

# HOMEAGAIN

*Stephanie Ballard*

September 2010  
Gas Station Theatre



# HOMEAGAIN

Choreography Stephanie Ballard

Featuring Rachel Browne  
Robyn Thomson-Kacki Freya Olafson  
Nicole Owens Rachel Cooper  
Paula Blair Arlo Baskier-Nabess  
Leslie Crozier Kathleen Hiley  
Kristin Haight Nina Patel  
D-Anne Trepanier  
Odette Heyn-Penner

September 24th 7:30 & 25th 4:30  
Gas Station Theatre

Tickets \$22 or \$18 before September 15

homeagainballard@gmail.com  
or contact Claire Hardy

O'Neill Family Trust



OFFICE OF THE O'NEILL FAMILY TRUST  
COUNSELLORS & ESTATE PLANNERS

# HOMEAGAIN

*Stephanie Ballard*

September 2010

Gas Station Theatre

[homeagainballard@gmail.com](mailto:homeagainballard@gmail.com)



# HOMEAGAIN

Choreographed by:  
**Stephanie Ballard**

Gas Station Theatre  
September 24th 7:30 & 25th 4:30

Featuring Rachel Browne  
**and 13 prominent dance artists**

limited seating reserve now  
**homeagainballard@gmail.com**

**Culture Days Activities**  
Landscape Dancing Provencher Bridge  
September 24th 4:30-5:00

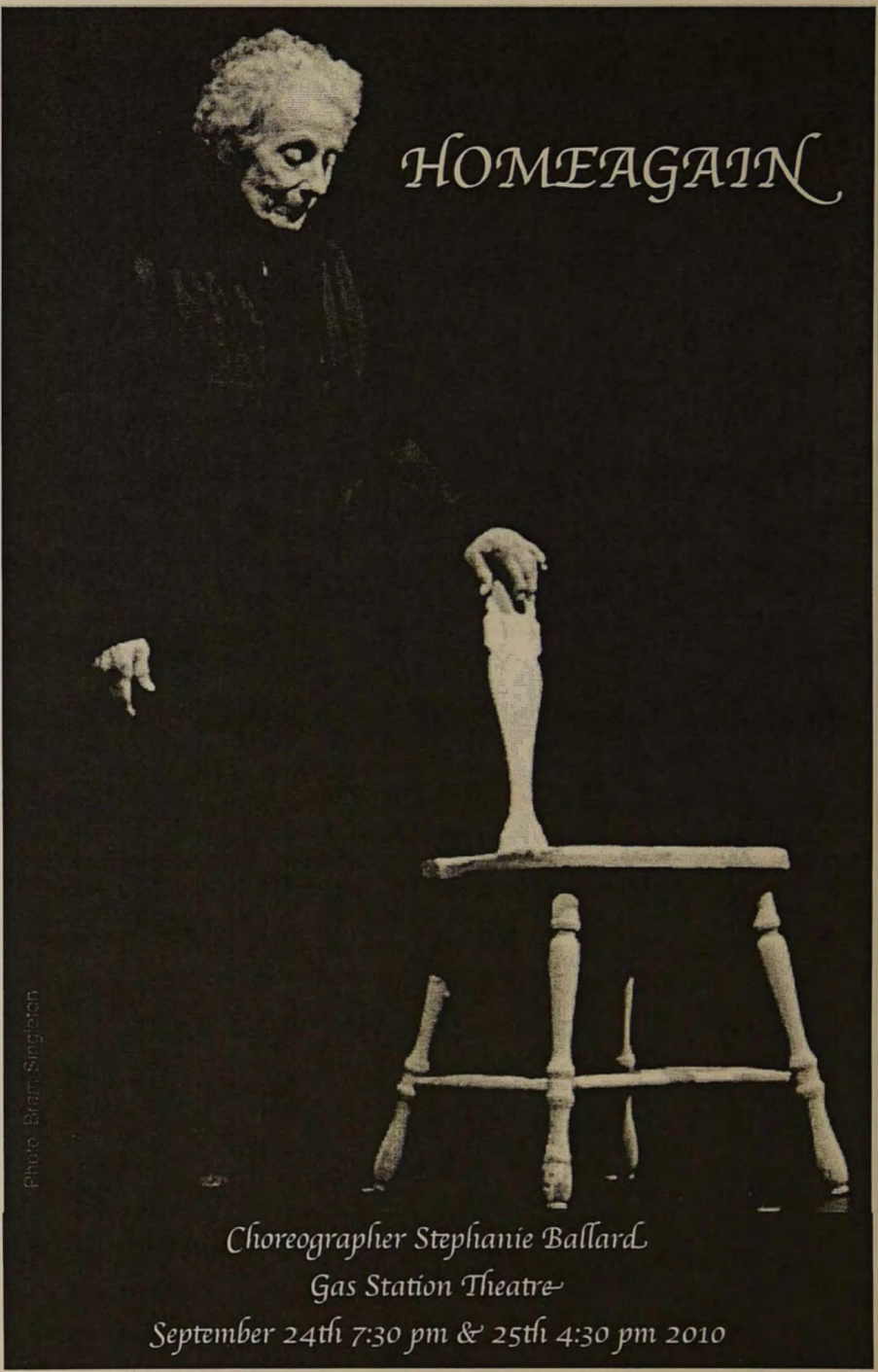
Legacy Lecture and Tea by Stephanie Ballard  
Gas Station Theatre  
September 25th 1:30 - 3:30

