remember Tommy Douglas now that greed and selfishness have come to be official virtues and we are asked to value every single thing, poetry too, as it participates in some grotesque market.

This was besides what we learned in school. I was one of those who liked school. I liked to get the new books in the fall with their paper and ink so fresh you could smell them. I would open them up and put my face right into them—in what could be described as some pre-pubertal training, except that I still do it—and in paroxysms of gratification snuff in those wonderful booksmells, available now only in yearbooks far as I can tell. Any day now somebody is going to show how the chemicals in paper finishing or in printers' ink cause brain damage. For my part I don't care. I am an unrepentant book-sniffer and there are times you must face death straight.

And I liked, once I was able to right myself and still the dizziness, what I saw

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ESSAY

there too. Most of the time that is. There were stretches which when you finished felt like you'd been riding 20 miles bareback on an old farm plug. What the selections were has slid somewhere into the laundry chute of memory. I suppose with a little research I could turn up a few examples, but what would it matter? Except for Dick & Jane. I admit to being a tad embarrassed when I was asked to read, "Oh oh oh, look look look, see spot jump, see spot play," or something like that.

You've got to understand. I grew up on what was a pretty modest mixed farm, where you got cow shit on your runners and dogs lost legs to rats when they were pups and men got frustrated with rusted nuts and rusted wheat and stupid cows and swore, angrily, and often, at them. And they wanted me to face a little girl in prissy pink who said "ohohoh." Nobody went to the office. I didn't even know what an office was, except the doctor's.

This was pretty far-out stuff, and I fell just short of distinguishing myself through the first three years of school. It's hard to know, looking back like this, but my mediocre school record may have had something to do with a larger gap. Eli

Mandel writes an eloquent account of how he grew up, a divided kid in Estevan, during the Dirty Thirties:

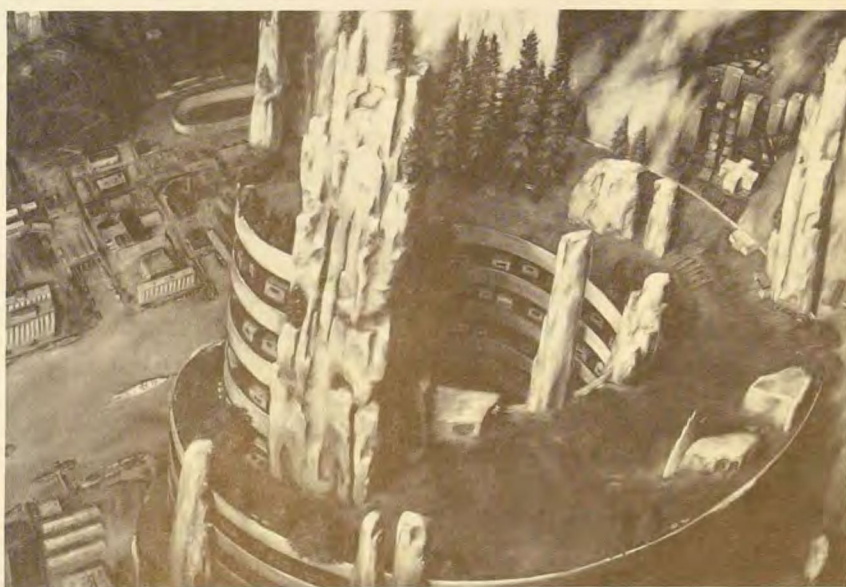
[The genteel poetry collected in *Elbert Hubbard's Scrap Book*] is enough, as W.O. Mitchell puts it, to give a gopher the heartburn . . . the colossal disparity in the situation: the gap between literature and life. The *Scrap Book*, we're told in the subtitle, contains "the inspired and inspiring selections gathered during a life time of discriminating reading for his own use." The coalminers of Bienfait were gathering to march on the town of Estevan. Steel-helmeted RCMP posted machine guns at what they called strategic corners and streets. Jewish farmers like my grandfather abandoned the hopeless dry dying farms. And the publishers of Elbert Hubbard—that is to say Hubbard himself—tell us "He was merely gathering spiritual provisions for his own refreshment and dedication . . . [from] scented rose gardens of Poetry . . ." And it treats us to such aphoristic wisdom as J.C. Holland's: "Music was a thing of the soul—a

rose lipped shell that murmured of the eternal sea—a strange bird singing the songs of another shore." Outside the green clapboard house, another Russian thistle bounced by. "Life is but a Thought" remarks Coleridge. Somebody carves *murdered by the RCMP* on the gravestone of a dead miner. "The nation that has schools has the future," remarks Bismarck.

Mandel describes his family's "poor shabby house surrounded by the devastated land," blighted with grit and thistles and wind, in which his mother read "the high-minded sentimentality of those words."

A few years earlier, Wallace Stegner had written an undefinable and beautiful book, *Wolf Willow*, which speaks with enormous power to anyone from the prairies. "You grow up speaking one dialect," he wrote, "and reading and writing another." In some variation I'd imagine this sort of thing has happened to all of us. It did in ways happen to me. I'd spent much of my pre-school life, so far as I can report, poking around the yard, checking out the barn, picking up the debris kids find fascinating, puncturing my body with the

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Eleanor Bond
*Rock Climbers Meet with Naturalists
on the Residential Parkade* (1989)

Photo: Shelagh Spence, Winnipeg

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ESSAY

accidents of moving, tormenting pups and scaling oneways, wandering in the pasture, mulling around sloughs, down the lane, ducking into the garden. Every night chased the sun into hiding.

I was often by myself, as I recall, though I had two older sisters who occupied my life, and sometimes plagued it. As I look back in suspect memory, I suppose those experiences to have been times of self-sufficiency in what—if I can say this without glamourizing—would be some state of containment. That's what writers need *when they are writing*, a capacity to go in on themselves; it's you there, alone and pecking away at words. There's no one to hold the pen for you, no amanuensis, no line to god: lo god 'mworkin on a new book and yeah yeah how you spell that lord ok good 'nthen what? If you are going to write you are going to spend hours and hours alone with yourself and the crazy itch to twitch some sounds around.

But I was talking about words not matching worlds. Hell, even Zeke the hired man sounded prissy to me in those first readers. But, a few years later, school became an adventure too. There were lines of romance, the farflung longing in Bliss Carman's "The Ships of Yule":

When I was just a little boy
Before I went to school
I had a fleet of forty sail
I called the Ships of Yule;

Of every rig, from rakish brig
And gallant barkentine,
To little Fundy fishing boats
With gunwales painted green.

They used to go on trading trips
Around the world for me,
For though I had to stay on shore
My heart was on the sea.

I never dreamt of ships, there on the sunscraped prairie, but the poem stirred me, banged around inside like a big wind in a hayloft. I revelled, as I still do, in simple narrative poems and committed them, joyously, to memory. Knew them by heart, as we say, in that exquisite phrase.

I see that what I call up most vividly and most pleasurably from my reading then is poetry. The passages are memorable, filled with what I guess I'd call the wonderful voicings of sound and rhythm, though I don't want to be mystical about this. I'm reminded of a colleague, Margaret Allen, who commiserated with me one day

on our students' inappreciation of poetry. How can this be? we wondered. She said that when she was a kid her aunt once asked her why she liked to recite poems and Margaret said to her, "I like the feel of the sound of the words in my mouth." That's why I like it too. All those slips and hisses, the burps and coughs, whistles and stutters. If we give ourselves a chance, take in the words, let ourselves be taken in by them. If we allow ourselves to be children, to (god forbid) play, like fool around, make fools of ourselves. (A puritan, says H.L. Mencken, has a haunting suspicion that someone, somewhere, somehow, is enjoying himself.)

In those days I was a kid and I attended a school on the edge of town. It was a small school and it was run by a legendary principal, Mr. Third. Mr. Third was known for his strictness and for his gifts as a teacher. He was not one of those cranky teachers who speak only of "standards" and suppose learning must come in some crimped version of asperity. You know the kind: no vinegar could be quite sour enough, no joy forgivable. Humiliation and boredom as starters. Mr. Third was one of those who as he asked, gave. I loved Mr. Third, even as, like the others,

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ESSAY

I feared him too. I wasn't wary quite the way I was with horses—big chests packed full with hairskin smells and muscles—but you get the idea. We'd traipse in from football and snowballs and fistfights, dry heat knocking from the radiators, and he'd work the frost out of us. Somewhere at about grade five or six, I'd pretty much figured out under his tutelage what you could do with sentences and paragraphs, and I'd written dozens and dozens of pieces. Letters, descriptive paragraphs, character sketches, stories, poems, plays. I'm not sure about songs but they must have gotten in.

What we turned out must have appalled Mr. Third. All those misshapen, misspelled, smudged exercises. All those fumbled words, contorted syntax. All our bagged and collapsed imaginations.

I was lucky. For some reason I took to writing like a cow to corn. It was as much fun as baseball or Boston Blackie, when only The Shadow knew what evil lurked in the hearts of men. There in the chalkcreek of desks and at home leaning into the weakness of a kerosene lamp I wrote with a fervour only a heifer in heat could have matched. I haven't a single thing I wrote then, and though I from

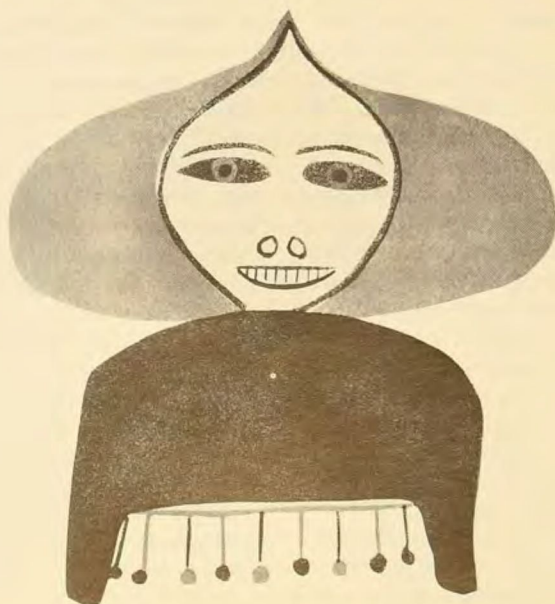
time to time suffer a twinge of nostalgia about one thing or another, I am grateful for this loss. As I think of those efforts, they must have been effusive and over-written. And yet, somewhere in that welter Mr. Third found something. He even said so, not so much to me as to my mother. But I got the message and was pleased. It was almost as thrilling as the bb gun I got for Christmas.

As I drifted off into adolescence and high school the writing died off, but the words never did. I continued to read the poetry we covered with a sense I was touching something or something was touching me. There was Wordsworth. Why Wordsworth I don't know, so far in his upland hermitage from the cindered and chickened yard, the rusted machinery and forests of ragweed on our farm. He snuck into my mind, so insinuated himself there, not even girls and basketball could quite keep him down.

The thought of being a writer hardly crossed my mind in those days. I busied my way through adolescence. My dad when I was 14 became janitor at a school in town, and I helped him clean during holidays. For a few summers, when we still had some acreage and my uncle Walter

ran a dairy farm, I diddled their edges. Played baseball, basketball, football. Soon had jobs of my own. I worked at the first supermarket to open in Estevan, left no legends there, and so far at least have found no poems in what I remember of the store. I left there—this story my friends find laughable for some reason—to work my final year of high school in a men's clothing store. I doddered in student council affairs and, eventually overcoming a mild dose of farmboy bashfulness, journeyed to the distant planets of romance. When I speak of these matters I mean something more than slouching against the gym wall in transport of fear that any of my smallest fantasies might breathe on me or my god, that close, perfume or breath, touch. There are those who will tell you that's all, to this day, I write about.

Literature reappeared at university, reared its bright and lovely face. I went to the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, as did all natives of the province in those days. But at the time (this was in the early '60s) few of my professors knew Canadian literature or held it in high regard. Fewer still gave any indication that writing might actually be done right there and then. I don't want to be misleading



Jessie Oonark, Young Woman, Stencil, 1972

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ESSAY

about this. The University of Saskatchewan was one of the first universities in Canada to teach American and Canadian literature. But the curriculum on the whole implied that poetry was written by dead Englishmen and sometimes, it seemed, for them. For the longest time our universities behaved as if there were no Canadian culture. There was Canadian history, Canadian economics, even Canadian sociology. But there was no culture. Culture was something that happened in other places, like tornadoes and scandalous relations.

I do remember the first live writer I ever saw. I was taking a course in the American novel taught by a British immigrant and he brought in the Canadian poet Earle Birney. The occasion constrained Birney to read from one of his novels but there he was—a real live writer from Canada. I probably inflect this in the wrong way, now, for as I think more about the occasion, most of us were by then so caught up in the study of everybody else's writing we knew enough not to be bowled over by a Canadian. At about the same time I heard about some guy called Eli Mandel, a poet from Estevan. I knew of the Mandels, of course; they ran a department store in Estevan. But Eli? who was he? This was news to me, and it remained news to most folks in Estevan until fairly recently when they held a day in his honour. I mention these things because they show all too clearly what has been a conspicuous absence of our own writers and writing in our lives.

One of my earliest poems was about my father, an intelligent man who, like many others, had no chance to develop his love of words and his love of story:

i remember you
years later in the white light
bent on our 55 Massey
dragging the rusted discer
over Evendon's section 7 miles north
of town
its steel plates glinting on the rub
of dirt
and the loud sudden scrape of rocks
grinding off sparks
your striped engineer's cap ruling the
redness
in a clean line across your forehead
(the startling white softness of your
body
underneath the grey cotton shirt you
always wore)
and the sweet smell of the soap and
cream

you pulled through the zipper of
your pebble-grained leather shaving
kit
on Saturday nights and how in good
spirits
we rolled down the gravel road
over the big hill under
the orange slant of the sun
with Hank Snow blowing us down
into Estevan
from CHAB in Moose Jaw yellow
on the radio of our 53 green Ford
*Just to think it could be
Time has opened the door
And at last I am free
I don't hurt anymore*

And there was my mother, more and more
in love with the play of words, joking,
punning. She's there—I want to blame
someone—in the paranomasia that persists
in what I write:

there it goes
over canadian tire my tired
canadian heart
rises
brighter than fortified margarine
im so mortified
higher and higher into three
tiered clouds if id tried
than a seagull fades a fist
you hist into
and filled

You can see what I mean about the feel
of the sound of the words in your mouth.

I have only begun to write about the
miners' strike. It's there waiting its time.
In the meantime I read and write. We all
do. We all have experiences and we find
ways to write out of them. In the view of
writing I am promoting we do not prove
ourselves or necessarily improve ourselves
by undergoing what we like to call 'experi-
ence'. Which means in its most popular
espousals that you get in the least reflective
state possible and plunge in—that's what
does it, brings 'life' ripped and snorting
into the ink. I'd be inclined to argue the
opposite, though there was a time I be-
lieved, sort of, you pour life hot and pant-
ing, summer dog, into a pool of words.

The idea I'm advocating at first scan-
dalizes: literature begets literature, writing
derives from writing. Look at it this way:
everyone feels grief, finds life amusing /
tragic / ironic, goes through pain, falls in
love, gets angry. Writers have no special
knowledge of these things, and even if they
did, who could know if they did?

What distinguishes writers from
everyone else then? Nothing in their souls,
nothing in their hearts or minds, if by those
synecdoches we mean innate or mystic
power. Writers are people who learn how
to write and who work at their writing.

Writing requires intelligence, it requires
care; it also requires knowledge. I'd even
say that writing which snags us needs
something I'd be willing to call inspiration.
It does not, however, require genius. And
a good thing, too, there being no such
creatures—lone souls, self-created, boom-
ing with new planets, whole galaxies drift-
ing out of their heads. This is a grotesque
and damaging view. To think of the writer
as apart from and superior to the rest of
us is demeaning to everyone.

I want to end by quoting one of the
devastatingly witty stories Margaret
Atwood tells about literary attitudes in this
country, including the myth of genius.
"We like to think of writing as merely per-
sonal, merely self-expression, and hope-
fully neurotic," she says, "because it lets
us off the hook. If that's all it is, if it is
not a true view of the world or, Heaven
forefend, of a human nature of which we
ourselves partake, we don't have to pay
any serious attention to it."

And here's her killer story, a fitting end
for what I have tried to say:

A friend of mine told me once that
when she'd been in France a man,
upon hearing she was a writer, com-
mented, "It is an honourable profes-
sion." In Canada we don't—even
now—think of writing as an honour-
able profession. We don't think of it
as a profession at all. We think of it,
still, as something called "expressing
yourself." I'm sure you've all heard
the one about the writer and the brain
surgeon who met at a cocktail party.
"So you write," said the brain surgeon.
"Isn't that interesting. I've always
wanted to write. When I retire and
have the time I'm going to be a writ-
er." "What a coincidence," said the
writer, "because when I retire I'm
going to be a brain surgeon." ♦

*Dennis Cooley is a regular columnist for
Border Crossings. He has published a
number of books of criticism and poetry, and
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Guild.*

The Culture of Personality

Unaffectionate Notes on the Glitterati, the Paparazzi and the Ignorati

by Stephen Phelps

IT IS A bleak dawn when they come for the last of the bona fide art radicals. He is in a maximum security cell for cultural violators, a dingy studio loft soon to be converted into a luxury condo. The cell is very dark, surrounded by painted-over windows, dusty ceiling beams and exposed brick walls. His last meal remains on the table untouched. He has sat up all night, penning final letters to posterity. He looks tired, the skin of his face drawn and mottled. He has lived fast, poor and unsung, and he plans to die the same way. When the guards come, he rises to greet them with solemn dignity, then walks under close escort to the courtyard below. As he stands blindfolded against the wall, bathed in blue TV lights, the pitiless sentence is read aloud: "... for persistent defiance of the omnific media, our sacred arbiter of trends and benevolent dispenser of reputations."

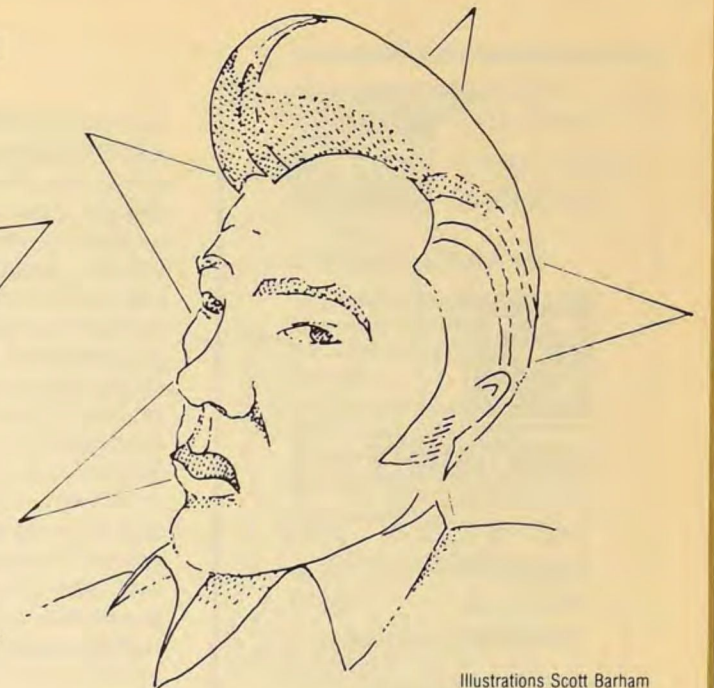
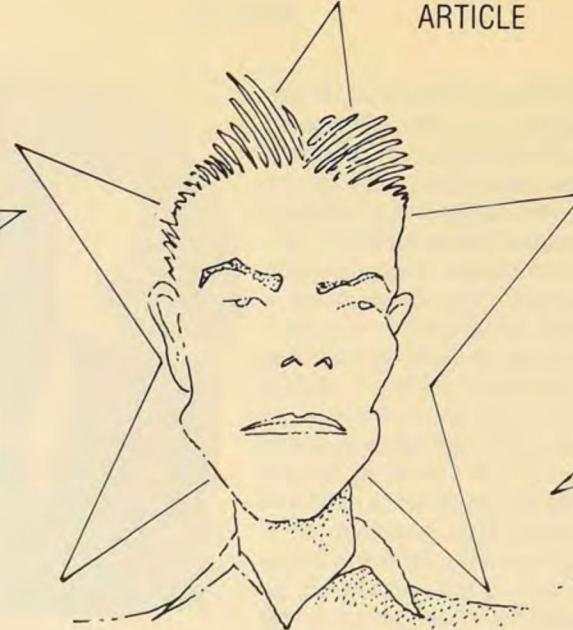
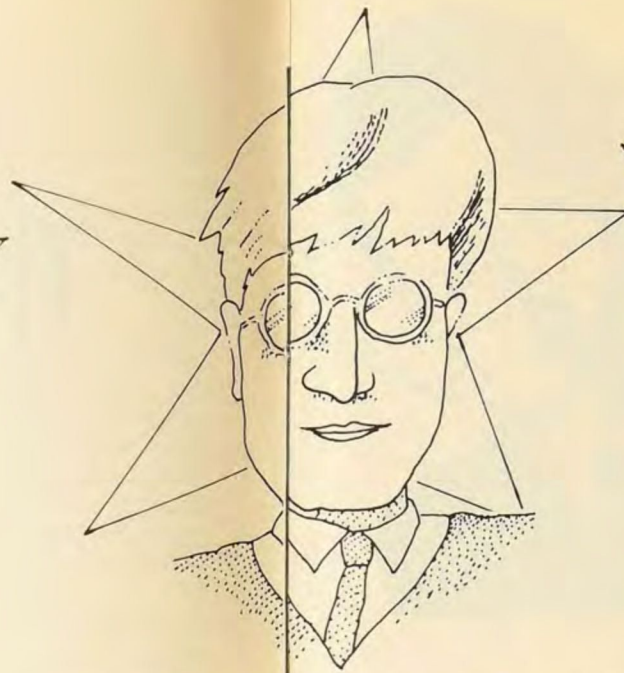
An angularly coiffed interviewer from MTV offers him a final cigarette. "Any last words?"

The doomed artist is implacable: "The reckoning is at hand," he intones, his voice rising to unexpected percussive clarity. "You and all the other celebrity hacks in our media culture, obsessed with big money and notoriety—your days are numbered." With those final words, the presiding officials step back. The members of the firing squad raise their rifles. "Ready . . . aim . . ."

Well, you can dream, no? But even if the reckoning isn't at hand, even if, on the contrary, the star cult has only just begun to flex its might and influence over an oblivious culture, you can at least hope that deliverance is inevitable, that our merchandising millennium and the personality cult it has spawned carries the seeds of its own self-destruction.

By way of preamble, let's understand some basic distinctions regarding the meaning of stardom or fame in the media age. There are two basic categories of fame: celebrity and superstar. Those who achieve the latter status (such as Bill Cosby, Bruce Springsteen and Andy Warhol) are no longer measurable in conventional terms. "Talent," "intelligence," "character," even "looks" are vague callipers at best, the anaemic mutterings of a critical intelligentsia confined to life's cheap seats, outside the power loop and irrelevant to the sales culture that actually anoints these brand-name icons. While superstardom remains the artistic ego's fondest dream, the more realistic goal for the vast majority of creative sloggers is simple fame. In this context that means becoming a commodity—like soybean, pop or chip dip.

It's the manic scramble to achieve permanency in either of these orbits that is responsible for what purists terms "the big sell-out," the soulless slide into commercialization. A more incisive observer, lamenting the disappearance of our



Illustrations Scott Barham

counterculture heroes, might dub it a sleight-of-hand swap. It's a tale of rebels supplanted by Cinderellas, of aesthetic storm-troopers switched for Tinkerbells; and of meat and marrow substituted for marketable pap by that infamous magician and greatest retailer of contemporary taste—the mass media. In its cunning bosom, hype and message have now become virtually indistinguishable.

To understand how this came to be, it might help to draw back a bit and consider the history of the modern rebel—the anti-hero and radical.

Drawing on a strange *mélange* of outlaw traditions from Camus to Genet, radical hip in its heyday was an attitude not easily translated into economic or philosophical terms. Born in an era before mass media consolidated public opinion, it produced some fixed ideas—that moral vision is best arrived at through sin (Rimbaud via de Sade); that conformity can give you cancer (Norman Mailer via William Burroughs). Basically, it assumed that man was a drag and the cultures he invented were hopeless. In response it posited a simple code: live fast, die young and be cool. It was a minimalist view, comfortable with the pessimism of the post-war world, and honed to grim perfection by such melancholic notables as Jackson Pollock, James Dean and Jack Kerouac. What was truly daring about these intellectual rebels—a deep contempt of the profit motive and amused indifference to status—was reduced in kind and substance over the ensuing decades. Stealing the march of decline was the rock star.

Any assessment of the contemporary rebel's demise has to start with the rock star. In an age of mass appeal, mass manipulation and affluence, he is the vanguard, the leading edge. He is the epitome of the personality cult that has been the rebel's undoing. And the history of his debasement is as good a testament as any to the toxicity of our sales culture.

Bursting on the scene in the '50s, and embodied in a young Elvis Presley, the rebel rocker was a direct response to the cultural banality of pop. For an industry that measured revolution in purchase units, the ascendancy of the rebel was a gold mine. By the '60s, the rebel rocker owned the pop charts. Buoyed by the political turmoil of that era, the likes of Bob Dylan and John Lennon embodied the collective hopes of an entire generation bent on social reforms. Inextricably tied to the distemper of their times, the musical world-beaters who would self-destruct at the era's close—and there were many—provided a motherload of raw material for media myth-makers, pre-eminent maestros in their own right. Recasting the burn-outs and fatal drug overdoses that tolled so heavily on the performers of that period, media mavens painted those performers as martyrs to a doomed cause, blowing a rich note of requiem all the way to the bank. The revolution personified by the icons of the '60s would surrender the stage to the effete technopop of the '70s and the frothy mincings of gender-benders like David Bowie—refugee from firebrand relevance. A narcissistic binge that itself begged a backlash.

Enter Punk. Clothed in the safety-pin chain mail of anti-style, Punk provided an

electrojab of future shock—its immediate mission, to poke a stick in the androgynous mush of a music scene that had become more commodity than force. More than ersatz rebels on a missionary rant, Punk's notorious head-bangers also ushered in the return of the anti-social radical—albeit a carnival version. Unfortunately, this throwback's moment in the spotlight was destined to be brief. Unlike other reactive musical movements, which tended to celebrate the new, Punk was all opposition against the old. How long its serrated message, running on bile alone, would have endured is anyone's guess. But its fate was pretty well sealed by the relentless attention of the mass media. Codifying the Punk attitude, and coaxing its bullet-headed aggression into tidy cages, the media destigmatized Punk's isolated guerillas and reduced them to copyable cartoons for teenage consumers.

The makeover of the radical has been the media's signal triumph in the '80s—this after years of jamming the original message by sending out high-frequency harmonics of its own version of radical hip. With Bruce Springsteen, a.k.a. "the Boss," the whole manipulative exercise has been brought to fruition. Declawed of generational antagonisms and built to rock critic specifications, this chronicle of working-class America has turned the runaway American dream into a personal crusade, a bitter hymn to hulks of rust and displaced labour, highly saleable for today's corporate playlists. If Springsteen ever boasted rebel potential, it was long ago swallowed up in the great boutiquing of Self that has marked the MTV years.

With his guitar slung over his shoulder like an assault rifle, the hyperkinetic Springsteen has staked out rock and roll's high ground, pitching his blue-collar images to a suburban generation whose only knowledge of the working stiff and his plight comes through sitcoms and nostalgia films.

Springsteen's elevation throws into high relief the question of who's calling the tune—the mob or the piper. For hardball cynics, there's never been any doubt as to who's in charge. In a sales culture like ours, the fans were bound to take over. Contrary to the myth of the rock star as showman and shaman, megastars from Presley to Dylan and the Boss have never been forgers of their own fates. It is the public that has become the master controller, the Svengali. This transference of control was anticipated by a prescient Thomas Mann in his allegorical novella *Mario and the Magician*, in which the sinister magician first cracks the whip over his audience like a ringmaster and then eerily submits to its whim. "Thus he groped his way forward," Mann writes, "like a blind seer, led and sustained by the mysterious common will."

If radical hip in music has fallen irretrievably under the spell of the common will and into the hands of media demographers, so too has its radical counterpart in the visual arts.

Today's radical artist has his immediate roots in the Yippie movement—that '70s band of anarcho-nihilist, media-manipulating politicians whose irrepressible penchant for staged confrontation set the standard for protest art in the media age. It was this movement, not the apolitical

dreamy Hippies, that gave birth to the counterculture as mass movement.

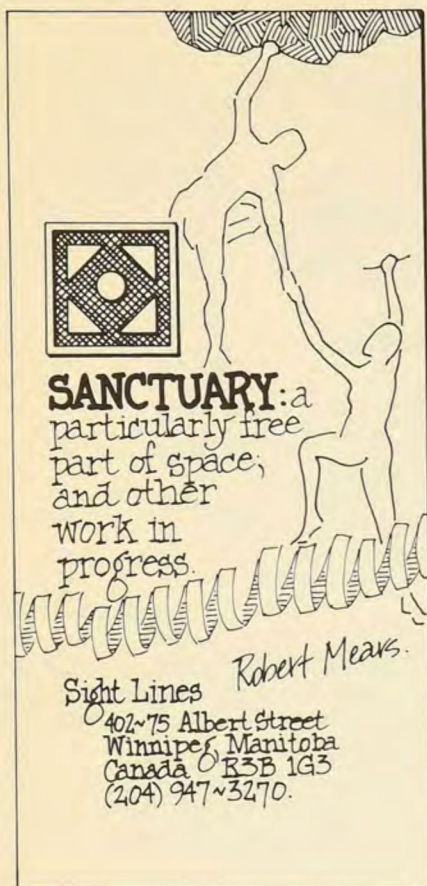
Despite their anti-corporate bluster, the art stars of the '70s nursed a deep ambivalence about the art scam supposedly exploiting them. Underlying their populist antipathy towards hype and markets, there was a grudging respect, even feelings of envy, for those disingenuous dandies who'd been playing the media like a foil, and banking fortunes in the bargain.

The most noteworthy of these modern hysteres was Salvador Dali, the Magus of Surrealism and, until his death, the doyen of artworld showbiz. Rightly celebrated at the outset of his long career for his stunning attacks on bourgeois conventions, this virtuoso painter of the century's twisted fantasies rather quickly turned to wholesale buffoonery. No artist in history has made a bigger spectacle of himself. Parlaying native zaniness and flair into highly marketable lunacy, the flamboyant Dali became a virtual synonym for Modern Art. Dali died last year at 84, by all accounts a picture of feeble dejection. Long spent as a creative force but not as a commodity, this provocateur-exhibitionist-dandy may have been Modernism's first casualty of self-promotion.

If Dali's classical roots secretly chafed at the demands of the mass media, his successor of sorts, pop icon Andy Warhol, would find a perfect fit with his time and place. From an illustrator and window decorator to a novel '60s painter credited with mating fine art to pop culture, Warhol would also become a synonym for Modern Art among the ignorati. His glitzy portraits of high society brahmins and telegenic show-biz types—perfect Andy fodder

—proclaimed the utter triumph of hedonism in a media-saturated, celebrity-obsessed culture. Like Dali, who had hitched his talent to the pursuit of a marketable persona, Warhol went to his grave some two years ago with purists pecking at his heels, roundly denouncing the artist's cynical legacy.

As the maestro of arty hype, Warhol could have learned a few tricks from his immediate successor, the young Mark Kostabi. A strumpet of grand tradition, this New York painter has brought to the art game his own inexhaustible repertoire of career stratagems. With the ghosts of Dali and Warhol egging him on, Kostabi has claimed star billing in an art world riddled with attention-grabbing jesters. Media gimmicks tend to pop out of his head like springs on a bum mattress. Among his more notable coups is a version of Warhol's East Village Factory. Called Kostabi World, it's a full-fledged production plant staffed by groupies who provide the ideas and execute finished products, which in turn only require Kostabi's signature. That signature has acquired the clink of coinage for avid collectors who apparently never tire of the artist's antics or his insults. Kostabi has learned the Warholian dictum that once successfully launched onto the mass market an artist can pursue a hugely profitable career entirely immune to critical opinion. Forever courting the New York paparazzi, this unabashed showboat self-admittedly lives to see his name surface in boldface in the gossip tabloids. Kostabi makes no bones about his preferred reading: "If I were given the choice of a cover story in *Artform* and a



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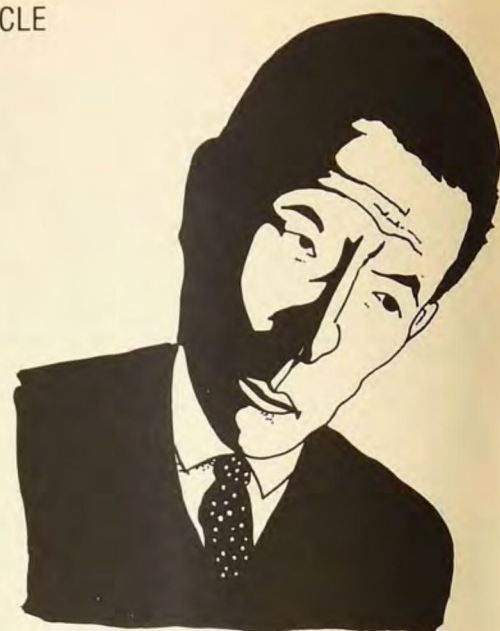
cover story in *People*, I would take *People*. And I think just about every living artist would take *People*. But they've never thought about that. My contribution to art history—one of my contributions—will be to propose that option."

Even for less brazen media sluts, self-promotion has become the basic groundnote of radical ambitions: today's cutting-edge artist has little choice but to go along. The image of the art radical is now firmly fixed in the media's eye, an image that demands to be emulated if an artist is seriously intent on taking his message to the bank. The guiding myth tells us that all true artists are born from adversity. Growing up, they share two things in common: a heavy heart addicted to ennobling casualty, and an antisocial bent rooted in denied affection. Too ambitious to trade in their involuted drive for the grim attrition of the analyst's couch, they take up art—initially as therapy—before discovering that it equips them with a liberating wedge for their torments.

