

Dance in/au Canada Danse

Dance and Dollars:
Interview with the Canada Council
Profil: *Rene Picard*



SUMMER 1975
No.5
\$2.00

Editorial

Susan Cohen

Editor / Rédactrice

The third annual Dance in Canada conference (June 22-25, 1975) had many results in attendance, ideas and support generated in Edmonton. But one of the most important events—one which will not be covered in the conference report to be issued this year—came unexpectedly at a gracious banquet on the weekend when Timothy Porteous, associate director of the Canada Council, announced to delegates the gist of a report made by Peter Brinson, head of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth Branch of the Gulbenkian Foundation, on the state of ballet training in this country, as well as the Council's new funding policy toward dance training institutions and the Council's thinking on the future of dance in this country (and thus its criteria for support). A number of misunderstandings, due to the vocabulary Porteous used in the speech, and a great deal of discontent with the assumptions behind the Brinson report, made his audience very vocal and the atmosphere a lively one. In an attempt to clear up those misunderstandings, and especially, to set forth publicly the thinking of the Council on many matters, the Dance Canada magazine conducted an interview with him and Monique Michaud, the Council's dance officer, which we are printing verbatim in this issue because of its importance. We hope you will read it carefully and respond to us or directly to Council on the points it raises.

Our second piece this summer is by René Picard, formerly dance critic of *Le Devoir*, on his own formation as a writer and observer of dance. We thought it was an appropriate moment to profile Picard, and no better person to write that profile than Picard himself. Picard is leaving for a three-year stint as a member of the Délégation générale du Québec in Paris and his pieces will no longer be a part of the local scene. However, he will begin writing a regular letter from Europe for the Dance in Canada magazine in the next issue.

You will also notice a different format this time. Rather than having translations of English and French appear side by side, we are publishing contributions only in the language of origin. We believe this format is still in keeping with our policy of bilingualism. We hope our readers will be encouraged to develop a facility in both languages. However, and unfortunately, the major reason for this change is because the magazine simply could not sustain the enormous financial burden which translation has placed on it in the previous four issues. The costs were simply too great to enable us to continue this practice. This new format will allow us to increase content in the future within practical economic limitations. English and French translations of any published material may still be provided on request from the Dance Canada office.

We hope you will find this issue informative and useful. As always, we would appreciate any comments from our readers on the content and the format of the magazine.

La troisième Conférence annuelle de Danse au Canada, tenue du 22 au 25 juin cette année s'est avérée des plus fructueuses aux points de vue des présences, des idées et de l'appui qu'elle a suscités à Edmonton. L'événement le plus important de ces journées fut le grand banquet au cours duquel M. Timothy Porteous, directeur associé du Conseil des Arts du Canada, fit connaître, aux délégués, la nouvelle politique de financement envers les institutions d'enseignement de la danse et la pensée du Conseil sur l'avenir de la danse dans notre pays (et par là ses critères d'appui); il y rendit également public un rapport de Peter Brinson, dirigeant de la Fondation Gulbenkian de Londres, sur la situation de nos trois principales écoles professionnelles de ballet, le Ballet National du Canada, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens et le Ballet Royal de Winnipeg. Les quelques malentendus attribués à la terminologie employée par M. Porteous et le grand mécontentement provoqué par les sous-entendus du rapport Brinson ont rendu l'assistance assez bruyante et agitée. Dans le but de dissiper le malentendu, et particulièrement, d'énoncer publiquement et par écrit les diverses idées du Conseil, la revue *Danse au Canada* a obtenu une entrevue avec M. Porteous et Monique Michaud, officier de la danse au Conseil. A cause de son importance, nous reproduisons cette entrevue verbatim dans ce numéro. Nous vous encourageons à la lire attentivement et à transmettre, à la Revue ou au Conseil des Arts, vos opinions sur les différents points soulevés.

Notre deuxième article nous vient de René Picard, ancien critique de danse au journal *Le Devoir*, qui nous parle de sa propre formation d'écrivain et d'observateur de la danse. Il nous semblait bien à propos d'offrir un profil de M. Picard (et qui mieux que lui-même pourrait nous le tracer) alors qu'il part sous peu pour un séjour de trois ans dans la Ville-Lumière à titre de membre de la Délégation générale du Québec à Paris et que ses articles n'animeront plus la scène canadienne de la danse. Cependant, M. Picard nous écrira régulièrement.

Vous remarquerez également un changement de format dans ce numéro. Plutôt que de produire les traductions françaises et anglaises côte à côte, nous ne publierons maintenant les articles que dans leur langue d'origine. Nous croyons que ce format respecte toujours notre politique de bilinguisme. Et nous espérons que nos lecteurs se sentiront encouragés à acquérir une maîtrise des deux langues. La raison majeure de ce changement est que, malheureusement, la revue ne peut plus supporter la lourde responsabilité financière que la traduction lui a imposée pour les quatre derniers numéros. Les coûts étaient trop élevés pour nous permettre de continuer cette pratique. Le nouveau format nous permettra, à l'avenir, d'augmenter le contenu de la revue dans des limites économiques pratiques. On pourra toutefois se procurer des traductions anglaises ou françaises de tout article paru en s'adressant au bureau de Danse au Canada.

Nous espérons que vous trouverez ce numéro utile et instructif. Comme toujours, nous aimerions recevoir, de la part de nos lecteurs, tout commentaire sur le contenu de la revue et particulièrement sur son nouveau format. ●

Dance ^{In/au} Canada Danse

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Special Thanks to/
Sincères remerciements à:
The Ontario Arts Council
The Canada Council

SUMMER

1975

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Noticeboard

*Cover/Couverture: The National Ballet of Canada
in Giselle.*

Dance In Canada is published quarterly by **Dance in Canada Association**. The views expressed in the articles in this publication are not necessarily those of Dance in Canada. The publication is not responsible for the return of unsolicited material unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope. Subscription: \$6.50 per year. Single copy \$2.00.

The publication Dance in Canada is included with membership in **Dance in Canada Association**.

Danse au Canada est publiée trimestriellement par l'**Association de la Danse au Canada**. Les opinions exprimées dans les articles de cette publication ne sont pas obligatoirement celles de Danse au Canada. Le rédaction n'assume aucune responsabilité quant au renvoi de matériel non sollicité, à moins que celui-ci ne soit accompagné d'une enveloppe-réponse affranchie et adressée. Abonnement: \$6.50 par an. Prix du numéro \$2.00. Les tarifs de publicité seront fournis dans le prochain numéro.

Les membres de l'**Association de la Danse au Canada** recevront d'office la revue Danse au Canada.

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Dance in Canada: 314 Jarvis Street, Suite 103, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2C5. ISSN 0317-9737



Monique Michaud, dance officer



Timothy Porteous, associate director of the Canada Council

Dance and Dollars: **Interview With The Canada Council**

Susan Cohen and Murray Farr

DCM: Mr. Porteous, because I suppose it is the first time that the policy of the Canada Council toward dance has been stated publicly, I would like to discuss some of the points you made last night—the division between ballet and modern, the way you see it in terms of funding, the kind of support and the future of the support that's being given to the three major ballet companies.