O'Neill Family Trust



MANITOBA ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DU MANITOBA





# HOMEAGAIN

Photo: Brian Singleton

Choreographer Stephanie Ballard

Gas Station Theatre

September 24th 7:30 pm & 25th 4:30 pm 2010

# HOMEAGAIN

Choreographer Stephanie Ballard

Costume Design: Stephanie Ballard

Homeagain is an intergenerational Dance Theatre Work by critically acclaimed choreographer Stephanie Ballard. Created for thirteen dance artists who vary in age and experience, this work embraces a cognitive mapping of memories both physical and emotional. Homeagain pays tribute to Rachel Browne and numerous women who have made a difference to modern dance in Winnipeg. The choreographer believes that archetypes spring from collective-consciousness, and every archetype is present in everyone of us.

This work is dedicated to Arnold Spohr

Production Stage Manager: Paige Lewis

Assistant Stage Manager: Janelle Hacaault

Outside Eye: Faye Thomson

Artistic Consultant: Peter Quanz

SB Personal Assistant: Claire Hardy

Graphic Designer: Kathleen Hiley

Box Office: Claire Hardy

Videographer: Vince Pakhala

Flyer Photography: Bram Singleton & Alberta Johnson

Gas Station Theatre Staff:

Executive Director: Nick Kowalchuk

Technical Director & Lights: Todd Drader

The music for this work is a collage of arias sung by the great  
Maria Callas

# HOMEAGAIN

In order of appearance

Robyn Thomson Kacki

Paula Blair

Rachel Cooper

Kristin Haight

Freya Olafson

Leslie Crozier

Kathleen Hiley

Nicole Owens

Arlo Baskier-Nabess

D-Anne Kuby

Nina Patel

Odette Heyn-Penner

Rachel Browne



### *Special Thanks and Acknowledgments*

*Gaile Petursson-Hiley, Sally O'Neill, Ross Noden, Peter Quanz, Dan Wild, Maria Gomori, The School of Contemporary Dancers, Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, Charlene Kulbaba, Holly Harris, Peter Kaminiarz, Webidiotz Passionate about Results - [www.webidiotz.com](http://www.webidiotz.com),*

*To the dancers for bringing forward their exquisite artistry and lifetime commitments to dance.*

*The late great Louise Bourgeois was influential in the development of images for this work.*

