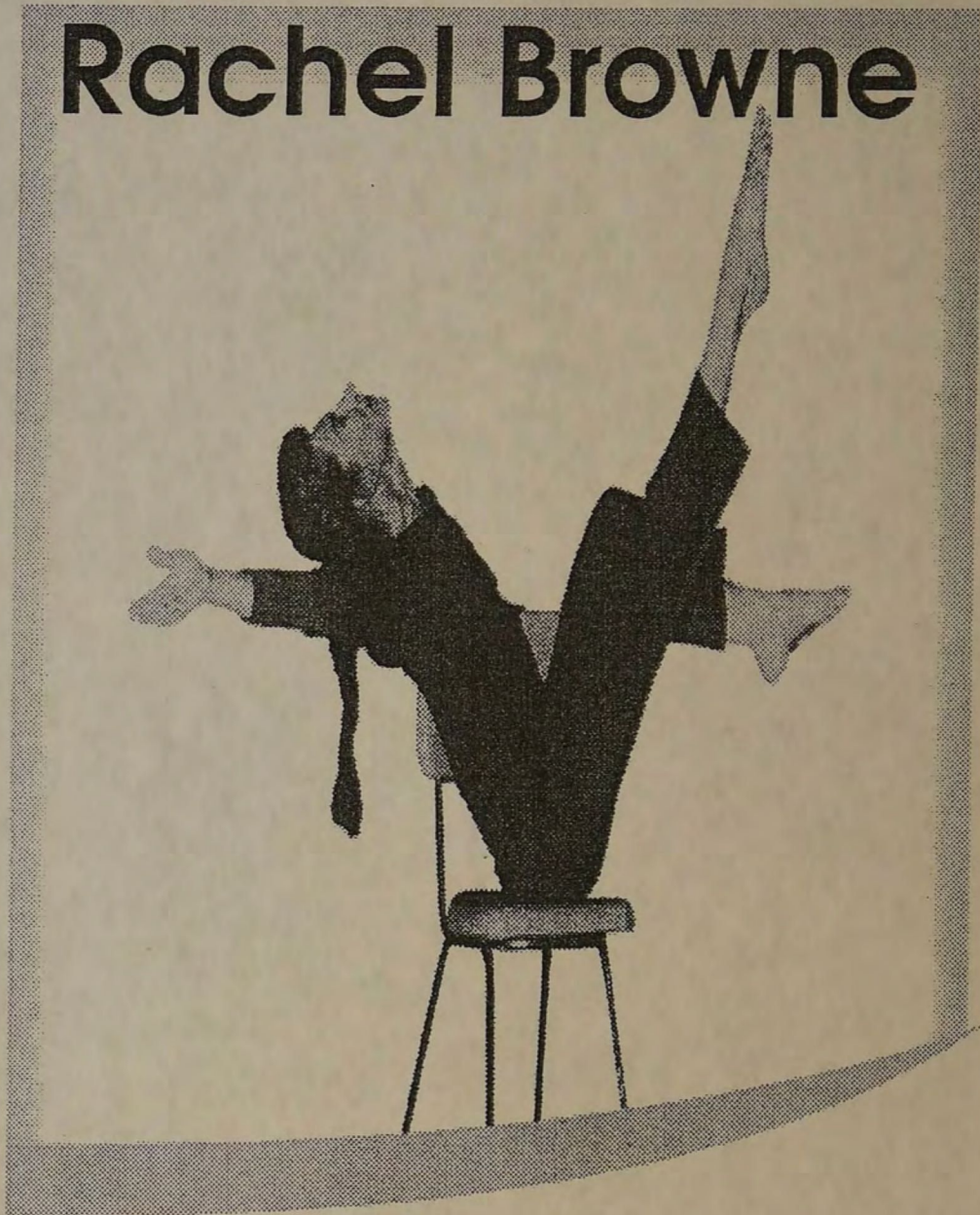


# DanceWorks

presents the choreography of

## Rachel Browne



DW122

*Edgellit*

*Mouvement*

*K.J. 4*

*Willow Island*

Winchester Street Theatre

Oct 19-21, 2000 @ 8 pm

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# 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.

43:00 TOTAL DANCING

### INTERMISSION

### MOUVEMENT

[created in 1992]

**choreography:** Rachel Browne  
**music:** Bernard Xolotol  
**lighting design:** Hugh Conacher  
**costume design & construction:** Alana Shewchuk  
**performer:** Linnea Swan

9:00

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

8:30

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

13:00

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.

29:30 TOTAL DANCING



# Older dancers deliver riveting performance

## DANCE

DEIRDRE KELLY

### Edgelit

Choreography by Rachel Browne  
At the Winchester Street Theatre,  
in Toronto, Thursday

Older dancers don't die, they just quietly fade away. Well, that's the conventional wisdom. You hardly ever see a dancer over 40 on the stage, except, of course, if it's a diva like Carla Fracci or Alicia Alonso, aging ballerinas who refuse to give up the ghost.