An artist's formal apprenticeship usually entails a stint in an institution of higher learning, where wide-eyed aspirants are expected to regurgitate half a century of theory at the feet of instructors who specialize in reducing art history to an alignment of solutions bound to a long series of problems. Sifting through the modernist maelstrom, the embattled neophyte builds his personal expression on foundations laid by past problem solvers; the ultimate objective, to push his way to the forefront of that continuum. Art has always been more a relay race than a Dantean journey, anyway.

After three or four years of training, the embryonic achiever is propelled into a milieu characterized by manic ambition and desolate struggle. Notably, there are no career brochures littering the exit doors of his alma mater. Thrown back on his own resources, he stands naked in the cutting wind. Here is where aesthetic pubescence begins—a maturing process that entails a lot of bawling, and not a little rage, following on the hard realization that an artist is expected to renew daily vows of poverty in a society that mainly provides for those willing to contribute materially to its corporate personifications—economic and political.

In the past couple of decades, a country-wide network of publicly funded galleries has blessed the Canadian radical with an institutionalized buffer zone to cushion his fall. At various times described as a



Mafia-style cartel, the artistic equivalent of OPEC, these institutions specialize in formalizing tribal allegiances for "dead end kids" with \$5000 worth of orthodontics and their own Visa cards. Tarded up for the war-path, they join a conga line to parade their colourful quirks for talent spotters and star hunters, shifting and bobbing to the robo-drumbeat of an influential art literati. These, along with curators, have hammered out a range of politically correct topics. Urban decay, nuclear Armageddon, media manipulation, gender oppression and environmental destruction top the agenda. Worked and re-worked by a hardcore faithful, the predictable end-products in paint, performance and video are now being churned out in almost factory conditions.

For an enlightened few, the sober moment of truth comes with the realization that the radical status so hotly sought has itself become another off-the-rack career—not a big ticket item like Law or Medicine, the careers of choice for upwardly mobile baby-boomers, but a calling worthy of attention nonetheless. And, little thanks to media attention, the once infamous bravura and disruptive stylistic tactics of the contemporary radical finally become just another landmark in the perpetually shifting ethic of fashion. For a strain genetically coded to resist the seductions and treacheries of style, you have to wonder how the avant-garde managed such an accommodating back-flip. Any Marxist worth his semiological salt could have told today's radical that taste is just an anagram for state.

If radical art as we used to know it is indeed dead, the autopsy will reveal multiple



causes. **STRANGULATION:** pressure from sphincter idealists whose fatal reflex upon receiving public funds was to close the circle around a prescribed style. **STAB WOUNDS:** getting it in the back from self-anointed arbiters for refusing to ape the right models. **SHOCK:** the recognition that the offbeat track so assiduously pursued has finally joined up with the mainstream and the satanic status quo.

Abetted by the mass media, the situation has encouraged wholesale defection. Tired of being marginalized, weary of the high-toned disdain of *les autres* that characterizes the snobbery of the public gallery institution—and finally judging the commercial waters sweeter and more profitable—scores of painters, sculptors and multimedia auteurs have plunged mask and snorkel into the mainstream to woo private galleries and dealers. After a brief, vitriolic season of formal experimentation, many an '80s video artist has bailed out as well, turning his talents to music videos as he flees an institutional culture that for the past decade has been running on auto-pilot.

Here's how Istvan Kantor, a Montreal performance artist, plots the course: "Before it was absolutely one of the most important philosophies for an artist to hate TV. A new strategy in the 1980s is that artists accepted the mass media as part of their work." Kantor suggests that video art, which once set itself in opposition to TV, has become TV.

If former media heretics have become disciples, the once parasitic media itself has become a host. Today, instead of "mass cult" ripping off "high cult," as was the

case in the early days of TV, we have art being fashioned from the media junk pile and artists tapping the boob tube for their references and inspiration. Like it or not, today's radical has had to frame himself and his activity within the idiot box, donning the mask of a colourful clown to find a place in the phantasmagoria of electronic culture. Media pundit Hans Magnus Enzensberger sounded the warning as early as 1962 when he pointed out that "... everyone sooner or later winds up working for the media—the consciousness industry."

Indeed, the next great counter-movement in art may repeat the Luddite uprising that saw unemployed mobs turning their anger on the first machines of the industrial age—only this time with renegade artists taking sledge-hammers to their TVs.

Whether that day comes or not, let's hope in the meantime there is a place in heaven where the lure of fame and the trivializing glare of the one-eyed void do not reach. Even though God himself is rumoured to live in a building with a doorman and a satellite dish, and even though artists are not reported to be numerous in places He goes to for the summer, we can at least hope that He admits them to occasional group audiences—the broken and sainted alike. And presumably it's there that today's copped-out radical will have an opportunity to rub shoulders with the genuine article—historical world-beaters like Goya and Hogarth who challenged their culture at every turn and rose above their times. Or more beneficial yet, maybe there'll be a chance to hobnob with Surrealists like André Breton, Max Ernst and Jean Cocteau, legendary upstarts who packed their antics with rock salt and used scandal to real purpose. They had the fortune of being part of an era when artists actually fought in the streets over their art, and not with each other for a piece of the limelight. Theirs was the last great age before the radical's supporting belief went missing, before professionalism and lust for fame seized the reins. For the dazed Contessas of the current scene, products of the lunatic demands of self-definition in the media age, any contact, however brief, with these long-gone revolutionaries is bound to reveal the dazed—and the present days—essential folly. ♦

Stephen Phelps is a gallery administrator and a contributing editor to Border Crossings.



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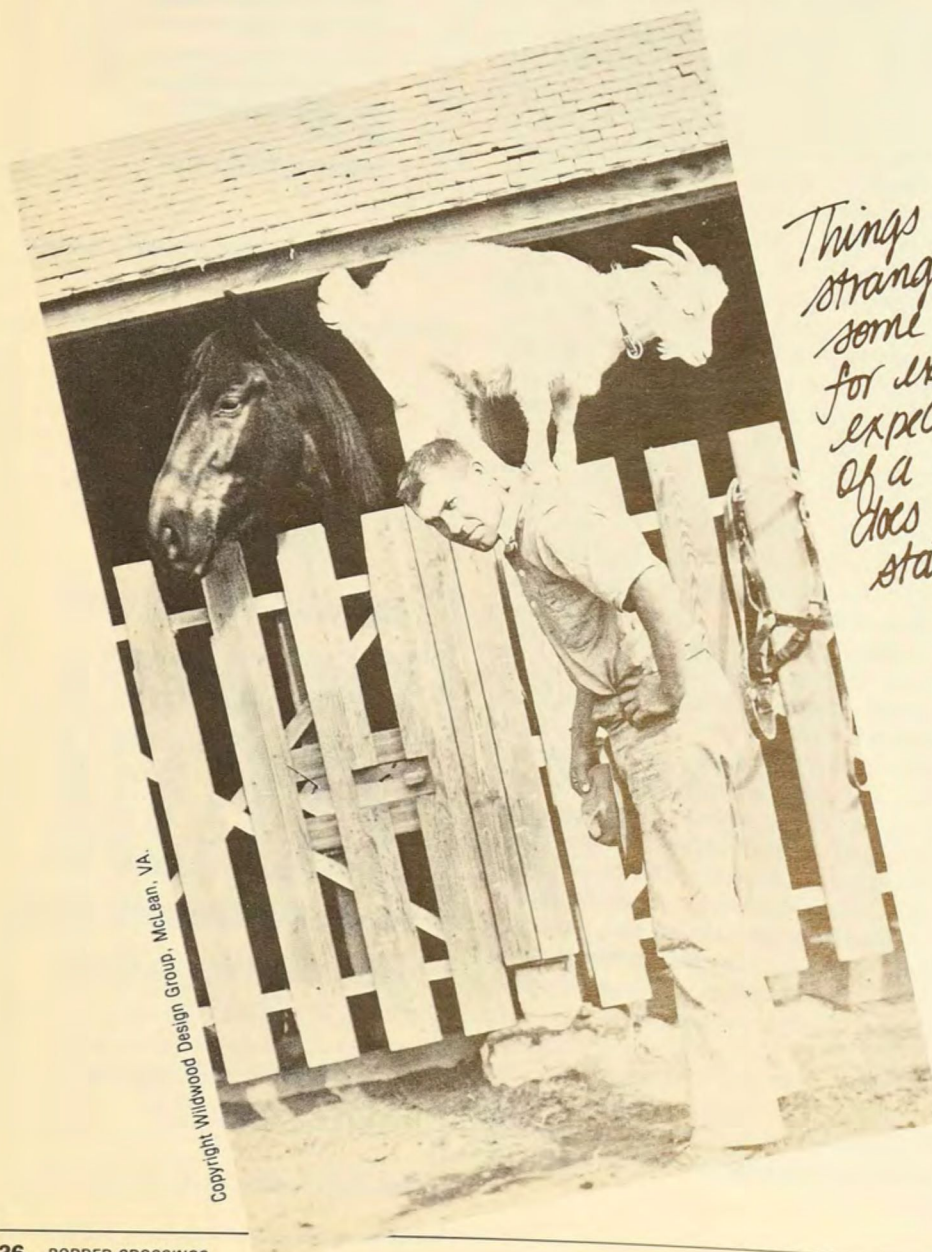
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Horses, Goats and Grace

by Meeka Walsh



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Things come to you in strange ways. Grace and some form of transcendence, for example. Not how you'd expect. Not with the birth of a child, although that does involve an altered state and is of course, wonderful.

Not with a luminous orange and mauve-tailed sunset and not with the tones and burred chords of an organ rising along the stone verticals of a Gothic cathedral. The strange knowledge, the little opening, the fragment of light, if it comes, comes ordinary as egg yolk on a breakfast plate, comes simple as the thwack of a newspaper between your doors.

I ride. A chestnut Thoroughbred mare with a breedy head and elegant gaits. The most comfortable horse I've ever ridden, who is ridden by way of an agreement we struck, who was never "broken" and never humiliated. Our relationship is based on democracy and chance. Chance because it turned out she's the horse, not me;

ESSAY



democracy because—two parties, two votes. So we ride by agreement. I pay the board. It gives me a bit of an edge but it's an advantage I never push. I can't afford to because I really am party to the notion of democracy and because my horse is my teacher and I'm still learning.

I had a big dog once, a Great Dane, and while he was alive my life was full of him. When he died there was a space about as big as 180 pounds and 11 years of an alternate, fur-covered, smell-other-than-mine being can leave. I didn't know what to fill the space with. It had nothing to do with a husband or children or friends or a career. It was animal-specific and I grieved. I walked and I grieved. Then I bought a black velvet crash helmet and leather riding boots, flat boots that dipped out at the midway point and rose higher on the out-sides, and I drove out beyond the city limits to a stable and I asked to be taught to ride.

I knew you couldn't hold a horse around the belly. I didn't expect I'd take him home but the space that needed filling was big and another dog wouldn't do just then. I rode a lot of different horses—dusty, lumpy, inelegant school horses who worked for a living and whose professional status made them indifferent. I sweated, grew dusty, fell often, tasted the sand-salt dirt on the arena floor and carried a linen handkerchief to blot my upper lip.

Horse shit, sand and salt and the debris of hot riders, mostly rich, mostly women. The floor of the arena was that colour—grey and beige with small gold flecks of hay via horse turds, sparrow down from the birds in winter, some occasional glints of silver—coins jogged out of riding breech pockets. A Dutch master's palette, heavily varnished mercantile colours, a burgher's study, velvet jackets, high-crowned dark hats. The stable manager who planned some day to buy the place practised frugality and kept the lights low. The dun-coloured dust was horse-kicked up the walls and stayed, hung in the air in puffs, and the air was brown. Private

and interior, secret and pungent, a poor colonist's snuff rich enough to elicit the sensual tickle, the small spasm of pleasure, a clandestine, intimate, pre-arranged sneeze.

I rode, I watched. My eyes grew big. I hardly spoke. I learned to groom. Marvelled at the underside of a horse's foot, remembered the horses on my street when I was very little. Stood on the concrete floor of the barn, in the centre aisle, horse tethered quiet beside me, heads bent down, mine and his, and the blood rushed into my head. I held the foot, right fore, and on the rushing blood, on the streams and rivers I could hear inside my head, feel against my ears from inside, came the horses from when I was little. "Don't go near that horse. Stay away from his feet. Watch those feet. He'll kick."

An urban kid in a house with paved sidewalks, paved streets, a city a little out of step which still had horses pulling wagons, coaches really, that delivered bread and milk and Eaton's. Over their noses were leather socks that held feed. Half shells of thick black leather screened their eyes. They were short and stocky and they smelled like men who work hard in the sun. When they moved on they left traces of the country. Tobacco-coloured, new-potato-shaped buns that pushed the city limits out for me even if I was only little and didn't know about such things.

Now I didn't have to stay away from the horses' feet. Now I knew they wouldn't kick. I understood about shifting my weight against flank or shoulder to get the weight off the foot I wanted to lift, knew to run my hand down the horse's leg with authority, to tip up the foot to pick it out. Holding hands with a horse, sort of. And when the barn was empty of other riders, when I'd be alone grooming and fussing with the tack, I could get closer to the horse.

I wasn't, it turned out, properly "horsey." I couldn't imagine buying a horse, grooming and riding it for years, training and competing and then selling it because it didn't go well in competition. I couldn't

imagine putting down a horse whose heart and lungs worked fine, whose eyes were bright, whose coat was glossy, because it went uneven. By the time I'd bought my own horse I knew we were in it for life, whosever ended first.

I'd listen with horror, my breathing short, my stomach sick, to the news that Kirby, much loved horse of Elizabeth, or Royal, dear, dear bay belonging to Mary Jane, was being put down in the afternoon. Did they know? Did the horses know? I'd set aside the dandy brush and curry comb and slowly move toward the box stall of Kirby or Royal. If my eyes had been closed I could have picked it out. Smell lives inside memory and heralds recollection before any of the other senses and I'd sniff out death. Charged and painful, crackling at the edges like the spot where lightning's just been, sweet and green like ether, damp and unavoidable, old papers gone mouldy in a cellar. Yes, the horse knew. He was always quicker, sleeker, hotter, more willing. I couldn't bear it.

Not growing up horsey, I was unschooled in all of this. Frantic plans would rush up. I'll open the stall, chase the horse out, he'll run, make a break for it, break for it.

No good. -Lame left fore. Uneven gait. No stamina, coat clipped and fine, prey to all the bugs, shod feet, too late. I'll buy him, find a farm, pay his board. How many times?

Each time I'd go back to my own mare and push my nose against her belly, replace the green ether smell with her own sweet leather sweat.

Breathe in, breathe in.

Alone in the barn was best. Coming early, the horses snuffling the feed just dropped into their buckets, chewing the hay, the grass, conversational, morning-warm, the space still close, a bunch of guys, girls too, knowing everything about the other from having shared the night, having waited out the dark, the barn still nighttime intimate. My own horse nickering to my voice, others acknowledging her nicker, my presence, with a small sound.



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"Hi guys. Have a good night?"

"Nick, nick."

"Good, me too."

"Nick."

"What's up? Anything new?"

Everything was still fine and that was good, all I wanted.

I rode often, took lessons, was thrown a lot, got hurt, felt real pain and real fear and still kept coming back. Whatever was I doing? Was this Hemingway's need to test aliveness? Was I measuring my gut? What am I doing here? What's the test?

It was a test. Life in Canada, lots to eat, whatever education I wanted, apparent freedoms, good health. Nothing I'd ever done before had involved pain or risk or this kind of courage, either. Oh well—certainly unpopular positions and sticking with them, being odd man out and alone. I did that. I was good at that. But risk to body, trying it and winning. Now that was heady stuff. Small gulps of glory lay there, I sensed. If I prevailed, if I climbed up and over the fear, real fear based on real risk, then on the other side I might find some other thing, some other state.

Occasionally I'd have it—a small silver ribbon of it, a small moment that was other. When, briefly, I'd have it, after a good hard ride, after the horse had bolted at the light underside of a leaf turning in the wind, after I'd slid almost off the saddle, almost off the horse, had clung sideways, uneven, one leg grotesquely long in the stirrups, my imbalance throwing the horse off and both of us panicked, after I'd somehow righted myself, kept the reins, calmed the horse and carried on, then, after, in the barn, cooling her out, me still gulping at the wet air, the silver ribbon of it would flick past me. I had been courageous. I could have fallen or been dragged. I hadn't. I wasn't. I took control, carried on, rode on, finished what I said I'd do. Scared silly, I came through and now there was that silvery shred, of what? What is it on the other side of courage? Grace? A little transcendence.

I figured I wasn't entitled to a lot of that. It's mostly Biblical domain and I live on the prairies, flat, not high up or close to anything. So I settled for the small silver band of it and recognized the horse barn as the place where I found it, the horses as the creatures with whom I shared it.

I've been riding her a long time now. Still the same horse. And I kept my word. She had some chronic lameness in her

forelegs. We've put on corrective shoes. Spring and fall she's a little asthmatic and she wheezes. Nothing medication can't alleviate. A few white hairs fleck her muzzle. I pull the white strands I find in her mane. Her gaits are still flashy and our bargain stands. I ride. She's the horse.

After a ride when she's groomed, she smells rich and private. I think, when I put my nose against her, that there isn't a cleaner place in the whole world. Guileless as a pantry full of folded linens, genuine as the birds that shout outside my window just after first light, honest as my dog's passion for cooked chicken. I breathe and allow myself forgiveness.

Horses are always coming into the barns as boarders for a while. I don't ask anymore. Recently one was brought in from the track. The stall next to Maggie's was empty and they put him there. For horses fresh from the track these stables are like a rehabilitation centre. They're rarely brought in in great shape. Either lame or crazy or exhausted or over-medicated. It takes a couple of weeks before their weight is right, before they calm down or get wired up. The guy next to Maggie was tense and he stood in his stall and weaved and bobbed his head and swayed endlessly back and forth. It didn't stop.

One morning, early, I was grooming in the aisle. Everyone was quiet. From the stall next to Maggie's I heard a squeezed, breathy, complaining call. And again. Lord, I thought, he's colicky, he'll go down, get himself cast and be unable to right himself. He'll die before they can call the vet. I peered into the dark box stall and a white, triangular goat's head lifted toward me.

They'd put a goat in the stall to calm the horse. I'd read about chickens and cats being called on that way but not goats. Why not? Outside of *Heidi* goats have been given bad press and I'd always felt it unfair. You hate someone who allows himself to be victimized. "She invited it," they say about battered women. "They brought it on themselves," they said in Germany. No one likes a scapegoat. Of course he's necessary, but no one likes him. Think of William Holman Hunt's painting. Who's volunteering to change places there? And I personally don't support the notion of lechery although I've heard someone being called an old goat and then one eyebrow is lifted and the lips are pursed. I also know goats have been rounded up and herded off with the unbelievers, the sheep being

ESSAY

the good guys. But I remember rows of disembodied goats' heads like a benediction in the Arab market in Jerusalem and here, in the barn, this little goat, nurse goat, charity goat, was calming the blood heat out of the race-track horse.

When the stalls were being mucked out the goat would be let out to wander through the barn. Someone tied a blue bandanna around her neck. "She's pregnant," they said. Expecting when? No one knew. She carried on. For some time each day she'd step through the barns, a stout lady with small feet, little black hooves that made her look like she was wearing high-heeled pumps. She never strayed. This was home. She had work to do and she'd be responsible about it. When the barn wasn't being cleaned and her charge wasn't outside in the paddock, she'd be in his stall with him. Occasionally I'd hear her small voice.

Some days I didn't ride. Some days I'd ride early and she would still be in with her patient. Once the weather turned warm I brought my dog out with me. I'd ride and she'd sit in the car, her face hanging out the open back window. She could watch the comings and goings and I thought it made new pictures in her head

—something different to watch later in the long hours when I was at work. I imagined those pictures unrolling like a movie reel. After I'd finished riding I'd let the dog out, and she'd snuff and run with the stable dogs and dip in and out of the barn, checking on me.

The wall phone was near the tack room and I was making a call. The dog loped into the barn, gave me a wet nose and disappeared into the tack room. I finished my call and whistled for her. She was slow to respond and when she came out her muzzle was white and milky. "Where've you been? What's on your face?" and I dipped toward her and grabbed her collar. I sniffed at her mouth and learned nothing. There was no odour. Great, I thought. It's worming paste for the horses or poison for the rats. She's going to be sick. I went into the second barn where the stable crew was mucking out. Still holding the dog by her collar, I asked, "What's white in the first barn tack room that my dog would have eaten?"

"The goat. She had her babies. Twins. For two days she was fine. Then she developed an infection. The vet was here all night. Intravenous and everything. She

died early this morning. The babies are being bottle-fed over at another place."

"But what's the white stuff on my dog's face?"

"That's the goat's. We milked her before she got sick. It's okay. Not infected or anything. We were giving it to the babies."

I let go of the dog and she jogged back to the first barn. The dear goat. So stylish in her bandanna and high-heeled pumps. So earnest and pale and conscientious. Quiet about the things she had to do. Dignity. That goat had dignity.

I followed the dog back to the tack room. She was snuffling at a plastic tub. In the bottom were two inches or so of the goat's milk. "Let's go." I knelt next to the dog and with two fingers scooped some of the milk off her chin. It was thick, not white but ivory, like Devon cream.

Here it is, I thought. Another one of those silvery ribbon moments, a sliver of light, a brief transcendence, grace, a gift, and I put my fingers into my mouth. ♦

Meeka Walsh is the executive editor of Border Crossings. Her first book, Ordinary Magic: Intervals in a Life, was published in May by Turnstone Press.



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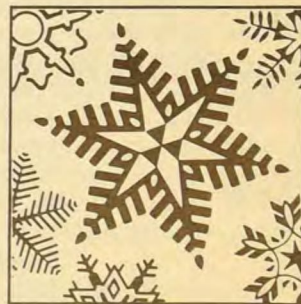
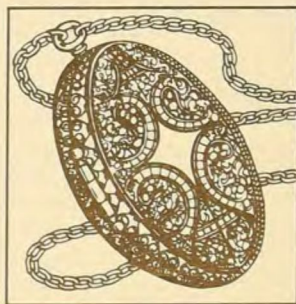
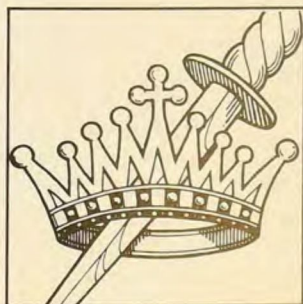
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A ROSE FOR MARGIE GILLIS

Your body unfolds
a lexicon

of idioms, your hands, your hair
the muscles around your knee

your thick ankles
and your hips jiggling

(Molly Bloom in a loose dress
on the empty stage in the hard light

of everyone watching
and listening) two

fat freckles on your thigh
and oh, when you leap, the sound

of your feet flat
on the floor

and the push
of your spread fingers

make the air in my lungs
feel dangerous

as a tide
or a moonlit hour alone

and i don't know
how

but your eyes when they look up
once at the end

release
my heart

OUT OF THE CRADLE

rock is not the bottom.
there is no bottom.
there are no lines either.

there is money, of course
but never enough.

there is moonlight and water.
there is romance. there are children.
and acrobats. and those who kill for fun.

there are lists and promises.
there are betrayals. dust

comes in through tight windows.

there are dreams
that make us
crazy and sad
when we suck them
from t. v. screens
all the way into our blood.

there are birds, graceful
silhouettes in just the lightest
wash of blush magenta near the end
of day. and there are
birds who eat the eggs
of other birds.

there is the sea
endlessly rocking
stones
at the edge
of the mind. and there

are tiny survivors
the eye can't see
who split and go on
splitting and the first
is also the last
because they're one
and the same.

DOUBLE WRECK TANGLE for Nettifer

There is no language for this
there are only words: *delight*
and *failure* lift like aimless
birds from this memory I have
of absolute piano the violins
the birch fire flaming up and
the intimate soft but now and
then awkward moves we forgave
our muscles for so completely
there because we did not want
to let the days and nights of
privacy build their invisible
walls between us for a second
longer and we have never been
closer or more beautiful slap
happy as kids discovering new
ways to please each other and
the shadows ate us and we ate
the light that flamed over us
and in our eyes even the slip

of an elbow or an eyelid did
not feel rejected or unloved
and now in the chillout of a
white freeze frame I scratch
ice from the car windows and
close my cumbersome hangover
around this unwiltable image
I have of us inside the fire
light and the music and that
starry promise disintegrates
in the light that fills with
tiny diamonds and a headache
begins to pull its conundrum
tight around this cold fever
because I hold you more than
I want to inside my personal
sense of doom like a blossom
I need to ignore because the
only language I know has not
said the words of your dream

REVIEWS

RISKY HISTORY

Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age

by Modris Eksteins

Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989

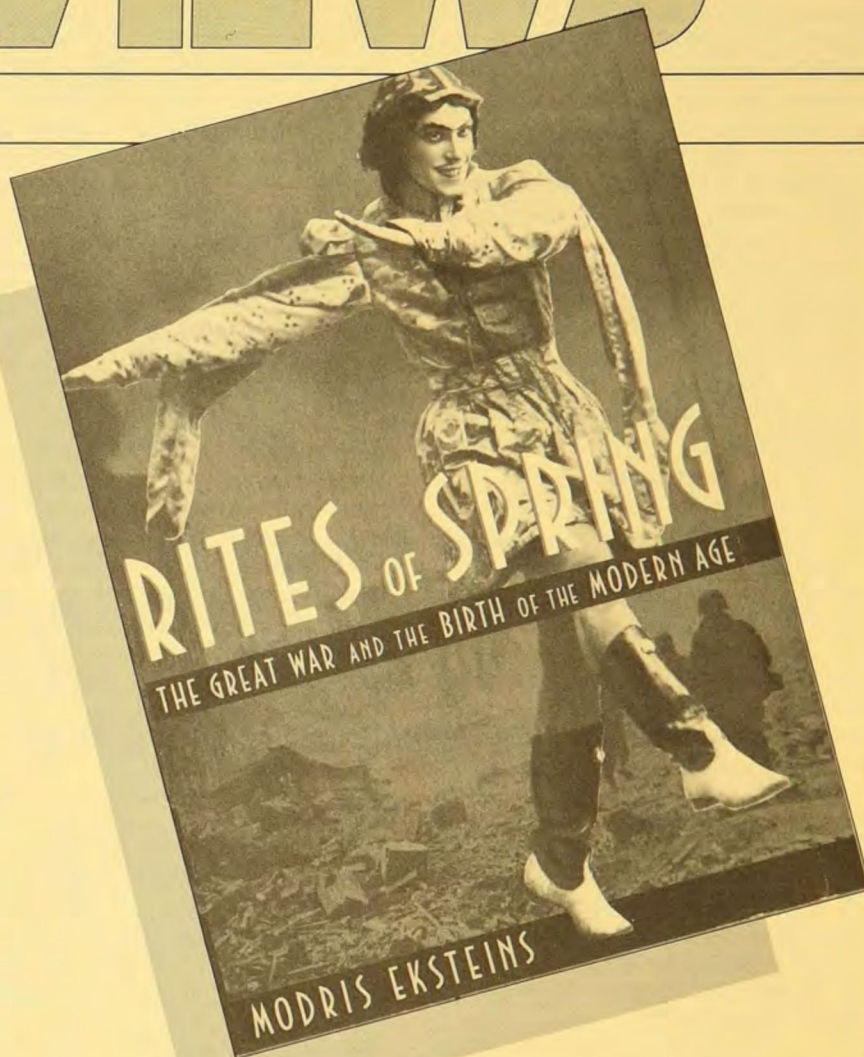
396 pages

Hardcover, \$26.95

REVIEW BY MARK ABLEY

What kind of an age is it, I occasionally wonder, that has no name for itself but postmodernist? An age, I suppose, of whispers, cackles and echoes—an age that tries to look at the future, yet still needs to define itself by relation to the past. In literature, even now, our unspoken heroes—the exemplary models for our inner lives—tend to be the men and women who shattered convention early in the 20th century: Rilke and Kafka, Joyce and Stein, Proust and Mandelstam, all the “sad captains” of the high modernist enterprise. Lovers and practitioners of the other arts, too, still find themselves retaining a ghostly image of the original modernists as an emblem of courage, of grace and good fortune. Their shadows hang heavily over our endeavours: “Philip Glass may have talent,” we find ourselves thinking, “but he sure as hell isn’t Stravinsky.”

With the kind of provocative, iconoclastic judgement that so distinguishes *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*, Modris Eksteins looks on Stravinsky, Diaghilev and the Ballets russes as symbols of another brand entirely. “The *Rite of Spring*,” he suggests, “which was first performed in Paris in May 1913, a year before the outbreak of war, is, with its rebellious energy and its celebration of life through sacrificial death, perhaps the emblematic oeuvre of a twentieth-century world that, in its pursuit of life, has killed off millions of its best human beings. Stravinsky intended initially to entitle his score *The Victim*.”



It's clear from the first pages that Eksteins takes the arts very seriously. On one level, his book is a brave attempt to rescue the writing of history from the tedious number-crunchers, thereby retrieving it for the domain of literature and for the general reader; more importantly, perhaps, Eksteins treats the arts as a cause as well as an effect, and as a profound agent of historical changes rather than as a mere witness to them. He demands that artists behave responsibly; when they don't, he pulls no punches. In a wonderfully ambiguous line, he suggests: “The unknown soldier stands front and centre in our story. He is Stravinsky's victim.”

Rites of Spring is a risky book—the most audacious work of cultural history I've read in years. To make a symbolic equation between the sacrificial dancer in Diaghilev's ballet and the sacrificed soldiers in the First World War is an innocuous enough proposition; but Eksteins has failed in his intent if, by the book's end, his readers are not convinced that all those slaughtered boys and men were, on a poetic level, also the victims of Stravinsky, Diaghilev, Nijinsky and their fellow modernists.

Eksteins's own position, as far as one can tell, is that of the classic humanist: he decries the myths and propaganda of the

Great War, as a result of which "the world became a figment of imagination rather than imagination being a figment of the world." To transcend the physical world has been, of course, the prime imaginative goal of many a great—and bad—artist. Writers have often taken it as a noble aim. Eksteins will have none of it. If art veils or denies the truth, he believes it deserves condemnation. Among his most shrewd and acute suggestions is that the kitsch art so favoured in the Third Reich bears an intimate relationship to modernist forms of art we usually revere.

His range of reference is startling. In a single sentence early in the book, Eksteins plausibly links together Isadora Duncan, muscular Christianity, the creation of the modern Olympics, the rise of the Boy Scouts, and the liberation of women from whalebone corsets. The book's title rightly

world became an affair of rats and trenches, of amputation and mutilation, soldiers and civilians alike took refuge in a landscape of the mind. "This imagined landscape," Eksteins suggests, "was bound to fade when the war was over, and with its disappearance, modernism, which in its prewar form was a culture of hope, a vision of synthesis, would turn to a culture of nightmare and denial." Although the author does not pursue the point, it seems to me that this process helps to explain the appeal of Marxism to so many young intellectuals in the following generation. At a time of rupture and economic depression, Marxism seemed to hold out the possibility of a renewed synthesis—a reconciliation of the social and cultural spheres. This hope, like so many others, would prove illusory.

Eksteins's previous books, written mainly for an academic audience, have

our athletes, journalists, politicians and (especially) businessmen, and you'll find a slavish devotion to the imagery and metaphors of war. Eksteins accuses Dada artists of playing "war games of the mind"; the Dadaists are by no means alone. Incidentally, it's one of Eksteins's rare but telling statistics that struck me as his single most shocking line in the whole book: by the end of the Second World War, "for every ton of bombs the Germans had dropped from the sky on Britain, the Allies—mainly Britain and America—had dropped 315 tons on Germany."

That kind of fact, that kind of sudden perception, exemplifies the value of *Rites of Spring*. Time after time, Eksteins nudges us into reimagining what we thought we already knew. Discussing the war itself, for instance, he focusses not so much on the disillusionment of soldiers as on their continuing willingness to fight. After all, few engaged in mutiny compared to the many who died like cattle. With their senses dulled and numbed, they lived by reflex and blind duty. As meaning became harder and harder to locate in any political vision, the soldiers grasped for meaning in their loyalty to comrades. The only freedom they could find lay in the death's-edge equality and tremulous fraternity of life in the trenches. And so it proved impossible to rebel against the war without also turning one's back on the fellow sufferers—the men who, alone, gave the war a breath of purpose.

Bolshevism, Italian fascism, Nazism. In the wake of the Great War, all these political experiments attracted the hope and faith of artists. As Eksteins explains, such movements "seemed to capture the mystique of the avant-garde movements of an earlier day: to embrace life, to rebel against bourgeois sterility, to hate respectable society, and above all to revolt—to bring about a radical revaluation of all values." One is left wondering whether the avant-garde has, by its very nature, a totalitarian streak.

And when the Red Army was entering the ruined city of Berlin, when a secluded Adolf Hitler was preparing his suicide, the staff in his underground bunker began to dance. ♦

Mark Abley is the book editor of *The Gazette in Montreal*. His last contribution to *Border Crossings* was two poems in Volume 8, Number 3.

"And when the Red Army was entering the ruined city of Berlin, when a secluded Adolf Hitler was preparing his suicide, the staff in his underground bunker began to dance."

implies that one of its central motifs is dance; and Eksteins not only understands the history of the Ballets russes, he also knows about the chief of Kaiser Wilhelm's military cabinet, a count who liked to dress up in a tutu and do pirouettes in front of the admiring emperor.

The paramount weakness of *Rites of Spring* lies in Eksteins's unfortunate tendency to make arresting generalizations which tell only half or two-thirds of the truth. It's way too simplistic, for example, to say that "Germany . . . represented the idea of revolution in this war." In one extraordinary section, Eksteins indicates that Germany was "the traitor" at the outbreak of war. Describing the German fury at Britain's involvement, he writes: "Here was reasoning worthy of the modern aesthetic. The victim, not the murderer, is guilty." Britain's hands were not so clean—nor "the modern aesthetic" so utterly shameless and contemptible—as that passage implies.