### *"A Christmas Carol"*

*December 22 & 23 at the Gas Station Theatre*



MANITOBA ARTS COUNCIL  
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Choreography Stephanie Ballard

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September 24th 7:30 & 25th 4:30

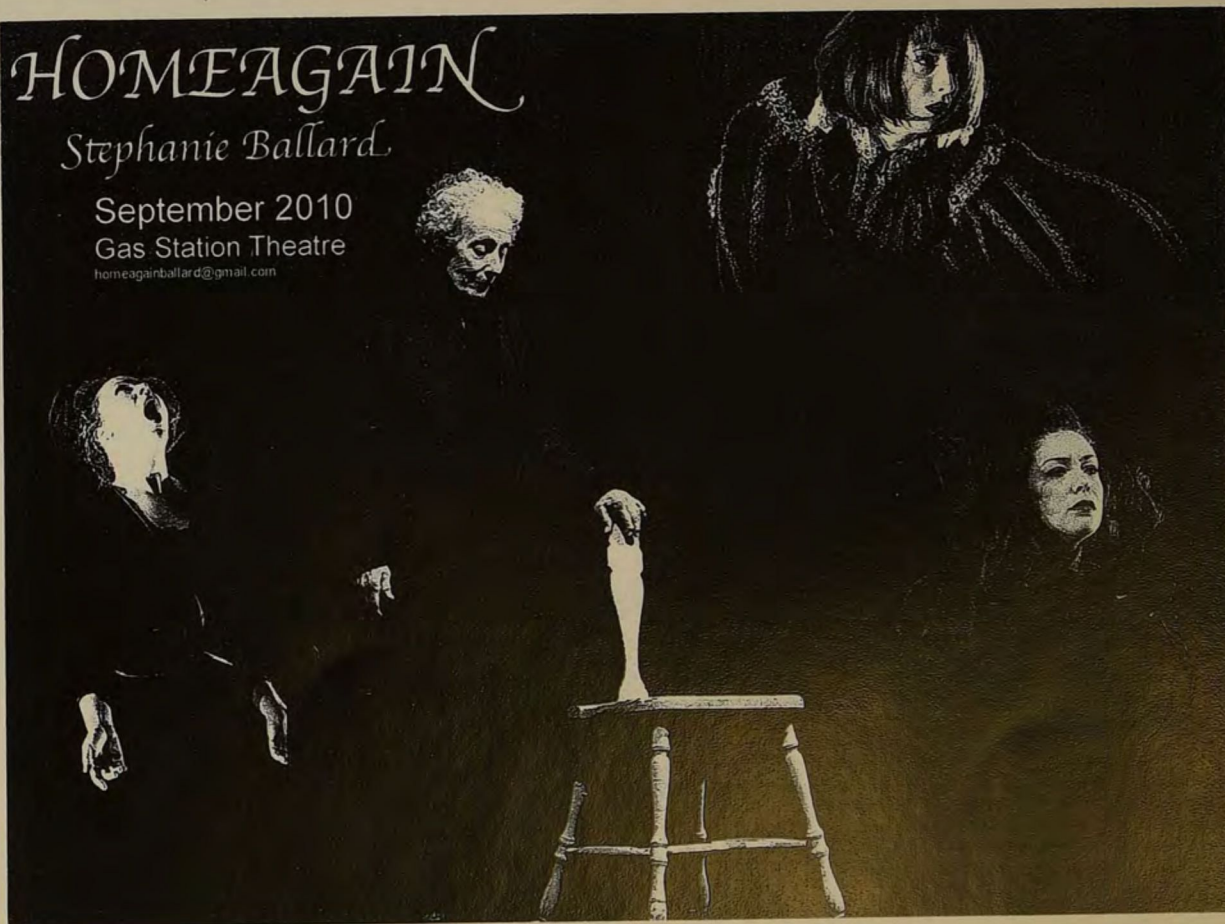
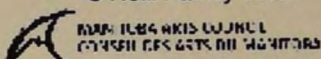
Gas Station Theatre