Modern dance has always been a bit kinder to the old, perhaps because of its emphasis on emotional expressiveness rather than bravura performance. Merce Cunningham, now in his 80s, still treads the floorboards. And the late Martha Graham was emoting through her cast of sexually repressed characters well into her 60s. As choreographer Jiri Kylian demonstrated with the international success of his Netherlands Dans Theatre III, a dance troupe for artists in their twilight years, there is an interest in older dancers. They bring to their performances a seasoned artistry, nurtured over years of just plain living. They might not kick as high as they used to, or move as fast, but they bring to the stage nuance, maturity, and emotional colouring so rich and variegated that it recalls an Old Master's painting.

Da Vinci came to mind, as did

Rembrandt, when Manitoba choreographer Rachel Browne commanded the stage at Toronto's Winchester Street Theatre on Thursday night. The Canadian dance pioneer — she founded the country's first modern dance troupe, Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, in 1964, is still performing and choreographing at the ripe age of 65. *Edgelit*, a three-part work that is part of her ongoing Older Women Dance project, contains arresting imagery borrowed, it seems, from painting's classical period, where the human form is ordered according to geometric design. In one instance, Browne and partners Stephanie Ballard and Odette Heyn-Penner, themselves women of a certain age, assembled in triangular formation, each one supporting in some way the body of the other. The triad image is so reminiscent of the Italian school that you half expect the Holy Spirit to descend and pronounce the miracle of resurrection. But far from ironic, the visual quotation is an affirmation of a seasoned choreographer's discerning eye. Browne is an artist who has transcended all dance trends with a vision that is uncluttered, archetypal, authentic. She is a modern dancer with a classicist's passion for carefully crafted form. No amount of time will wither its value.

Her love of symmetry and exactness shows remarkably through the stringently structured framework of her dance. *Edgelit* (named after an Adrienne Rich poem) is a forward

progression of emotionally charged movement propelled by a repeating pattern of solo women performing with a chair. Each soloist wears a red shirt. She stands apart from dancers assembled around a second chair dressed in flat tones of black or charcoal. The red-shirted ones — and they include Patricia Fraser, who initiates the First Solo, as well as Susan Macpherson and Davida Monk, who follow, respectively, in Second Dance and Quartet — are each personalized by a distinct complex of feelings. Fraser is the frightened one, while Macpherson is the inquisitive innocent and Monk is rage and sorrow. Opposite them is the trio of Browne, Ballard and Heyn-Penner whose interchange of tender, pleading, supportive gestures make them look at times like a dying mother/grieving daughters reunion. A minimalist score by Ann Southam contributes a note of melancholy.

The net effect for the audience is riveting. Besides masterful choreographic compositions, the evening serves up forcefully interpretive dancing by some of the finest mature women dance artists the country has to offer. *Edgelit* is a magnificent event describing a philosophy of life as something intense, fragile, ephemeral, brightening and frightening; in short, something worth aging for.

*Concludes at The Winchester Street Theatre, 80 Winchester Street, tonight.*



## Edgelit as daring as dance can be

BY SUSAN WALKER  
ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

Rachel Browne, according to biographer Carol Anderson, doesn't like being called a pioneer, a term she takes to refer to the past.

But Browne, founder of the first modern dance company in Canada, Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, has never returned from the frontier. *Edgelit*, part of her ongoing Older Women Dance project, is as daring as dance can be. Naked, you might say, although no one removes her clothes. This lengthy exploration of the seasons of womanhood is the title dance in a show of work from 1992 to the present. Running through tomorrow at the Winchester Street Theatre, the program yields up the fruits of a

richly creative period Browne entered in her 60s.

Patricia Fraser, Susan Macpherson and Davida Monk perform the principal roles in the three parts of *Edgelit*, subtle, tense but nuanced dance to the equally nuanced compositions of Ann Southam. Straining from one chair toward another in the opening solo, Fraser gives full-body expression to a kind of yearning, finally fulfilled when she reaches the second chair. Macpherson takes up where she left off, as Browne, Stephanie Ballard and Odette Heyn-Penner form a triumvirate clustered around the opposite chair. Macpherson's and Monk's solos express struggle, pain, striving, fear and frustration, while on the other side of the stage Browne,

and the two younger dancers display the peace that accompanies both youthful innocence and old age.

Browne's choreography runs on the dynamic of contained versus released energy. In *Mouvement*, outstandingly performed by Linnea Swan, there's a sense of wide open prairie, of something like electricity drawn up from the core of the earth to make a woman's limbs tremble with life.

A similar feeling is found in two pieces for young dancers, *K.J.4* and *Willow Island*. Joyfully performed by the graduating professional class of the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, these two works prove that Browne is still in touch with the boundless enthusiasm of her much younger self.

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