Eksteins locates the essence of modernity in the divorce of the social from the cultural realm of experience. As the outer

concentrated on Germany, and his comments on German culture in *Rites of Spring* have a particular force. In many respects, his description of Germany on the eve of the Great War could well apply to the USA today, with both nations pursuing a *Weltpolitik* that leaves little room for, or interest in, the fears and wishes of other countries. Imperial Germany in those days, like imperial America now, believed in a national mission for itself and actively promoted the ideas of technical efficiency, progress and change. Both countries had a weakness for gaudy theatrical spectacle: Disney World, it could be argued, is the Bayreuth of the late 20th century. Both Germany and America, too, have been anxious to deny history.

Other sections of *Rites of Spring* also invite a comparison between European past and the North American present. Describing the mood of a German student in 1914, Eksteins observes that "war as reality . . . is denounced and lamented, but as idea, inspiration, and means, it is applauded." Don't we suffer from a dose of the same schizophrenia? Listen to the language of

PERSONAL NOTES

*16th Annual Winnipeg Folk Festival
Birds Hill Park, July 6-9, 1989*

REVIEW BY JAMES LESLIE DONAHUE

Winnipeg, popular wisdom has it, experiences the coldest winter of any large urban centre on planet earth. At the winter solstice (Christmas/Chanukkah) locals are known to string more holiday lights than any people anywhere. Winnipeg also has very hot summers and near the midsummer solstice Winnipeggers throw a wonderful celebration, the near-legendary Winnipeg Folk Festival. It's a kind of four-day musical brigadoon that has taken place every second weekend in July for 16 years. I know folks who think the festival is the *only* reason for staying in a place with such horrible winters.

From modest beginnings in 1973, the Folk Festival has grown spectacularly in size, artistic scope and international reputation. To call it a cultural institution would be to miss the point. It's more like a point on some secular ritual calendar. Forty thousand people attend the event, many from thousands of miles away. People plan their summers around it. Eight hundred volunteers staff the event; some have been volunteering since the first year. Hundreds of performers come from all over the place and go away unanimously singing the festival's praises. The program is 100 pages long; there are lists of stages, campgrounds and schedules; there are testimonial letters from government officials. The list of board members and major sponsors reads like a Who's Who of Winnipeg society. The campgrounds at beautiful Birds Hill Park start to fill a week before the festival. The best party in the west goes on for days after the festival tents have been folded up for another year. The local, national and international media come in droves. A mainstage performance could launch a career—there's always some rumour of mega-stars hiding incognito in the crowd. It's a time and place where anything can happen. Brigadoon for sure, but with a touch of Barnum and Bailey.

I've been a folksinger by trade since I left school in the early '60s. I always liked the intimacy and relative lack of artifice offered by the folk tradition. I decided this year it was time for me to retire, "to hang

up the axe." If I were a good-looking 23-year-old mesomorph with a trust fund, a BBA and three sharp lawyers, I might consider going on. But the "bizz" is no place for a skinny middle-aged introvert with no money.

I performed at the first Winnipeg Folk Festival and subsequently at four others. I've attended all but the 1984 edition. This year I was going to stay away. I thought it would hurt too much. It was a little like going back to the office after retirement, without the gold watch.

As the festival weekend approached, however, my curiosity got the best of me. Firstly, I wanted to see how the festival's Artistic Director, Rosalie Goldstein, would deal with the changing tastes of a younger audience. Secondly, I wanted to see if Jane Siberry could inspire me as much as when I heard her at last year's festival.

A previous era of folk festivals in the '60s had foundered when popular tastes veered in the direction of electrified rock and roll. Music traditionalists were mortified when Bobby Dylan plugged in his Fender at the 1967 Newport Folk Festival. Newport died; Dylan lived on. There was some danger that newer festivals like Winnipeg's would suffer the same fate. There is a new generation at about the same age as Dylan's early audience was in '65. Their tastes are different. Youth, as we all know, is the fuel of the music bizz and for the festival to thrive it has to get the kids out. But you have to keep the old audience happy as well—the baby-boomers are a significant economic reality and they love music.

Rosalie Goldstein, in her third year as Festival Director, did a seamless job of bringing together almost every aspect of the contemporary music scene. There was Celtic balladry, Quebecois harmonica, Bluegrass, Roots rock 'n roll, Post-punk Nouveaux Folk-rock, Blues, Zydeco, Dub poetry, protest songs, dance music, kids' music, humour, story-telling, banjo-picking, new songwriting, novelty acts and even a medicine show. I can only comment on some of the performances in detail (there was too much for anyone to see). But as I wandered the site over the four days I was impressed by the consistently high quality of musicianship and showmanship. The Washington Squares might have murdered Leonard Cohen's "Everybody Knows," but that was about the only clunker I heard all weekend.

The new internationalism in music was brilliantly exemplified by Ashwin Batish. This affable, classically trained guitarist

combines genuine ragas with rock arrangements replete with electronic sequencing. His "Sitar Power" show brings the wonders of East Indian music to a new generation of westerners. He's a natural successor to Ravi Shankar.

Ecological issues have brought political concerns back into the mainstream music scene. Many performers touched on these matters at the Winnipeg Folk Festival. The one that really moved me was Shingoose and his band—wickedly called The Indian Act. Shingoose is one of my favourite North American performers. He's urbane, but however profound his theme, there is always a light touch and a genuine warmth. When "Goose" sang of mother earth and Indian country the efforts of Sting looked a little pale and stagey. This guy's a major talent, musically and spiritually.

The left-wing, working-class arm of folk balladry was very much alive in the person of Billy Bragg. His straightforward songs and new guitar accompaniment have won him a large and growing following (mostly 20 and under). Unfortunately, I missed his afternoon concert, but my younger friends filled me in with cryptic, enthusiastic reviews: "far out," "dynamite" and "really neat" adequately describe the range of critical responses. What really impressed me was how Billy took lots of time to mingle with his fans, signing t-shirts and posing with people for pictures. In an Appolonia phase of musical culture, it's nice to see a star with a human touch.

Black musical literature in the form of Rap has been the biggest industry event since the early hard-core scene. While there was no Rap band at the festival we did get to hear some fantastic Dub poetry, its Caribbean equivalent. Lillian Allen's fierce presentation of human rights issues and women's issues was nothing short of breath-taking. I'd like to hear a whole evening of her stuff.

Purely traditional forms were beautifully represented at this year's festival. I was enchanted by Loreena McKennitt's masterful presentation of Celtic music and educated by the collaboration between Rubena Sinha and Kay Stone. These two combined traditional East Indian dance with world folk-tales. Deep stuff that left me wanting more. My own special interest is North American music. The Red Clay Ramblers did a set of early American band material that was very current, but the astonishing thing about the show was its flawless musicology. Throughout this year's festival, tradition was well served.

Outdoor festivals are best summed up in cameos, tiny moments, vignettes. As I was walking by the mainstage on Saturday night I noticed three or four youngish-looking women holding hands and doing a highly spontaneous skip-dance. One of them was Rosalie Goldstein. The festival was cooking, the rain had held off and Rosalie had successfully demonstrated how pop and folk, past and future can be a symbiotic process.

The Sunday of the festival had started badly for me. I missed a ride and was too late to catch Billy Bragg. As I waited for a bus by Portage Place I reflected on how austere and bleak downtown Winnipeg looks on a Sunday. The few people who were around seemed miserable. Police cars crawled by regularly. Across the street two men were having a heated argument that looked potentially violent. It was all a little too much like American TV. My bus came by, mercifully, and I transferred to one of the shuttle vans that took performers and press from the International Inn to the festival site. The village-like atmosphere was such a nice contrast to downtown. My day started looking brighter. And then because of all the conversation, address-exchanging and re-connecting with friends who'd soon be on airplanes to other places, I hardly got to listen to any music. I wasn't really worried about missing things, though. Sunday was the night Jane Siberry performed on the mainstage and that was my other reason for being at the Folk Festival.

Jane was scheduled as the penultimate act of the entire event. I wondered how such a quiet performer could handle a crowd that had been partying for days. She was doing it solo as well, accompanied only by an acoustic guitar. I was frightened for her and wondered if drunken yahoos would spoil the mood.

Predictably, after Siberry's first song there was a very rude catcall from the back of the crowd. It's an inverse testimony to her quiet power that the "music as beer ad" set becomes almost violent in their reaction to her work. I was relieved that the heckler shut up after she compared him to the "20,000 drunk Northern Europeans" she'd met at another festival. She proceeded faultlessly, intensely, through her set. Sometimes she played guitar; at other times she conducted her intimate songs with her left hand in the manner of a choir teacher. There was no adrenalin in her performance but there was excitement; there was no ego but there was focus. There is an atmosphere around Siberry that is unlike

anything I've ever witnessed: a sense of an extraordinary intelligence and an equivalent loving kindness. A brocade butterfly painting with silver lasers is about as close as I can get to describing my impression. Not everybody feels it, but most do. When Jane is on stage you genuinely feel that you've met a friend.

I thought of Cockburn's "Festival of Friends" and all the things that sustained my own 20-year journey in music. I remembered *why* we play songs. I wanted to go home and write. Bob Dylan once said that the purpose of the artist is to inspire others. Just when I thought I couldn't go on, Jane did that for me. Her encore piece was a magnificent little song with a chorus that comes to my mind whenever I'm getting lonely or afraid. "You don't want someone to need you, you don't need someone to want you, you can get it from yourself, you can get it from yourself." As I listened I realized that I could never stop singing or writing, even if it was only to be shared with a few friends.

As much as I wanted to hear the finale of the festival, I felt that I needed some quiet time after Siberry's set. In the backstage performers' area there was a sense of dénouement. The circus was about to leave town. About a dozen people were wandering around a cafeteria tent that just a day before had seated hundreds. As we chatted it became apparent that all of us had come backstage for the same reason. We'd heard Jane Siberry and we wanted some silence. I've gone to numberless concerts in my life and never known any performer to have had such a powerfully quieting effect on people.

As I left the wind-up party at the International Inn, I worked up the nerve to thank Jane for being here. I asked if she'd be back. "Maybe this fall," she said, "with the band." My reaction was more one of relief than excitement. In a world out of whack, in a city that looks like a Brinks truck, in a musical milieu that's become unrecognizably commercial, once in a while I need to hear a gentle voice. As long as people like Jane, Shingoose, Loreena McKennitt, Kay Stone and Rubena Sinha, and Billy Bragg can find safe places to share their thoughts and their music, I'm convinced that there's hope for us all. Although I'd be quite happy to spend Christmas almost anywhere else, I'm already planning to be in Winnipeg next July for the 17th annual festival. ♦

James Leslie Donahue is a folksinger and writer who lives in Winnipeg.

MS. BUTTERFLY

Lepidoptera

Contemporary Dancers

Choreography by Tedd Robinson;

music by Ahmed Hassan, Aaron Davis,

Debbie Danbrook and Allen Cole;

set by Michel Lemieux

REVIEW BY MELINDA McCracken

In spring 1988, the board of Contemporary Dancers chose a risky strategy. It handed most of the company's entire 1988/89 artistic budget of \$75,000 over to Tedd Robinson to create a major work. It suspended its subscription series for the season and, except for a choreographic workshop, there were no fall or winter performances.

Many people around and within the company thought this was dangerous. Tough and exciting, but was it wise? The company would have no box office revenues until spring 1989. The whole weight of the year's achievement would rest on a single work by the company's young artistic director. Could the company sustain audience interest on the strength of this one creation? Audiences could decline, and money could be lost. People worried. Some long-time fans and funding bodies did, in fact, pull out.

On Tedd Robinson's quirky shoulders fell the responsibility to deliver. He came through smelling of roses and looking like a butterfly. Robinson seized the opportunity to do what he wanted. He regularly takes big risks and in spite of the pressure he made no concessions to audience expectations. The result is a brilliant piece of dance. When it was premiered in Brandon in April 1989 the choreographer neither explained nor apologized for the piece and while its strangeness confounded a large percentage of the audience, they still gave *Lepidoptera* a standing ovation. It's as if they instinctively recognized they'd seen something excellent. What they were seeing on stage was a culmination of a particular period in the history of contemporary dance in Canada, a history in which Tedd Robinson is playing a progressively larger part. One of Robinson's initial influences was Lindsay Kemp, a British mime and punk who was more interested in theatre than in dance. Coupled with his awareness of the radical experiments in "Tanz Teater" being conducted by Germany's Pina Bausch, Robinson began to develop his own sense of the possibilities of combining dance and theatre.



Lepidoptera (1989), choreography by Tedd Robinson, Dancer Karen Kuzak. Photograph Bruce Monk

Lepidoptera is based on Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, Tedd's favourite opera. He also likes *Sayonara*, the movie based on *Madame Butterfly*, with Marlon Brando as Pinkerton and Suzie Wong as Cho Cho San.

In Tedd's *Lepidoptera*, there are no lavish evocations of Japan. No butterflies, no golden brocaded artistry, no white-faced geishas hobbling around in ornate costumes and head-dresses. There is no narrative and no story. The stage is bare except for two panels framed in black wood and covered in gauze and glass—crude versions of the screens found in Japanese tea-houses.

The costumes are soft and simple, like the velour warm-up clothes modern dancers used to wear in rehearsal. There are four costumes—the cream sailor costume worn by the male dancers; the soft blue women's costume with bell-bottom pants and loose tops exposing bare midriffs; the red siren costumes, with long skirts slit up the front, and which bare one shoulder; and the faded green, cream and blue tutus worn by Fiona Drinnan, D-Anne Kuby and Tanya Lockyer. These tutus are faded and tatty, the colours ugly. Somewhere in these adjustments to the costumes is a suggestion that the heroics and romanticism

of ballet are irrelevant to the present age. Over the tutus the three women sometimes wear long silk kimonos. While the kimono is a Japanese garment, it also evokes the sleaziness of someone halfway out of bed. The kimono has been used in other CD works.

Lepidoptera improvises on the theme of heartbreak and loss, as inspired by the relationship between Cho Cho San and Pinkerton. It succeeds in evoking aspects of these most unendurable human emotions.

Tedd conveys loss in many ways, through Drinnan's hysterical thrashing—gibberish and wild grimaces and grotesque positions; through Gary Tai carrying D-Anne Kuby in his arms to the footlights, showing only the whites of his eyes; in the "Shoes" sequence when Fiona Drinnan—talking gibberish as usual—picks up white plastic shoes scattered about the stage. As fast as she picks them up, they slip out of her arms. Her fumbling futility is an active correlative to the sense of loss that sets the tone from the original story. A rare moment of pleasure is provided by hip-swishing, tempting sirens.

In the dance's climax, Bruce Mitchell stretches his arms upwards and outwards over one of the panels in the screen and

then in an agonizingly slow movement pulls down the white gauze, tearing long black holes in it. Tanya Lockyer lies under the screen's heavy glass panel. Dancers come and gently lift it off her body, turn it into a bier and then place her on top of it.

Ahmed Hassan's music is wonderful. He has included snatches of *Madame Butterfly*, a heavy electronic synthesizer beat and low throbbing sounds from a strange North African horn. Some segments of the music are pre-recorded, others are played live.

The dancing is harsh and brutal in large part because the dancers never get a chance to pause or recover. But they are superb, doing everything Tedd asks of them. They serve his difficult concept magnificently.

Lepidoptera is brilliant. It has, admittedly, some weaknesses—the tone sometimes slips into self-mockery and the strange movements sometimes evoke titters. At the same time, it is a major dance, totally new, and evidence of a fairly courageous and radical understanding of the risks dance must run if it's going to remain lively. ♦

Melinda McCracken is a freelance writer who lives in Winnipeg. She has just completed a book on *Contemporary Dancers Canada*.

FATHERS AND FILMS

Winnipeg Film Group Premieres
June 30 - July 9, 1989

REVIEW BY K. GEORGE GODWIN

The Winnipeg Film Group followed up its January "We're in the Movies" showcase with midsummer premieres of six new local films. While this fresh batch of works failed to match the highs—and lows—of the earlier event, the six films continued to display the range and variety of local film-making.

The series included three WFG workshop productions, group efforts made under the supervision of experienced film-makers. *Swanson's Nightmare*, with John Kozak in charge, is a functional little thriller about a man driven to death by his own paranoia. Rather predictable and talky, its chief distinction is an over-the-top performance by Rick Match as Swanson; Match seems to subscribe to the Bruce Dern flare-your-nostrils-and-bare-your-teeth school of acting.

The two brief documentaries produced by the Janis Cole workshop were slight but well made. *When Worlds Collide* pays an amusing visit to the locker room of an amateur hockey team and gets the players to explain why they play the game—for the fun, the exercise, the camaraderie. Then it shows the disintegration of the game into a brutal fight—also, as the goalie explains, a bit of fun. In *Death: The Impossible Escape*, the film-makers have captured a rather engaging and articulate interview with escape artist Dean Gunnarson, who in explaining why he does things which seem completely insane makes them sound quite reasonable.

The main points of interest in the series, however, were two longer films. Allan Schinkel's *The Monster in the Coalbin* is an effective little children's film about overcoming fear. An eight-year-old boy whose parents have recently separated comes to focus all his insecurities on the monster he's been told lives in the coal-bin of his new house. When it becomes certain that his father won't be coming home again, he gathers his courage and goes to confront the beast, which vanishes in the face of his growing maturity.

Schinkel exhibits a fine grasp of traditional narrative technique; his camerawork and editing are impeccable as he constructs the simple story through details of character

and setting. His work with the actors (particularly the children in the cast) is assured; the film gains much of its charm from relaxed, natural performances.

At the opposite end of the scale is Laurence Mardon's *The Sad Fate of the Girl, Justine, at the Hands of the Marquis de Sade*. More interesting but less successful, this first film is nothing if not ambitious. Mardon has set himself the task of making a "film of ideas," embodying an argument in images. To this end, the film's structure is highly schematic. But because the four characters are for the most part underdeveloped ciphers, in the end the point of the argument remains vague.

The action revolves around the deathbed of the Marquis de Sade (a quirky performance by Michael Saurette). A pompous

for an ally against degeneracy, but he's drawn to the erotic Juliette. She offers to help her sister gain his attention (by bringing Justine's repressed sexuality into play). The priest rejects Justine in horror and de Sade strangles her before dying himself.

De Sade and the priest are mirror images, both rife with the same libidinal energies. But the priest is contained within a cocoon of hypocritical religious and social rules. His religion is a tool for disguising/repressing his desire; his defence is to project that desire onto Justine, the blank screen of innocence. This theme of projection is central to the film: in two major scenes, Plato is quoted (first by de Sade, then by the priest). The chains which bind the slaves in Plato's cave, the film says, are the constricting rules of society. What the

and thus a dead end; its inner contradiction is that it requires victims. In order to have this freedom you must enslave and sacrifice others (women, of course, and other powerless elements in the existing order).

The film's argument resolves itself into a conflict between the father as protector and as destroyer. ("Father" is the most frequently repeated word in the film.) Since this figure, however, always demands total obedience, the protector is actually a hypocrite. There can be no "good" father except a dead one. De Sade hates the father, then becomes him and finally dies in order to make way for his successor. In other words, freedom means becoming the father (thus excluding women who become the sacrifices which confirm paternal power) and becoming the father means death.

as well give in to those libidinal urges. As presented in the film there is no political content in de Sade's philosophy, just a depressing focus on insatiable personal desire. In other words, conceived as an answer to a repressive social order, it is itself repressive and finally has nothing to say.

Even though the film runs itself into a philosophical cul de sac, it manages to achieve a visual elegance quite impressive in a first effort. Although the editing is at times jarringly crude, the black and white photography by Michael Marshall and the production design by Gordon Wilding are imaginative and effectively dreamlike. Perhaps the film's intricate structure would not seem quite so strained if the unresolved ideas had been buttressed by a fully



The Sad Fate of the Girl, Justine, at the Hands of the Marquis de Sade, directed by Laurence Mardon, 1989. Photograph Gerry Turchyn

priest (the entertaining Allen Mills) arrives to administer the last rites, but finds the debauched de Sade unrepentant. Despite the title, the film actually centres on the figure of the priest. Bound by the rules of religion and social rectitude, he represents the world against which de Sade has rebelled. As a final act, de Sade intends to shatter that world in the priest. His tools are his two daughters, the sexpot Juliette (Miranda Platt) and the innocent Justine (Jennifer Griller). Justine looks to the priest

slaves see are the distorted shadows of their own true desires. By destroying the "innocence" embodied in Justine the priest is ultimately freed from his hypocrisy and liberated from the cave into the light of truth.

But of what does this liberation and this truth consist? It's at this point that the film (and de Sade) become really problematic. There is, in de Sade's idea of freedom, a fundamental contradiction. Not simply because this freedom is purely reactive, a negative image of the existing social order

A question remains about the point Laurence Mardon is trying to make. He begins with a title saying that de Sade considered himself to be *the* philosopher of the French Revolution. Does this mean that the Revolution was corrupt from the start? Or that de Sade was deluded by his own fantasies? The film presents the Marquis's philosophy as a relentlessly nihilistic closed system; one can live either as a hypocrite or a libertine—but either way the end point is death, so one might

developed narrative and more roundly drawn characters.

In this instance, Laurence Mardon's ambition has exceeded his reach; I hope the next time out he can extend that reach rather than rein in the ambition. *The Sad Fate* holds out the promise of highly original work to come. ♦

K. George Godwin regularly reviews film for *Border Crossings*.

THE ESSENTIAL ENIGMA OF GLENN GOULD

Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations
by Otto Friedrich
Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989
441 pages
Hardcover, \$27.95

REVIEW BY ROBERT QUICKENDEN

It has been seven years since Glenn Gould died. The interim has been marked by collections of articles and a sustained attempt to probe his private world. Now comes the official biography, a book far more interesting and less pretentious than that designation implies.

Otto Friedrich begins his book with a review of the strange afterlife of this reclusive man. In September of 1987 the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art presented eight concerts by Gould, projected on a screen 20 feet high. In the Netherlands, a Glenn Gould Society has been formed, complete with a regularly published glossy magazine. There are frequent colloquia and symposia hosted by various international organizations. And then there is the archive itself in the National Library of Canada which contains everything from his famous scarves and mufflers, to letters, cancelled cheques and a curious book of blank pages entitled *Essence of an Enigma*. And, of course, there are the recordings and the documentaries, all of which can be heard at the flick of a switch.

These opening pages present a kind of cultural phantasmagoria, a reminder that the visual and aural technologies of our time create a world of perfect simultaneity where the profound and the absurd are common bedfellows.

Gould loved that simultaneity (whether in the form of listening to several conversations in a diner, or the contrapuntal talk of the radio documentaries) and he lived within a labyrinth of sound which ensured his privacy and nurtured his genius. He was always revealing and concealing himself, and technology allowed him to play that game in ever more elaborate forms.

Gould used the word "autobiography" frequently in his essays and interviews, and understandably so: every recording was so unmistakably his, with a style of performance that was inimitable even at its most

*"Perhaps his greatest desire out of this intense privacy
was to reach someone, not so much
for his own sake as for what
he found in music . . ."*

perverse. He referred to his documentary *The Idea of North* as the closest he ever came to autobiography. He considered writing his memoirs and, in that quintessentially Gouldian piece—"Glenn Gould Interviews Glenn Gould about Glenn Gould"—developed a kind of parody of confession.

To read his biography is to read the signs, to look for the impulse of self-revelation that surfaced so often in a man who threw himself with such passion into all that he did. Friedrich weaves together the work and the man until, when you reach the chapter on private life, it only seems to confirm, in personal terms, what has gone before in his professional life.

Friedrich brings much illuminating detail to this central paradox of solitude versus communication which lies at the heart of Gould's creative efforts. In an interview with Jonathan Cott, Gould described the month spent convalescing in the Vier Jahreszeiten Hotel in Hamburg in 1958 when he came to know the "exaltation" that comes of perfect solitude. Friedrich provides a context for that event, showing that Gould never quite forgot the external world. He was delighted to receive the recording of his Beethoven "First Piano Concerto" performance and found it to be full of *joie de vivre*, an opinion apparently shared by a passing chambermaid who stopped to listen and then respectfully withdrew.

Gould's desire to be alone, to be no longer complicit in the web of human will and ambition, was often countered by his attempts to deal with the world through a strange, manic humour. His withdrawal from the concert stage very nearly coincided with Horowitz's return after several years' absence and this provoked Gould to compose a bizarre musical parody of the

returning artist which, for years after, Gould harassed Columbia to record.

But Gould also sought to make more serious music and the chapter on composing is one of the most interesting in the book. In his puzzling failure to create original work you can again see the contradictions of the man playing themselves out. All Gould's efforts at composing seemed to end in either imitation or parody. The only completed composition, the "String Quartet," is a musical anachronism, a beautiful imitation of a late 19th-century style. It is written in the key of F minor which Gould thought best expressed his own personality because it was "halfway between complex and stable, between upright and lascivious, between gray and highly tinted. . . . There is," Gould goes on to say in support of the key and his own character, "a certain obliqueness." That captures well the complexities of a man who was equally fascinated by the rigours of Bach's counterpoint and the autumnal romanticism of Richard Strauss.

His list of projects is itself revelatory. One of these was a TV opera based on Kafka's *Metamorphosis* as well as a "quasi-autobiographical opera," as Gould described it, about an aging composer who composes in a style that belongs to a preceding century.

Nothing came of all this. "It's all either Schoenberg or Brahms, what I write," he complained to Leonard Bernstein. Perhaps, as Friedrich suggests, he knew too much of the great music of the past, or he lacked original creative ability, or was too much the perfectionist. Perhaps that obsessive need for control never allowed him the freedom to take creative risks.

But the need to do more than just record the work of others led Gould to a different kind of creative effort: the radio

documentaries. They were the product of a fascination with the human voice as heard on the radio, a voice that provided, Gould wrote, "something quite special . . . the original human contact, that incredible, spine-tingling sense of awareness of some other human voice and persona." This statement reveals a powerful sense of intimacy which guards itself against the kind of technology that allows contact and distance at the same time.

In the documentaries the voices are subject to the structural forces of composition and yet the result is a strange hybrid, something caught between creativity and a kind of inspired manipulation. To understand my point you have only to listen to the puzzling ending of *The Idea of North* where the grandeur of the conclusion of Sibelius's "Fifth Symphony" sounds over the rather incoherent efforts of the narrator describing just what going north means. At times I feel these pieces might have worked better as a parody of the world we live in: Gould orchestrates a bewildering babel of simultaneous voices in which truth and lies are confused in the same monotony.

Whatever the creative endeavour, Gould always thought art should aspire to a state of wonder and serenity. "Art on its highest mission is scarcely human at all," he wrote. In this serene, ecstatic state we're able to rid ourselves of the contradictory and the perverse. To be inhuman does not imply something sinister; rather, it evokes a state of non-sensual passion.

In the account of the last years of Gould's life, you feel enormous tension and a sense of price being exacted. He seems to have sensed this himself in his fascination with the doomed figure of Adrian Leverkühn in Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus*. Friedrich provides material that gives a strong sense of these final years.

He quotes passages from Gould's journals which reveal a driven need to understand and control his own physical decline. As a self-created musician, it's as if he wanted to control his body as well. The details are obsessive; the experiments in which he tried to correct various forms of pain are unrelenting and hopeless.

In the final chapters, Friedrich combines the journal and interviews with people who knew Gould to give us a disturbing portrait. Everyone remarks on how Gould suddenly went from the strength of youth to the deterioration of old age. Leonard Bernstein felt that beneath Gould's delight in trying out different personae was a profound uncertainty as to who he was: "Is he going to be a kid or a grown-up man, is he always going to be this adventurous, surprising little fellow, or is he going to be a serious man?" Some of his acquaintances were convinced he concealed the profound sadness of a man who could make no intimate contact with anyone.

His final recording of the *Goldberg Variations* provokes the most extreme reactions. The closing aria, with its slow tempo and terrible poignancy, seems to embody at once ecstasy and farewell. Novelist Timothy Findley captures that paradox in the following interview excerpt:

I couldn't stop crying when I watched him doing the last moments of the *Goldberg Variations* [he says].

Q. But he's terribly happy there—

A. Of course. He's gone into another dimension. Yes. He's found sainthood.

Q. Even though he's all alone.

A. Yes, of course. As all saints are. But how ghastly.

And there is the strange portrait Tim Page provides from his last visit to Gould: the room full of empty Valium capsules, the hunched, burnt-out figure who stands among his own ruins and says these are the happiest days of his life.

The second recording of the *Goldberg Variations* was praised by Edward Rothstein of the *New York Times* as a work that was "more affecting, more serious, more seductive in its depth . . ." than the youthful recording of 1956. It left one with a sense of both "ecstasy and quiet repose." Gould read the review repeatedly to his cousin Jessie Greig, the woman he was closest to throughout his life, and told her how wonderful it was to be perfectly understood. Perhaps his greatest desire out of this intense privacy was to reach someone,

not so much for his own sake as for what he found in music and what he so brilliantly realized in his finest recordings.

The recordings are the autobiography that Gould never wrote. I can't listen to them without being aware of a particular sensibility at work, a need to wrest something from the music, even to the point of doing violence to it. Often that interpretive energy led to strange results. The 1956 recording of the late Beethoven sonatas was disastrous—an almost perverse attempt by Gould to justify his own dislike of the music. Similarly, the later recordings of the Mozart sonatas are a Mozart never heard before or since, played with a contrapuntal fervour that violates the composer's every intention. But in the finest of the Bach recordings there is an energy and an awesome ability to bring out the inner voices of the music that few have equalled.

In 1973 Gould recorded three of his own piano transcriptions of Wagner, one of which is a remarkable performance of the *Siegfried Idyll*, the same work he later chose to conduct with orchestra in his still unreleased conducting debut. It captures the extremes of his sensibility and reveals an intelligence that threatens to consume the music. The climaxes are passionate, the lyricism poignant, the ending a seemingly infinite and quiet ecstasy. At the same time there is an almost manic passion for drawing out the contrapuntal structure of the music, as if he were looking for something beyond what the music could give. It's not surprising that Gould spoke of abandoning recording altogether and turning his prodigious talents to conducting and writing.

Finally, though, we don't listen to the recordings just to discover Gould. The ultimate paradox is that in being most himself, he forces us to think most about the music.

When he was 19 years old, Gould broke off studies with his teacher Albert Guerrero, and withdrew to the family cottage on Lake Simcoe to practise alone and achieve what he called the "solidarity of the ego" so necessary to any artist. The courage of that choice gave us both the strange idiosyncrasies of his worst playing, and the unquestionable genius of his best. This was perhaps the final paradox: in being most himself, he best served the music; from a chosen solitude, he best communicated its deathless vitality. ♦

Robert Quickenden is a Winnipeg freelance writer and a pianist.

Highlights of the Next Issue

Photography:

Horst

Geoffrey James

Karsh

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Sheila Metzner

Joel-Peter Witkin

*

Gordon Pinsent
on John Hirsch

*

Gary Geddes and
Contra-dictions in
Nicaragua

*

The Pub Poems
of Per Brask

*

Fiction by Leon Rooke

*

and more . . .

FIVE POEMS by LORNA CROZIER

BEHIND THE CAMERA

The most beautiful
is the woman behind the camera,
the one who is making
the three children smile. Years later
they'll laugh at the photograph,
the funny hair, the bony knees,
show their adult friends
how sweet they looked
in their Sunday dresses white as wings.

No one will remember the way
the woman looked behind the camera.
Now as she composes sun and shadow,
the children across the lawn
are as separate from her body
as they'll ever be.

She wonders how everything in her life
has brought her here,
the ordinary house, the narrow yard,
the lilacs literal and magical
insisting their scent into the air,
everything at this moment
conspiring
to make her invisible,
her three small daughters
turning into memory,
turning into art.

STATIONS OF SNOW

Sunday morning, 7 a.m. Already
there are tracks in the snow,
a calligraphy of cats
traced in the alley. Their blue
ideograms read like a Chinese text,
up and down. With a small broom
I sweep the windshield.
I am driving to the station,
meeting a train. The car remembers
the curves of the road, the slippery patches.
Its headlights build columns of snow
I drive through, morning
closing behind me.

At the station I want my mother to be there,
as she was, standing with two loaves of bread
in a brown bag, a suitcase with a broken lock
at her feet. I want her to have come
from a different country, to have crossed
all this snow, the train pulling her further
into winter and another time.

At the place where she is going
a cat walks across the yard,
placing its back paws precisely
where the front have been.
In a hooded jacket my father
sweeps the steps with an old curling broom,
his name printed on the handle.

By the time he has finished,
the top step is filled with snow.
He sweeps and sweeps
for he knows my mother has no boots.
When she arrives she'll be wearing
a velvet hat, and on her feet
her wedding shoes.

SUDDENLY UNDERSTANDING THE OLD MASTERS' USE OF LIGHT AND DARK

Making my way by touch,
I come down at the end of the party
to see why you aren't in bed.
The house is dark, except for the light
in the kitchen and the light of her body
as she straddles you
sitting in the hard-backed chair,
her legs wide open, your eyes fixed
on her radiant skin, how white
she is from head to toe
except for a mole the size of a dime
on her left shoulder blade.
It stares at me like the dark
eye of a deer come upon
suddenly in the bush,
each of us holding
the other still,
afraid to make
the first
move.

LIFE IN THE COMIX LANE

Average Life Comix
by Alethea Lahofer
Muriel Richardson Auditorium,
Winnipeg Art Gallery
June 7, 1989

REVIEW BY MAURICE MIERAU

Alethea Lahofer has been working as a performance artist in Winnipeg since the early '80s. Her shows at Ace Art, the Plug In Gallery and the legendary Lithium Cafe were marked by striking visual effects, noisy sound-tracks and a degree of self-absorption that gave many of these performances an uncomfortably voyeuristic edge. Lahofer's crude and frequently purple rhyming couplets were so much a part of these shows that in 1984 she published them in a chapbook titled *Under-understood*. As the title implied, self-absorption was mixed with a large dose of self-dramatization.