Tickets \$22 or \$18 before September 15

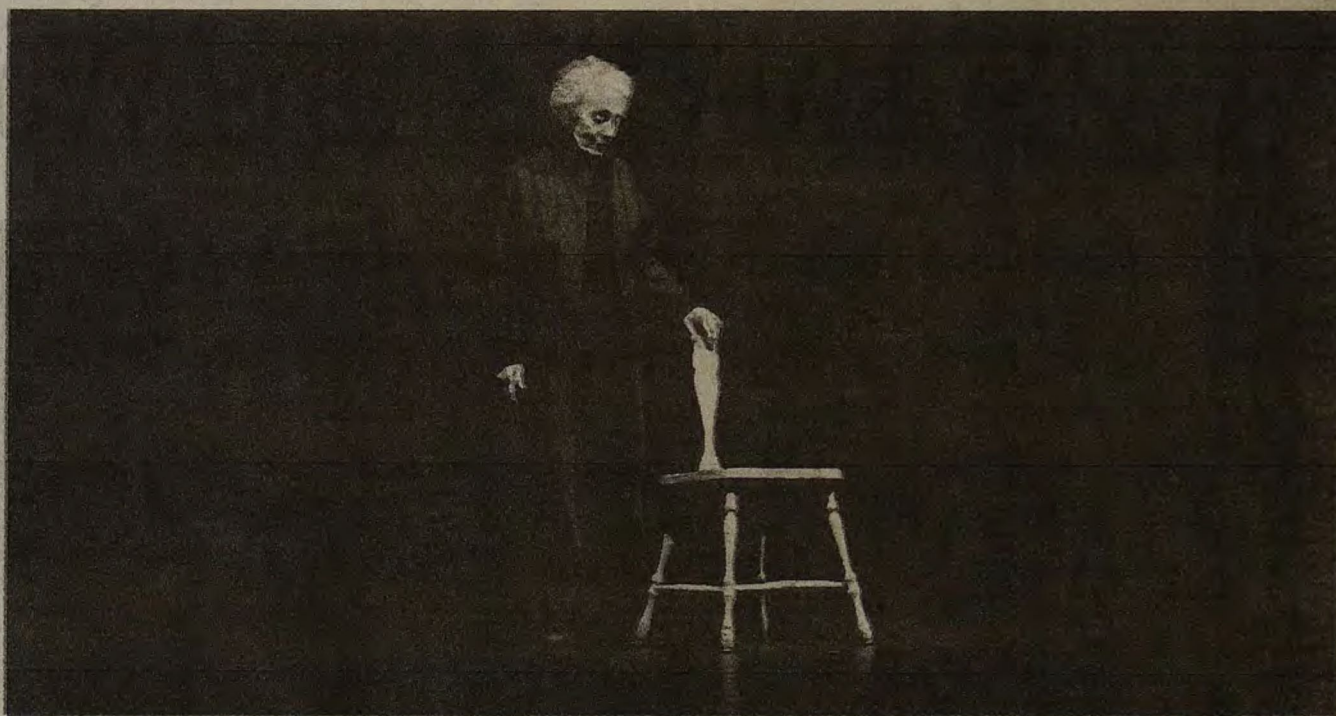
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or see Claire Hardy

O'Neill Family Trust







BRAM SINGLETON

Rachel Browne, at 75, is one the elders held in esteem by the dance community.

## Collection of 13 dance solos honours legacy, future of modern dance

By Alison Mayes

**N**O one cares more about preserving and honouring Winnipeg's dance history than Stephanie Ballard.

The senior choreographer and teacher is an ever-present godmother to the local dance scene. For the past 12 years, she has been immersed in national efforts to document modern choreography of the past four decades and keep it from slipping into oblivion.