PORTEOUS: I don't think the proper distinction to make is between ballet and other forms of dancing. But I think there is a distinction to be made between large companies, companies that have 20 or 30 or more dancers, medium-sized companies, perhaps between 10 and 20 dancers—I'm just putting this very roughly—and finally, extremely small, portable and probably highly experimental companies of five dancers or less. It seems to the Council that if you are to have dance activity which covers a satisfactory range artistically in this country, you need to have some big companies, some medium-sized companies and some small companies. Historically, when the Council was founded 17 years ago, we just had the big companies. Initially, our support went in fact to three big companies. Now those three big companies are still with us, and, in fact, they are bigger than they were and their artistic standards have risen. I don't think today's audiences for the big companies would accept the standards that prevailed 10 years ago. The Council feels that it has an obligation, and it is desirable to provide the resources necessary to maintain the large companies and to allow them to achieve and to maintain satisfactory artistic standards. But it also feels that the total number of companies in any category, and particularly the total number of companies in the biggest category, has to be rather severely limited in a country of 22 million people, partly because of the question of finding sufficient financial resources to sustain that type of operation but also because of the necessity of finding sufficient human resources, finding the choreographers and the dancers, the technicians and the audiences. The first point I was trying to make last night was that we still think that in this country three large companies are probably the most that we can support, and therefore we would be extremely reluctant to further diminish the amount of resources we have available to support big companies by contemplating the existence of additional large companies from parts of the country where they presently do not exist.

However, we think that the future of dance in this country depends a great deal on the smaller companies, and in that area we feel that we have been expanding our support; we've been increasing its range and particularly this year, for example, we've increased the proportion of our budget that goes to the smaller companies.

DCM: Could you specify the amount of funds the dance office has?

PORTEOUS: Last night when I was using the overall statistic of \$3.5 million, I was referring not only to the funds that are at the disposal of Monique. I was also including the Touring Office funds which are invested in dancing, and, as it happens, in this year the Touring Office budget has gone up and the major increase has gone into dance touring because it was felt that was where the major increase was required. Last year's budget was of the order of \$180,000. This year's budget is of the order of \$400,000. So there is a very substantial increase right there. In addition, the budget that Monique administers is \$2.844 million. But also there are grants to individual artists

which are not considered to be part of her budget. If you add up the amount of funds that would go to individual dancers I suspect it would be of the order of \$200,000 or \$300,000 in the course of a year. But that's a calculation I made up in my head. Overall dance funds were \$400,000 in 1967. That is a six-fold increase up till last year. Assuming that the amount of money available to us to invest in dance continues to grow, we feel we will be able to support a large number of the medium-sized and smaller companies.

DCM: So, what led to the misunderstanding last night was the particular vocabulary you used—'ballet' to describe the big companies and 'modern' for all the rest.

PORTEOUS: You see it happens by coincidence that the three largest companies would probably describe themselves as ballet companies—and they are. But beyond that there are different perceptions of what people are up to.

MICHAUD: The fact is at the moment it is divided into disciplines. It shouldn't be like that and it won't necessarily be like that. But chamber or concert ballet groups, for example, are very new. We haven't turned them down. They haven't really come to us yet.

DCM: Well, the great success story is Entre-Six. In less than a year, they have a \$100,000 budget and they haven't even asked the Council for help.

DCM: Could you specify the proportions now that will be available, in terms of the overall dance budget, to the major companies and to this expanding chamber dance group?

MICHAUD: The easiest figure to use is that we have brought up the smaller companies' budgets by 80 per cent. Even if it's a small amount, 80 per cent is a big percentage.

DCM: Is there now a minimum for the smaller companies, a minimum grant? I'm referring to project grants, because that's where most of the chamber companies are really coming in, are they not?

PORTEOUS: In theory, there is no minimum, but in practice, yes.

MICHAUD: Project grants are where it starts. I've brought them up to \$7,500, \$10,000, etc. this year.

PORTEOUS: Is there an example of one we gave \$7,500 to?

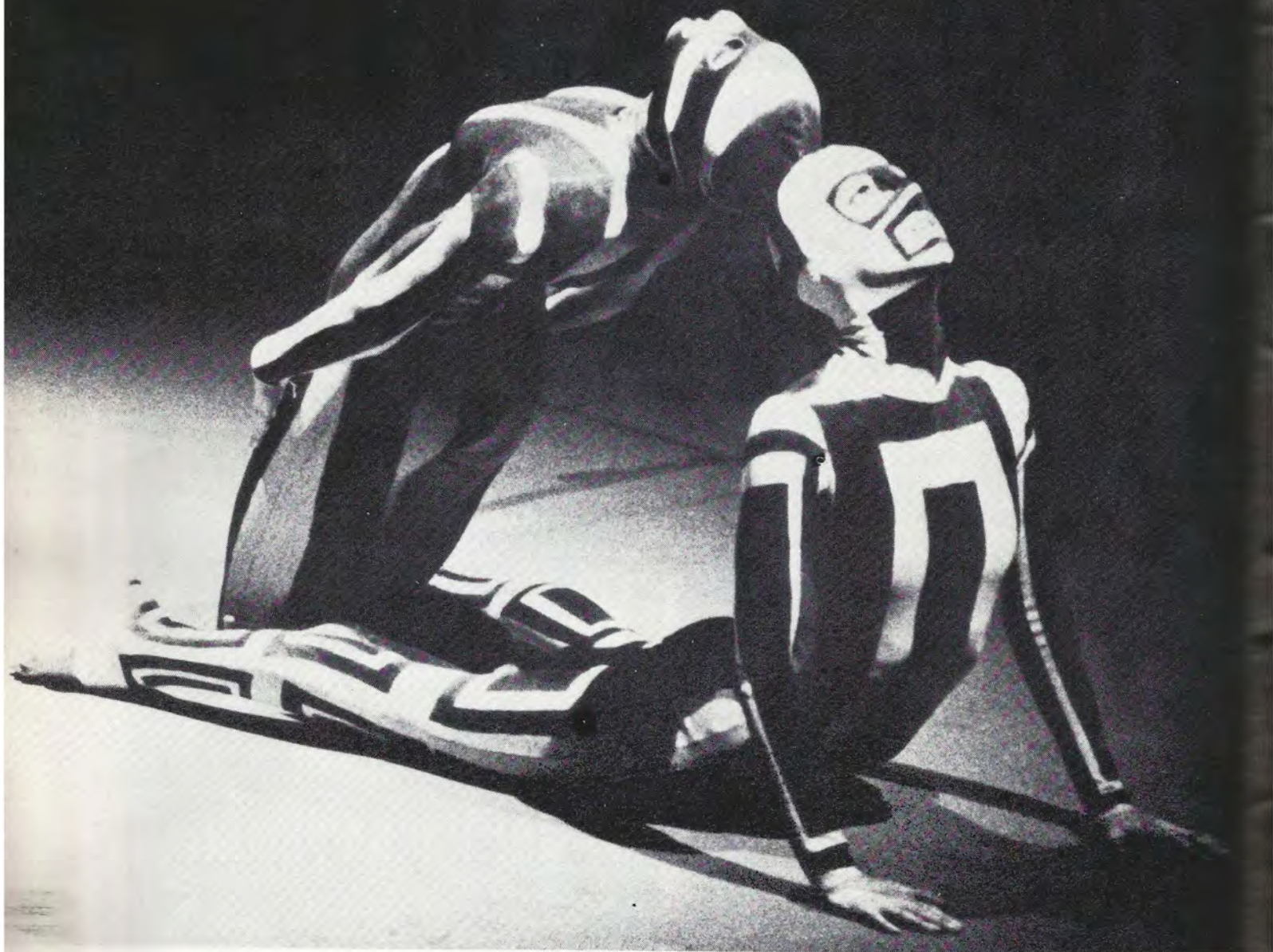
MICHAUD: Yes, Dancemakers.