But Lahofer also had an engaging and flamboyant stage persona, which may partly explain her continuing appeal with the pointy-shoed, hipper-than-death fine arts crowd. The real development in her work, though, has been her concentration on writing which has matured dramatically since her debut as a performance artist. She read from a recently completed poetry manuscript in April of this year at the Blue Note Cafe and it was hard to believe this was the same writer who used to produce doggerel protest poems. She has some of the same command of multiple voices and devastating dead-pan irony that Doug Melnyk demonstrates in his writing and recordings, but she pushes her material harder. The effect is to generate a more visceral response with abrupt shifts between rhetorical levels; one moment she sounds like a greeting card out of *Blue Velvet*, the next like a slightly hysterical passage from *True Romance* magazine.

Equally impressive is Lahofer's versatility. Undaunted by the 'professional' requirements of grants committees and juries, she has hustled, shoved and just plain worked her way into being a multidisciplinary artist. She has worked on video projects, computer animation, performance art, music, poetry and various multimedia combinations of these.

Average Life Comix, her most recent and most ambitious project, is largely an

KISS

I have taught him
to kiss me on the lips
when I arrive for a visit
and when I leave,
his whiskers brush my chin.

I refuse to let his kiss
fall on my forehead or my cheek
but face him straight on,
my hands on his shoulders
hold him still.

Hardly a lover, more
than a friend,
Father, we never talk
but our mouths meet
like two small animals,
blind and dumb.

They touch each other
then move on,
tunnel deep in the earth
where they know the other's
taste and smell,

the age-old taboos
of father and daughter,
the bitter, inexorable
pull of blood.

THE WHITE HORSE

When I met you it was as if
I was living in a house by the sea.
Waves sprayed the windows,
slapped the wooden steps.
Yet I opened the door
and a white horse stood there.
He walked through the rooms,
his head swinging from side to side,
his hooves leaving half moons
of sand on the floor.

Make what you will of this. This was
the most natural thing I've ever done,
opening the door, moving aside
for the horse to come in.
Not that you were he.
He was simply a horse, nothing more,
the gentle kind that pulls a wagon
or drags seaweed from the shore,
ankles feathered, great hooves wide as platters.

He wasn't you,
that didn't matter. He looked at me
and we knew each other. That night
I wanted to live. I wanted
to live in a house where the door
swings on hinges smooth as the sea
and a white horse stands,
waiting for a sign.

Come in, I said,
and that was the start of it,
the horse, the light, the electric air.
Somewhere you were walking toward me,
the door to my life swinging open,
the sea, the sea and its riderless horse
waiting to come in.

REVIEWS

apprentice work. Much of it is promising and even compelling, but clearly Lahofer and her collaborators have not mastered the various media they employed. The show was mostly projected on a large vertical screen where she interacted with animated screen characters. In addition, there were a few interludes where large puppets emerged from the wings and made vaguely Tai Chi-like movements to a loud soundtrack. The animation was an extensive collaboration among Lahofer and computer artists Alex Poruchnyk, Murray Toews and Jerry Whalley working together on Amiga computer equipment. Susan Chafe constructed the enormous and oddly funny puppet heads and Ken Gregory did most of the music.

"Country Western Comix," the first piece, illustrated a number of the show's shortcomings. Lahofer appeared behind the screen, in shadow, holding a guitar and wearing a large stetson. She proceeded to regale the audience with some surprisingly good country swing guitar. The problem was the song was too long, the guitar was out of tune and Lahofer does not have a good singing voice. The most interesting thing about this intro was its visual effect, especially the fade-out from back-lighting to full-screen projection.

"1,000 Cow Faces," one of the first animated pieces, was funny but it felt almost like a product demo—a one-line joke that didn't lead anywhere. The first interlude with one of Susan Chafe's huge puppet heads had the air of an esoteric ritual, but the complete lack of any transition to or from the animated material was annoying. And while Ken Gregory's music was carefully crafted, it revolved around a single tone centre, and became monotonous as a result.

"The Man Who Needed a Can Opener" was a longer animated piece with a narrative component. It featured a charming, mock-'40s comic-book style with crude dialogue-balloons, split screens and goofy melodrama. Lahofer, who wrote all the dialogue, was really at her best in evoking the flat, *National Enquirer*-trained mind of Pam, her heroine. Near the beginning Pam explains that she always bolts her door to keep out the potential "psycho-rapist-killer, or worse, someone handsome and sweet and gentle." This figure from a million Harlequin novels might very well make Pam get "lost in a smile, then lost in a dream of romance," and she'd be "better off at the mercy of a psycho-killer than at the mercy of love."

One moment she sounds like a greeting card out of Blue Velvet, the next like a slightly hysterical passage from True Romance magazine.

The problem with this kind of satire is the problem with so much postmodern, super-cool irony; it enjoys the sleazy ethos of its satirical target so much that there is almost no critical distance between the camp and the post-camp. In other words, "The Man Who Needed a Can Opener" is a bad '40s comic book for fine arts students; it's not clear whether we should read it as satire or hip bathos. That's not the whole story. At times Lahofer's satirical wit is very sharp. Here's a voice-over heard under a shot of a bright red heart.

Not much more to do but to keep my heart in that old tin can—hidden under the sink, behind the Ajax, behind the S.O.S., behind the Sani-Flush, behind the disinfectant, hidden behind the things you never let strangers see: Tide, Glad garbage bags, Sunlight soap . . .

After this amusing deflation of romantic clichés through brand-name domestic trivia, the show was interrupted by one of many rough transitions. "Hey, let's watch some TV commercials, Isaac," says Pam and the scene cuts to her watching a TV report on civic politics. The heavy-handed satire of a bafflegabbing-sexist-pig-politician is neither funny nor insightful. Lahofer may have felt the need to inject some kind of political issue to redeem the piece from its own frivolity.

Still, the combination of one-liners and Pam's rich monologues carry the piece. But "The Man Who Needed a Can Opener" typifies a more general problem with the show: Lahofer and company haven't really fully exploited the technology they're using. Other than the verbal humour and the enjoyable campiness of the visuals, the piece was curiously static. Some interaction with live actors might have been effective, and more dynamic animation and image-scanning could have pumped things up a bit. It didn't help that the dialogue-balloons were in an especially ugly type-face plagued by synch problems and further marred by frequent spelling mistakes.

"Hey Kids!" was a sort of didactic rock video about the dark side of capitalism. Based on comic-book ads designed to recruit kids as salesmen for mail-order houses, it used an industrial-grind soundtrack to good effect with nightmarishly overlapped advertising imagery. Titles like "cars," "cash" and "condoms" flashed on the screen, followed by a grotesque clown face and a large barking dog. Again, the problem with the piece was its length. A drastically edited version would have had more impact. And the testimonials at the end seemed to deny the darkness of the piece in a way that was flippant and off-putting.

The least successful piece of the evening was "Sam Suicide P.I.," a sophomoric send-up of existentialist philosophy. As a satirical target, existentialism seems beyond being passé. Besides, Monty Python had done this kind of thing very well almost 20 years ago.

The last two pieces really saved the show. Chafe's ten-foot-high puppet with plastic clothing and garish red lips, manipulated in an eerie swaying motion by three handlers, was like a figure from Noh theatre accidentally dressed in clothes from K-Mart. The effect of watching this puppet was hypnotic and transcendently absurd.

"John the Cleaner Meets Destructo Girl" was visually the best conceived piece of the show. Although Lahofer's live intro was over-loaded with allusion to Beckett, what stayed with me was her elegant visual sensibility. The highly stylized figures with Plastic Man-like rubber torsos and flashing body parts were often strikingly beautiful. I suspect that much of this visual conception came from Murray Toews, who has the most inspired camp and pop-based style of any young artist in Winnipeg. Some of the palimpsests of flashing colour on the cartoon figures had almost the quality of mediaeval drawings of saints.

But apprentice work it was. While Lahofer is one of a handful of 'hypermedia' artists worth watching, she runs the risk of spreading herself too thin. What *Average Life Comix* lacked was some unifying vision. Clearly, inside Lahofer is an aesthetic visionary; what remains for her to accomplish is a closer tie between that artist and the one we're given tantalizing glimpses of in the best of *Average Life Comix*. ♦

Maurice Mierau is a freelance writer who lives in Winnipeg.

Red Rock and After

by Wayne Tefs

SOME THINGS FALL into patterns. You say goodbye to lovers over checked tablecloths in pizza joints named after Greek Olympians, you see the foreman at the bar laughing with the waitresses and you know the rumours of lay-offs are true. Life turns on an axis of events that repeat themselves.

Whenever my parents moved it was raining.

In May of 1964 the lawyers closed in on my father and forced him to declare bankruptcy for the second time in thirty months. The first was in Red Rock, an iron mining town that went bad in the way of mining towns, taking Father's hardware store with it. He and Mother had worked hard there for twenty years, sinking their savings back into the business. They lost it all when sales of hematite plummeted in the early sixties. I was fifteen at the time. A big orange van backed across the lawn which Father and I had dug and planted and rolled a couple of summers earlier, and two men in blue uniforms shifted our furniture, clothes and appliances out of the house. Father had built it himself. He'd shovelled in the gravel for the weeping tiles, he'd hung the front door through which our stuff was being carried in a light rain. As they moved back and forth the two uniformed men ducked their heads to keep their faces dry. My mother stood in the kitchen, packing the last of the china. Bravely, she was trying not to cry.

She came from a family of market gardeners who sold vegetables to wholesalers and didn't think of themselves as businessmen, as Father did. They were simple folk who liked cabbage rolls and beer and picnics on sunny summer days. Mother's passion was flowers. We had tomatoes and lettuce and peas in a plot at the bottom of the yard, a regular vegetable garden, but around the house Mother kept her flowers in narrow, loamy beds. Dahlias, peonies, sweet williams, begonias, tulips, daffodils, many names I no longer remember. She came in from tending them with her face flushed from the sun and perspiration glistening on her brow, saying she felt clean and free. Mother had a youngish-looking face. She understood no better than us kids why Father was up worrying every night over glasses of whiskey.

*I realized that
if my father could take
an axe to a man, anyone
was capable of anything.
I began to realize,
too, that I was.*

The hardware store in Red Rock was lost on mortgages. Two more years of making payments and Father would have been in the clear. But the market for hematite dried up. Father had gambled on the mine holding out and he lost. According to Father the unions priced Red Rock's iron out of competition with Germany's. He was against medicare and strikes. But mostly he was against unions. He called the men who went out on wildcat strikes shirkers, and worse things after he lost the hardware store in Red Rock.

The laundry he bought in Fort Frances was another thing. That's where the orange van took us in the rain in the summer of 1962. This was a pulp and paper town, a union town, too, with a sister city across the border in the state of Minnesota and a tradition of hard-nosed success. The Fort Frances Canadians had won the Allan Cup twice in the early fifties. But it was more bad luck for my father. The previous owners of the laundry had left some bad debts which Father got tangled up in somehow. Courts and lawyers ate up the little cash he'd managed to salvage from the Red Rock fiasco.

He was a short, wiry man with brown hair and eyes to match. He smoked a pipe. He liked owning small businesses because of the independence they gave him. A coal-yard labourer during the thirties and a private during the war, he'd had a belly full of taking orders. "No one's my boss," he

liked to say—and then add with a laugh, “except your mother.” I remember him laughing a lot in Red Rock, and smiling over his pipe as he tamped and fiddled with the tobacco before lighting up. That was his great pleasure, smoking his pipe.

He liked fishing rods and guns, too, which he sold to Red Rock’s miners and which he taught me how to use so I would grow up a man. He taught me to squeeze, not pull, the trigger of a rifle, and always just at the point where you started to breathe out. He taught me to walk in the woods without making a sound. When I was very small he hunted moose in the muskeg terrain around Red Rock with a hand-gun. He used a .38 Walther HP he’d brought back from the war as a souvenir. I had the job of blowing into the moose horn while Father positioned himself behind a tree twenty yards down wind. The sight of a thousand-pound bull moose crashing down on us through the scrub is etched on my mind forever. When it was fifty yards away Father stepped out from behind his tree, aimed and fired one bullet into the moose’s chest. I never knew him to take more than one shot. Or to think he’d done anything extraordinary. He liked moose steaks. He liked fishing on warm afternoons, too, and always predicted we’d catch our limit. He was an optimist despite everything.

Just as the laundry in Fort Frances was beginning to turn a profit there was a disaster. The phone rang about three one night, waking us. I lay trying to listen to my father’s side of the conversation. I couldn’t make out what he was saying but I heard the scree and scraw of trains in the yards near our house, the distant hollow thump of cars being coupled together. We lived in a rented place near the tracks with a yard too small for a vegetable garden or flowers. When Father finished talking he put the phone down and went into the bedroom where he spoke to Mother in hushed tones. Minutes later I heard him leave through the back door, his steps echoing down the walk. He was in a hurry.

There had been a fire at the laundry. It took three pumps to put out the flames in the roof. Sirens, police cars. One fireman had collapsed from smoke inhalation when he was trapped between two upright mangles that toppled over. That wasn’t the worst of what had happened, the Chief said. He was a big man with soft hands and a pencil moustache. He had driven Father home from the laundry at dawn

and stood in the kitchen, drinking a mug of coffee which Mother had made. I lingered in the doorway, knowing something important was happening. Father sat at the table drinking whiskey. His shirt-sleeves were rolled up, his eyes were wild. He looked up from time to time but he didn’t focus on anything. He stared into space and then back at his drink. The Chief whispered to Mother that Father had nearly killed a man. He’d taken one of the firemen’s axes and started hacking at the machinery, all the while shouting. When two policemen had tried to restrain him, he’d turned the axe on them.

Father clenched his hands on the whiskey glass as the Chief spoke to Mother. I remember his knuckles were white. Blood had smeared on the table top and then dried.

“You were good to bring him home,” Mother said to the Chief. To Father she said, “Wasn’t he, Tom?”

Everyone was speaking softly, like after a death, and I could hear the electric clock in the display panel of the stove whirring and ticking. My father raised his head. He looked at the Chief as if he hadn’t realized until that moment that he was in the room. He looked back into his whiskey glass.

Mother asked, “What happened?”

The Chief said, “At first there was so much smoke it was hard to see anything.

Clothes burning, I guess.” He looked at Father for confirmation, but when he got none, he went on. “Then part of the roof caved in and the boys were hosing it down when Tom here grabs an axe and leaps through a flaming window.”

“My God. Didn’t you even try to stop him?”

“We were caught off guard. We saw him duck under the smoke and make for the front of the building where there wasn’t any fire.” The Chief squinted over his coffee, working to recall each detail as if he were giving evidence in court. “He hacked down the office wall first,” the Chief said, nodding at Father. “Plaster and wood chips flying through all that smoke.” He waited to see what Father did, and when he said nothing, the Chief went on. “It might have been funny except that Tom was so crazy.”

Mother nodded. “How’d he cut his hand?” Blood was pooling on the table from the cut on Father’s wrist.

“We circled to the front of the building, the cops and me. After we shouted for him to come out, the sergeant and one of the other cops went in after him.” The Chief drank some coffee. He added in a bolder voice when he saw Father was quiet, “I didn’t see how he cut himself, but I saw him turn the axe on the sergeant.”

Mother looked terrified.



FICTION

"There was a scuffle and the cops brought him out with his arms pinned behind," the Chief said gruffly. "That's why I brought him home. They wanted to lay charges, you see."

"Charges?" Mother asked.

"Obstruction of justice," the Chief said, lowering his voice again. "Assaulting an officer."

"Tom," Mother said.

Father looked at her and then at his bloody hand. He seemed to rouse himself from the trance he'd been in. "Why are you talking about me," he asked, "as if I wasn't here?" There was anger in his voice. I'd heard him say things around the table about police and firemen and I'd always thought he admired them. But his voice was filled with rage. I took a step backward.

The Chief studied his mug of coffee. "I better go," he said. He looked for a place to put the mug and settled for a space on the counter between the coffee canister and the whiskey bottle.

"You talk about justice," Father said. He stood suddenly, nearly tipping over the table, and said, "What the hell do the cops know about justice? With their pensions and their fat-cat wages?"

"Tom," Mother said.

He added as an afterthought, "And you firemen with your soft jobs and frigging union."

"Sit down," Mother said. "You're talking nonsense."

"Am I?" My father stood in the centre of the room, looking wildly from my mother to the Chief. "Am I now?"

"You broke the law, Tom." The Chief pulled himself to his full height. He had a pot-belly but he stood a head taller than Father. "That's all I'm saying. You attacked your property like an animal, you resisted restraint, you abused an officer of the law." The Chief drew a deep breath. "You attacked a man with a deadly weapon, is what I'm saying. That's wrong, and that's all there's to it." He hiked his pants up by the belt. "You're lucky to get off without charges being laid."

"Lucky?" Father said. He came around from behind the table, pushing at his shirt-sleeves. Since his days at the hardware store he'd always worn a white shirt, and this one was smudged on one shoulder with soot. "Lucky?" he asked again. His face was white and his brown eyes bugged out of their sockets.

"Tom," Mother said. "For goodness sake, the man brought you home. He's trying to help."

"Get out of here," Father said in a loud voice.

"Don't you lay a hand on me," the Chief said. He was backing up toward the door, his big rubber boots clumping across the

floor. I don't think Father had any idea what he was going to do until the Chief put the idea of physical violence into his head.

"I'll do anything I want to. It's my house, isn't it?"

The Chief said, "You lay one hand on me and there'll be charges. So help me God, Tom."

My father leapt at him then, pushing the Chief's chest with both hands. It was a gesture of impotent anger, not violence, the kind you use on the schoolyard with the class bully. You can hit a man in the face or even in the chest with your clenched fist and mean to hurt him bad. But when you shove with both hands you're only trying to get something out of your way. My father had taught me that, too, along with how to break a man's nose with one snap of your elbow. "I'll damn well do what I please," Father said. "This is my house, see. I've still got that."

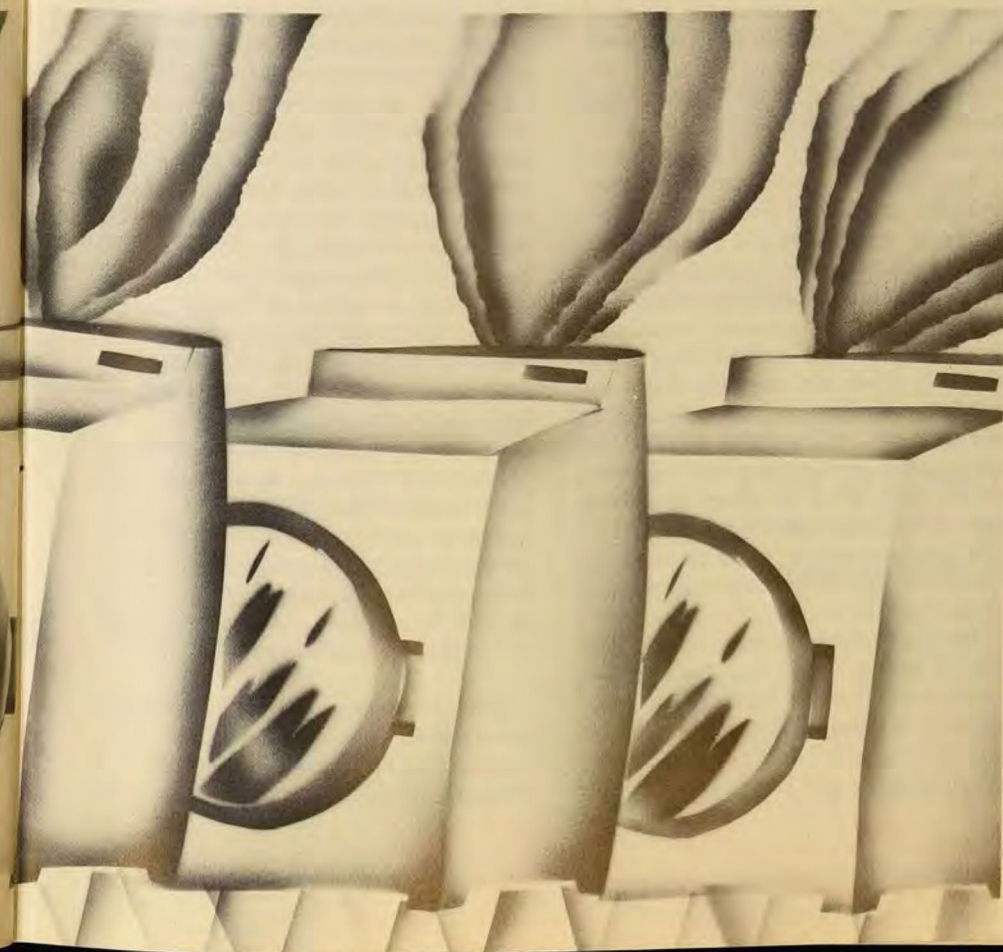
"Oh my God," Mother said. She looked wildly about the room, realizing suddenly that I was there.

The Chief stumbled backwards into the door. There was a bloodstain in the form of a handprint on his chest. He wrenched the door open. "You'll see," he said to Father, who was standing with his face upturned to the Chief's, maybe a foot between them. "I'll get the law on you."

After that my father went to the window and watched the Chief get into his firehall station wagon and drive away. He stood looking out into the night with one hand up to cut the glare from the glass. He was there a long time after the car was gone. His shoulders looked small to me. Mother and I stood in the room, not looking at each other. Mother had her hands folded over her stomach like she had a pain there. Maybe she was thinking about how her life would change in the future. Maybe she was wondering how on one night Father could have gone after one man with an axe and fought with another in his own house. Maybe she was just numb with what had happened and was waiting for something ordinary to occur. I don't know what she was thinking.

I remember clearly what I was thinking because it was the first time it occurred to me, though I've had occasion to think it many times since. I realized that anyone is capable of anything. A father on the church board could be forcing his teenage daughter every night. The lady you meet in the aisle at Safeway might have killed her child and buried it in the back yard. I realized that if my father could take an axe

Illustration by Scott Barnham



to a man, anyone was capable of anything. I began to realize, too, that I was.

After a while Father turned away from the window and looked at us. "I don't know why I did that," he said. He sounded like a child puzzled about misbehaving in class. His eyes shifted from one of us to the other. They were normal again, sunk back in the sockets.

"Let me put a bandage on that," Mother said, meaning his cut wrist. She crossed to the cupboard and took down a first-aid kit.

My father said to me, "I was way out of line there." He seemed to be waiting for me to speak. "I don't know what came over me. You'd think when a man lost his head that way he'd at least be able to say why afterward, wouldn't you?"

"Yes," I said. My voice sounded small in the room.

He looked me up and down, though I don't think he was actually thinking about me. "You would?" he asked.

"I would."

"Yes," my father said. He was calm now, not the tense silent he'd been when he'd sat at the table drinking whiskey, but ordinary calm. He looked about the room as if he were only now aware where he was. "I wanted us to be happy here," he said. "Just to be happy."

"I did too," I said, thinking of the friends I'd made at school and would have to say goodbye to. I felt very weary of life.

Father must have too. He sat with his chin in one cupped palm and looked blankly at me. There were lines around his mouth, a spot of blood on one cheek and the white welt of a scar he'd got in hand-to-hand combat during the war in Italy. His breathing was laboured and after a while he said, "I feel so hot." He touched his brow and added, "Right from my feet on up. Just hot."

Mother said, "Here." When she was done putting a bandage on Father's wrist we sat around the table and drank coffee. We looked at each other, but no one had much to say. We were thinking private thoughts. Father got up and poured himself more whiskey. He splashed some in a glass for Mother, and when she shook her head, he pushed it in front of me. I took a sip. It was my first taste of whiskey. I felt the raw burn of alcohol down to my gut.

"I don't blame any of them," Father said. He shook his head. Some of his hair had matted to one temple with dried blood. "I did for a while, but I don't any more."

I listened to his voice. It was a soft, gentle voice which rasped a little from the pipe smoke he'd inhaled. I thought of all

the stories I'd heard him tell around the kitchen table in Red Rock, building to a slow climax while he tamped and fiddled with his pipe. He used wooden matches which he struck on the sole of his shoe and shook once quickly to extinguish after he'd lit up. When I was a child he'd let me blow out those matches, and I remembered sitting on his lap saying "bwow, bwow" whenever he lit up. I felt the urge to tell him that I loved him, but I did not. I sipped my coffee. I watched the dawn creep in at the window.

The Chief didn't lay charges, but the law came down on Father just the same. Lawyers dragged him through the courts over the bad debts while he was planning how to get the laundry operating again. I remember him standing amidst the charred machinery with a push-broom one Saturday when I was helping him tidy things up. His gaze roamed around, appraising the damage, calculating how to put things back together. I don't think his heart was in it. That day he sent me across the street to buy Pepsis and when I came back he had the classified section of the paper open on his lap. "There's a hardware for sale in Stone Creek," he said. "What do you think of that?" He told me about the town. He was impressed by its clean streets. He'd never liked the chemical odours of Fort Frances or the effluence that blew out of the pulp mills' stacks and settled on everything in the town. He thought he could make a go of that hardware store in Stone Creek. Like I say, he was an optimist.

We drank Pepsi and swept broken plasterboard into heaps. From time to time Father lit up his pipe and gazed out the window. There were a lot of places a man in his fix would rather have been, with a family to feed and a second bankruptcy looming. He never said anything about that. He never said anything about the burdens of family life or railed about injustice the way I've heard men do since. He never said anything about what happened on the night of the fire either, though his gaze shifted a lot after that night and he didn't lecture me any more about seeing things through to the better end or taking the bull by the horns.

He must have been preoccupied thinking of money. There was the insurance pay-out but that got held up waiting for the Chief's report, and then the adjustors found out about Father taking the axe to the machinery and things became more

complicated. I remember him going off to court, carrying his cardboard brief-case bulging with papers. His wrist had healed but he smoked more than ever and in a desperate way, as if he were trying to get as much smoke as possible into his lungs. He was talking about an out-of-court settlement then, and starting fresh somewhere else. Mother went to work at Eaton's where she was a clerk in the Accounts Office. One day I dropped by to bring her the sandwich she'd forgotten on the kitchen counter. There were pockets under her eyes and she seemed to get paler by the day, but she smiled at me over her files in her brave way. She was worried about Father. "Don't hold it against him," she told me.

"No," I said.

"If you want to blame something, blame this cruddy town." That's the closest I ever heard her come to swearing.

"It doesn't seem fair," I said. "He tries so hard."

"That's just it," she said. "Bad luck." She opened the wax-paper her sandwich was wrapped in and took a bite. "It seems to follow us around. I mean it seems to follow *me* around." She looked out the tiny window of her office. "I remember during the depression how your grandfather had us kids load up a wagon of watermelons one fall. That's when we had the farm in Pine Ridge. We'd tended those watermelons all summer, hoeing and watering them so they'd be round and juicy for the market, the way he insisted. He drove to the city to sell them. With what he made he'd hoped to buy flour and salt and maybe some shoes for us kids. They offered him five cents apiece. Five cents. You couldn't buy two chickens for that. Do you think he took it?" She looked at me to see if I understood the point of her story. "He did not. He turned the horses around and drove the wagon out of the city without stopping. About a mile from home he threw the watermelons in the ditch." Her voice choked a little as she remembered. "That's what this is, I guess," she said. "That sort of kick in the teeth."

She ate the rest of her sandwich in silence. I went out and brought us two paper cups of coffee. "But don't let it get you down," she said later. "As soon as we get out of this town things will be better."

It was raining when we left Fort Frances. Father and I were up most of the night, loading our stuff onto the three-ton truck with the driver the company had sent

FICTION

along. Toward dawn a light rain began to fall. Father roped down the furniture. He arranged the boxes of china Mother had packed last thing so they wouldn't be damaged. The driver pulled the overhead door down with a clang and sealed the compartment for the customs officials who had to inspect every truck crossing the border. The light drizzle misted on the skin of his face as he walked around the truck, checking its tires. Father and I said goodbye to Mother and my sister who were joining us by bus after they cleaned the house and returned the keys to the landlord.

We followed the truck's tail-lights to the edge of town where Father stopped to get gas and buy some tobacco. Along the streets house lights were coming on as people woke to a new day. We stood beside the car, breathing the morning air.

"Smell that crap from the mill?" Father asked me. "That chemical crap?" His nose twitched.

I looked at the mill. "I won't miss that," I said.

When we got back into the car Father turned on the wipers. A mist hung over the highway. "I never did like this town," he said. The wipers beat steadily against the windshield.

I felt close to him at that moment. "I hated it," I said. "The smells, that black crap in the air. Even the kids at school."

"That's it," he said. "Hate." Father speeded up as we hit the edge of town. Rain spattered the windshield, making it difficult to see the highway. At a curve there was a thump under the car. We looked at each other. Father glanced in the rearview mirror. "I hit something," he said, a note of surprise in his voice. "A cat, I think. Its eyes flashed at the side of the road." He was a man who cared about animals. Once when I shot a woodpecker with my .22 he made me search for it in the bush and make sure it didn't suffer needlessly. He took his foot off the accelerator and hesitated for a moment, the car drifting along in silence. Then he drove on. After a while he re-lit his pipe and threw the match out the window. "The hell with it," he said. The tires of the car swished in the water gathering on the asphalt. We sat staring out the window as the highway snaked into the distance, misty, grey and flat. ♦

Wayne Teft in a Winnipeg novelist and a contributing editor to *Border Crossings*.

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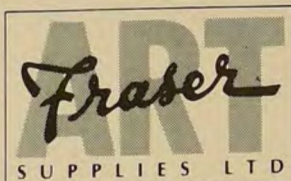
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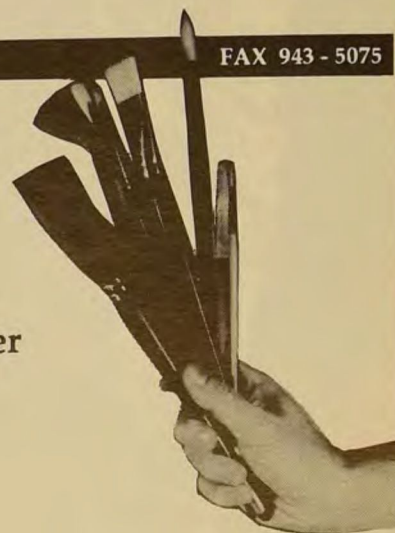


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DANCE

Dance-Maker

The Turbulent and Moving Times
of Rachel Browne

by Jacqui Good



RACHEL BROWNE is fiercely proud of establishing Canada's oldest modern dance company in Winnipeg 25 years ago. After all, the Canada Council told her it was folly to start a second dance company in a city the size of Winnipeg. Surely the Royal Winnipeg Ballet was enough. Move to Vancouver, they suggested. But Rachel Browne was stubborn and she stayed. In the early years she was the company's chief dancer, as well as publicist, booking agent and fundraiser. And through the quarter-century she has been a prolific choreographer as well. Yet, she's remarkably modest about her skill.

"I think the first 20 years were an apprenticeship," she says. And then hesitates. "I'll take that back and say that I still feel like an apprentice. I probably always will. Of all the dances I have ever made or have ever seen, I know just how very, very few are fine little gems. So I'm still struggling with making dances."

"Making dances," she calls it. Not "choreography" or "art." She chooses solid, housewifely language to describe the way she stitches scraps of her life together and creates a movement quilt.

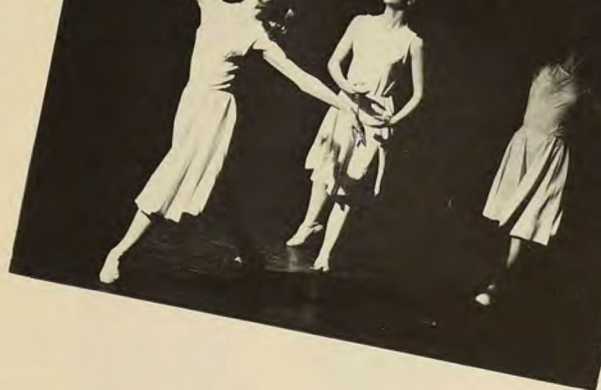
I've been watching and admiring Contemporary Dancers for at least 15 years myself. They were one of the few modern dance companies that toured across the country and as a result I first saw them in Fredericton, New Brunswick. I was bowled over by the uncompromising intensity of their work, especially when they performed *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, based on a book of poems written by children in the Terezin Concentration Camp during World War Two. The music combined German folk-song with distorted electronic sound. Dance collided with theatre and the effect was chilling. The choreographer, however, wasn't Rachel Browne. She had chosen the work of Richard Gain and, as she was to do so often, she had chosen well. As artistic director, she put the work of guest choreographers ahead of her own. It was never The Rachel Browne Company.

And yet, when she presented a retrospective of her own dance this year to celebrate the company's 25th anniversary, I realized just how distinctive and important her work has been. And for the first time I saw how closely these dances are tied to Rachel's own life.

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previous page:
Sunset Sentences, 1989,
Ruth Cansfield.
this page left to right:
The Bus, circa 1971.
Songs and Dances, 1964.
True Believer, 1965,
Rachel Browne,
Ron Holbrook.



We'd talked many times before, although always about dance or politics. But one sunny, summery afternoon we sat on a park bench, squinting in the sun, and talked about the personal life that lies beneath the professional and how the two connect. The first surprise is that Rachel Browne isn't her real name. She was born Ray Minkoff on November 16th, 1934 in Philadelphia. Browne is the name she acquired from her first husband. Ray became Rachel when she discovered that the name Ray Browne was already registered on the Actors Equity list in New York. So, a Rachel Browne danced in a summer stock production of *Oklahoma* and she's been dancing ever since.

Ray Minkoff, however, was dancing long before that. She was only six years old when some dancers visited her public school. "There was a girl with socks pulled over her toe shoes. I wasn't able to see the shoes or figure out how she danced on her toes like that, but I was entranced. When I went home I asked for dance lessons."

She got them. The Minkoffs didn't have much money but they couldn't deny Ray anything. She was the only child of her father's second marriage to a much younger woman. Two step-sisters and a step-brother were grown and married. "I was totally spoiled," Rachel remembers. She was sent to the local dance school run by two sisters. The Mimi School of Ballet offered

singing and elocution along with tap and ballet lessons. Young Ray took them all.

"My mother still has a picture of me on my toes. I was only about six years old. I wouldn't want anyone from the Royal Winnipeg school to see that picture. I was much too young to be *en pointe*."