But Ballard, 61, is still active as a dancemaker. This weekend, 13 female professional dancers who range in age from 22 to 75 are performing her new intergenerational work, *Homeagain*, at the Gas Station Theatre.

All 13 are grads of the School of Contemporary Dancers who have, Ballard says, "given a lot of their life to dance."

The piece, which is set to operatic arias and runs about 70 minutes, is a collection of 13 solos. Ballard, who also designed the costumes, says the heartfelt, memory-infused work arose out of her commitment to the legacy of modern dance and her belief in its future.

"It feels, in some ways, like a per-

### DancePreview

#### Homeagain

- Gas Station Theatre
- Friday at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday at 4:30 p.m.
- Tickets \$22 (cash only, at the door)

sonal retrospective," she says. "It's a work that embraces our modern-dance community. It's about who we are as dancers, and human beings."

The piece is dedicated to Ballard's close friend and great mentor, Arnold Spohr, the local legend who led the Royal Winnipeg Ballet for 30 years and died in April at the age of 86.

*Homeagain*'s most senior performer is 75-year-old Rachel Browne, the indomitable founder of Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers (WCD) who originally came to Winnipeg as a ballet dancer, but followed her heart along the modern path with enormous support from Spohr.

"The dance community really holds elders in esteem, in ways that lots of other professions do not," Ballard notes.

Ever-conscious of dancers supporting one another, Ballard has

scheduled Saturday's performance of *Homeagain* for 4:30 p.m. so audiences can also catch Hybrid Human, choreographer Jolene Bailie's high-profile collaboration with painter Wanda Koop, at 7 p.m. at the Winnipeg Art Gallery as part of the free Nuit Blanche celebration.

This is a frantically busy time for Ballard, who is preparing to co-host the free RWB performance and celebration of Spohr's life at the Centennial Concert Hall at 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 4 (tickets for that event must be reserved in advance by calling RWB at 956-2792).

And this Saturday at 1:30 p.m. at the Gas Station, she is contributing to the Culture Days weekend by giving a free public Legacy Lecture about a significant event called Dance Discovery 1979. It marked the first-ever collaboration between RWB and WCD dancers, she says.

After the one-hour lecture, everyone is invited to stay for a Legacy Tea, a deliberately old-fashioned kind of get-together.

"That's what I like: tradition and roots," Ballard says.

alison.mayes@freepress.mb.ca





Rachel Browne in *Homeagain* by Stephanie Ballard / Photo by Vince Pakkala

## A Celebration of Dance and Dancers

*Homeagain* by Stephanie Ballard

Winnipeg: September 24–25, 2010

By Holly Harris

But it's Browne who nearly stops the show. When she suddenly steps onto the stage for the electrifying, climactic, thirteenth solo, it felt as though the entire audience collectively stopped breathing. As she silently moves to a thinly backed wooden chair escorted by Heyn-Penner, I couldn't help but recall her poignant duet, *Flowering* (2005), which the two women performed during the renaming of the Rachel Browne Theatre in 2008. Stretching her arms outwards while gently swaying on her chair, it's as though she is embracing the entire modern dance community she has helped create, as matriarch, elder, wise woman. As black-and-white film footage of Browne's face

is projected on a large screen, the stage slowly fills with the dancers who stand at her side as living totems to her legacy. I heard many open sobs in the audience as Browne turned to witness her own flickering, fading image. Although her appearance onstage is brief – lasting merely minutes – Browne's dignified presence grounds the entire work just as she has served as bedrock for Winnipeg's dance community for nearly half a century. This singular moment seemed to encapsulate her life's work like no other, going for the emotional jugular with a force I have seldom seen.