DCM: So this is the minimum grant for companies like that, recognizing the conditions under which they have to operate?

MICHAUD: It is difficult to answer a question like that because for projects we often cover the deficit for a series of performances. They're 'up to' grants, if you like.

PORTEOUS: Also, sometimes we have made something special available to companies, for example, the services of a person.

MICHAUD: Not very often. We've done that for companies on operations grants but not very often for projects. Projects really have to do with a series of performances or the creation, choreography or cost of mounting new works.



Anna Wyman Dance Theatre

PORTEOUS: Normally, project grants would be \$7,500 and up.

DCM: And what about operating grants? What is the minimum there?

MICHAUD: It's \$60,000.

DCM: So that means the four major contemporary companies are all up to at least \$60,000. (In the case of the Contemporary Dancers of Winnipeg, this Council decision means a jump this year from a \$25,000 grant to \$60,000.)

DCM: Do you think the distinction will fade between the four major moderns, if you could call them that, and the emerging sector that is now on project grants?

PORTEOUS: To go from a project grant to an operations grant, we make much more severe judgments on artistic quality and we also start making more severe judgments on the administrative side of the company, because if we are going to give a company \$60,000 we need to have some assurance that there is somebody there who knows what to do with the \$60,000. So the answer to your question depends first on the existence of artistic quality which is justified and secondly on the combination with administration.

DCM: In the immediate future do you see any more of the chamber companies getting operating or sustaining grants?

MICHAUD: It depends on how many of the criteria they



Helen Jones of Toronto Dance Theatre — no more companies will join on operating grants.

meet because the Council is very reluctant to withdraw its support. It really labours over that before it does that. When we make an operations grant, it's a long-term involvement. But at the moment there is no company graduating from project grants to operating grants.

DCM: You were saying that university companies are a great problem for you. Is that because they fall into that limbo between art and education?

MICHAUD: Yes, and they often come out of physical education or *mouvement corporelle*. The line is difficult to draw. Also, they get special financial consideration from the university and are able to do things an outside company would never be able to do. Sometimes they have lavish, beautiful studios compared to a company on the

street struggling. They don't have to pay rent. They study for MA's and such and get together once in a while to perform. It's a very different situation altogether.

DCM: Could you also elaborate on the special conditions that make dance so financially distinct from the other performing arts?

PORTEOUS: The question is where to start. But I tried to make the point last night that dance is mainly a group activity. It is possible to have individual recitals and small groups, but the vast majority of dance activity that does take place involves not only bringing people together over a period long enough for them to develop collectively as artists. This is different from opera, for example, where you just bring people together for a short time and put on



Entre-Six: New chamber ballet company

your performance and then disband. It's different from theatre in that theatre can change the size of its productions, or change the actors who are performing or can make all kinds of variations—and still be the same company. But in dance you really have to bring together one group of people and keep them together, and they have to devote themselves exclusively to that activity.

Secondly, I said that the ratio between rehearsal and performance is much higher in dance. The other extreme is the symphony orchestra, which can have two or three rehearsals, put on its concerts, put on perhaps two or three different concerts a week; it can take the same group of music lovers and bring them back maybe 12 times a season. A dance company is extremely rich and lucky, if it can bring them back three times in the same season. Therefore, the total number of people that a dance company has to perform to, just to be able to develop the same amount of artistic activity, is much larger than it would be for an orchestra or theatre company. That, of course, is part of the reason why dance companies have to keep moving around the country and can't stay in one city as an orchestra can or a theatre company can.

Added to all the human resources problems—bringing these people together and keeping them together and providing them with long periods of rehearsal and creation, dance companies have all the problems of transporting them around the country, finding the places for them to perform in and assembling the audiences in those places prepared to come and see them.

The other advantage they have in other art forms is that you can have the Royal Winnipeg Ballet or the Manitoba

Theatre Centre, and the people of Winnipeg can identify very strongly in a municipal sense with those organizations. Ninety per cent of the audience these companies draw on will be Winnipeggers. I've said the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, but that in fact is an example of the reverse, because an extremely large proportion of the audience the Royal Winnipeg Ballet has to draw in order to survive artistically are not Winnipeggers. They are people in Calgary, Vancouver and so on, they don't have the same identification with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, as Winnipeggers would have with the Manitoba Theatre Centre. So again this means you need a much higher concentration of resources just to maintain *in artistic existence* a dance company than you would a company of similar reputation or similar artistic quality in another discipline.

This means that given an equivalent amount of resources to invest in the dance as you might have in music or theatre, you have, in fact, to invest in fewer companies. With the same amount of public support, you can support many more theatre companies than dance companies, many more types of music than dance. The Council's philosophy about dance or music or theatre relates to the nature of the activity itself.

DCM: The other point you brought up last night was the whole question of education, of the standards of dance teaching in this country. You chose that opportunity to announce publicly the gist of a report made by Peter Brinson (founder of Ballet for All and head of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth Branch of the Gulbenkian foundation). Could you please discuss that?

PORTEOUS: In the past, the Council has been restricting its support for institutions giving professional training to dancers to one institution, the National Ballet School. There were several reasons for that. One was that such an institution itself requires a great deal of resources to survive or maintain acceptable artistic standards, and we felt that the resources available to us were probably inadequate for that. Secondly, we have felt and we have been advised by people that we have consulted on this question that the standards of teaching at the National Ballet School were superior to anything else in the country. Thirdly, the National Ballet School has had a deliberate policy of bringing its students from all parts of the country and of offering them courses in both official languages. That gave it a national character which was an argument in relation to obtaining funds from the federal government.

So for all those reasons, we have been providing support to the National Ballet School, but that has been the only dance training institution that we have been providing support to. About a year ago, we asked Peter Brinson to take a look at three ballet schools (the National, the Royal Winnipeg and Les Grands Ballet Canadiens) and report on what he found and make recommendations as to what Council's policies toward them should be.