In her mid-teens, Ray announced she was going to become a dancer. By this time, she had transferred to The Littlefield School, which offered more sophisticated training and the great choreographer, Anthony Tudor, as a guest teacher. She started to practise "fanatically" and even got to dance a small role in Tudor's production of *Les Sylphides*. Eugene Ormandy was the conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra and Rachel Browne remembers it to this day as a wonderful, magical event.

She doesn't remember, however, what her parents thought of her decision to dance professionally. "I don't suppose they were crazy about it," she says, "but I just did what I wanted." Her teachers, she recalls, "acted shocked. They didn't think I had the makings of a dancer. I had the wrong sort of body. But I did have a good sense of rhythm and I did move well."

Those characteristics were enough for the stubborn young teenager. Tudor suggested teachers who might help her in New York City and Ray moved there literally the day after she graduated from high school.

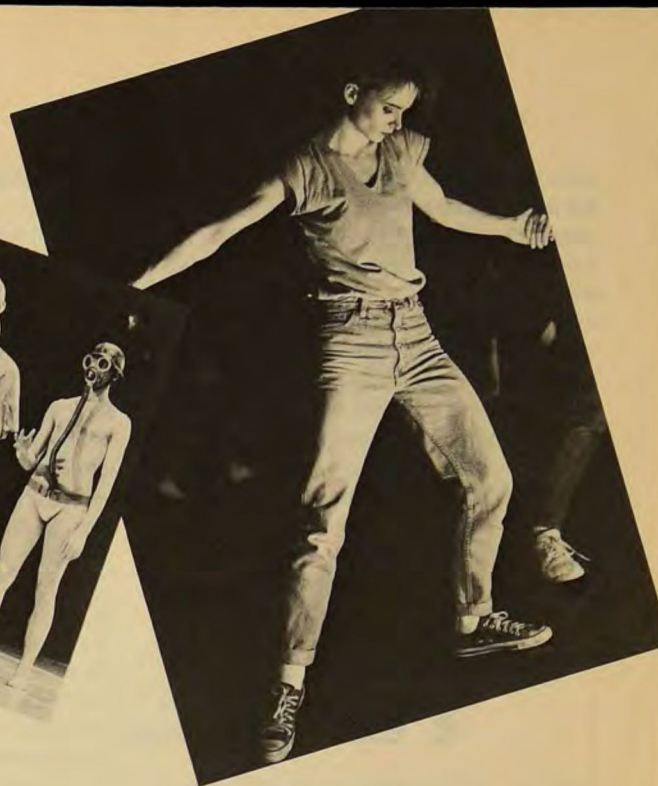
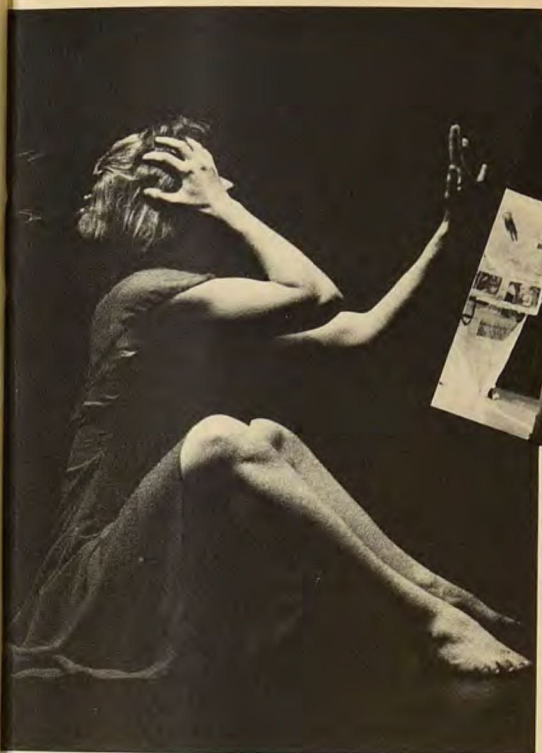
"I remember that my father placed an ad in the *New York Times* advertising my skills as a typist so I could support myself. I had practised typing just as neurotically as I had practised dancing."

And, yes, there is a driven quality to many of Rachel Browne's dances, like *Old Times Now* from 1987. Its only dancer is a woman (Rachel's dances are almost always about women); she wears a harlot's red dress and it's clear she's been buffeted by life. For a very long time, she moves only in jerky fragments, repeating the same constricted movements over and over again while Almeta Speaks sings "Nobody knows you when you're down and out." It's a wrenching experience.

Curiously, in the earliest dances there's none of that tension. There's simply the joy of movement. *Odetta's Songs and Dances* is the first work Rachel ever created. In 1964, she had already retired from ballet to raise a family. "But I missed dancing. I was listening to Odetta sing folk-songs on a record and I just started jumping around the room. And I was rather surprised that what I was doing didn't look at all like ballet."

What it did look like was folk-dance infused with a new modern spirit. The simple barefoot steps had life and energy. The arms reached up and out. The back curved and stretched. Even 25 years later *Odetta's Songs and Dances* seems vital. Rachel

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left to right:
Bad Times Now, 1987, Anne Bruce Falconer.
I Never Saw Another Butterfly, 1972.
In A Dark Time, 1987, Kim Knight.

Browne says it's one of the few dances that still satisfies her. It comes straight from her childhood love of movement.

Rachel Browne acquired her passion for social justice around the same time as her passion for dance. She grew up in a Philadelphia neighbourhood with the rather poetic name of Strawberry Mansion. Today it's an all-black slum that Rachel describes as looking "bombed out." But in her childhood it was an ethnically mixed, solidly working-class neighbourhood.

"I remember cheese stores and a kosher butcher shop. There was a fish store where I was horrified to see all the fish still swimming around in tanks. And there was a park."

Rachel's mother went out to work every day in a garment factory; her father stayed home to listen to the shortwave radio and read left-wing publications like *The Daily Worker*. Israel Minkoff was an old-style, old-world radical. He'd been arrested in pre-revolutionary Russia as a teenage activist and had spent time in jail before his wealthy Odessa family spirited him out of the country.

Her father seemed an old man to young Ray. "We weren't very close. I never knew him well," she says. Her strongest memory is of his pockets stuffed with newspapers. Occasionally he bought and sold some real estate but the deals never seemed to turn a profit.

At one time, Israel Minkoff had worked for an insurance company, collecting premiums in black neighbourhoods. One day while making his rounds he was badly beaten. He recovered physically but not emotionally and thereafter stayed close to home. But he didn't blame his assailants. Typically, he saw capitalism as the cause of their rage. As Rachel recalls, he decided that "they didn't know what they were doing" and that this violence couldn't happen under the new regime he was reading about in *The Daily Worker*.

Eva Greenberg, Israel's second wife, was at least 20 years his junior. But she too was a child of the revolution. Her poverty-stricken Ukrainian family found life much easier after the revolution. Eva was trained to work as a practical nurse and would have happily stayed in the old country but her family insisted on emigrating. She met Israel in Philadelphia when they were both members of a Jewish choir.

Rachel inherited a radical tradition along with a musical one. It was while attending classes at the New York School for Social Research in between dance classes that she met her husband. Don Browne had trained as a lawyer and worked as a department store manager but he abandoned that to become a longshoreman in order to help organize the workers.

Rachel and Don immersed themselves in radical politics. They were, for a time,

members of the Communist Party and received late-night visits from the FBI. In 1957 Rachel moved to Canada to become a soloist with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. A few months later, disillusioned with American politics, Don Browne joined her.

In Canada, Rachel has been particularly concerned with issues of war and peace. She's been an active member of Artists for Peace and she's attempted to make peace the subject of many dances. There are titles like *Survivor*, *To the Year 2000* and *The Cry*. "I didn't feel any of them really worked," Rachel tells me. But then she agrees that she was happy with "some" of her latest piece, *In a Dark Time the Eye Begins to See*. Young people in jeans and tee-shirts chant dire warnings and whisper their fears but then, with an optimism unusual in Rachel's political dances, they link arms and move in a circle to the baroque strains of Pachabel. Perhaps life can go on.

Rachel Browne reads voraciously. She acquired the habit from her parents, especially her mother who "is really an intellectual despite leaving school at grade two or three. She'd come home from the library with a pile of books and read. She would also write little poems and stories. She could have done any number of things artistically."

It's trendy these days to mix text with movement. Yet, Rachel Browne has been doing it for years. In 1975, she used a

DANCE

suite of poems by Dorothy Livesay and Miriam Mandel for a half-hour dance called *The Woman I Am*. The music by flautist Paul Horn gave it an up-to-the-minute, all-Canadian feel. Perhaps that's why the board of Contemporary Dancers wanted to send the show out on the road. Rachel says she argued against the tour, "but some people felt we should hit the big time. We only played the biggest halls

and we lost a lot of money, \$40,000 at least."

The Woman I Am is a dance that sticks in the memory, despite the difficulties in finding the right balance between word and movement. The balance is perfect in *Haiku* (1981), in which Rachel Browne and Ruth Cansfield put on oriental robes and recited Japanese poetry. As they spoke, they moved slowly and gracefully, reflecting

the shifting moods and textures of the words. Arching arms and bending backs are alternately serene, playful and melancholy. And the two figures reassure one another in the way of mothers and daughters everywhere.

The mother-daughter relationship recurs repeatedly in Rachel Browne's work. The connection may be clearly autobiographical; Rachel's 89-year-old mother still lives with her, and she has three grown daughters.

In 1961, Rachel left the Royal Winnipeg Ballet to raise a family. "I wasn't conscious of feminism then. I was influenced by my times and the things women were supposed to do. So I decided to have a child for 'my husband's sake'." But things weren't quite that simple. Rachel was told she couldn't conceive and so the Brownes adopted first one child and then another. "I don't think I was a particularly good mother. I should have kept dancing. Instead I was getting miserable and unhappy."

Then, surprisingly, Rachel became pregnant. But when the new baby was two, she decided to take her three children and leave the marriage. "It wasn't so common then. In fact, I was the first one of anyone I knew. Don begged me to leave the oldest girls, Ruth and Miriam, with him. I did." The next half-dozen years became "a time of turmoil. I spent so much time just trying to see them. I became obsessed with the children. It was horrible." Some people stopped speaking to her and she felt great guilt. But still she kept dancing. Throughout this period she was nurturing Canada's first modern dance company, as well as creating bright, joyful dances that were completely at variance with her personal life.

This year Rachel Browne premiered a highly autobiographical dance called *Sunset Sentences*. The cast of characters includes a grandmother, a mother and three grown daughters. The young women each dance alone, but the older women stay close to each other. The daughter wheels her mother's chair. The mother is still; she looks directly ahead but often appears not to see. With gestures that Rachel admits to stealing directly from her own mother, the old woman does reach out and smooth her granddaughters' hair. She also puts her arms around her daughter. There's a connection among these people. They drift apart but they keep coming back together.

Looking back at the difficult times, Rachel says she can now see the therapeutic

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DANCE

effect that dance has had on her. In particular, she says, making a dance called *Shalom* saved her from "a nervous breakdown" in 1983. She was asked to retire from her position as artistic director. The board had apparently once again decided to jump into the "big time." They brought in an American choreographer/dancer, Bill Evans, whose reign was short and controversial. Rachel was rewarded with the title "Founding Artistic Director" and found solace in having more time to devote to choreography. She also took over the job of fundraising. Resident choreographer Tedd Robinson was promoted to the role of artistic director and the company (briefly and pompously renamed Contemporary Dancers Canada) moved in the direction of extravagant dance-drama.

Shalom is the antithesis of those dances, a simple and stately solo set to music played by Glenn Gould. At the time, I assumed it was an elegant farewell to the late musician. Rachel tells me it was also "a goodbye to the company. Right after I was pushed out I was feeling desperate. I'd go into the studio by myself to dance and to feel better."

The result was a beautiful public elegy that covered over her private grief. In no way did it question the action of the company's board. After all, you don't criticize your child in public.

But the day I talked to Rachel Browne she was feeling like doing just that. Only recently she'd received a letter telling her that her services as a fundraiser were no longer required by Contemporary Dancers. The dismissal hurt both financially and personally. "I have the statistics to prove that I was a first-rate fundraiser. Now, I wouldn't say that about my choreography."

I would. Even at the risk of seeming old-fashioned. Rachel Browne's work harkens back to a time when modern dance saw itself as an answer to the overblown excess of ballet; to a time when emotion and movement were more important than sets and costumes and gimmickry. Much of modern dance today depends on those trappings for its impact but Rachel Browne still believes in the power of a body moving simply in an empty space.

"I'm an optimistic person," Rachel Browne tells me. And she immediately

starts to look on the bright side of things. In a way she's relieved to be rid of the difficult job of asking people for money. As for her own position, she says, "I'm used to living on next to nothing." She has a happy second marriage, loving relationships with her daughters and time to be with her mother. At the age of 54 she doesn't perform any more but she does dance in the studio every day.

She reminds me of the woman in *Old Times Now*. Gradually the dancer stops her sharp convulsive movements and takes control. She leaps around the stage, exulting in her power to survive.

That woman in the red dress announces that she's still here. And, with every new dance, Rachel Browne makes the same persistent announcement. ♦

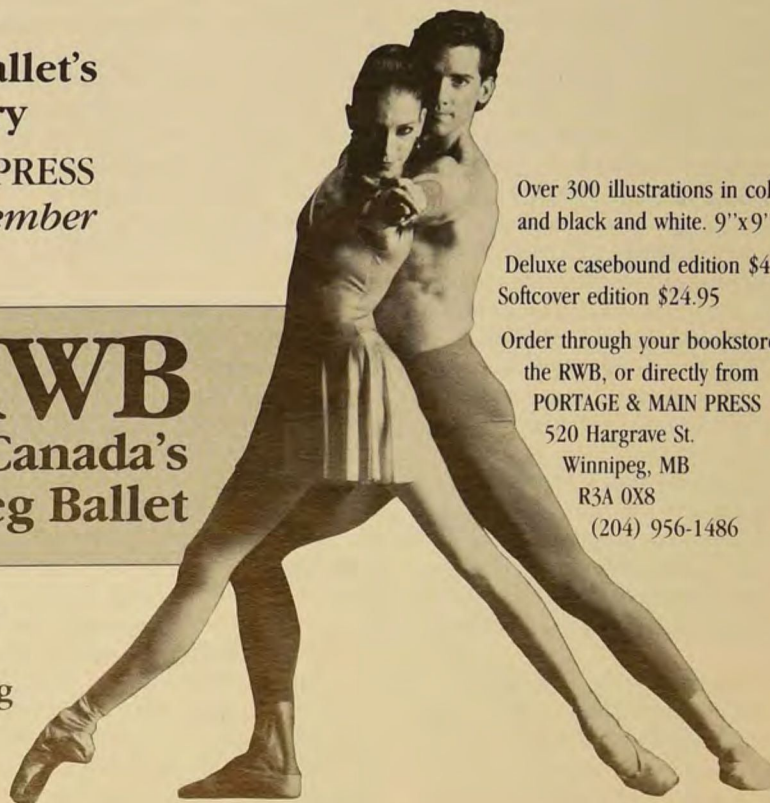
Jacqui Good is the co-host of the CBC arts program "Arts Encounters." She also regularly writes about dance for Dance in Canada magazine.

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Outside Inside

The Self-Portrait Drawings of Ivan Eyre

by Meeka Walsh

WITH THE EXCEPTION of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* the notion has existed that a man's character can be read on his face. The evidence displayed there can tell you, if you know how to read it, something significant about a man's life.

The inclination to know ourselves, to know each other, to tell ourselves and learn about others, is abiding. Monuments, effigies, epic legends, portraits, self-portraits, biographies and autobiographies, hand-prints in red ochre on cave walls dating from 15,000 B.C., portraits on a pyramid wall from 2500 B.C., emperors and courtiers in marble from just before the first century A.D., and so on to the present—our need to define ourselves and others persists. It's how in dealing with language the critic Walter Benjamin suggested he might read his own life, "bios-graphically on a map," seeing it laid out as if it were an urban grid.

First self-definition, then explication and finally a seeking after posterity served as impetus for the self-portrait, a visual autobiography. And when the Renaissance gave the nod to the idea of the individual, self-portraits became a significant form of validation for the artist *qua* artist.

Over a period of years Ivan Eyre has done a series of drawings that is as fine as the medium ever is—beautifully worked, masterful examples of chiaroscuro, of implied volume in spite of a light hand, controlled and sure. The subject is himself. He eschews the habit of self-portraitists: there are no visible signs of his "trade"—no

easel or brushes, no artist *in situ* with skylight, model and draperies. There's no coyness or tricks—no Velasquez, the meta-painter, in *Las Meninas*, no van Eyck inviting himself as a reflected guest to the Arnolfini wedding. But there are mirrors and Eyre constructs enclosures which allow him to see and then reveal whatever aspect he chooses.

In all but one of the self-portrait drawings presented in this small portfolio, Eyre has wrapped and covered himself, further abstracting what he feels are always abstractions—every line to canvas or paper being just that and not the object itself—seeing himself as an abstractionist while we read his work as mimetic.

Present and near as his hand and his thoughts, he's his own most available subject. The wrappings simply extend the range and can be seen to serve a role not unlike Rembrandt's theatrical and exotic costumes.

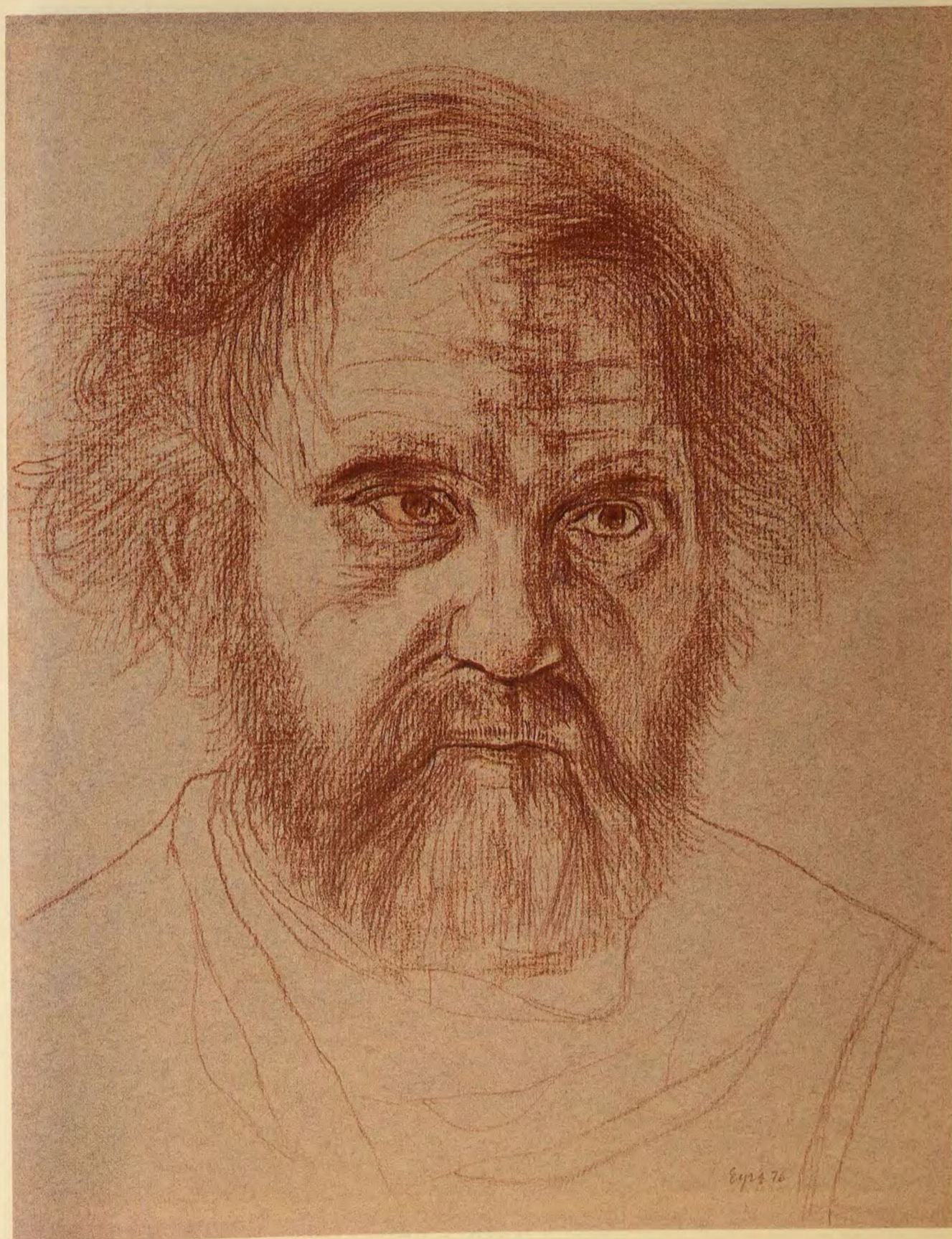
I've always felt Eyre's work to be full of contradictions and ambiguities. There's no point expecting the usual and like the modernists, the camp in which I'd place him, that's just what he's about: contradictions. Telling the other side—and movement away from content—at least in the sense of what's apparent. So while most self-portraitists seek to be self-revelatory, Eyre prefers to cover and obscure, literally cloaking and masking his image. You could say the references are hooded, guarded. I think of the leather hood slipped over a hunting falcon's head and reflect

on one drawing, a profile facing the viewer's left. And then I think of the one visible eye, narrowed and almost bird-like, the pupil a dark dot, a dark-pupilled eye scanning . . . for what?

Another of the self-portraits is in full profile. Eyre has underpainted on card in pink and taupe. The charcoal drawing is done on a glassine overlay. The figure wears a half-toque cut away in front. A bib-like fabric covers the nose and mouth, bandit style. My eye was pulled to the fragile v at the bridge of the nose, the fragility heightened by the pink underpainting. If he's hiding, it's not working. The overall effect is vulnerability, even to the soft, thin tufts of hair sticking out at the back of the toque.

The hoods, helmets or bonnets suggest to the viewer a different space than the one everyone else is living in—something quite separate from the spaces we inhabit—like an astronaut's headgear or a personal bathysphere. It's clear the artist is probing other depths, other spaces. Even in the most direct piece where the artist's head and face are uncovered we're still outside whatever he's inside. But finally, obscuring or revealing is not the real issue. Eyre's self-portraits tell his full story: "I am an artist." ♦

Meeka Walsh is a freelance writer and critic living in Winnipeg. Her most recent story, "Choker," will be published next month in Malahat Review.









ERIC FISCHL

India in My Imagination

Bull with red-painted horns drinking water.
Mountains of bricks along the road.
Planted fields the colour of lime jello.
Bullocks pulling cart w/bundle the shape of gigantic toy top.
Lavender sheets blowing in the hot breeze out in the jello-green field.
Orange truck coming at us.
Very, very dry.
People the colour of dust, dressed the colour of flowers.
Like peacocks sitting on the heads of camels; India in my imagination.
"All India Travels" the ad says. It feels like all India travels at us.
Desert people people the desert.
"Stone war bridge," says Mr. Lall.
Motorcycle underneath bus wheel—no sign of life.
Turquoise house out of the blue.
New asphalt road with traffic bumps. "Disco bumps," Mr. Lall calls them.
Woman draped in cloth carrying huge bundle of sticks on her head—unbelievable shape!
House surrounded by braided piles of dung.
A man with pet bear hitchhiking. Who's going to pick him up?
Rickshaw with sticker saying "Star Trek."
Little girls dressed in red climbing out of a military transport vehicle.
I'm waiting for the Hindi roadsigns to turn into English, like an old movie.
Horse's legs painted orange.
Man sitting in tree.
"How do people drive in India?" I ask Mr. Lall. "Eye contact," he says.
Bull with blue horns.
The Taj Mahal at dawn—nothing more perfect. Icecold underneath our bare feet.
Driving from Jaipur to Agra with Mr. Lall, 02.15.89.

Eric Fischl



CAMERA READY

SNAPSHOTS OF ERIC FISCHL

by Bruce Ferguson



Eric Fischl, *to be titled*, 1989, oil/linen, 115¼" x 140¼", courtesy Mary Boone Gallery.

VISUAL ARTS



Photographs by Eric Fischl.

ERIC FISCHL IS an artist, raconteur and my close male friend. We have bonded and been intimate or disagreed and fought; shared enlightening times and conversely, have experienced embarrassing moments. We've worked together professionally and as raging amateurs; have fiercely supported and just as passionately chided one another's desires, fears and ideological positions. We have remained friends at different and variously intense levels of emotion and intellect throughout a 16-year period. I often think my curatorial and critical work "through" his art. His work is a touchstone both because of my familiarity with it and because of my strong belief in its continuing significance. As both an artist and an influential audience he is not far from my mind when I subject a thought, a text or an exhibition to analysis.

Inevitably, this relationship has led me to consider the similarities between criticism and friendship. At first glance, they might seem to be at odds. The relation between a critic and an artist, for instance, is usually seen as problematic and tense. Different priorities, aims and personal circumstances produce the distance which is necessary to the success of one another's projects. Friendship, at the other end of the telescope, is often seen to function more fluidly, more generously and supportively. But even a superficial analysis reveals that when criticism enters friendship,

it can enter as a healthy and redemptive dynamic. And it's often the outcome of shared professional and even emotional interests, an expression of the highest desire between both parties for an ongoing dialogue.

SNAPSHOT NUMBER ONE: 1972; Eric at play

My first memory of Eric is at a late-night dinner party in Montreal at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, hosted by the Canadian president of *Time* magazine. Eric's then-abstract paintings were part of an exhibition sponsored by Time Inc. The event was an intense public relations attempt to maintain the magazine's interests in Canada without restrictions to its content or its conglomerate profits in America's favourite colony to the north. The evening ended with Eric, me and Allan McKay, who had all been seated with the president and his wife, repeatedly begging this poor subservient executive to drive us around the block one more time in his chauffeured limo. After we received his final embarrassed rejection Eric performed a ventriloquist act, making his dessert the animated dummy, speaking up for millions of unrequited desirers everywhere. (Years later, at the Venice Biennale, Eric performed a similar act with a talking wallet which spoke with comic eloquence of the

relation between money and art.) For Eric and me it was the beginning of a series of relations: male to male, friend to friend, curator to artist and, not incidentally, American to Canadian.

What happens when a critic and an artist are friends? Does the critical profession, with its allegiance to spheres of academic theory and language-based intellectuality, finally undermine the potential of an aesthetic program based in the uncanniness of materials? Does it eventually and necessarily tire of or condescend towards art? Or does the friendship dominate to the point of creating a sycophantic climate, ultimately eroding any critical intervention? And worse, does such a relation mean that critics only befriend artists whose work is aligned with their values; or can artists only have friendships with critics whose professional ideologies and positions attend reciprocally to their needs? Are artists reduced to illustrators of critical positions explicated by their critic-friends; or is the critic reduced to justifying the productions of his artist-friend? And what happens when one becomes more powerful, more influential or more institutionalized than the other? Does success and fame destroy the potential critical reciprocity or the friendship—or both?

Most of these alternatives produce or reproduce relations which are static, a kind of image-text, 'anchor-relay' relation

which mimics the comfortable predictability of the worst television news programs. Despite the ideological gap between left- and right-wing critics, their positions often represent a pure advocacy that has only surface differences. Admittedly, it is difficult to maintain any rigour when collusion and complicity form the cynical and



competitive environment of the artworld and when humanist sentimentality is the overpowering convention by which friendship operates. A more flexible position (which moves somewhere between blind advocacy and distanced academism) is difficult to find and even more difficult to maintain. And more to the point, perhaps, is that there are strong differences between a professional relationship and a social one, where the economies of exchange are differently constructed and threaten to exhaust the other's living potential in the name of perfection.

SNAPSHOT NUMBER TWO: Eric at work

I organize Eric's first one-person show at the Dalhousie Art Gallery in Halifax where I am the director. I've spent time at parties in his studio, sitting in his bathroom reading his textualized walls, and I have been privy to his notebooks, full of writings, ravings, songs, poems, quotations and drawings. I've heard him speak of these new objects he's making as things with referents—bridges, houses, barns. He writes and designs the catalogue and together—through a kind of formal accident—we fall out of pictorial Modernism into language, into discourse. The catalogue acts like a mutual manifesto of dissatisfaction (against Greenberg, against NSCAD, against Canadian regionalism, against all our fathers). Later, outside this provincial milieu, we learn that it is a rupture shared, theorized and practised widely at the same time in many places. Much, much later I learn that he thinks it was my idea for him to write in the first place, when I have always believed (and still do) that it was Eric who led me to the interrogations associated with the postmodern debate. Such is memory, thus criticism and friendship. The same event circulates unevenly in unplotted narratives that are impossible to prove or accurately reconstruct.

For a critic to be able to talk about art reasonably and accurately, he or she must be close enough to the artwork to read it. That reading is most satisfying when it fully engages his or her body and senses in a way that is sympathetic to the nuances of the art, to its public suggestions and to its right to speak as an object. A critic must even be close enough to hear the art's muteness, to allow its silences to evolve into the inevitability of language. A critic must know the art well enough to feel its weight and sense its variable surfaces. A critic must be open to the object's needs to the point where the implications it raises can be met with honesty and care. These erotics of the object and the space it hovers in should be valued and the work of art should be allowed to breathe artlessly.

SNAPSHOT NUMBER THREE:
Eric at home

Eric and I spend some desultory time in the Germanys of Berlin one December before Christmas. I am researching some recent video. We've decided beforehand to reward his patience and boredom with my incessant interest in "moving images"—as he calls popular culture in general and video in particular—with a visit to Paris. A debate between popular culture and the role of art is at the base of our discussions about appropriate subjects and effective methods of work. In Paris, we buy presents, get insulted by haughty salesclerks, eat and drink too well and generally indulge a kind of unspoken ennui in our lives and our relationship. One late night we look at Richard Serra's installation in the Tuilleries and we do a *Mad*-magazine, "What's wrong with this picture" routine, until our laughter enriches a sterile prop in a winter town.

In the morning, at the Jeu de Paume, feeling better for having again established a common ground, Eric suddenly launches into a long discernment of a Degas on display. It is a small painting of a woman looking into a mirror, a so-called "last-look" mirror with all the connotations of fashion and death which attend its illusive skin. Eric explains fastidiously and painfully how the woman is not seeing herself as she is; that she is instead seeing herself as older, as her own mother or as a sister; or that perhaps she is actually seeing an image of her sister or mother; or she is seeing herself more idealized and more perfect (or less so); or, equally, she could be seeing herself in an unknown past or in an even more vulnerable future. Eric's intense interrogation disturbs this picture profoundly, disrupts its easily recognized 'realism', its beauty and its artfulness. He uncovers the ghosting uncomfortability which underlies it. What he uses is the difference between the two biased images engaging each other within the frame; what Douglas Crimp sees in the symbolism of Degas's superimposition

photographs or what Lacan had discussed in terms of necessary misrecognition—the panic and pathos of images metaphorically incised in the "mirror stage," where image and reality are forever linked in the fabric of unfulfilled desire. This is not only a child's moment, as Lacan understood and as Eric's understanding of the Degas also shows, but one which is repeated endlessly in anyone's alienated relation to cultural images.

This thematic later reappears in Eric's paintings, one of which has two separate parts—a nude woman on a chair and a young ballerina—occupying the same environmental space but a different psychological and (perhaps) historical space. At such moments, Eric reminds me of the courage it takes to pursue a commitment to art, the tragic beauty of its narrow-mindedness and the rewards of such passionate responsibility. When his double painting was first shown, Eric stood proudly beside it talking to Meryl

Streep; her already-mediated face became for me yet another link back to all the public figures and rehearsals in Degas. Three years later, at the Degas show at the Met, a girl recognized Eric and came over to say how much she liked *his* work.

At the same time that the critic must be intimate with a work—with its material demands and occupations—he must also be able to engage it contextually. A critic must accomplish the siting of the work in a cultural field not exhausted by delusions of the artist's intentions, stylistic bravura, or the private language of commerce and power. The implication of the work must be set against all that to reveal the artist's and the art's deep participation in the culture—in its relations to theory, to history and to audiences of different gender, class and race. The shared social space of the work must be uncovered for its critical potential to be reworked textually. Its lack of uniqueness must be insisted upon; its adversarial, negative relation to a calming culture





must be stressed. Pressure must be applied to find the wounds in society which criticism can aggravate. The spirit of doubt which activated the art's production in the first place must be maintained as the guarantor of a critic's labour of love.

Whatever necessary methodology must be applied to make viewers suspicious of the positive account of art as a simple reflection (which is the myth of truth). Scientific work can be countered by a deeply subjective response, elite work by a popular antidote, serious work by laughter and comedic work by stern disciplinary responses. The academic can be countered by parody and the untutored taken seriously; the minor given major attention; political work given a psychoanalytic reading and vice versa—all to upset, disturb and encourage the potential for a dialogue of differences—to un-mirror the relation between art and criticism, the relation between matter and language. What is needed is a deliberate "misidentification" to protect the distances between, to dislocate the original intentions and the overly occupied territories.

SNAPSHOT NUMBER FOUR:
my self-portrait

A painting entitled *Vanity* is in the back gallery at the Mary Boone Gallery. To

continue to be a "bad boy" in public, Eric responds to an article about him in *Vanity Fair* magazine. He paints a nude woman behind a mirror: the copy of *Vanity Fair* with Eric's likeness on the cover is between her legs and serves as a dildo. The painting is self-conscious to the point of privacy and journalistic to the point of banality. I'm embarrassed by being too close to move on a more generous interpretation and too far away to help a friend whose unconscious (at least) is in trouble.

Another painting entitled *Scarsdale* (a suburb north of New York) is a brilliant re-reading of the John Singer Sargent show at the Whitney. This work concentrates on the tired and negative melancholia closely associated with the female at the end of the 19th century. The female is still waiting, a disillusioned and static object of male cultural myopia. Here, Eric reawakens to a renewed historical condition: the curse of a commitment to civility (marriage) by women who remain victims of patriarchal culture today, trapped in the endlessness of property relations in which they are the currency. In Fischl's oscillation between the feminine as object and as subject, this particular casualty redeems my faith in him as a real interpreter of culture,

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Eric Fischl, *Untitled*, 1989, oil/paper, 35" x 46", courtesy Mary Boone Gallery.

a critical witness rather than a perpetuator of a purely affirmative culture.