### ALSO ONLINE:

Hi-Tech, Lo-Tech, No-Tech

*Avatar* by Freya Björg Olafson

and *The Great Escape* by Isobel Cohen

By Philip Szporer

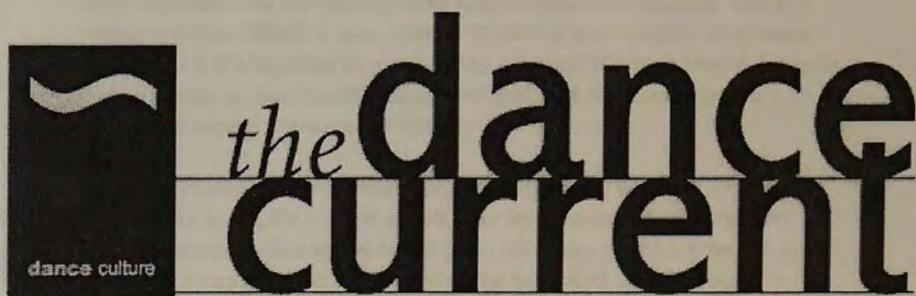
Elusive, in a Half-Light

*Vessel* by Out Innerspace Dance Theatre

By Kaija Pepper

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Les critiques et incidences sont postées dans leur langue d'origine.*

~

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### A Celebration of Dance and Dancers

"Homeagain" by Stephanie Ballard

Winnipeg: September 24-25, 2010

by Holly Harris

They say you can't go home again. But for Winnipeg choreographer Stephanie Ballard, "home" is always as close as the nearest dance studio or stage. Ballard's deeply personal "Homeagain" is a celebration of her passion for dance as well as an homage to all those who create it. The seventy-minute production, which premiered at Winnipeg's Gas Station Theatre, also pays significant tribute to legendary founding artistic director of Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, Rachel Browne, who made a rare onstage appearance during the show's two performances. The work is formally dedicated to Ballard's friend, mentor and longtime companion Arnold Spohr, who passed away last April.

Billed as an intergenerational work, it is indeed that, with its all-female company of dancers ranging from the youngest at age twenty-two to Browne at seventy-five. Each brings their unique gifts and varying levels of experience to the stage while becoming creative muse for Ballard's vision.

The production flows as a series of living portraits, with its thirteen solos performed by Robyn Thomson Kacki, Paula Blair, Rachel Cooper, Kristin Haight, Freya Olafson, Leslie Crozier, Kathleen Hiley, Nicole Owens, Arlo Basker-Nabess, D-Anne Kuby, Nina Patel, Odette Heyn-Penner and Browne.



D-Anne Kuby in "Homeagain" by Stephanie Ballard / Photo by Vince Pakhala

A grande dame of Winnipeg's vibrant dance community, Ballard is a former company member and associate artistic director with Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, whose work as choreographer and artistic advisor

October 22, 2010

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for Margie Gillis has included thirteen years of extensive touring. She is a recipient of the Clifford E. Lee, Jean A. Chalmers and Jacqueline Lemieux awards, and is a founding Director of Mouvement/Winnipeg Dance Projects. Ballard is also an indefatigable dance archivist and co-founder of the Winnipeg Dance Preservation Initiative.

A second Winnipeg pillar is Philadelphia-born Browne, who has enjoyed a long history as WCD's former artistic director, resident choreographer, teacher, mentor, advisor and friend to its countless dancers over the past forty-plus years. Browne also founded the School of Contemporary Dancers in 1972, and continues to inspire young dancers by creating work for its Senior Professional Program each year. She remains active as a choreographer, with her newest work premiering this November during WCD's mixed repertoire show.

The highly theatrical "Homeagain" incorporates a constant play with perspective that features Ballard's own costume, set and lighting design: there are tiny baby shoes on chair legs, and the dancers wear voluminous wigs and tulle crinolines under dramatic gowns. As well, mysterious veils and inky black shrouds obscure the dancers' faces, and many of the costumes, including pedestrian tunics and trousers, are black (a Ballard hallmark), creating a world tinged with melancholy. But there are also touches of innocent whimsy: oddly decorative floral headpieces; a dancer's hand fleetingly brushed across a cheek; another dancer resting her head on a wooden chair in quirky puzzlement.