He made the case that in ballet—you see his report was confined to the discipline of ballet, but I said last night that some of its recommendations had implications which

would apply to dance generally—experience showed that to have a great ballet company you had to have a great training institution associated with it. And that these two were mutually dependent. Therefore, insofar as the Council was interested in maintaining the artistic standards of ballet companies, it should also have an interest in the level of training that was being provided for the dancers who would become available for those companies. Peter Brinson felt, secondly, that the level of support for the training institutions was far too low, and he included the National Ballet School in that. He said that the salary level at those schools was too low in relation to salaries paid in other aspects of dance and also in other educational institutions. So, in general, his recommendation was that some part of the support that we are providing for the discipline of ballet should be directed toward raising the standards of the training of dancers. He also made the third point that in most countries where ballet has developed there has been a standard of teaching and training to which all teaching institutions could refer and to which all students could have some access. In Canada, because of our geography and constitution and so on, training institutions have sprung up without any kind of central standard. Some of them, of course, have related to the standards of British institutions. He recommended that in a country like Canada, if we wish to develop our ballet and our own dance, we should attempt to develop Canadian standards of dance instruction and establish qualifications for

Contemporary Dancers: Up to \$60,000



teachers. He pointed out that one of the things we have in Canada is an enormous variety of regions, temperaments, physiques and so on, and he felt that this should be used to our advantage and shouldn't be just boiled down into a great homogeneous pot. We, nevertheless, should work toward developing some kind of standards in that area, if we were really thinking of the future of dance in this country. Of course, that brings us into very dangerous territory. As a federally-funded institution, when we try to ask for funds for that purpose, we often don't get a very enthusiastic reaction. We're met with the argument that that is really part of education and that is provincial responsibility. In fact, many people who are in the training and educational field feel that they should be autonomous within their own provinces, and it's an unnecessary interference to have anything that goes beyond the provincial boundaries. So it's a field in which there are a lot of difficulties. But, on the whole, I think that many of the points that Peter Brinson made in his report are valid and deserve consideration by the responsible provincial authorities and particularly by people in the dance field itself.

DCM: One of the things Peter Brinson said which you quoted yesterday was that the standards were "dangerously uneven", which is a very striking phrase. Will there be any attempt made by the Council to discuss this with the dance community and with the people concerned with education?

PORTEOUS: Yes, I think we'd like to have some reaction from the dance community itself. It would have to be said that the immediate reaction we had last night was not entirely positive. I think an organization like Dance Canada, for example, could do some very valuable work in getting people together and getting some consensus on how to resolve these problems in the peculiar country that we happen to live in, and the Council would certainly be prepared to participate in that kind of activity.

DCM: Well, I felt last night in your speech that you on behalf of the Council showed a willingness to open a dialogue on sensitive issues that had more or less not been discussed openly and particularly among those who are most concerned with it. Although there were mumblings of discontent within the large banquet room during your speech, it was pretty low key, I should think, compared to things Council has run into before in public hearings.

MICHAUD: Sure. In a certain way I was glad to get a reaction. Often the dance community does not react.

DCM: There's a growing maturity in the Canadian dance world.

PORTEOUS: Dance itself—this is a thing which always amazes me—is so young as a separate activity. That is true in a world sense. It's much truer in the Canadian sense. You know the original generation of professional Canadian dancers is still active in the profession as choreographers, artistic directors and teachers. We don't even have the children of the first generation yet. In other words there is nobody whose parents had an involvement. Whereas if you look in music for example, the people who are professional musicians have been brought up in music. Very often, it's the same thing in theatre. But with dance, certainly in Canada, we're right at the beginning and we're asking the questions for the first time. There are lots of mistakes the Council hasn't got around to making yet.

DCM: There is a definite indigenous dance world in Canada now. It's not been grafted or transposed.

PORTEOUS: An indication of that is that this year for the first time the artistic directors of the three largest companies are all people who've been brought up in this country and got most of their professional experience here. I certainly do not believe that we don't need to bring people from other parts of the world to enrich what we're doing, but we also have to be in a position to develop our own artists. And I think that's an indication that we're moving in that direction.

MICHAUD: A recurring sentence in Brinson's report is that, 'You can't work fast in dance: You're thinking of ten years and ten years and ten years.'

PORTEOUS: He said it takes ten years to establish a dance school so that it's not just going from week to week, then it takes ten years after that to really develop itself as an artistic entity; and then it's going to take another ten years before the students it's been training have really got themselves into the dance world. A total of 30 years.

MICHAUD: That's the age of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

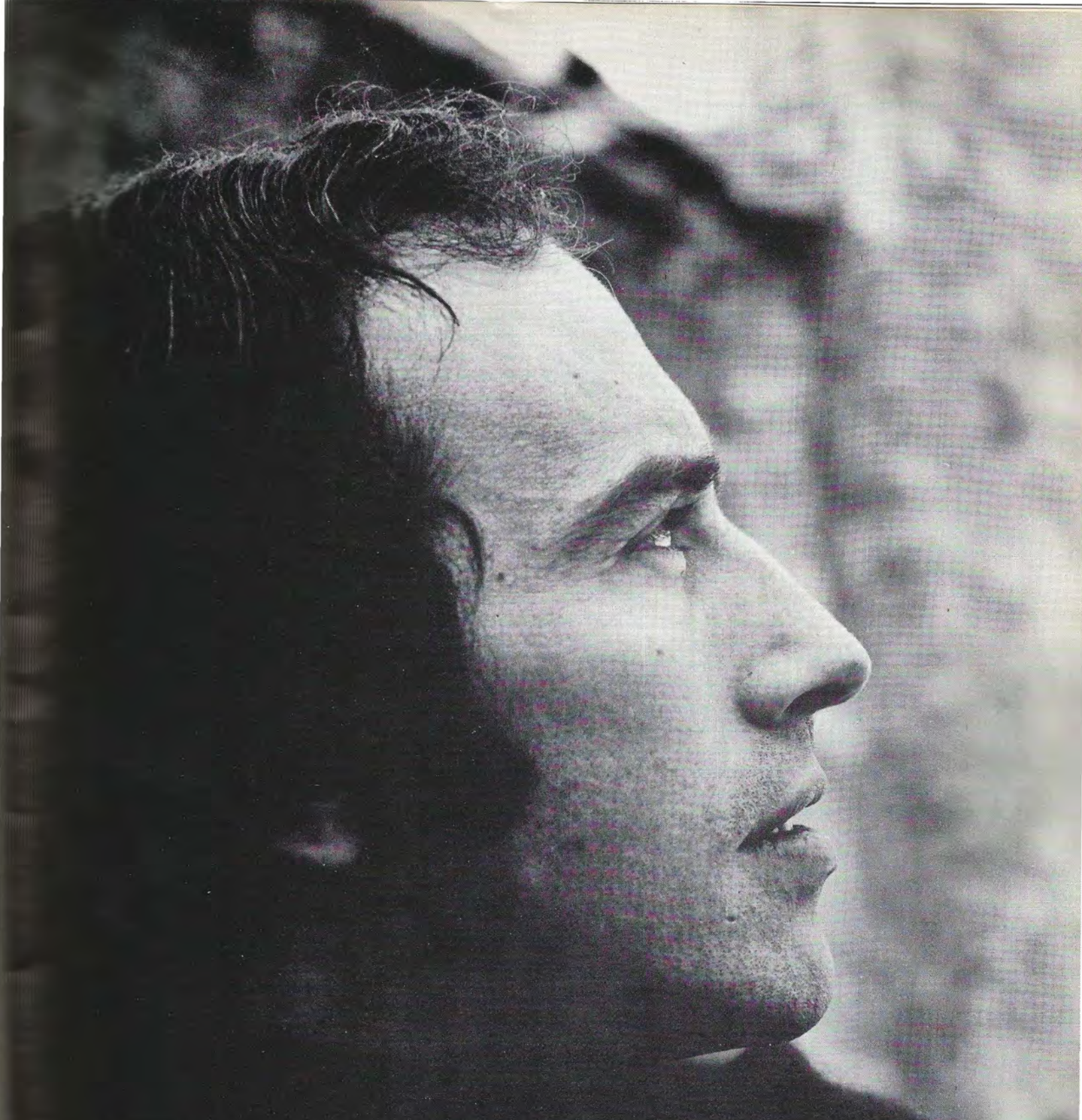
PORTEOUS: So it's easy to be too impatient.