In other words, in criticism, in friendship and in art production the model is one that Lacan might have called "the correct distance." Too close and all is narcissistic delusion, the dangers of overidentification and slippage into subjective overkill. Too far and the distance can become a will to objectivity or, worse, a seeking after Truth. Both end up being justifications of authoritarian power. Either can produce a kind of textual impotence which arises from a repression of art's stubborn refusal to be accommodated perfectly by language. Too close or too far are distances of inappropriate desire. Both distances are arcs toward madnesses or misappropriate interpretations. The health and goodwill of both criticism and friendship lie in the sphere of correct distance, one which will allow all subjects access to playful and erotic responsibility and to serious and deliberate impulsiveness. Properly put, we are all transitional objects for each other, alive and well only when the correct distance allows good relations to be in place. This mythical equilibrium must be strived for despite its impossibility in both criticism and in friendship.

SNAPSHOT NUMBER FIVE:
home at work and play

Eric, April Gornik and I are together in Deya, Majorca, spending time sunbathing, looking for the Avinida made famous by an earlier generation of Toronto painters. We're competitive, playing everything from Canasta to pinball machines to raise the stakes in this sleepy town. The town has a restaurant that we go to nightly and it's full of Robert Graves acolytes. They're expatriates from America and India and England, waiting for Graves to officially sanction their projects so that they can finish Ph.D.'s or books. They live on scraps of rumour and anecdote from his house on the hill. They're like circling buzzards. Graves is senile and during an afternoon tea with him and his wife, the three of us realize he doesn't notice that a hot teapot is burning his hand. Our interest in myth moves from the classical to the topical; it is not Graves's work but his scorched presence that occupies our attention.

The conditions of expatriatism and its denials are made evident one afternoon when Eric spellbinds a cafe audience with stories from American TV, one of the evils from which they are all fleeing and one of the dangers to the classical myth they all

favour. Eric ruthlessly remembers plots to "Mary Tyler Moore" shows, perversely recreating characters and punch lines. The audience sits, fascinated, as he seduces them into his own version of the American Dream—a preview of all the paintings to come with alienated beings watching TV and a disturbance of their superior expatriate position toward contemporary mass culture. Sometimes the correct distance is right around the corner. The painter can listen to the insights in day-to-day mass culture and sometimes, even now, the critic or the curator can listen to paintings to hear a sound that isn't just canned laughter.

Bruce W. Ferguson is the Adjunct Curator to the Winnipeg Art Gallery and a freelance producer living in New York. He curated an exhibition of paintings by Eric Fischl which opened at the Mendel Gallery in Saskatoon and toured to four other countries, closing at the Whitney Museum in New York in 1985.

ARCHITECTURE

Richard Henriquez

ARCHITECT OF RADICAL MEMORY





Above: Henriquez House, Vancouver, interior.
Left: Henriquez House, exterior montage.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF Richard Henriquez is the most personal of any architect in the country. In a discipline not known for its tolerance of autobiography, Henriquez has been able to instil in his buildings and projects an insistent sense of his own personality, a personality that is variously eccentric, elegiac and infused with an intractable feeling for ritual.

This sense of ritual is at the centre of Henriquez's art—and I use that word fully conscious that it is usually thought of as separate from architecture. For Henriquez art and architecture are inextricably linked; he can't have one without the other. His artistry comes in his approach to conceiving a building; he is able to take his own lead as much as his clients'. Henriquez is a strong personality and when he wants to do something that he's committed to—and he seems only to take on projects that are personally significant—he wants to do it his way. "I'm interested in the idea of inventing a fictional history for a building," Henriquez says. He fleshes out this notion like a novelist, creating a story around each building that participates to varying degrees in historical accuracy and imaginative invention. His narrative for the Villa Karma building (a reconstruction in Vancouver of an Adolf Loos building in Vienna) has the labyrinthine complications of a John Fowles novel.

In the Sylvia Hotel project, he took an eight-storey building that had been built in 1912 as a luxury hotel on Vancouver's English Bay beach and used its style to inform his addition. The new building looks like a renovated version of the old building, except, of course, that it's built

from scratch with contemporary materials. "The idea is not to invoke nostalgia," Henriquez says, "but to give people a new way of looking at what they take for granted." With the Sylvia he also gave people a new direction to look; the original building had ignored the view of the harbour to the west, while Henriquez went for it like a fish to water. The 17-storey condominium tower includes the brick, terracotta walls and punched windows of the original Sylvia but it also has a glazed curtain wall that is rotated to take advantage of the spectacular view of the harbour.

Henriquez is especially sensitive to the layered history of the place where buildings stand. He comes from a culture where nothing is wasted or thrown away, where ancestral, familial and historical presences are honoured. Nowhere is his deep respect for the emotional resonance of the past more evident than in his own house, a building that tells us as much about the kind of individual who built it as Frank Gehry's house tells us about him. It's not surprising to find in Henriquez's house a memory wheel, full of the talismanic presents of his family. Out of this centre of ritual and memory, Richard Henriquez continues to build an architecture that is a record not of monuments, but of sensibility. It is, altogether, an extraordinary body of work, one all the more potent for its understatement.

The following interview took place in Richard Henriquez's Vancouver offices in June 1989. It was conducted by *Border Crossings*' editor, Robert Enright.

BC: You were born in Jamaica. Tell me what you remember about that country.

RH: My earliest memory has to do with a hurricane that almost demolished our house in August 1944. I remember the sound of the dishes breaking in the night as half of our house was destroyed. We were huddled in one room at the back of the house with a dozen and a half other people from smaller houses who had come to find shelter. I went out in the yard the next morning—our house was right across from the beach—and all the trees were completely flattened and there were fish in the yard. My mother says I was singing “Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag,” but I don’t remember that.

BC: Your mother was already inventing a fictional history for you?

RH: No, I think it probably happened. She isn’t usually like that. What I didn’t know, because I was only three years old at the time, was that two weeks later my mother discovered my father had been killed in the war. So it was a pretty rough time for her. My sister and I went to live with our grandparents and my mom went to work. Then a couple of years later she married a first cousin of my father’s, and we went to live in a small town 20 miles away. I don’t know how many people lived there, maybe a thousand or so. And I remember spending a month at least of the summer with my grandfather, who had a citrus plantation. And those were my happiest memories. We used to go fishing and swimming every day and my aunt would take us to ride horses and roam around the property.

BC: So apart from your father’s death it was a charmed childhood?

RH: No, because besides the happy experience there was boarding school. I went when I was seven years old and it was pretty cruel. I wasn’t a particularly robust child at the time and I remember being beat up and stuff. It’s the summers I remember fondly, not being at boarding school.

BC: Were you aware of being a member of a special family? Were the Henriqueses a significant family in Jamaica?

RH: To some extent, yes, although our part of the family wasn’t the rich one. My father ran a small property for my grandfather. He was in agriculture and when the war broke out he became what was known as an agricultural instructor. He worked for the government and he’d go around to small farms, telling people how to cultivate so they could increase food production. But I have absolutely no memory of my father. I learned about the family from my grandfather during the summer. Sitting on the porch in the moonlight, he’d tell me stories about his growing up and roaming the world. I always questioned him about our family. I tend to be the genealogist in our family; I have masses of stuff I’ve collected.

BC: Was this questioning of your grandfather a process of romancing the past?

RH: No, I think it had to do with the lack of my father and wanting to know about him. I think that may have stimulated it. There seemed to have always been a gap there, something tangibly missing. I have no doubt that the way I am has to do with his not being around. And it’s determined my attitude towards objects that he made, as well. There are a few things that he made—bowls, wooden bowls, bits of furniture—that are very important to me.

BC: They’re emotional talismans?

RH: Yeah. He touched it, I touched it. I have no other remembrance, no other connections.

BC: What kind of influence did your mother have on you?

RH: A tremendous influence. As far as I’m concerned she’s a saint. She’s just a wonderful person.

BC: Was there anything in your upbringing that would have pushed you in the direction of architecture?

RH: The interest in architecture also came through family. My granduncle, he married

my grandmother’s sister, was also an Henriquez. He was just a brilliant man—a sculptor, a painter, an architect and an engineer. They used to come and visit my grandfather during the summer and I would go with him to look at buildings that were under construction. He would also make sculptures for us. I remember being tremendously impressed by his talent. And you know what else I remember very clearly? The smell of paint. In Jamaica wooden buildings would be painted on the outside with white or cream-coloured paint and then white sand would be dashed onto the paint and it would stick and form a beautiful finish. I can see the sand forever—a very vivid memory.

BC: Do you have a lot of strong sensual or visual memories of Jamaica? Did it shape your sensibilities in many ways?

RH: Certainly it did in terms of attitudes about things and about waste. In an underdeveloped country you don’t waste materials. You can spend all day fixing something, but you can’t throw it away because it represents material. Material is very costly; labour’s cheap. And of course the opposite is true here. In Jamaica people would pull nails out of wood and straighten them and reuse them. We never wasted anything, even to this day. I was cleaning out my mother’s house, which I’d painted 12 years ago, and I found a pair of sandals with paint all over them. Most people would throw them out but I spent an hour cleaning them up. They look great; they’re perfectly good leather sandals. That’s how I am and how I wish more people were. Because the world can’t sustain the waste.

BC: I can see your great-uncle being an influence, but did you make art as a child? I suppose I’m asking whether you were a natural drawer.

RH: I did sculptures out of limestone. I did paintings. I’d make houses out of thatch and bamboo when I was growing up. It was something I did quite naturally. It was very easy for me to make things, it always has been easy to make things. Strangely, among the five members of my family, I seem to be the only one who took

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"Villa Karma"
2070 Barclay St.
Vancouver

that kind of an interest. Another brother was interested in wiring a house with bells and stuff, and another one used to sell mangoes. He became an accountant.

BC: What made you decide to study architecture? Was it the combined influence of your great-uncle and your cousin?

RH: Well, I had already decided by the time I was ten years old that I was going to be an architect. Of course, in those days I imagined that my uncle would teach me architecture. I didn't know the word university. You apprenticed. He never went to university.

BC: And at that time your conception of an architect was someone like your uncle who made things.

RH: Well, yeah. He designed buildings. A few of them are still in existence. They're Beaux Art buildings with Greek statues and porticoes on them.

BC: Did he have a continuing influence on you?

RH: He died when I was in first-year university. So my relationship shifted to his son, who died when I was in fourth year. He got encephalitis and died within a week. It was a tremendous shock. We were very, very close. He was like a father to me. I kept thinking of all kinds of other people it should have been. It was years before I accepted the fact that he was dead. I'd walk down the street and see somebody who looked like him and I'd run up to him. I guess it wasn't until I went back to Jamaica and actually physically visited his grave that it finally sank in.

BC: How much does the kind of architecture you do have to do with a sense of loss and elegy? I mean, you have this incredible respect for the past and a continual need to reconcile the past with the present. I wonder how much of it comes out of an emotional imperative?

RH: I haven't really thought about that. But it could be. We're actually doing a building right now to commemorate my cousin. It's a building for my wife's art centre which was designed by my son. We're actually incorporating my cousin's





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drawings into some leaded windows for the building. So the building will contain the input of four generations of architects.

BC: That's quite significant to you, isn't it?

RH: Yes, I think the connection between the generations is very important.

BC: When you graduated from Manitoba you went back to Jamaica to practise architecture?

RH: I went back for a couple of years and built a number of buildings. Actually, it was really exciting going back because in Jamaica at the time there must have been only 35 architects in the whole country. I walked into an office and I was given half a dozen draughtsmen and all these projects to do. And tremendous freedom to make mistakes.

BC: And did you?

RH: Oh, I made a few. I also designed a couple of interesting buildings. One was a house overlooking Kingston. It was a very steep, sloping site so all the structures collected up in great trusses. I was trying to deal with the climate without having to resort to air-conditioning. We did breathing walls, trying to get the evening wind going across a person's body. It had high ceilings with louvres high up to get good cross-ventilation.

BC: One of the things you recognized is that the place where the building was located had a fair amount to do with what that building should be. Was this a process of education or did you do it by inclination?

RH: In Manitoba you were educated to think more regionally. The interest in the specificity of place and its history came much after Manitoba. In fact, it wasn't until I came to Vancouver that I began to question regionalism as a conception. I began to think about a place that's unique in the world, rather than designing buildings that had to do with a part of the country.

BC: Did you choose to live in Vancouver because it had a congenial climate?

RH: I think so. We took a trip out here right after I graduated and we really liked it.

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BC: What interested you about the place once you got here?

RH: The motivation in coming here was just to get a job and make some money and feed the family. We had two kids. I don't think I thought about architecture in philosophical terms in those days. It was simply a matter of making a living. I worked with Rhone and Iredale Architects for two years on a very interesting project at the University of British Columbia—the underground library—and I guess out of that project came this business of the specificity of place. We had oak trees on the mall and I became completely convinced that the form of a building had nothing to do with its function, or very little to do with it. I realized that a building could be about other things.

BC: So you determined that the real architectural dictum was form follows site?

RH: Right, and this is especially true for a library which is made up of small increments—book shelves that are three feet high—and people—a person reading is four by five. You couldn't analyse a library and come up with any particular form. The whole concept was stupid when we thought about it.

BC: Was it radical thinking to design out of that context? It wasn't the way most people were thinking about libraries.

RH: It was not done a lot in those days, but I didn't think it was being radical.

BC: Did you have a feeling you were out on a limb with this project?

RH: No. I guess I've never been awed by obstacles. And there were serious obstacles in this project, beginning with the proposal to locate the building on the main mall. Nobody at the university had the authority to approve its location so it had to go to the Board of Governors.

BC: Your sense was that a library must have a central function in a place of learning?

RH: Yeah, the centrality was a gut reaction and then we proved it in all kinds of ways. We did origin-and-destination studies,

pointing out where the students were throughout the day, and plotted this information on a map. And everything converged on this spot right in the middle of the main mall. Then we did stop-frame movies of people at class breaks from the top of the clock-tower and they criss-crossed this spot in streams. And we took pictures of the footpaths after a snowfall, and again it reinforced our conviction. So we were able to justify our gut reaction scientifically.

BC: Does form follow gut, too?

RH: Yeah, yeah. I got that from a professor I had at M.I.T. who said, "If it looks right it might work."

BC: What was M.I.T. like when you were there?

RH: It was a very exciting place. In those days we still had the belief that technology would save the world.

BC: You were among the converted?

RH: Oh yeah, I was in advanced visual design courses with Gyorgy Kepes, where he was interested in integrating technology and art. He was doing kinetic sculptures and all kinds of photographic work. I think the change in my attitude towards technology had a lot to do with the ecological crisis, really. I think if one were able to show that technology and ecology were totally compatible—assuming you can write off the population explosion, which is also connected to technology and science—then my ambivalence about it would disappear. But it seems to me that the waste that goes on is ingrained. The waste that goes on in North America is incredible.

BC: Do you distrust technology pretty profoundly?

RH: I do, yes. None of the buildings we've done is an attempt to find new ways of building. Brick and mortar are as good a way of building today as ever. I don't feel the need, just because they're economical, to have buildings made out of plastic that look as if the wind's going to blow them over. Architecture has more to do with a stake in the ground, with something that's



Above: Lee Building, original facade.
Left: Lee Building, contemporary facade.

rooted to the earth, than with the mechanics of show.

BC: *Is one of your fundamental arguments that architecture should radiate out from that central stake in the ground?*

RH: For me a building has to define a place in the world and I don't think that can necessarily be done by the architect. When you think of what makes your place it has to do with objects that have to do with you as a person, your history arranged around you. A person can rent an anonymous apartment and make it his by virtue of the things that he brings with him. Houses where everything is designed by a decorator I find unbelievably vacuous. I don't know how people can actually live in a world without the orientation that comes from things brought with families, or from travels, or things made by their kids. It's just unbelievable to me that people can live like that. It's sad.

BC: *You see this locating through family memory as an antidote to our collective amnesia, don't you? If we don't remember where we've come from, then we don't know where we are?*

RH: Yeah, that's absolutely right. And the modern belief in the here and now. You know, "You've only got one life so go for it." And go for it means buying this new car or getting into debt without thinking of the ramifications for your kids, let alone for the next generation. There are other cultures obviously that don't take that view. I was reading something about this one tribe that had to consider what would happen in seven generations. The elders' job was to think about the effect their decision would have seven generations down the line. I like that a whole lot. There should be a department in the government.

BC: *The Department of Seventh Generation?*

RH: That's right, yeah.

BC: *How did you escape the modernist trap of building monuments? I know enough about you to know that you have a pretty formidable ego but it hasn't manifested itself in this modernist direction. The Miesian direction of not paying a lot of attention to human beings.*

RH: I wouldn't call them monuments at all. I would call them abstract sculptures. And there's a big difference between a monument and an abstract sculpture, a very big difference. I'm not against the former, but I am against building the latter.

BC: *Regardless of scale, do you deny the beauty of Miesian architecture?*

RH: Yes, to me it's not beautiful at all. It's just vacuous. It doesn't move me. There's just nothing there, it doesn't represent anything. It's just an abstract sculpture. I guess it reflects the sun or something so that you can say, 'that's a nice shadow'.

BC: *Can you remember the first building where you felt you were really onto something? Was it the U.B.C. Library?*

RH: I think four or five years after that, sometime around 1973.

BC: *What building?*

RH: I don't know that it would be one building. I think it started with the Lee Building in Chinatown where we rebuilt a facade that had been burnt down. And it was rebuilt as close to word for word as I could, and behind it we built a new building, separating the two by a few braces. It was like a stage set. And although we were told doing that sort of thing would be kitschy and like Disneyland, it looked okay. It had an authenticity to it when you looked at the street. But it started me thinking about some of the stuff we were fed about representation, reproduction and simulation. And with a number of other buildings where we started to deal with the street as an arena and to think of the city not as an organism but as a setting for ritual. In school you thought of the city as an organism and the streets were the arteries. Of course the problem with the analogy is that if the city is an organism then it's out of control. The person isn't the centre because the city grows, almost by itself. This huge organism just keeps growing and its tentacles keep growing. . . .

BC: *It's how Baudelaire described Paris, as "la ville tentaculaire."*

RH: It's out of control. If you think of a city as a setting for human ritual then you centre on a person. The Gaslight Square Building was the first time we began to deal with the building as if it had many purposes, one of which was to deal with the street as a stage for human life. I think that was the first change in attitude. Subsequently, my architecture started to deal with things that I brought to it for myself and drew out of the site. When I went to school in Winnipeg it wasn't legitimate to do something that was capricious, that was a whim, a dream, that couldn't be justified in concrete terms. Now I find it quite legitimate to do that. This building I have with the woman in it, for instance. I'm not ashamed of it even though it's hard to justify why she's there.

BC: *Now, is it hard to justify her presence historically or contextually?*

RH: A woman with a two-storey-high head at the top and three storeys of feet at the bottom is not something you can convince people of, but I justified it by saying it's a sculpture, and people seemed to accept that, "yeah, you can put a sculpture on a building."

BC: *Were you an artist first and being an architect followed out of that?*

RH: Yes, I think that's true. As a kid I was an artist. You lose that, of course. At Manitoba you learned to build and I'm grateful for that. It's important to know how. It's like being able to talk or write. I mean, I did four years of structural engineering at Manitoba. I can do a building that's radical in structural terms and feel confident that I can make it work. Like my house. You look at it and think that's a pretty macho thing to do structurally. But I know enough about structural engineering to know that it's not a big deal.

BC: *I was intrigued earlier when you used the word "authenticity" in connection with the Lee Building. You spend a lot of time researching earlier materials and buildings so that when you do a renovation you're paying respect to that earlier tradition. Is that an accurate description of the kind of intellectual process you go through?*

RH: Yes and no. In the case of the Lee Building, the facade was rebuilt with bricks and mortar in a very similar manner to the original. There are other projects we have done where we have reproduced something in modern material.

BC: *In the Sylvia Hotel you progressed as if you were re-imagining the history of the building?*

RH: But if you look at how it's built, the lower part of those buildings are made of concrete with grooves that simulate the terracotta, which in turn simulated the stone. The whole notion of simulation is not new, but you don't have to do it exactly the way the previous generation did it. The important thing is that there's a dialogue between the old and the new and that there's a believable resonance.

BC: *In fact, for someone who does renovation, you're pretty interventionist, aren't you? You don't have any qualms about messing around with history in that way?*

RH: An important aspect of renovation for me is to preserve the record and that means being able to see the layers and distinguish them from one another. In the case of the Sylvia, one of the layers was a fictitious layer. We have done real renovations—my house would be an example of that. I've gone out of my way to reveal the layers of the old house, the top and bottom and sides of it. Inside, where we put in a new wall, it's painted white and where there was an old wall, it's painted green. It's a memory more than a record because we've taken some liberties. I'm not doctrinaire in this approach but I'm saying it is important to leave a record. So I don't find renovations, where it looks like an all-new project, to be successful. It's like going to a museum where you see an old piece of pottery and there's a piece missing and they put in a contrasting patch. It seems to me that's what you have to do with renovation if you have respect for the piece that you're renovating. You have to distinguish between a record, a reproduction and a memory of a thing. When you're reproducing something from the past, there's no obligation to be accurate. It's

got to be *believable* but it doesn't have to be accurate.

BC: *Is authentic a fill-in for believable in this context?*

RH: Yes. It has to feel authentic.

BC: *Is this what you call fictional history?*

RH: Fictional history isn't the piece of pottery in a museum; fictional history is preserving an accurate record. It's the pristine thing. It isn't the piece of pottery in a museum. Some of the stuff I'm doing now is very ambiguous. I'm doing a project where we are taking a building that Adolf Loos built in Vienna, imagining that it was in Vancouver and then cutting bits of it away as a result of a mistake which a dyslexic surveyor made laying out the road across the street. So there's this mirror image crossing the side of this road, which is across the street, which cuts a piece of this building away. And the project is informed by this whole narrative. It gets even more complicated as the building develops from this story.

BC: *Just figuring it out is complicated enough. How have you been able to sell a client on this idea?*

RH: They don't know about it. They'll find out about it later. In fact, this particular project is into the city for approval right now and the planner wanted to get rid of the remnant of the original Villa Karma. I had to tell him that it was absolutely essential because it's where the story began. After he stopped laughing, I convinced him it was not totally in jest and now he's gone along with it. I wrote him a personal letter justifying the project and at the end said, "P.S. Adolf Loos is watching." He's trying to get it approved.

BC: *It's revealing to hear you tell the story of this building. Do you think of your architecture as a kind of three-dimensional narrative, that your buildings are telling a story, not just of their own creation but of some social context that's personally significant to you?*

RH: Oh, yeah. There is a reason for this narrative. What we're trying to do is develop the history of this place. There

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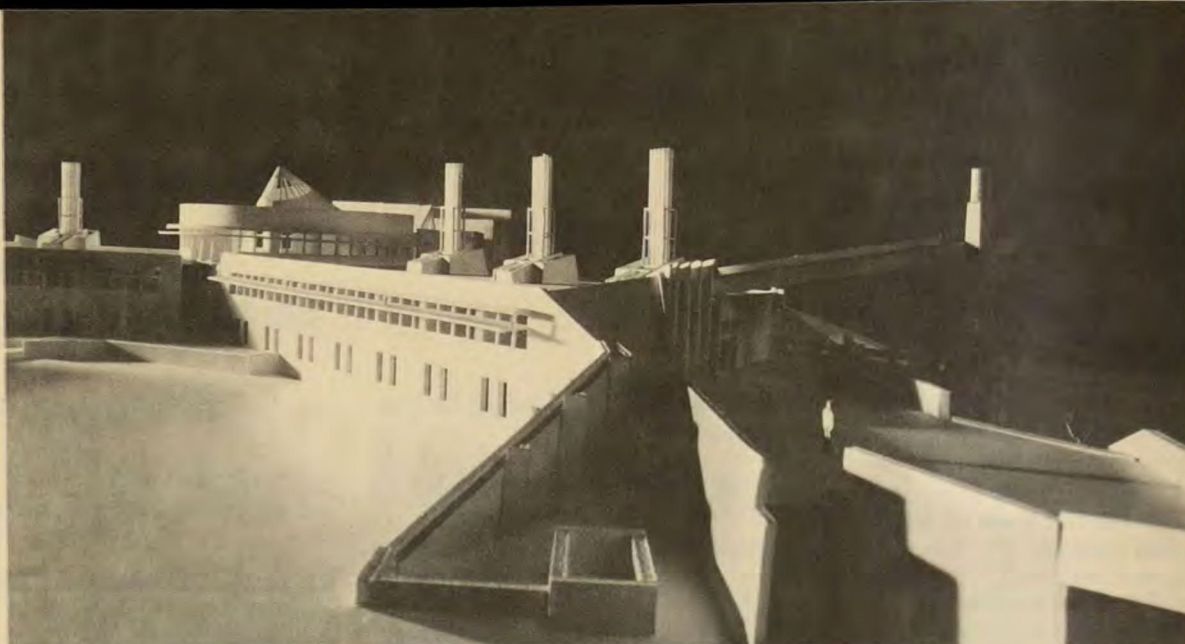
used to be houses here. There is a street across the way with an idiosyncratic geometry that we're trying to somehow mirror in this project. And you could literally say, "Well, we're going to build a little house that somehow looks like the one across the street." You could respond in that rather prosaic way, or you could make it a little more interesting by developing a sophisticated narrative that informs the project at all levels. That makes it quite easy to do a project that has cohesiveness to it because you know what Villa Karma looked like and when you cut a piece out of it you have to patch it with something. Well, we're patching it in 1989, so we're obviously not going to do it with the same stuff it was made of in the '20s. So the layers now become quite evident. And it gives the feeling of a renovation, a renovation which is touched by history. But it's a history that's not real; rather, it's evoked.

BC: *You're talking like a novelist. This is what a novelist would tell me if he were to describe how the central character in a novel takes over. What I'm drawing attention to is the fact that your creative process is instinctively—even practically—an artistic and not a scientific one.*

RH: Yes, that's true. Also, some of this has to do with my son who is working with me. He's just finishing his Master's. He was at Carleton University and then at McGill with Alberto Perez Gomez, and talking to a young student about some of the things that he's studying today has had quite an influence on my thinking.

BC: *In what way?*

RH: Well, Perez Gomez is very much against the way architecture is going. He has written a book called *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science*. But the emphasis at Carleton was very theoretical and



Trent University, Environmental Sciences Building.

anti-scientific. They did theoretical projects that had nothing to do with function and some of the students didn't even do very much building construction. That's a pity, actually, because that's a very important part of architecture.

BC: You care for the built building, don't you? I can't see you being a conceptual architect.

RH: No, that's right. For sure I wouldn't. Although, when I get involved in various fights getting things approved and built, I fantasize from time to time how wonderful it would be to not have to deal with all that. But yeah, I like to see things being built.

BC: Is your house the most personal piece of architecture you've ever made?

RH: Probably. It has a lot to do with the way I feel about architecture.

BC: Is it also the most layered of the pieces you've done?

RH: Is it the most layered? Yeah, I guess it is with the old house, which was built by a doctor for his family, which they lived in their whole lives. So there's that layer and then there's what we did to it, and then the things that are in it that come from way back. It's also filled with artwork of one kind or another, things that my wife made—she's a sculptor—and my daughter made—she's a painter—and my son's drawings and some of the things that I've made. And then heirlooms that have been passed on, pictures of great-grandparents and other objects that have come from Jamaica.

BC: Are you fighting a rear-guard action against the general practice of architecture? Do you feel frustrated that your profession has become less human than you would like it to be?

RH: I'm not terribly judgemental about the profession, if you want to know the truth. A lot of architects are well-meaning and they do the best they can and they're just not interested in these things. I don't blame them for the way the world is going. I figure there's a lot more momentum attached to the way things are than could possibly be changed by architects. We have relatively little power.

BC: Is architecture an ethic for you? Has the building of buildings, objects—whatever it is you make—has it a very strong moral imperative?

RH: Ethical? Yeah, personally ethics are important. I got that from my family. You have one reputation and if you lose it, you've lost everything. I have a sense that people have to take individual responsibility for what they do.

BC: Have you ever built a building that you wish now you hadn't?

RH: Not in terms of ethics. There are a lot of buildings I'm ashamed of for other reasons.

BC: Have you built some bad buildings?

RH: A few. Not so recently. I've become wiler in my old age and I find it's a little easier to get my own way because I can be persuasive and use the system to make it work. When I was younger the system got the better of me. I was beaten down and just outsmarted by it.

BC: I'll bet you can be damned hard-nosed.

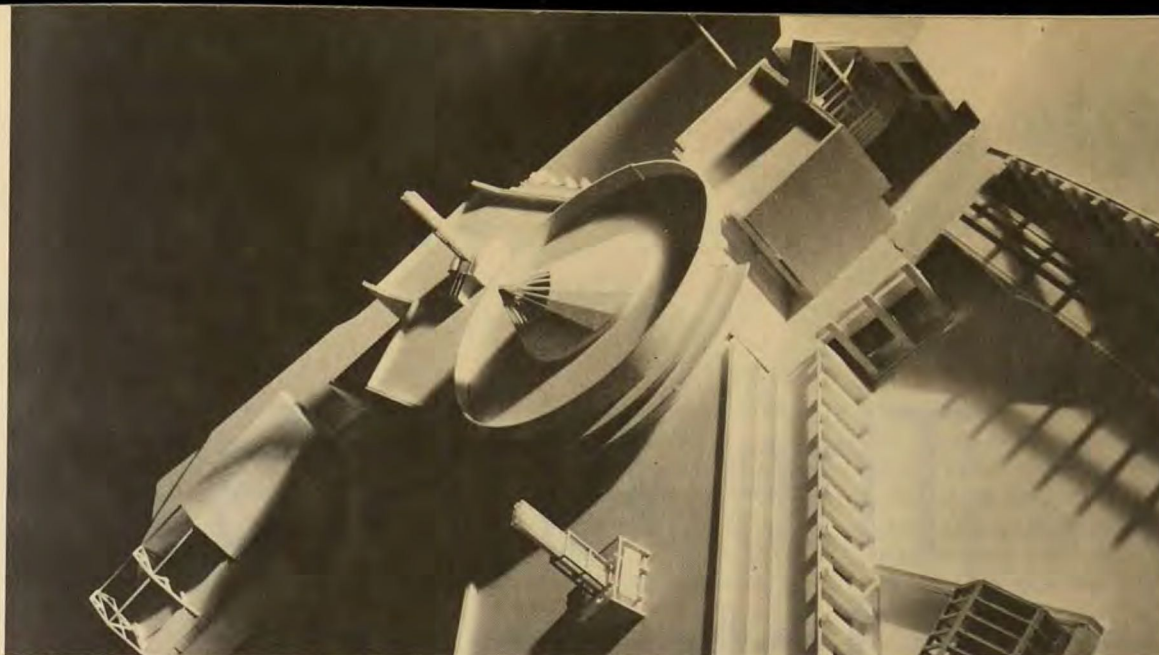
RH: Yeah, I can be stubborn, I can be very, very stubborn.

BC: What about your most recent project—the Environmental Sciences Building for Trent University? I sense that it's a very significant building for you and that in it you're really insisting on the sense of ritual you talked about earlier.

RH: Well, it's important because it presents an opportunity that the average building project doesn't present. Trent University and the people there look at what they have as a very special legacy.

BC: You mean the whole concept of Ron Thom and his master plan for the campus?

RH: I don't think it's just Ron Thom, you know. It's Ron in relation to those people and what he was encouraged to do. It's a very special place. So there's a big responsibility that I feel to carry on what he started and maybe push it a little bit further. I suspect the reason I got the job in the first place was because of my interest in the whole ecological condition. I talked about things like that. I'm trying to add another dimension—into ecology and geography—to an Environmental Sciences building which hasn't only to do with science. It's a building with labs and offices and places of research. I'm becoming more and more convinced that just being able to measure pollution in a lake isn't going to fix it. Even though we find a way of getting it out of the industrial process, it's a multidisciplinary problem. The way I described what we're trying to do is to use a belief in the importance of re-establishing man's sacred relationship to the earth, of



Trent University, Environmental Sciences Building.

considering people as part of a community of living things. Things like putting the earth, which is the habitat for the creatures occupying that place, back on the roof is a gesture that the people of Trent are permitting us to make. It costs money to do that. It doesn't cost a huge amount of money, but it costs money. And they're giving up something else, maybe a few hundred feet of pipe or a more sophisticated air-conditioning system. They're giving that up for earth on the roof.

BC: Do you feel that architecture can be a repository for cultural memory?

RH: For me the issue is continuity between the past, the future and the present. And making people aware of their place in time and space. You've got to know where you came from. This is a personal interest that has developed but it seems to me it has an application that's central to what I do in architecture.

BC: I was going to ask you about the memory wheel in your house and the function it serves as a talisman, as a physical thing that contains the objects of your family's aesthetic. It's so direct.

RH: Yeah. Well, again I'm trying to get that connection between the generations, in this case the whole family. There's another piece as well, a cabinet that I made for my daughter when she got married last year. It has a number of little drawers. There's one that's about 2½" wide and has two holes in it with tiny picture frames, and below that is one twice as big, and below that is one twice as big again. And the first one has two places for pictures and the next one four and eight and so

on. In the first drawer are pictures of my wife and myself and my daughter's grandparents and her great-grandparents, and in the drawers are objects that come from those generations—be it a thimble or a recipe written in Yiddish that her great-grandmother made. There are two sides to this and on her husband's side is the same thing. It's made out of some old mahogany boards from a cabinet my mother had in Jamaica. And it's in the shape of an easel. It's supported on an easel because both my daughter and her husband are painters. I gave it to her at the wedding and told her that it was a reminder of her place in the world at the centre of two families.

BC: Can you make anything new in architecture? You talked earlier about technologies and how you basically want to return to a stake in the ground, that mortar and brick are good enough. Is there also, then, a limitation that comes with the gift of this earlier technology? Do you have a feeling that you're doing new things or are you really just interpreting the past?