Paula Blair in "Homeagain" by Stephanie Ballard / Photo by Vince Pakhala

Many of the individual pieces prove the adage that less is more, as Ballard artfully crafts her images like choreographic jewels to exploit her dancers' acting skills. Hiley cuts a figure as tragic as a Tolstoy heroine, sitting in a sea of dark fabric while her beautifully expressive face tells her ambiguous tale. Patel, eight months



Nina Patel in "Homeagain" by Stephanie Ballard / Photo by Vince Pakhala

pregnant, evokes the eternal continuity of generations. Dressed in luminous white tulle complete with pearl choker and gloves, she suggests a courtly – albeit cryptic – Marie Antoinette figure. Holding her gaze steady, Patel's elegantly gloved fingers creep through her skirts as she reposes like an all-knowing stately queen.

Other solos are more forceful, providing dynamic contrast as well as a taste of Ballard's eclecticism. Basker-Nabess appears like an exotically plumed bird with her lyrical arms stretching into the darkness. Her solo becomes a study in detail, with single body isolations creating a fascinating



interplay of movement. Haight springs onto the stage like a capricious harlequin, dressed in a bright red tank top and black leotard. Her solo alternates between sharp attack and undulating fluidity, with deep lunges and trembling limbs highlighting her powerful athleticism. A heavily cloaked Cooper remains centre stage – as do many of the performers – until she walks resolutely to the front.

A sense of fragility runs like a thread throughout the show, as when Olafson suddenly crumples to the floor like a puppet whose strings have broken, only to rise again. A wide-eyed, bustier-clad Thomson Kacki enters the stage in a state of wonder, then rips her blonde wig off as daring self-revelation.



Robyn Thompson Kacki in "Homeagain" by Stephanie Ballard / Photo by Vince Pakhala

"Homeagain" also celebrates mature dance artists whose presence on Winnipeg's stages has been missed. A former WCD company member during the 1980s, Kuby possesses a quiet inner strength that younger dancers could take a page from. As she silently tiptoes around a square of light cast onstage, her arms stretch skywards as if cherry-picking from memory trees. Stepping inside the light becomes an act of courage – or defiance – until she comes to rest onstage curled in a fetal position. Heyn-Penner, dressed in a simple black jersey dress, also begins in silence. Her clenched fists that open to cupped hands, quick floor rolls and backwards foot kicks show her natural grace and purity of expression.

But it's Browne who nearly stops the show. When she suddenly steps onto the stage for the electrifying, climactic, thirteenth solo, it felt as though the entire audience collectively stopped breathing. As she silently moves to a thinly backed wooden chair escorted by Heyn-Penner, I couldn't but help recall her



Rachel Browne in "Homeagain" by Stephanie Ballard / Photo by Vince Pakhala

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Born of passion, the decidedly introspective work is not without flaw. Some of its emotional multi-layers ran so deep as to lie beyond comprehension. The reasons for certain movement choices, and their meaning, at times became as abstract as the dancers' unintelligible mutterings, and I wished to have been privy to the numerous conversations that doubtless occurred during the creative process. The atmospheric score consisting entirely of the great Maria Callas singing classic arias also began to take on an overly homogenous quality after an hour-plus of essentially the same musical texture. Several of the arias trail off or end abruptly, which opera aficionados would find especially unsettling.

But still, this is dance, and "Homeagain" is not only an inspiring reflection of Ballard's lifelong dedication to the art form, but also a moving testament to its very essence. Most of all, it is a powerful tribute to the legions of women who have created modern dance in this country, leaving a legacy so that future generations may follow - and flourish - in their courageous footsteps.

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document.write(unescape("%3Cscript src='" + gaJsHost + "google-analytics.com/ga.js'
type='text/javascript'%3E%3C/script%3E")); try { var pageTracker = _gat._getTracker("UA-
13203910-2"); pageTracker._trackPageview(); } catch(err) {} ...
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