DCM: Were you making any implications in your speech about the modern companies?

PORTEOUS: Yes, I think some of the implications of what Peter says in his report could be extended beyond the particular discipline of ballet. But it depends, of course, on finding the necessary resources, and we're not going to cut down on the institutions we are presently supporting or withdraw our support from them. So additional activities have to be funded out of additional resources that come to us. In the past, we have been able to get additional resources.

MICHAUD: The panels of juries at the Council have been very concerned with the quality of teaching in modern dance. They've been talking about it more and more in the last year.

PORTEOUS: Many years ago there was, in fact, only one serious possibility for the training of dancers—the National Ballet School. The Council has been supporting it over the years and over the years the school has maintained its pre-eminence from an artistic point of view. It has been the school that has been recognized outside Canada as being our best ballet school. However, as the dance itself evolves in this country, the demand for training dancers expands beyond the possibility of a single institution to provide it. So, therefore, while maintaining the quality of this pre-eminent institution, we also have to think about building up the quality of other possible institutions for training our dancers. In Peter Brinson's report, he emphasizes the relationship which has historically existed between performing ballet companies and schools and the likelihood that a really good company has to have a school related to it and vice versa. So the Council is considering various possibilities for raising the standards of training dancers in institutions other than the National Ballet School. Now, like all the other Council programs in the future, this of course depends on additional resources being made available. But as a modest first tentative step in this direction, this year we will make a very small grant to the professional schools that are attached to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. These grants will have the objective of helping them to improve the artistic quality of their training.



René Picard. Profil

la formation d'un critique de danse

En 1947, Edwin Denby le grand critique de danse aux Etats-Unis publiait un texte intitulé "The Critic" dans lequel il résumait ce qu'était pour lui la formation et le rôle d'un critique de danse. En préparant celui-ci j'ai relu le sien pour constater combien il demeure valable trente ans après, et combien Denby s'y attaquait déjà à l'essentiel du problème: "aiguiser la perception".

Plusieurs chemins peuvent amener à la critique et la route individuelle de chacun suscitera une approche différente, plus ou moins nouvelle. La mienne a emprunté tant des photos de danse vues, enfant dans les journaux quotidiens que de la fréquentation des musées italiens et, d'une formation en science politique. En d'autres termes tout ce qui concoure à nous faire, s'inscrit déjà dans le processus de formation du critique. A partir de cette toile de fond il est possible cependant d'ajouter, dans le but de devenir un critique sérieux, des éléments supplémentaires plus précisément orientés à l'acquisition de moyens et de méthodes de travail. En critique tout comme en art, s'il y a une partie instinctive il ne s'y en trouve pas moins une autre, éduquée. Le résultat de cette éducation que vise-t-il? Que cherche à faire le critique avant tout?

Intéressé par la force de communication d'un art, celui de la danse, le critique tente de la rendre de plus en

plus évidente en cherchant à éveiller chez ses lecteurs "des aspects insoupçonnés de leur propre sensibilité". Habituellement plus au fait de l'histoire de la danse, le critique peut apporter des éléments de compréhension et d'analyse des oeuvres nouvelles ou même parfois offrir une vision nouvelle des anciennes. Il sera sensible à l'évolution, au milieu et à l'époque. Sensible au mouvement, essence-même de la danse, il l'observe, le retient en vue de le rendre par les mots et, là n'est pas le plus facile. Il aura à capter des mouvements clairs, biens rendus, précis, d'autres confus, étranges, bizarres, nouveaux, déconcertants, toujours intégrés dans une chorégraphie et alimentés par l'art et la technique du danseur. De traduire par la phrase la profonde intégration de deux éléments peut devenir une source de cauchemars car c'est là que se situe le fondamental de la danse et là aussi que jaillit son étincelle souvent rebelle à l'encre de la plume. Le danseur et le chorégraphe exigeront deux approches distinctes, après une première saisie globale de l'oeuvre. "Cet ensemble de rythmes articulés dans l'espace et dans le temps", demande une terminologie spécifique pour le décrire, il faut l'inventer à tout instant.

L'amour de la danse, une conception dynamique de l'art, un sentiment profond d'indépendance, une solide

Serenade de Balanchine (National Ballet)—le génie d'un certain changement.



connaissance de l'histoire de la danse, la fréquentation de tous les lieux de spectacles de danse, les discussions sur le sujet, tant avec des artistes que d'autres personnes aussi intéressées enfin peut-être la fréquentation d'un cours de formation de critique demeurent à mes yeux les principales qualifications permettant de se lancer dans le métier. Soulignons tout de suite qu'il ne me semble pas nécessaire d'avoir peint pour comprendre, situer et discuter une oeuvre, de même la danse se laisse volontiers cerner par l'observateur du mouvement. Le fait de n'avoir appartenu à aucune école, de n'avoir été assujetti à aucun professeur peut même parfois conserver au critique une disponibilité plus grande face aux multiples recherches chorégraphiques contemporaines.

L'amour de la danse ou du moins la conviction que la danse constitue l'un des arts fondamentaux . . . et non seulement un divertissement élégant, préside à tout travail de critique. C'est cet intérêt qui nous fait sans cesse réagir, c'est encore lui qui nous garde constamment en éveil. Le critique qui ne verrait la danse que sous l'optique d'un esthétisme statique comme c'est malheureusement souvent encore le cas, aurait vite fait d'épuiser les synonymes de "beau" et de "crémeux". L'art en général s'est toujours nourri d'une époque pour la traduire et

même la devancer; en ce sens son discours s'alimente à deux sources fondamentales, celle de l'histoire des sociétés et celle de la problématique esthétique vue sous l'angle scientifique d'une évolution continue ou encore sous celui d'une évolution—rupture. Découvrir ces sources, sentir par soi-même ce côté vivant de l'art, le critique aura dû y arriver pour son propre compte avant de se lancer dans l'écriture. Je demeure convaincu que cette découverte peut se faire tout aussi bien à travers la peinture, la musique que l'histoire des idées politiques ou de la philosophie. Par la suite l'histoire de la danse abordée sous ce jour fascinera littéralement. Cette histoire on ne la connaît jamais assez. Maîtrisée, que de bêtises pourra-t-elle nous économiser, et que de lumières nous fournira-t-elle. Souvent j'ai été étonné par cette candeur que donne l'ignorance des faits historiques, des écoles, des étapes de la danse, des artistes d'un pays et de l'évolution de l'art, ce tant au niveau du public que celui de certains artistes ou "historiens".