RH: I'm not against technology and I'm not against new technology. We use modern things in our buildings, but I certainly don't go out of my way to develop new technologies, nor am I particularly interested in them as anything but a means to an end. If there's a new computerized thermostat that'll save energy, fine. I wouldn't have difficulty with that. We've done buildings where the bricks were made in panels and assembled in large sections. I don't have a problem with that, either. But that's not what buildings are about; they're about something else.

BC: Does it concern you whether or not your buildings will still matter to people in 50 years, say?

RH: I think it's very important that buildings have a lasting value, that they're not just trendy things that make the glossies and are forgotten.

BC: But with a project like the Sylvia Hotel, would you like some young turk to come along and figure he's going to take your interpretation of the Sylvia one step further?

RH: Sure. In fact, I was thinking the other day that as an academic exercise I should do a renovation of my house. What would somebody do 50 years from now? I'm trying to think, is it going to be an apartment-zoned area where the density is double, or what is it going to be? How could you add another layer? Sure, I think they should, absolutely. I don't have a problem with somebody renovating one of my buildings, but not erasing the record.

BC: Why does it matter to you that these buildings have the kind of resonance which you talked about? What difference does it make if a building has something in it that is emotionally important to you? Sixty years from now someone will be using that building in a way that has no connection at all to your initial impulse in making it.

RH: Why does it matter? It's a question of respect. There are people who built this country and built old buildings and they put a lot of love and attention and craftsmanship into them. I think it's disrespectful to just knock them down and not leave any trace of what they did. I think it's very disrespectful. ♦

The Artist's Intention

by Terrence Heath

For a critic to accept on face value what an artist writes about his or her art is a major failure of critical imagination. It is to succumb to the artist's narcissism—to become a pawn in his or her game of self-inflation.

Donald Kuspit, *The New Subjectivism*

FOR THE PAST year, I have been writing poems out of a poem, *Cuento de dos jardines* by Octavio Paz. At first, I was translating passages, which then escaped the Spanish and took on my English images and phrases. Then, thoughts and dreams, particularly dreams, started in his poem. His words carried them around in their pockets like a boy with a penknife, a man with loose change.

As I write and read, I find there is a great deal of room, of unoccupied space in this poem. I can move around inside it and, although I am never crowded, I find the places accommodating me. Sometimes, in reading the words, I can tell from the feel of the language that some inner

restlessness is being quieted; I allow myself to be carried along. More often, it is simply a place to work.

This experience has led me to think about art in a different way. Or, better, it has allowed me to see more clearly how I handle art. Most simply stated, I think I am conscious of entering into a poem, a painting, an installation, and attempting to re-create it and, more often, to make something out of it which is my own. I don't mean by this mining it for ideas, stories or techniques. It is not even a matter of inspiration. It is personal engagement with the work.

This personal re-working does not remove my interest in the intentions and circumstances of the artist. On the contrary, I see what the writer or painter is doing as complementary to my involvement. I wish the work to remain attached in some basic way to the artist and the larger context of his or her thought. The fact that Senor Paz wrote his poem on board a ship returning to Central America from India does not aid me very much in understanding its meaning, but it locates him for me in much the same way that a

lover's description of where she is, what she is wearing, what she is thinking, what she has been doing, locates her for my body's yearning to be with her. I think something akin to this yearning is basic to participating in the art.

To see the viewer, reader or spectator as an active participant is a commonplace of 20th-century art. Actors sitting in the audience, or the audience following actors around, the choice of multiple endings in a novel, and the entry into the space of the viewer in many installations and pieces of sculpture are all versions of this concern. In effect, the viewer becomes a co-producer, a participant in art-making, even though the result is not simply an understanding of the art. The art object becomes the occasion for understanding, rather than the experience of understanding; it becomes the occasion for production, rather than the product. The viewer becomes what Joe Fafard has called "the second participant."

Similarly, the artist is also a viewer, the first viewer of his or her own work and a participant in the works of others. Although my writing directly out of a poem

by Octavio Paz is a deliberate focussing on my part, all artists work out of the accomplishments of other artists and from the reactions and expectations of the viewers. No artist is original in any absolute sense. The very concept of art-making is given to the artist by the culture in which it is produced.

Why, then, the endless discussions about the role of the artist's intention? I.A. Richards' presentation of literary worth as arrived at through the anonymity of the author; Derrida's rallying cry of "il y n'est pas hors texte"; the strong warning voiced by Donald Kuspit in the quoted excerpt at the beginning of this essay. And, on the other side, Warhol's artist as a star. The very need to look at the intention of the artist in dealing with the work seems to be a particularly sensitive area.

It's basically an issue of authority. How is the work to be understood? I have known many artists to feel that they have been misunderstood, but I have never met one who felt there was only one way to experience or understand the art work. (Well, maybe one!) In running a public gallery, I certainly became aware of the reactions of viewers to works with which they were not familiar. Usually, they wondered what the artist intended, or else made up a meaning themselves. In other words, both artist and viewer saw the artist's intention as neither definitive nor irrelevant.

Perhaps, artist's intention is only a thorny issue for art critics. The authoritative artist as opposed to the authoritative interpreter. It may have become a central issue in part because the role of the critic has changed over the past 30 years. There is a good deal of difference in viewing the critic as an evaluator of worth in art or as an explainer of meaning. In the former case, there is no doubt about the artist's intention to create a work which functions well aesthetically and, in any case, no one is going to take the artist's word that he or she has just painted a masterpiece. In the latter case, the critic's interpretation and the artist's intention can be contesting approaches, and there is a strong tendency among most

viewers, I suspect, to side with the artist unless they and the critic dislike the work. The dismissal of artist's intention may be no more than warring professions, or the critic's grab for the laurels.

The issue of intention does, however, activate a number of reflexes, which are part of our cultural inheritance. One of these is the Romantic image of the artist as an ecstatic genius, whose authority comes from inspiration beyond the ken of ordinary humans. Culturally, this figure is a derivation of our concept of Jehovah as creator. Both tend to place the act of creation in a separate and exclusive category of experience; the analysis of intention, of course, is central to both. In this perspective, the viewers are really onlookers, passive and more or less benighted. This view of art-making, and of creation, invites rejection of both creator and intention.

Another stereotype of the artist sees him or her as a child or simpleton. Unencumbered by intellectual sophistication, the artist in this view creates simply and directly from the heart. They know not what they do, but they have, like children, a direct contact with the most basic and meaningful truths of human existence. Indeed, concern with complex, worldly problems are seen to corrupt the artist. Here, the intentions of the artists are not important, because they are really a conduit and not the originator of the meaning of their work.

A third view is of the artist as megalomaniac. The extreme phase of self-expression is seen as the ego gone wild. Intention becomes, for the artist, the unrestrained assertion of self and, for the viewer, the contemplation of forbidden narcissisms. The intention of the artist is all but irrelevant for ordinary life. This stereotype leads ultimately to a view of art as either entertainment or therapy; neither the artist's intention nor the viewer's reaction is of any importance.

It is difficult to deal with our stereotypes, because they are never truly dispelled. They linger like shadows in the half light of our understanding. The reality of making art, it seems to me, is of a

different nature from any of these views. The artist is not separate from the viewer, nor the viewer from the artist. Not only do they both bring their creative ideas to focus on the work, but they are both the formative culture in which the art object exists and has meaning. The relationship between artist and viewer is neither communication nor connoisseurship. The former leads to art as propaganda, in which the artist's intention is definitive; the latter leads to art as taste, in which the viewer's judgement is definitive.

When a concept becomes intractable, it is sometimes the language which is not functioning satisfactorily. As I look at the words I am using I realize that there is a triangle of terms which pins down our thinking about art. These are: artist, art object and viewer. Behind them lurk the stereotypes discussed above and behind them probably many others. They are separated, one from the other, by the very fact that they are nouns. None of these terms is easy to define in the culture of art-making. I would wish that I could take these nouns which marshall my thoughts in these repetitious formations and change them into verbs. If we could talk about "artisting," "artobjecting" and "viewering," I think we could more fruitfully discuss the dynamic nature of art-making. We would be able to describe the interactions of the three components without attributing exclusive function to any one. So, the action of viewering could be seen as a part of artisting, the interaction of artisting and artobjecting could be explored, the artisting of viewering could be made sense of.

After a time of thinking in verbs, it is possible that the concepts would expand and adapt, so that the viewer could be co-creator, the art work accepted as unfinished and the artist seen as knowing in part. In the meantime, it seems we impoverish our understanding by stereotyped concepts, which do not give us back our own recognizable experiences. ♦

Terrence Heath, a former Director of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, lives in Toronto. He is also a contributing editor to Border Crossings.

ALTARED EGOS

REFLECTIONS ON HISTORY, ART AND SELF

by Modris Eksteins

LÜBECK IS A city of spires and Hanseatic grandeur. Its majestic Gothic churches and proud patrician houses point to the mercantile power that once was resident here and radiated across the North Sea and the Baltic. The city has, however, not always been as resplendent as it was in the Middle Ages and as it is today.

During the last hour of the last Saturday in March 1942 and into the early hours of the next day, Palm Sunday, the Royal Air Force arrived here: 191 of 234 planes of Bomber Command found their goal and dropped their payload, mainly incendiaries. Much of the old city went up in flames; over half its buildings were damaged. By dawn most of the city's grand spires had collapsed.

After the war, beginning in 1949, the *Altstadt*, or old city, was painstakingly rebuilt. The churches, the city hall, the merchant manses, even the house on the Mengstrasse where Thomas Mann grew up, they all rose again.

Today the city is one of great beauty and has been recognized by UNESCO as an international heritage. But where in these magnificent, rebuilt, red brick churches, in these gabled Hanseatic houses, where does the historical reality end and the pretence begin? Which stones, gables, spires belong to the historic Lübeck and which to the reconstructed replica? It is hard to tell.

This city dramatically poses the essential dilemma of art, and indeed of existence,

in the 20th century: Where does the reality end and the illusion begin? What is genuine and what is posture? What is real and what is imagined?

In Berlin stands a remarkable architectural statement on this issue: the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church. In this case no attempt was made to recreate the original after it was blasted by repeated Allied bombings. Here historical reality and contemporary imagination came together in a stunning combination. The bombed-out church tower was left standing like a smouldering cigar stub, and a modern building was erected around the old tower to frame its gruesome truth. There was to be no confusion in the statement, only admirable integrity. But the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedachtniskirche is an exception; hence, all the more remarkable.

Thomas Mann is perhaps the most famous modern son of Lübeck. Not surprisingly, the relationship between art and life, between individual imagination and social reality, obsessed this master of fiction, to the point where he came to wonder if art was not simply a form of neurosis. Is art, he asked himself, not simply an expression of the socially maladjusted? And is it not the socially maladjusted who are most interested in art?

Here in Lübeck the other day, I collapsed, exhausted, on the sofa. I'd been cavorting with my young sons, playing menacing dragon, giving them

galloping-snorting monster rides that sent them into paroxysms of giggling-hiccuping pleasure. Both were clinging to me like monkeys and demanding that the game continue when I suddenly decided to hoist a white flag. I pleaded dispensation from the monster wars on account of age, back and other inadequacies. "We'll do it again in the future," I said, pathetically. The three-year-old had tears of disappointment streaming down his face. His retort was simple, crisp and perfectly logical: "Do the future now, Dad!"

Many of the Moderns of our century, frustrated by what they saw as immobility and hypocrisy around them—a culture of bad backs and sad sacks—behaved in a similar manner. Some were more vituperative in their frustration than others. Filippo Marinetti, that whizz-bang of Italian thought, wanted to blow up the toll-bridge that to him was the bourgeois concept of time. In his hyperactive "futurist" declamations before the First World War he called on his followers to speed in their racing cars to far-off wars, to ignore the petit-bourgeois toll collectors, to ransack museums, pillage libraries and murder moonbeams en route. Invigorating sensation, life in the fast lane: that was the essence of existence—not decrepit monuments, let alone decrepit people.

"Do the future now, Dad!" Marinetti, a relative youngster, might have said as much to Giolitti, the grand old man of *fin*

ESSAY

de siècle Italian politics and of *trasformismo*, a politics of compromise, of tired realism, of grotty wheeling and dealing. For Marinetti, as for Oscar Wilde and many other turn-of-the-century aesthetes, life and art blended; reality and imagination were indistinguishable parts of the scintillating monster ride that was their existence. One must strive to live one's life as if it were fiction, insisted Wilde; to be merely a fact was to be a failure. The Giolittis of this world distinguished, regrettably, between fact and fiction and adulterated being in the process. That was the charge levelled by the Moderns against the Ancients. Life must be a spirited event, not a compromise, much less a disembodied moral statement.

"Do the future now, Dad!" The beatniks of the '50s added two extra lilting syllables to this modern slogan. They took a rather ascetic Dad and turned him into a jazz-loving, Gauloises-smoking "Daddyo." Dada, by contrast, as well as latter-day punk rockers, turned that wish into an apocalyptic command. All these groups, however, were ministering mainly to themselves.

The event, the happening—heralded by screams from the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, or, some years later, by cries of "Crazy, man!" in the streets of New York, or, some years later still, by the rat-tat-tat of AK 47s in many parts of the world—has become central to our modern aesthetic sense. But the function and purpose of the artist in this street theatre, the question of who is entitled to be called an artist, and which of us constitutes the audience, none of this has been at all clear. The art of Modernism has been distinctly at odds with itself.

On the one hand, the modern artist has claimed that his work is entirely the product of its environment and its audience. Stravinsky said of his revolutionary *Rite of Spring* that he was simply the vessel through which the composition flowed. Similarly, Picasso, when asked by a German officer whether *Guernica* was his work, answered, "No, it's yours." There has been a measure of comfort in this supposedly symbiotic relationship with the outside world. The artist has surrendered himself to his audience and thereby surrendered responsibility as well. The moral dilemma of art is no longer a problem. Not the murderer is guilty but the victim, as Franz Werfel put it. It's up to you, dear reader, to cope with this article. Don't blame me if you don't like it.

But the modern artist has also consistently played the opposite role of *agent provocateur* and *enfant terrible*, a casting that has involved an arrogance and self-indulgence of monumental proportions. For André Gide the quest was for the *acte gratuit*. He wanted to throw people out of speeding trains, boats and planes, for no reason at all. This free act would be synonymous with liberation. Indeed, surprise is freedom, insisted Jean Cocteau. But in Gide's imagination, freedom and death seemed inseparable. The upshot was an attempt to create newness for the sake of newness; newness became a value rather than an attribute. The modern artist has consciously sought the new, the provocative, the unexpected. In the end the modern artist has sought to surprise even himself. But at every moment newness has also implied extinction: the birth of the new entails the death of the old.

While Stravinsky proclaimed that *Rite of Spring* had an energy unto itself which simply flowed through him, his letters and comments in 1912-13 reveal that he was deliberately intent on shocking the public with his new composition. Together with his fellow conspirators, Diaghilev and Nijinsky, he was out to create a *scandale*.

In the radical, suicidal denial of self in favour of an audience, and in the equally radical, murderous enhancement of self generated by an obsessive quest for originality, modern art has journeyed towards a psychic interior of conflict and contradiction. The most striking result of that journey has been a dazzling nihilism, a razzmatazz of mental fireworks. This journey into the interior, as the critic Erich Heller has called it, has been the result of general social, economic and political developments.

The independent artist is a creature of revolution: the issue of the breakup of the feudal world and the breakdown of traditional hierarchy and authority. And yet the independence of the artist, emerging gradually in the 18th and then especially in the 19th century, is not much different, in economic and social terms, from the independence of the former serf. Whether he remained on the land or went to the city to become a labourer, independence for the serf usually meant freedom to assume greater hardship and to experience more anxiety. The cradle-to-grave security that the feudal system represented, harsh although it may have been for some unfortunate, disappeared.

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ESSAY

Artists, particularly writers, painters and composers, were, however, left suspended in a limbo by this new world. Freedom from the old system of patronage and from the academies exacted an enormous psychological price. The result was either a demoralized and demoralizing pandering to public taste in an attempt to survive, or rabid rebellion, followed by destitution in most cases and, in some, even madness. Whatever the real cause of Vincent van Gogh's dementia, it remains highly symbolic of the modern artist's relationship to his world. Van Gogh was, as everyone knows, unable to sell a single canvas during his lifetime. Now, in an entire lifetime most people will earn less money than it takes to buy a single van Gogh canvas.

In our century the state and private benefactors have intervened at various levels to provide assistance to the artist. But like the dole, this support, while readily accepted in the artistic community, is also frequently resented because of its demeaning implications. The artist continues to live in a state of psychological degradation. But in this position the artist also becomes a hero and symbol of the 20th century—the victim-clown becomes the enchanter.

The First World War was the turning-point. The war turned people away from a bourgeois world of externality into themselves for explanation. Platitudes exploded, along with all those trenches that had names like Hindenburg, Kronprinz, Picadilly and Leicester Square. In the process, as Isadora Duncan noted at the end of the war, Everyman became a poet. Meaning could no longer be found in political declamation or any truism; it could only be found in individual experience.

The result was both liberation and frustration: the individual flailed about for recognition. In the '20s, antics became more important than action. Charles Lindbergh fit this role perfectly: flying the Atlantic single-handedly struck a sensitive nerve and was interpreted as action. Then, under the impact of fascism, antics and action became indistinguishable. National Socialism turned individual Angst into a clarion call for national greatness. Everyman had indeed become an artist. Hitler, the painter and would-be architect, was the supreme symbol of that transformation. "The German everyday," insisted one Nazi slogan, "shall be beautiful."

In this whole process, with its combined elements of liberation and anguish, art became provocation, rebellion, energy, a preoccupation with self by the artist, an automatism that was either literal or figurative. Spurred on by the moving picture and subsequent technological achievements, popular culture too became caught up in events in which audience was as important as actor. Andy Warhol, king of Pop art, represents the fusion of high art and popular culture in the 20th century. Through the medium of Warhol, the Campbell's soup can goes from the suburban kitchen cupboard into the art gallery. Kitsch becomes high art. High art becomes kitsch. As a result, tomorrow, in the age of high vanity, everybody will indeed be famous for a few minutes.

This visit to Lübeck is a kind of pilgrimage. I have been here before—40 years ago, amidst the rubble. I spent four years in a refugee camp after the war as a "displaced person." My memories of that Lübeck consist of ration queues, CARE packages and walks in a cemetery neighbouring one of the camps in which we lived.

I returned not for ghoulish reasons but to pursue, as an historian, the theme of the "displaced person." This *entortete Mensch*, as the Germans call the DP, this person without a place, might, it seems to me, become the classic image of 20th-century man, both socially and culturally.

The return has been a shock. I recognize nothing. Absolutely nothing. The ruins are gone. The prosperity is astonishing. The two camps we lived in are now, in one case, well-kept office buildings and, in the other, a huge new base belonging to the *Bundeswehr*, the West German army. The cemetery is, at present, full of magnificent rhododendrons. Their fragrance is heavenly.

I, the historian, who should have some answers, am confronted only by questions.

As a child, in the Meesen Barracks and then the Artillery Barracks here in Lübeck, I might have turned to my father and said, "Do the future now, Dad!" He would have, gladly. ♦

Modris Eksteins teaches history at the Scarborough campus at the University of Toronto. His most recent book, Rites of Spring, The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age, is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

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TOWARD LIGHT

A TRIBUTE TO RACHEL BROWNE



VARIATIONS (1969)

Choreographer: RACHEL BROWNE

Dancer: RACHEL BROWNE

Photo: J. COLEMAN FLETCHER

TOWARD LIGHT

A TRIBUTE TO RACHEL BROWNE

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A message from BRENT LOTT

WCD Artistic Director



Tonight's production of *Toward Light* affords us all with a rare opportunity to see the scope and depth of Rachel Browne's work. It is however, only a glimpse into a lifetime of creative achievements by one of Canada's icons of modern dance.

The inspiration for this Tribute emerged during the Shabbat dinner after Rachel's memorial service in Winnipeg, where family, friends and dance artists gathered. We were inspired to think "big", since that is what Rachel always did. If she hadn't there would not be a Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers. If she hadn't, the School of Contemporary Dancers would not exist. If she hadn't, I and myriad other dancers and choreographers would not be contributing to the evolution of our craft in Canada and internationally.

Since Rachel's passing, many have shared of her impact on their lives. The number and magnitude of these stories is astounding. Countless dancers/choreographers from across Canada and around the world have felt compelled to make known how she contributed to their artistic practice. I should have known, considering her impact on my life -- but Rachel was always so modest.

Modesty aside, Rachel was a matriarch, a pioneer (all words she eschewed) of modern dance in Canada. She is the reason many of us have careers in dance. She was, and how I still hate to use the past tense, more of a groundbreaker than a trailblazer. Her legacy is not a flashy one but one that demonstrates that talent combined with determination, persistence, and vision, can take you very far in life.

I am so grateful that Rachel's daughter Ruth and her husband David have made this Tribute show possible. Their financial support of the launching of The Rachel Browne Trust has propelled so many others to contribute. This Tribute show, and its touring to Toronto and Vancouver, is indebted to them.

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A message from STEPHANIE BALLARD



Rachel Browne was a legend in her own time. As a dancer she set a very high standard for herself. As a director and choreographer her accomplishments are unsurpassable. Rachel's work often included feminist statements that celebrate the power of women. She was known as a generous mentor and she especially encouraged women to choreograph. For that, many of us remain eternally grateful.

Rachel believed in leaving a legacy. And she has done so in a most prolific and profound way. One important facet of Rachel's legacy, Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, is now in the hands of Artistic Director Brent Lott, someone whom she trusted and believed in. Every WCD Company member is a graduate of the School of Contemporary Dancers Professional Program, as is Brent. The School of Contemporary Dancers' Co-Director Odette Heyn was Rachel's quintessential dancing partner. Co-Director Faye Thomson was her

revered master teacher and rehearsal director. Artistic Associate Gaile Petursson-Hiley was her muse as a young dancer.

Her profound impact on dance in Canada speaks for itself. The late Arnold Spohr, Artistic Director Emeritus of Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, often said that Rachel knew what it took: talent, tolerance and tenacity. In 1964 when Rachel Browne started a dance company in Winnipeg, I doubt she had any idea of the far-reaching impact she would have both in Winnipeg and throughout Canada.

I will miss her companionship and support when it comes to The Winnipeg Dance Preservation Initiative, archival work and advocacy. But I look forward to my ongoing working relationship with Kristin Haight on the The Rachel Brown Trust. We have all been touched deeply by Rachel's artistry and compassion. She was my teacher, choreographer, director, mentor and my treasured friend for forty years. Like many others, I owe my entire career to Rachel Browne and am very proud to be a part of her monumental legacy.

STEPHANIE BALLARD

Artistic Advisor for the Rachel Browne Tribute Tour

A message from FROM RACHEL BROWNE'S DAUGHTERS

Thank you very much for joining us for these special Tribute Performances in honour of our beloved mother. We hope you enjoy these eight pieces, which she so carefully crafted.

We are grateful to the dance artists who worked tirelessly and with such devotion to bring these Tribute Performances to life. A very special note of gratitude goes to Stephanie Ballard, Brent Lott and Kristin Haight.

RUTH, MIRIAM AND ANNETTE

Without the dancer, there is no dance. Rachel Browne was deeply invested in every dancer she chose to work with. She understood the difference between dancers that wanted to dance and dancers who had to dance. She made every effort to encourage talent when she saw it. She believed in practice as a means to perform.

She made every dancer she worked with feel special. Her passion for creating dances was shared equally with her dancers. Her dances and beloved dancers are a testament to her outstanding legacy.



THE WOMAN I AM (1975)

Choreographer: RACHEL BROWNE

Dancers: FREDERICK MCKITRICK, STEPHANIE BALLARD, RACHEL BROWNE, SUSAN OLIVER, NANCY PARIS, GRANT MCDANNIEL

Photo: J. COLEMAN FLETCHER

RACHEL BROWNE, CM

1934 - 2012

WRITTEN BY John Rymon

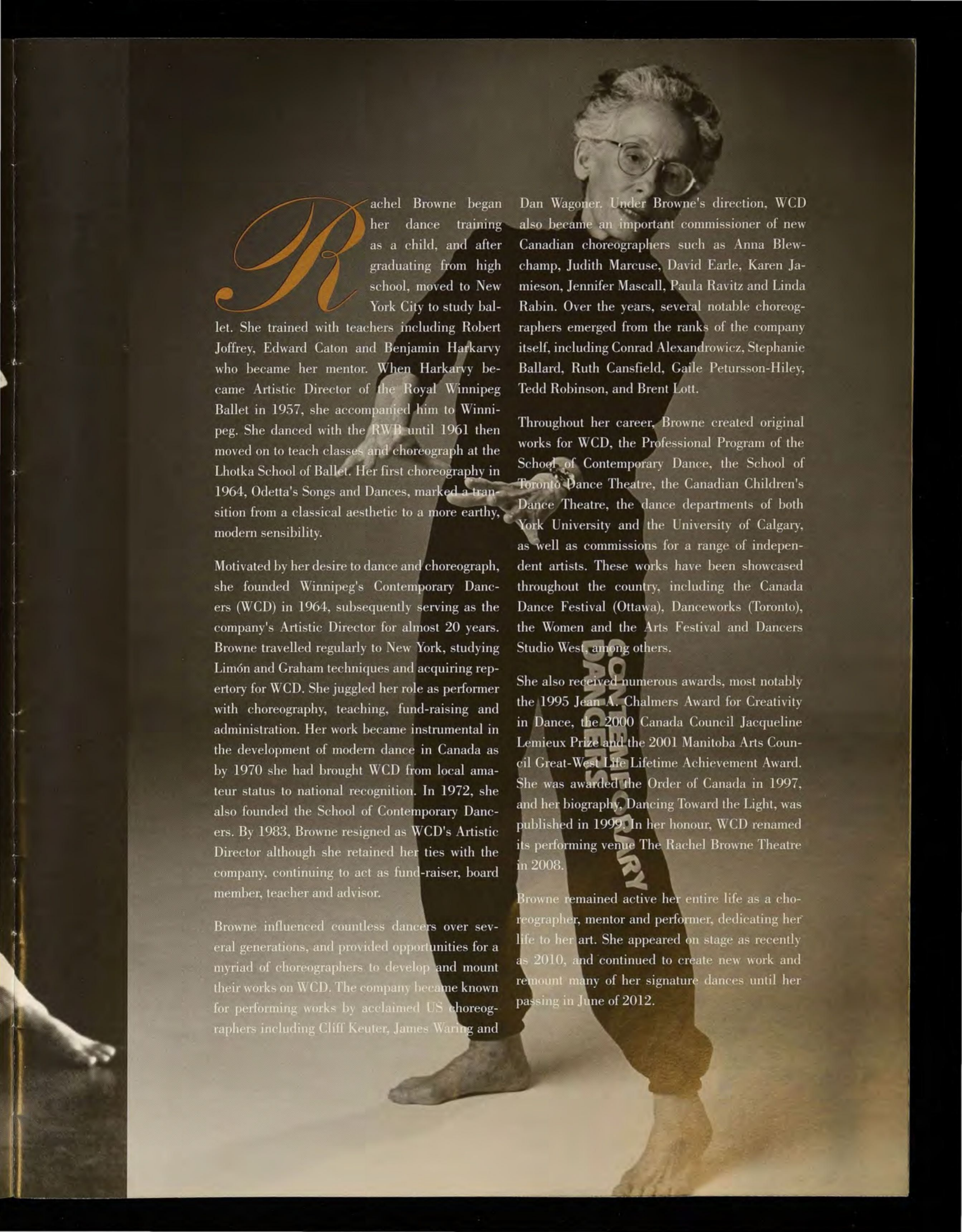


THE OTHER (1978)

Choreographed by RACHEL BROWNE

Dancers: KENNETH LIPITZ & RACHEL BROWNE

Photo: ROBERT TINKER



Rachel Browne began her dance training as a child, and after graduating from high school, moved to New York City to study ballet. She trained with teachers including Robert Joffrey, Edward Caton and Benjamin Harkavy who became her mentor. When Harkavy became Artistic Director of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in 1957, she accompanied him to Winnipeg. She danced with the RWB until 1961 then moved on to teach classes and choreograph at the Lhotka School of Ballet. Her first choreography in 1964, *Odetta's Songs and Dances*, marked a transition from a classical aesthetic to a more earthy, modern sensibility.

Motivated by her desire to dance and choreograph, she founded Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers (WCD) in 1964, subsequently serving as the company's Artistic Director for almost 20 years. Browne travelled regularly to New York, studying Limón and Graham techniques and acquiring repertory for WCD. She juggled her role as performer with choreography, teaching, fund-raising and administration. Her work became instrumental in the development of modern dance in Canada as by 1970 she had brought WCD from local amateur status to national recognition. In 1972, she also founded the School of Contemporary Dancers. By 1983, Browne resigned as WCD's Artistic Director although she retained her ties with the company, continuing to act as fund-raiser, board member, teacher and advisor.

Browne influenced countless dancers over several generations, and provided opportunities for a myriad of choreographers to develop and mount their works on WCD. The company became known for performing works by acclaimed US choreographers including Cliff Keuter, James Waring and

Dan Wagoner. Under Browne's direction, WCD also became an important commissioner of new Canadian choreographers such as Anna Blewchamp, Judith Marcuse, David Earle, Karen Jamieson, Jennifer Mascal, Paula Ravitz and Linda Rabin. Over the years, several notable choreographers emerged from the ranks of the company itself, including Conrad Alexandrowicz, Stephanie Ballard, Ruth Cansfield, Gaile Petursson-Hiley, Tedd Robinson, and Brent Lott.

Throughout her career, Browne created original works for WCD, the Professional Program of the School of Contemporary Dance, the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, the Canadian Children's Dance Theatre, the dance departments of both York University and the University of Calgary, as well as commissions for a range of independent artists. These works have been showcased throughout the country, including the Canada Dance Festival (Ottawa), Danceworks (Toronto), the Women and the Arts Festival and Dancers Studio West, among others.

She also received numerous awards, most notably the 1995 Jean A. Chalmers Award for Creativity in Dance, the 2000 Canada Council Jacqueline Lemieux Prize and the 2001 Manitoba Arts Council Great-West Life Lifetime Achievement Award. She was awarded the Order of Canada in 1997, and her biography, *Dancing Toward the Light*, was published in 1999. In her honour, WCD renamed its performing venue The Rachel Browne Theatre in 2008.

Browne remained active her entire life as a choreographer, mentor and performer, dedicating her life to her art. She appeared on stage as recently as 2010, and continued to create new work and remount many of her signature dances until her passing in June of 2012.



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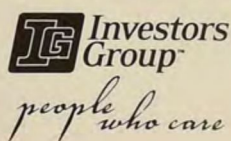
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The Launch of THE RACHEL BROWNE TRUST

To preserve & disseminate the legacy of Rachel Browne C.M.

After the tragic passing of Rachel Browne at the Canada Dance Festival in Ottawa this summer many of us in the Canadian dance community were left reeling. Rachel was a true icon whose life and art had a huge impact on the scores of dancers, choreographers and students with whom she worked. In honour of her incomparable contribution to dance in Canada it was decided to form The Rachel Browne Trust. The purpose of the Trust is to preserve and disseminate her legacy; the many dances she so carefully crafted. In order to launch this Trust nationally we have programmed this tribute show showcasing the depth and breadth of her significant body of work.

The Trust will be administered by Rachel's daughters Ruth Asper, Miriam Browne and Annette Browne with support from WCD, who will assist with its management. Internationally recognized dance artist, Stephanie Ballard, will handle Rachel's archival work (the preservation pillar of the Trust). WCD dancer and Rachel's most recent muse, Kristin Haight will oversee the dissemination of her dances.

Donations to the Trust are welcomed. Donors will be acknowledged at their level of support in the lobby of The Rachel Browne Theatre, in WCD's show programs for this season and permanently on WCD's website. All donations to the Trust will receive a charitable tax receipt from Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER GREG SELINGER

On behalf of the Province and the people of Manitoba, it is a pleasure to bring greetings to all those attending the Toward Light tribute tour for Rachel Browne. Along with Rachel's friends, family, and fellow lovers of dance, we have all gathered here today to honour Rachel's life through the art form that was her life's passion.

The founder of Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers and The School of Contemporary Dancers, Rachel's work changed this city's cultural scene. She brought contemporary dance into the mainstream, developed one of the top dance schools in the country, and made it possible for every Manitoban to discover professional dance. Today, Winnipeg can pride itself on dance performances of a calibre and range that are the envy of much larger centres, and we have Rachel and Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers to thank for that.

Tonight, I encourage you all to enjoy the performance and be reminded of Rachel's work, dedication, and true love of dance. I am certain this tour will be a huge success, just like everything else Rachel Browne has left her mark on. Thanks to all the organizers, Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers and other performers, and to Rachel's daughters, Miriam, Ruth and Annette, for allowing us all to celebrate Rachel's life through her work, one more time.

Yours sincerely,
GREG SELINGER
Premier of Manitoba

A MESSAGE FROM MINISTER OF CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM FLOR MARCELINO

On behalf of all Manitobans, I welcome you to Toward Light – A Tribute to Rachel Browne.

Another renowned choreographer, Martha Graham, once said "Dance is the hidden language of the soul." The Canadian arts community was extremely fortunate to have had Rachel Browne provide such wondrous translation in a lifetime dedicated to her craft. Through her vision and unbridled talent, she inspired a great many dancers, choreographers and audiences to explore and appreciate the exquisite art of dance.

Rachel Browne was not only a visionary, but also a mentor and an extraordinary artist. A gifted dancer, she shared her passion and creativity with our Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Her remarkable flair for choreography was always centre stage in her work with Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, an accomplished organization that she pioneered and led for decades.

Ms. Browne's passing is a loss, not only for her family and many friends, but also for the Canadian arts community which was so enriched by her energy, talent and achievements.

While we mourn, we are also grateful for her life that was lived so well and for her work that has touched the hearts, minds and spirits of everyone who had the distinct pleasure of experiencing her artistry.

Yours sincerely,
FLOR MARCELINO, MINISTER
Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism

A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR SAM KATZ

As the Mayor of Winnipeg, it is with great honour that I extend greetings to everyone attending Toward Light – A Tribute to Rachel Browne.