La danse étant dans son produit l'oeuvre éphémère que l'on connaît, elle exige de celui qui en parle beaucoup de mémoire jumelée à un sens de l'observation bien développé. Si l'un ou l'autre venait à faire défaut ou encore si des événements s'étaient produits avant nous il faut immédiatement songer aux gravures, aux photographies, aux films, aux témoins, aux livres.

Monuments de Jean-Pierre Perrault—l'avenir de la jeunesse et du talent.





Jeanne Renaud—un nouveau langage alors inconnu

Ces derniers, du moins les meilleurs deviennent des alliés. Comme tel ils aiment être confrontés et comparés, et par les plus perspicaces, même lus entre les lignes. Il se produit une chose merveilleuse avec l'histoire de la danse, la vérité historique finit toujours par percer et être rétablie tant par une force innée à celle-ci que par le travail des historiens compétents. Allons plus loin, même des historiens biaisés en énonçant des énormités ou en oubliant l'importance réelle de certains faits finissent par nous rendre service en nous dévoilant les culs de sac dans lesquels ils ont pu s'engager.

Si la critique aborde l'art de la danse avec un sentiment de gratitude envers les historiens et les biographes inversement il mène son métier dans un climat d'indépendance. Sans doute comme les artistes des autres média et peut-être encore plus, le chorégraphe et le danseur sont le plus souvent convaincus au départ de la grandeur de leur création ou de leur talent. Parfois c'est le cas, parfois il n'en est rien. Ce sera au critique de découvrir lui-même ces talents et ces génies. Si un communiqué de presse cherche par tous les adjectifs possibles à stimuler l'intérêt pour un spectacle, soit en fin de compte de le vendre, le critique le lira et l'oubliera. L'envoûtement d'une salle, les applaudissements d'un soir plutôt que de lui dicter ses adjectifs, inciteront le critique à se demander pourquoi et à cerner leur fondement. Comme le soulignait un jour un pianiste réputé: "On a retenu de chaque époque à peine 10% de sa production artistique ...", le critique de danse, durant sa carrière sera appelé à voir cette production en danse. De ce lot il cherchera ces créations qui dépasseront une mode, une ville ou même un pays, il pointera du doigt celles qui transcendent. Encore là le temps pourra devenir son meilleur allié, soit en lui permettant de se rétracter s'il a eu

tort, soit en lui donnant raison, s'il a su distinguer une valeur créatrice avant l'acceptation générale.

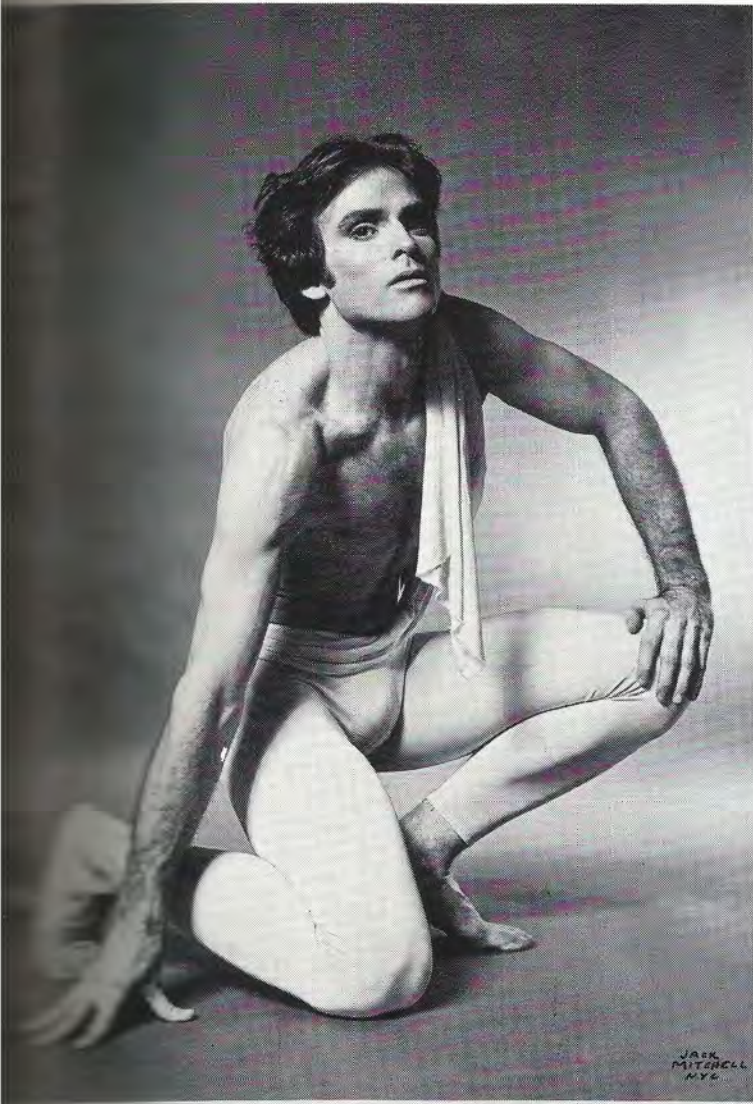
Un critique s'il naît toujours d'un milieu et en porte la marque ne doit pas moins se connaître lui-même et s'intéresser à ce qui se passe en dehors de son milieu. Pour s'en assurer le critique élargit ses horizons et multiplie ses points de références, visant ainsi un certain équilibre, lequel deviendra un élément important de son "objectivité". En fait il faut voir, voir et voir encore de la danse, de la bonne, un peu de mauvaise de la pauvre, de la riche, de la conservatrice, de l'innovatrice, de la vieille, de la jeune, de la révolutionnaire, et le moins possible de décadente ce, partout où elle se trouve. Cette fréquentation des spectacles et la jouissance d'un inventaire le plus complet possible évite bien des erreurs et permet souvent de ne pas chercher le nombril du monde là où il ne se trouve pas. Les yeux bien ouverts permettant de voir vraiment ce qui est produit valent mieux que des yeux plissés cherchant un quelconque horizon.

J'ignore si cela tient au caractère éphémère de la danse mais j'ai constaté que tous ceux qui s'y adonnent et s'y intéressent ont besoin d'en parler. Que de moments aux cours desquels la danseuse nous entretiendra de sa conception d'un rôle, des grandes figures qui l'ont précédée, où le chorégraphe dévoilera une problématique qui l'intéresse ou enfin des critiques souhaiteront comparer leur perception des oeuvres, les qualités des interprètes, l'évolution d'une carrière de chorégraphe etc. . . Ces moments s'avèrent souvent enrichissants, puisqu'ils permettent parfois de saisir de nouveaux points de vue et mettre à l'épreuve ses propres idées. Ceci ne signifie en rien que d'une part le critique se laisse dicter ses approches et que d'autre part, il cherche l'unanimité chez ses collègues.

Enfin le critique aura tout avantage à profiter d'un cours de critique de danse comme il en existe quelques-uns maintenant où il lui sera possible de mettre un peu d'ordre dans ses idées, mieux se connaître et ce de façon quasi-systématique en regard des choses de la danse et de cerner les dimensions de son ignorance. Sans doute cet effort de rétrospection sur la formation d'un critique lui confère une allure quelque peu théorique, il n'en demeure pas moins le fruit d'une expérience, la mienne. Tout ce qui m'a amené au travail de critique ne m'a jamais consciemment conduit sur ce chemin ou si peu, ce furent beaucoup plus les résultats d'une lente évolution et d'une sensibilisation qui m'ont donné l'audace de plonger. Cette sensibilisation elle a été marquée d'expériences esthétiques et intellectuelles précises.

Alors que j'étais enfant nous recevions à la maison les journaux de Montréal. Que de pas de deux immobiles que d'arabesques figées j'ai pu voir dans les pages artistiques de ceux-ci. En province même en 1950 on ne voyait pas de danse et il me semble drôle de dire aujourd'hui que c'est peut-être ce manque qui m'a attiré vers elle. Combien d'amateurs qui s'ignorent existe-t-il encore dans les diverses régions du Québec et du Canada? Combien de critiques valables n'écriront même pas une ligne? Puis la vie à Montréal et les voyages aidant, j'ai fini par voir de la danse.

Dans ce monde en éveil tout a eu son importance mais certains artistes y ont joué un rôle déterminant. Balanchine, Noureev, Jeanne Renaud, des films de



Vincent Warren—du danseur comme comédien

Doris Humphrey. Avant même de bien connaître le ballet classique je savais déjà que quelqu'un l'avait fait éclater pour l'amener encore plus loin et en faire un moyen de création et de communication contemporaines, Georges Balanchine. Parmi les meilleurs chorégraphes de ce génie une ressort forte et entière, "Agon". Danse vivante, art vivant l'oeuvre de Balanchine en est encore la preuve quotidienne. Je n'oublierai jamais non plus Noureev dans le rôle de Roméo. D'un grand jeté initial il a pu nous entraîner immédiatement au coeur-même du drame. Noureev offre la synthèse entre l'acteur et le danseur, soit l'exemple d'un artiste puissant dont la danse a toujours besoin.

En 1965 je voyais, un peu par hasard, un spectacle de danse moderne québécoise avec à son programme des chorégraphies de Jeanne Renaud et les oeuvres de différents artistes et musiciens québécois. Par ses nouvelles manières de bouger, son univers personnel et surprenant cette femme m'indiquait le germe d'une capacité propre au Québec d'inventer son vocabulaire et de danser son époque à sa façon, le Groupe de la Place

Royale prolongera sa vision et son oeuvre; elle avait eu raison. Plus loin de moi dans le temps c'est par le film (et le livre) que Doris Humphrey à son tour me révélera le caractère dynamique de la danse. Artiste exigeante et dévouée elle réussira durant sa courte vie à présenter un univers du mouvement entièrement élaboré à partir d'une idée personnelle et réfléchie, avec Graham, elle ouvrira toute grande la porte entrebaillée de la danse moderne contemporaine.

Je ne parle pas d'un Cunningham, d'une Meredith Monk, d'une Mary Wigman, d'un Perreault, d'un Patsalas, d'un Warren, d'une Karen Kain. Comme tous ceux qui précèdent ils me fascinent par leur vision artistique et leur pouvoir instinctif d'innovateur ou d'acteur.

Friand, j'assiste à ce spectacle du changement du monde. Dommage que plusieurs journaux canadiens ne comprennent pas encore la nécessité de compter dans leur équipe un critique de danse, professionnel auquel on fournirait les moyens nécessaires à un travail en profondeur. Mais ça viendra, ça viendra.

Karen Kain—beauté et talent international "made in Canada"





Notice board /A votre attention

At the third annual **Dance in Canada Conference** held in Edmonton June 21-25 of this year, the wealth of resources, performances and ideas belied its meagre funding. The new board, elected at the general membership meeting following the conference includes: Lawrence Adams, director of Fifteen Dance Laboratorium in Toronto and Visus video group; Joyce Boorman, assistant professor, faculty of physical education at the University of Alberta and director of the Children's Dance Theatre (Edmonton), and chairman and organizer of the Edmonton conference; Murray Farr, chairman of the board of Chimera Foundation for the Dance which manages the Alwin Nikolais and Murray Louis Dance Companies; Mary Formolo, co-artistic director of the Simon Fraser Dance Workshop and faculty member of the University; David Haber, former artistic director of the National Ballet of Canada; David Lint, assistant to the president of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, director of strategy and development for CBC and co-author of the McKinsey Report on dance for the Canada Council; David Y.H. Lui, Vancouver impresario and producer of dance events; Jacqueline Lopez, co-director of Entre-Six; Arnold Spohr, artistic director of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet; and Grant Strate, chairman of the York University program in dance and former chairman of Dance in Canada. The slate elected was the exact one, proposed by the association's nominating committee. Murray Farr was made chairman, Joyce Boorman secretary and Jacqueline Lopez and Arnold Spohr were elected vice-chairmen.

Dance Canada is now considering the possibility of holding the next conference in Halifax, in August, 1976, to coincide with the Nova Scotia Festival of the Arts. Gunter Buchta, on behalf of Dance Nova Scotia, has expressed an interest in holding the conference there.

Lawrence Gradus, artistic director of Montreal's Entre-Six, won the 1975 Jean Chalmers Award in Choreography at the Edmonton conference. The response of the audience to his award and his works, presented on the second evening of performances, proved what a popular choice it was.

The **Ontario Arts Council** granted the *Dance in Canada* magazine \$4,000 for the 1975/76 fiscal year. *Dance in Canada* was one of 57 magazines receiving grants, out of 107 applicants.

The **Royal Winnipeg** has a very busy season ahead of it. After opening in Winnipeg (October 1-5) with a new version of *Rite of Spring* choreographed by Argentinian choreographer Oscar Raiz, the company travels to Washington's Kennedy Centre October 13-18 where it will

be the only dance company performing in Canada's two-week salute of performing companies to the American Bicentennial. The company will give three separate programs including *Pictures*, the trilogy of works by John Neumeier, *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* and *What to do Till the Messiah Comes*, both by Norbert Vesak, and the *Rite of Spring*. Another work which might be given at the time is *The Hands*, a new piece by Paddy Stone (who choreographed their delightful *Strike Up the Band*) which was given its premiere in Ottawa in August. By the way, according to the most recent calculations, the Royal Winnipeg has performed *Strike Up the Band* some 222 times.