As a celebrated and legendary choreographer, Rachel Browne not only made an indelible mark on our City but transformed the landscape and accessibility of dance in our community. Her tenacity inspired countless dancers and aspiring choreographers across the country and around the world.

The legacy of Rachel Browne and the company she founded, Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, will continue to encourage others to push boundaries and achieve greatness. Keeping in mind her prolific contributions in the world of dance, The Rachel Browne Trust will provide the perfect opportunity to celebrate the influential and distinctive choreography that in, many ways, defined the landscape of dance in Winnipeg. Presenting the full spectrum of her artistic vision, this retrospective will combine excerpts from her classic pieces such as Odetta's Songs and Dances to one of her most recent and poignant works, Momentum.

Like so many visionaries, Rachel passed too soon and left a void that cannot be replaced. However, this event will allow our community to come together for the purpose of recognizing an individual whose commitment towards Winnipeg, not just dance, was second to none. Rachel was and, will always be, a beacon of light in our City, an earmark of the homegrown talent Winnipeg is renowned for.

On behalf of the citizens of Winnipeg and my esteemed colleagues on City Council, I send my regards for what I am certain will be a moving and uplifting celebration of human spirit.

Yours sincerely,
SAM KATZ
Mayor



RACHEL AND HER GRANDSON MAX ASPER AT WILLOW ISLAND
Photo: ANNETTE BROWNE



TOWARD LIGHT

"I still think of myself as a strong feminist, though I am not active in the women's movement. I am leaving that up to the younger generation, though my dances continue to reflect a woman's sensibility."

RACHEL BROWNE – 2011

ODETTA'S SONGS AND DANCES

Excerpts 1964

Music: ODETTA

Rehearsal Direction: FAYE THOMSON, BRENT LOTT AND KRISTIN HAIGHT

Original Lighting Design: BILL WILLIAMS ADAPTED BY STEVEN HUNNIE

Original Costume Design: GRANT MARSHAL

Reconstructed by: NORMA LACHANCE

1. *What Month Was Jesus Born In?:* LISE MCMILLAN, JOHANNA RILEY, SARAH ROCHE, KAYLA HENRY AND ALI ROBSON, EMMA ROSE (UNDERSTUDY)

2. *Water Boy:* MARK MEDRANO

3. *All My Trials:* ODETTE HEYN, LISE MCMILLAN (UNDERSTUDY)

This was the first piece that Rachel created for Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers. From the beginning Rachel showed a fondness for strong voices of women in poetry and song. Odetta's songs inspired one of her earliest, most enduringly satisfying suites of dances.

MOMENTUM

2012

Music: CHOPIN'S SCHERZO IN B MINOR; JANINA FIALKOWSKA, PIANO

Rehearsal Director: FAYE THOMSON

Original Lighting Design: SCOTT HENDERSON ADAPTED BY STEVEN HUNNIE

Costume Design: THE DANCERS IN CONSULTATION WITH NORMA LACHANCE

Dancers: RACHELLE BOURGET, SARAH HELMER, JAMES THOMSON KACKI

On May 25th 2012 referring to Momentum, Rachel said "Would you believe, I just finished a new work at age 77". This quote was taken from a note to Nancy Paris (Company member from 1973 to 1979). This work was created on these dancers for their graduation from the Professional Program of the School of Contemporary Dancers. This was Rachel's last creation.

FREDDY

1991

Music: TRADITIONAL BERLIN TEXT, KURT WEILL, ROGER FERNAY, LION FEUCHTWANGER, PERFORMED BY TERESA STRATAS

Rehearsal Director: BRENT LOTT

Original Lighting Design: HUGH CONACHER ADAPTED BY STEVEN HUNNIE

Original Costume Design: RANDAL NEWMAN
RECONSTRUCTED BY NORMA LACHANCE

Dancer: JOHANNA RILEY

These satirical musical compositions, created in Germany between the two World Wars, capture the tone of social decadence that characterized these times.

WILLOW ISLAND

1997

Music: SIMON JEFFES PERFORMED BY THE PENGUIN CAFÉ ORCHESTRA

Original Lighting Design: HUGH CONACHER ADAPTED BY STEVEN HUNNIE

Costumes reconstructed by: NORMA LACHANCE

Rehearsal Directors: FAYE THOMSON AND KRISTIN HAIGHT

Dancers: CAROL-ANN BOHRN, HANNAH EVEREST, BRIANNA FERGUSON, JILLIAN GROENING, EKATERINA LIKHOTIN, SAM PENNER, AMY WEBB, ARDLEY ZOZOBRADO (WINNIPEG)

This work was created for the 25th Anniversary of School of Contemporary Dancers Professional Program. Rachel's cabin at Willow Island on Lake Winnipeg has been her source of inspiration and gratitude. In the summer of 1997, Rachel read and contemplated by the lake as she dealt with deep personal change. When she returned to Winnipeg she began a challenging process that produced a joyful dance.

Toronto Cast: CANADIAN CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE – SEE PAGE 15

Vancouver Cast: VICTORIA SCHOOL OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE – SEE PAGE 16

INTERMISSION

RADIANCE

2011

Music: J.S. BACH ARRANGEMENTS BY BUSONI, PERFORMED BY MURRAY PERAHIA

Original Lighting Design: DEAN COWIESON ADAPTED BY STEVEN HUNNIE

Original Costume Design: NORMA LACHANCE

Dancer: KRISTIN HAIGHT

Rachel created this solo for Kristin Haight; it was the last dance of Rachel's to be presented by Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers.

"For Kris. In memory of the late Babs Asper, who loved dance, and composer Ann Southam, who turned to the music of Bach for solace." – Rachel Browne

MY ROMANCE

1990

Music: ROGERS AND HART, HOAGY CARMICHAEL
PERFORMED BY ALMETA SPEAKS

Original Lighting Design: HUGH CONACHER ADAPTED BY STEVEN HUNNIE

Original Costume Design: RANDAL NEWMAN

Reconstructed by: NORMA LACHANCE

Dancer: TREASURE WADDELL, SARAH ROCHE
(UNDERSTUDY)

Rachel created this work for her daughter Miriam.

KJ4

1994

Music: KEITH JARRETT, IMPROVISATIONS

Rehearsal Director: FAYE THOMSON, BRENT LOTT
ASSISTANT REHEARSAL DIRECTOR KRISTIN HAIGHT

Original lighting design: HUGH CONACHER ADAPTED BY STEVEN HUNNIE

Dancers: KRISTIN HAIGHT, KAYLA HENRY, MARK MEDRANO, EMMA ROSE, LISE MCMILLAN (UNDERSTUDY)

Originally KJ3 and commissioned by Toronto's Canadian Children's Dance Theatre, it was later remounted on the Professional Program at the School of Contemporary Dancers and the students of the School of Toronto Dance Theatre.

Toronto cast: THE SCHOOL OF TORONTO DANCE THEATRE – SEE PAGE 15

CCDT originally commissioned KJ3 (March, 1994 premiere)

(Slide Show)

SUNSTORM

Excerpts 2002

Music: CHOPIN TWENTY-FOUR PRELUDES; PIANIST EVGENY KISSIN

Original lighting design: HUGH CONACHER ADAPTED BY STEVEN HUNNIE

Original costume design: WANDA FARIAN ADDITIONAL CONSTRUCTION BY NORMA LACHANCE

Dancers: ODETTE HEYN, KRISTIN HAIGHT, ALI ROBSON, LISE MCMILLAN, JOHANNA RILEY, SARAH ROCHE, MARK MEDRANO, TREASURE WADDELL (UNDERSTUDY), EMMA ROSE (UNDERSTUDY)

The Twenty-four Preludes were written as a cycle, but the individual preludes stand in stark contrast to one another. The seeds of Sunstorm coincided with Rachel's recovery from hip surgery. She dedicated this dance to her family, friends, colleagues and medical staff whose support kept her afloat.

TRIBUTE STAFF

Artistic Advisor: STEPHANIE BALLARD

Tribute Assistant: JOHANNA RILEY

Rehearsal Directors: FAYE THOMSON, KRISTIN HAIGHT, BRENT LOTT

Production Manager: STEVEN HUNNIE

Stage Manager: PAIGE LEWIS

Program Design: CHRIS LEE OF GEORGIA

BRENT LOTT

WCD ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



There are so many stories, so many ways Rachel had an impact on my life both artistically and personally. She taught me class, (so musically challenging), she choreographed on me, (so musically challenging) and she became my mentor and a treasured friend. It was however long before I ever met her that she had begun to influence me as an artist. I did not know it

then but the accompanist for my ballet classes at the RWB, the pianist who helped me to breathe life in to each step I took, Shirley Grierson, was there playing because Rachel taught her how to be an accompanist. Long before meeting and I am sure long after saying goodbye to Rachel, she has and will affect my life and my art. I am forever grateful.

KRISTIN HAIGHT

WCD COMPANY DANCER



Ray's choreography provides the ability to be true to myself. Pure, honest movement communicating human experiences and sending messages. Her dances speak of strength, grace, resilience, vulnerability, integrity, dedication, gratitude, and most of all, being human. I am fortunate to have been in the original cast of four of Ray's works, including being a major part in the

creation of *Sunstorm* (2002), plus a remount of *Movement* (1992). The responsibility of remounting and performing some of this evening's works has and will continue to broaden my knowledge about Ray, and myself as an artist and human being. Her consistent influence on my journey has been formative in my career. Ray's spirit and love of dance live on tonight and for years to come through the initiation of the Rachel Browne Trust, which I am thrilled to be a part of. I am indebted to Ray for her friendship, mentorship, wise words and compassion.

KAYLA HENRY

WCD COMPANY DANCER



I am a 2011 graduate of The School of Contemporary Dancers in affiliation with the University of Winnipeg. I had the privilege to work with Rachel in 2009, remounting an excerpt of her work, *Sunstorm*, which was performed in SCD's show, *Basement Projects*. The experience of getting to learn and perform Rachel's work was an honour. I always appreciated

her detailed feedback after watching a dance. This is my first season as a WCD company dancer.

LISE McMILLAN

WCD COMPANY DANCER



I still remember the first time I experienced a Rachel Browne work, it was her duet *What a surprise!* and it instantly won my heart. It wasn't until my graduating years from SCD that I would have the opportunity to be in a work of Rachel's. I performed the duet *Dreamscapes* and was fortunate to continue my working relationships with her when I joined WCD in

2007. A career highlight for me was performing the solo *Edgelit* on tour across Canada with WCD in 2009. I remember Rachel's constant presence in the dance community, always attending as many rehearsals, showings and performances as possible. Rachel's steadfast encouragement continues to be felt today. Her words of encouragement will be with me forever.

MARK MEDRANO

WCD COMPANY DANCER



I graduated from the School of Contemporary Dancers in 2011. In 2010 I had the wonderful opportunity of working on and performing a remount of *Dreamscape*, a piece choreographed by Rachel. I am truly thankful for her valuable coaching and guidance. This is my second year dancing with the company after my apprenticeship last year. I am excited and proud to be

representing Rachel's work in this upcoming tour. I have also had the opportunity to work with many people who were touched by Rachel's artistry such as Christina Medina, Julia Sasso, Stephanie Ballard, and Jolene Bailie.

JOHANNA RILEY

WCD COMPANY DANCER



I am a 2002 graduate of the Professional Program of the School of Contemporary Dancers, founded by Rachel Browne. While as a student I did not have the chance to learn Browne's work, and she still taught technique class to the students when I was in my first year of the program.

In 2007, along two colleagues, Natasha Torres-Garner and Jennifer Essex, I commissioned and performed a new work by Browne titled *Ceremonies*, set to music by Ann Southam. As a company member for the last seven years of Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, also founded by Rachel Browne, I have had the great fortune of performing several of Browne's works, including *Songs That Dance*, *Toward Light*, and *Edgelit*, which I recently performed at Browne's request at a tribute to the life of Ann Southam held at the University of Toronto.

ODETTE HEYN

DANCER,
SCHOOL OF CONTEMPORARY DANCERS CO-DIRECTOR



Teacher, mentor, creator, artist, humanitarian, Rachel leaves us too soon. But how lucky for us that we were touched by Rachel's energy, that we were pushed and challenged by her. How lucky we are to have lived in Winnipeg, to have been the recipients of Rachel's gifts. She taught us to love this fragile community, to treat it gently, but to fight for it when necessary.

She taught us to care for it with passion and to support each other, openly, honestly, without judgement. She believed in the work, she believed in us. What greater gift can there be for a community? This community will truly miss this pillar, our Mother of modern dance. I will truly miss my friend; I will miss her in the studio, I will miss her in my life and at my dining room table.

ALISON ROBSON

DANCER



I didn't have the opportunity to work with Rachel as a student at the School of Contemporary Dancers, but I was keenly aware of her influence and presence. I got to know Rachel best as a loyal audience member at dance shows in Winnipeg, and even a show in Vancouver in which I was performing. In the few words we exchanged after performances she always

made me feel that I was not "just" dancing, but that what I was doing was important and powerful. Throughout this process I have been fortunate to work with many dancers who have worked closely with Rachel and I can see her in their gestures, in the way we listen to the music together, in the way we push ourselves further to achieve the perfect image and I am inspired again and again.

TREASURE WADDELL

DANCER



Meeting and working with Rachel Browne has had a profound and indelible effect on my life. Rachel taught me about possibilities I did not even know existed. Her dedication and her work ethic was an inspiration. Her demand for clarity and excellence was implicit. Thanks to Rachel my understanding of what excellence actually is shifted to a realization

that the heart of what mattered in the dance was truth. A physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual truth. She challenged me to look within and without.

Whenever I invited Rachel to come and watch me perform or to see work I had choreographed she was always there. Her support was a tangible thing. She always had an encouraging word and was honest in her observations. She was teaching dance but really she was teaching about life. I feel I am still learning from Rachel. Thank you Rachel for encouraging me to dance my path, you will always be in my heart.

SARAH ROCHE

DANCER



Under the title 'Memorable Moments' in an old dance journal of mine I wrote that one of them was "...being told I had a solo with Rachel Browne and my knees buckling beneath me". I was in my fourth year of the Senior Program at SCD and had the honour of performing *Mein Ruhe Platz* for my graduating show as well as an apprentice the following year when we renamed

our space The Rachel Browne Theatre. In that process Rachel taught me the importance of intention, to be clear with intention not only in my face but my fingers and torso and all parts of me. She also taught me about trust. To trust myself and to trust the audience. "Let them come to you... no need to push so hard, it's clean enough. They understand". Rachel, Thank you for your wisdom, your human-ness, your modesty and your spirit.

EMMA ROSE

DANCER



I began dancing at SCD in the general program at a very young age and having done all of my training through various programs in the school I feel unbelievably thankful to Rachel Browne who started it all. She laid the groundwork for this wonderful community that I was able to grow and thrive in as a dancer. Although I never had a close relationship with Rachel, I re-

member Rachel's kind and encouraging words as she greeted performers after a show. It was nice to know she was always in the audience sitting way up near the back, as she rarely missed a show (although she was known for being tardy). I am so happy to be a part of this tribute show, and it comforts me to know Rachel's spirit will always be sitting somewhere in the audience watching her beautiful dances and of course taking notes.

RACHELLE BOURGET

DANCER



A 2012 graduate of the School of Contemporary Dancers, I had the privilege of working very closely with Rachel during the last year of the program creating "Momentum", a trio choreographed for Sarah Helmer, James Thomson-Kacki and myself. Throughout this process, Rachel was patient, encouraging and generous, offering her knowledge both in and out of the studio. I am honoured to be performing for Rachel again and delighted to share her passion with such talented artists.

SARAH HELMER

DANCER



In my fourth year of the School of Contemporary Dancers' Senior Professional Program, I had the opportunity to work with Rachel Browne on the creation of the piece *Momentum* (2012). Being able to work so closely with Rachel was a blessing and an honour. Each day, Rachel inspired us with her unwavering dedication, her boundless energy, her endless capacity to nurture and the clarity and brilliance of her artistry. She taught and demonstrated how even the smallest of movements can be invested in and fully embodied. I hope that I can always carry Rachel's words and memory with me to be shared with others in the future.

JAMES THOMSON KACKI

DANCER



I am a recent graduate of the School of Contemporary Dancers. I was honoured to be a part of Rachel Browne's outstanding legacy. I am so thankful to have had the chance to work with this inspiring woman in my final year of training. Working on Rachel's timeless, masterful choreography while bridging into the profession, was such an artistically enriching experience.

I was awed by her exquisite ability to find and explore the complex simplicity of all movements, and truly moved by her sincere care of each and every individual dancer with whom she worked.

FAYE THOMSON

SCHOOL OF CONTEMPORARY DANCERS CO-DIRECTOR



Rachel was a renowned founder of modern dance in Canada. Stephanie Ballard and I were among her first Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers apprentices, and part of the first generation following her.

She was an honoured companion in my whole artistic journey – artistic 'mother', mentor and friend. As a dancer, I treasured the opportunity to perform her work. As a director, I highly valued her counsel.

Decades later, it was deeply meaningful to me to witness her intimate and wonderful rehearsals with The School of Contemporary Dancers Professional Program students – my artistic 'children' including my daughter, Robyn and son, James.

GAILE PETURSSON-HILEY

ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE, SCD



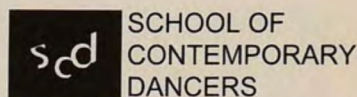
I have the great honour to have been Rachel Browne's muse during my eight years as principal dancer with WCD. Under her and Stephanie Ballard's Artistic Direction, we shared many milestone moments in dance together. I loved dancing in Rachel's work and cherish the guidance she offered as our "mother of modern dance".

It has been an incredible privilege to work in the school Rachel founded and watch her continue to inspire and create throughout the years. My daughter Kathleen and I share a unique legacy of both dancing in Rachel's work as well as assisting in her rehearsal processes. I am touched to be recognized as one of her dance daughters by her family.

opposite page:

GROUP PHOTO BY ROBERT TINKER 1986

JACK UDASHKIN, HUGH CONACHER, RUTH CANSFIELD,
D-ANNE KUBY, ANNE BRUCE FALCONER,
DEIDRE TOMKINS, ALAN SCHEWCHUK,
DESIREE KLEEMAN, FIONA DRINNAN, JEANETTE ANGEL,
BRUCE WOOD, GAILE PETURSSON HILEY,
ODETTE HEYN, MARGIE GILLIS, FAYE THOMSON,
STEPHANIE BALLARD, RACHEL BROWNE,
LESLIE DILLINGHAM



www.schoolofcontemporarydancers.ca

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPORARY DANCERS

The School of Contemporary Dancers is recognized as a leading national centre for professional contemporary dance training in Canada. The School was founded by Rachel Browne in 1972 and is currently celebrating its 40th Anniversary season. The Professional Program was founded by Odette Heyn and Faye Thomson in 1981 and it has continued under their direction for over thirty years. Numerous graduates have continued to enter the profession and perform with renowned companies and choreographers across the country and internationally. The School of Contemporary Dancers gratefully acknowledges the support of Canadian Heritage, the Manitoba Arts Council and the Winnipeg Arts Council.

THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPORARY DANCERS AND RACHEL BROWNE'S INFLUENCE

Rachel was an honoured mentor and supporter to Odette Heyn and Faye Thomson. She served as a core faculty teacher throughout the history of the Professional Program. Her teaching was focused through her choreography and rehearsal direction. She had a profound influence in the training of young artists through her outstanding gifts as a rehearsal director. Working with a quiet, intense focus that articulated the most subtle artistic nuances, she was able to draw out an exceptional level of technical clarity and artistry. Rachel followed the progression of the students with great interest and enthusiasm and they were deeply honoured to be able to work with her.

Rachel's final work, a trio entitled 'Momentum', was created for three 2012 graduating dancers of The School of Contemporary Dancers. This beautiful and vivacious piece expresses the momentum of her profound legacy carried forward into the next generation.

ODETTE HEYN & FAYE THOMSON
Co-Directors

All the rehearsal advisors for Toward Light are graduates of the school Rachel founded 40 years ago. For their insights and for sharing their memories of being in a creative process with Rachel, WCD would like to recognize the generosity of Alana Shewchuk, Randy Joynt, Paige Lewis, Gaile Petursson-Hiley and Jolene Bailie.





THE SCHOOL OF TORONTO DANCE THEATRE

For more than 40 years, The School of Toronto Dance Theatre has been training dancers who have been inspired by the depth of passion and the physical power of the human body in motion. Our teaching emphasizes the whole dancer - body, mind, and spirit - since excellent movement training engages the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects of our humanity. Our three-year Professional Training Program is a full-time, post-secondary program that provides a broad curriculum, a solid foundation of knowledge about contemporary dance, physical and intellectual instruction in the art form, extensive performing experience, and an environment for learning that prepares students for professional careers. Through our affiliation with York University, graduates may take advantage of a joint BFA program. The School is one of the nationally recognized programs at the forefront of training in contemporary dance in Canada.

REMEMBERING RACHEL

Rachel Browne envisioned and created dances of quiet power. I met Rachel in the 1970s and began working with her in the late 1980s. At that time she seemed to be undergoing a creative transformation. I recall her use of imagery in a way I had not experienced before, and felt I shared, as a true collaborator, in her search for the image that would "speak"; the metaphor that would resonate. Those images, though often dark, served to reveal a vision of hope. Rachel was an inspiration - a testament to the determination and perseverance of the creative spirit.

PATRICIA FRASER
STDT Artistic Director

KJ4

Rehearsal Direction: MAIRÉAD FILGATE

Rehearsal Assistance: PATRICIA FRASER AND ANDREA ROBERTS

Dancers: MARIE LAMBIN-GAGNON, KASSI SCOTT, KATHIA WITTENBORN, MICHELLE ZIMMERMAN



CANADIAN CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE

Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre (formerly the Canadian Children's Dance Theatre) is a repertory company founded by Artistic Director Deborah Lundmark and Managing Director Michael deConinck Smith in 1980 to present gifted next-generation artists in professional productions. While still in their teens CCDT dancers enjoy performing the work of such dance luminaries as David Earle, Carol Anderson, Danny Grossman, Margie Gillis, Peggy Baker, Peter Chin and Rachel Browne in forty shows annually. As part of the Toronto-based company's twelve year Ontario Arts Access initiative they have introduced 160,000 students to contemporary dance, from Windsor and Lion's Head to Kapuskasing and Kenora. Other presentation highlights include featured appearances at Toronto's Princess of Wales and Royal Alexandra Theatres for the Creative Trust and Dancers for Life Galas, tours to Singapore, Malaysia and China, and five invitations to the Canada Dance Festival.

REMEMBERING RACHEL

My beginning with Rachel was in 1969 when I was still in high school and she visited Saskatoon to give modern classes during an audition tour. I'd seen WCD perform (no other modern company was touring to Saskatoon then) and admired the company a great deal. As a ballet student I had no modern experience but her classes were so generous and encouraging that I was completely won over. Most of all, Rachel made me believe it was possible to conceive a company, direct it, choreograph it, dance in it, express yourself through it... Ten years later I used that extraordinary inspiration to co-found CCDT.

DEBORAH LUNDMARK,
CCDT Artistic Director

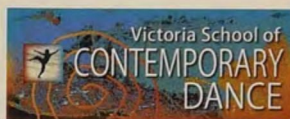
WILLOW ISLAND - TORONTO

Rehearsal Direction: JENNIFER DICK AND POON WOO

Rehearsal Director for The Rachel Browne Trust: KRISTIN HAIGHT

Dancers: MADELINE HORGAN, DANIELA JEZERINAC, JENNIFER MORSE, JULIAN NICHOLS, AVALON O'CONNOR, NICHOLAS RUSCICA, CALEIGH SULINE, CALDER WHITE

Understudies: ALEXANDRA KERSLEY, HANNAH SZEPTYCKI



www.vscdance.com

VICTORIA SCHOOL OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE

Victoria School of Contemporary Dance is one of the leading centres for contemporary dance training in Western Canada. Under the Artistic Direction of Constance Cooke VSC Dance houses a general school, professional training programme and Wings, a mentorship programme for emerging professionals.

Fizzik'l is a semi-professional contemporary dance company. The company includes dancers who are currently working at a professional level and an apprenticeship programme for dancers looking to pursue a professional career. Repertoire includes work by some of Canada's leading performers and dance creators such as Josh Beamish, Jung-Ah Chung, Shay Kuebler, Ron Stewart, Clinton Draper and Constance Cooke. The Company has performed in Romp, 4Dance, Light on our Feet, Dance Days, Kinect, Rough Cuts and many many site - specific improvisations.

REMEMBERING RACHEL

Like so many many dance artists, Rachel has had a profound influence on my life, her generous mentorship and friendship has been the gift of a lifetime.

"Never stop creating" she would tell me "and look for the gems". "If you get your grant make dance, if your grant falls through make dance, if your lover leaves you make dance, if you are tired, hungry, busy, happy, or joyful make dance". I've taken her notes, I hear her voice, I am forever grateful.

CONSTANCE COOKE,

VSC Dance Artistic Director

WILLOW ISLAND - VANCOUVER

Rehearsal Direction: CONSTANCE COOK

Rehearsal Director for The Rachel Browne Trust: KRISTIN HAIGHT

Dancers: NADIA BOUCHER, DAWN HARTSHORNE, REBEKAH LUDOLPH, STACY SANDERSON.

Apprentices: MATILDA COBANLI, ALYSON FUDGER, ESTELLE RADLEY-WALTERS

COMPANY BUS (1971)

ELAINE LOO, MICHELE
PRESLEY, DAVID TUCKER,
HOLLY ANNE SAVAGE,
BARBARA JOHNSON,
JANET OXLEY, DAVID
WELLER, JIM GREEN,
CHARLES MOULTON,
LARRY BRINKER,
RACHEL BROWNE



The Rachel Browne Trust
TO PRESERVE AND DISSEMINATE THE LEGACY OF RACHEL BROWNE C.M.

LEADERS OF THE TRUST – \$50,000

The Asper Family Foundation
Sensible Shoes Foundation—David & Ruth Asper

GUARDIANS OF THE TRUST \$5,000+

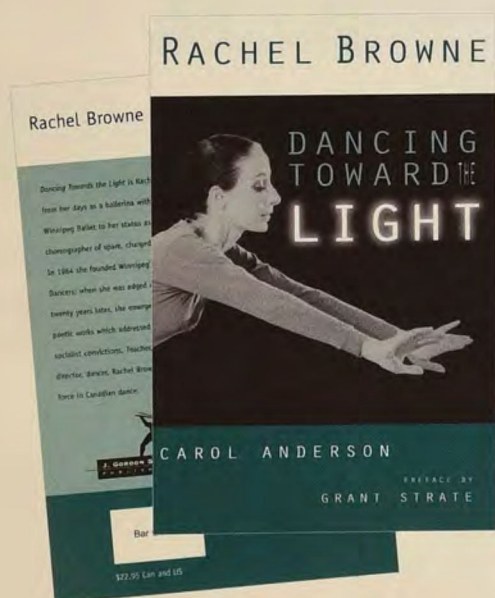
Hon. Douglas D. Everett
Susan Glass & Arni Thorsteinson
Kim & Bob Silver

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Brenlee Carrington Trepel & Brent Trepel

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<i>Lilian Bonin</i>	<i>Brent Lott</i>
<i>Candace Borger</i>	<i>Claudine Majzels</i>
<i>Brenda Boughton</i>	<i>Carol Matas</i>
<i>Annette Browne</i>	<i>Gerard Matte</i>
<i>Miriam Browne</i>	<i>Loraine McKenzie Shepherd</i>
<i>Carol Budnick</i>	<i>Russ Melvin</i>
<i>Butterfield Landscaping</i>	<i>Ivy Namaka</i>
<i>Kate Byman</i>	<i>E. Louise Nebbs</i>
<i>Ginelle Chagnon</i>	<i>Linda Nelson</i>
<i>Dwight Chmelniski</i>	<i>Ellen Oberlander</i>
<i>Thor & Krystyna Choptiany</i>	<i>Jim Parker</i>
<i>Joanne Couture</i>	<i>Darlene Payne</i>
<i>Diane Cullen</i>	<i>Fred Penner</i>
<i>Douglas & Verna Danylchuk</i>	<i>Nancy Pinell</i>
<i>Dena Decter</i>	<i>Lorraine Prokopchuk</i>
<i>Hillary Druxman</i>	<i>Laurel Ridd</i>
<i>Michael Dyck</i>	<i>G. Patrick & Deborah Riley</i>
<i>Alexandra Elliott</i>	<i>Margerit Roger</i>
<i>Susan Feldman</i>	<i>Rhonda Smerchanski</i>
<i>Cyndi Forcand</i>	<i>Trish Smerchanski</i>
<i>Paul-Andre Fortier</i>	<i>Jason Smith</i>
<i>Keith Fulton</i>	<i>Marlene Stern</i>
<i>On behalf of Colleen Furlan</i>	<i>Lisa Stiver</i>
<i>Milly Giesbrecht</i>	<i>Robyn Thomson</i>
<i>Michele & Jim Green</i>	<i>Ruth Thomson</i>
<i>Rajiv Gupta</i>	<i>Bob Tinker</i>
<i>H J Hammond</i>	<i>Deirdre Tomkins</i>
<i>Holly Harris</i>	<i>Alice von Graevenitz</i>
<i>Gaile Peturrson Hiley</i>	<i>Kevin Walters</i>
<i>Kathleen Hiley</i>	<i>Nancy Wightman</i>
<i>Ming Hon</i>	<i>Libby Yager</i>



"Dancing Toward Light is Rachel Browne's story, from her days as a ballerina with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet to her present status as a noted choreographer of spare, charged works of dance."

CAROL ANDERSON, AUTHOR

**LIMITED EDITION COPIES OF DANCING TOWARD LIGHT
 AVAILABLE IN THE LOBBY**

BEHIND THE SCENES

Rachel knew that while dancers, choreographers and artistic directors always receive tremendous recognition from the audience and the media, those who have worked behind the scenes often do not receive the recognition they deserve. Some of those people are: Ninette Archambault, Tanya Babalow, Michael Baldwin, Karla Berbrayer, Brenda Brand, Eve Buriak, Larry Clark, Lori Clark, Owen Clark, David Cooper, Dean Cowieson, Ester Crawford, Dena Decter, Geoff Devenney, Jim Donahue, Robert Doyle, Todd Drader, Jeannette Durant, Wanda Farian, J. Coleman Fletcher, Janice Fontaine, Cyndi Forcand, Shirley Grierson, Kristin Haight, Geoff Hayes, Beverly Herd, Jeff Herd, Odette Heyn, David Hinks, Richard Irish, Larry Isacoff, Alexandra Kaczmarek, Peter Kaczmarek, Tom Karnicki, Alana Keef, Greg Klassen, Ava Kobrinsky, Taras Koral, Megan La Touche, Page Lewis, Cam MacLean, Ted Madoff, Grant Marshall, Ray Marshall, Terry Marynewich, Grant McDaniel, Marilyn McGuire, Diana McIntosh, Sharon Medzon, Bruce Monk, Maureen More, Marjorie Morrell, Randal Newman, Basia Nitychoruk, Rod Olafson, Fred Penner, Ron Paley, Philip Phelan, Evelyn Polish, Tom Saunders, Marvin Schlichting, Tom Scurfield, Judy Slivinski, Ann Southam, Leslie Stafford, John Stammers, Joan Stevens, Lisa and Leilani Stiver, Sue Stone, Robert Tinker, De Tomkins, Michael Utgaard, Effie Von Helmut, Bill Williams, David Williams, and Laura Willows.

Special recognition goes to Hugh Conacher, with whom Rachel enjoyed the longest and most relied-upon working relationship in production management and lighting design.

From 1963 until 1973 Rachel directed WCD on her own. From 1973 until 1983 she worked with three associate artistic directors: Mariane Sarach, Kenneth Lipitz and Stephanie Ballard. As Founding Artistic Director she worked with four Artistic Directors: Bill Evans, Tedd Robinson, Tom Stroud and Brent Lott.

A heartfelt thank you to Miriam Adams, Carol Anderson, Amy Bowring, Deborah Lundmark, Dance Collection Dance and CCDT for organizing and hosting The Rachel Browne Tribute in Toronto on September 6, 2012. Bravo to Andrea Nann for her exquisite performance of Rachel Browne's, "Old Times Now". Thank you to everyone who shared in this very special event.

Rachel Browne knew what it took: talent, tolerance and tenacity.

ARNOLD SPOHR

Artistic Director Emeritus of Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet

I admire what Rachel did for modern dance; it is monumental in Canadian dance history, hats off to her!

JILL LHOTKA

Founding member of Contemporary Dancers

During SCD performance time, I would speak on stage... Rachel would give me notes afterwards. Such wonderful attention to detail! I was so honoured to get notes from Rachel! She made me feel special. She was always interested in my daughters and my personal life. My greatest joy was making Rachel laugh. That is what I will treasure always.

CHARLENE KULBABA

Office Manager, The School of Contemporary Dancers

Rachel Browne was one of the finest people I have ever known. Ray had a deep respect for all people, an overriding sense of fairness and justice, and a passion to hone and perfect all aspects of her being and her artistry. Rachel will long be missed and mourned by all who were privileged to have known her or her work. I am filled with gratitude for the honour and gift of her friendship.

ELLEN OBERLANDER

Longest-serving member of the Board of Directors for WCD and SCD

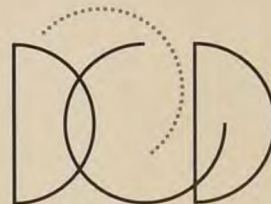
Through her abiding devotion to her art, Rachel Browne has come to stand as a moral force in Canadian dance. Singular in her courage, unwavering in her discipline, and at times through sheer bloody-mindedness, Rachel has been a trailblazer of dance in Canada.

CAROL ANDERSON

Dancing Toward the Light



Congratulations
to
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Contemporary Dancers
and
The Rachel Browne Trust
on mounting
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to Rachel Browne
from
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HOMEAGAIN (2010)

Choreographer: STEPHANIE BALLARD

Dancer: RACHEL BROWNE

Photo: VINCE PAKHALA

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