The **Contemporary Dancers of Winnipeg** will be incorporating works by five different choreographers -- Norbert Vesak, Norman Morrice, Linda Rabin, David Earle and Cliff Keuter -- next season. The company opens its Winnipeg engagement October 24-25 with a special guest appearance by jazz flautist Paul Horn. Rachel Browne, artistic director of the company, will choreograph a new piece to one of Horn's compositions. Then on a Western Canadian tour in November, Paul Horn and his group will accompany the Contemporary Dancers. Two students from the school of the Contemporary Dancers were accepted into the York University department of dance. As of this writing, the company had not had a response from the Canada Council on their application for aid to appoint an assistant artistic director as artist-in-residence for the coming year.

Assisted by a \$25,000 grant from the Secretary of State's office, the **Anna Wyman Dance Theatre** presented *Klee Wyck: A Ballet for Emily Carr* in a special commission for the Vancouver Art Gallery July 22-30 for International Women's Year. Ann Mortifee who did the song accompaniments to *Ecstasy of Rita Joe* composed and sang the accompaniment to *Klee Wyck*. In the fall, the Anna Wyman Dance Theatre undertakes a seven-week tour of British Columbia, visiting about 23 centres during that time.

The **National Ballet** had two stints at the Ontario Place Forum (July 9-16 and August 13-23) broken up by a three-week summer season at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. The company then begins its fall season in Montreal where Mikhail Baryshnikov performs with it (September 26-28).

The **Touring Office of the Canada Council** gave the National Ballet \$125,000, the Touring Office's largest single grant ever, for the company's fall tour taking it to seven Western Canadian cities from Vancouver to Winnipeg. The repertoire for the tour includes *Coppelia*, *Don Juan*, *La Sylphide*, *Kettentanz*, and the revival of Tudor's *Offenbach in the Underworld*. Also joining the repertoire on the tour will be *Kisses*, a series of pas de deux about different kinds of love, by National Ballet dancer/choreographer Ann Ditchburn.



Celia Franca—former artistic director returns to the helm for two months.

Artistic director David Haber resigned from the National Ballet at the end of July following irreconcilable artistic differences with the company's board of directors. Celia Franca, the National's former artistic director, replaces him on an interim basis until September 30 while a replacement is being sought. A search committee has been struck and the search is expected to last for a year.

The National Ballet of Canada's principal dancer Karen Kain appeared in a special gala season with Rudolph Nureyev, Margot Fonteyn and Paolo Bortoluzzi at Washington's Kennedy Centre (July 8-19). Then, after completing the Metropolitan Opera House engagement with the National, she flew to France to appear with Roland Petit's company in a new work specially staged by the choreographer for her. She will rejoin the company in Winnipeg at the end of their Western tour in October.

Although the **National imported Nicolas Beriozoff** to teach the company the old Diaghilev ballet *Le Coq d'or*, the work will not be going into the repertoire this year at all.

Among the musical offerings arranged by the group Camerata for the Shaw Festival at Niagara-on-the-Lake this summer, (August 24) was *An Evening with the National Ballet: Invitation to the Dance*. Highlighting the

works of two young and promising National choreographers, Ann Ditchburn and James Kudelka, the National dancers performed in *L'Histoire du Soldat* and *Trio*.

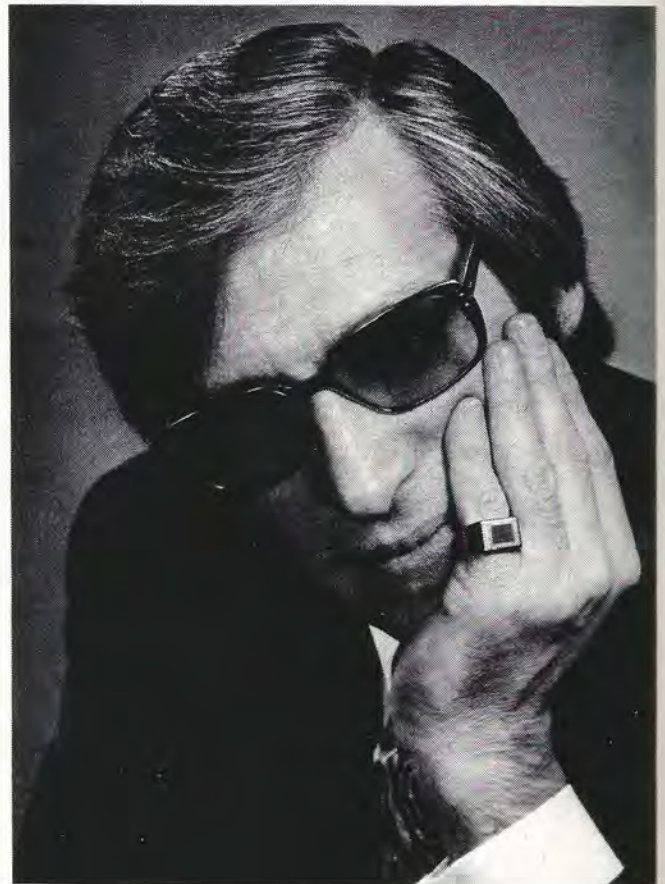
A number of **National Ballet associates** -- principal dancer Veronica Tennant, Alexander Walton, on the company's board of directors, and Pearl Whitehead who was instrumental in getting the company its start -- were named to the Order of Canada recently.

The Toronto Dance Theatre leaves for a Western Canadian tour which takes them to Winnipeg on September 15. The tour has been supported by a \$35,000 Canada Council Touring Office grant.

The fall season of Le Groupe de la Place Royale begins August 30 at the Shawinigan Festival in Quebec. Then it is on to a week of performances in September at Montreal's Centaur II Theatre before embarking on an Eastern Canadian tour which takes it from Toronto to Newfoundland.

In an ambitious program called **Summerdance (July 5 - August 3)** at the Expo Theatre in Montreal, *Les Grands Ballets Canadiens* marked its fifth anniversary of performing there with presentations of more than 10 ballets, a well as open rehearsals and films.

David Haber—National's artistic director resigns after less than a year.





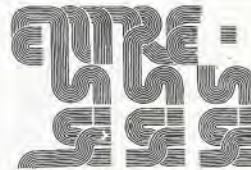
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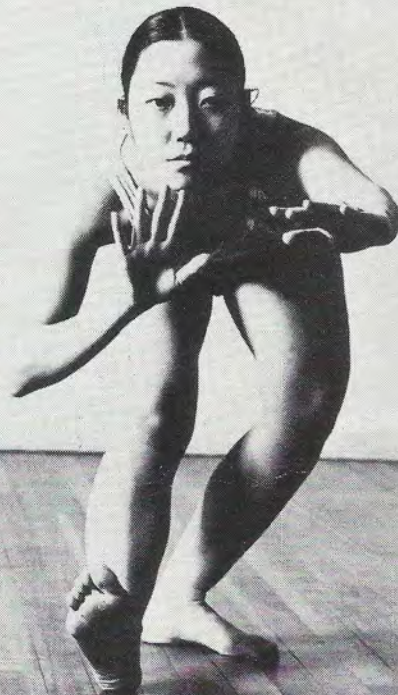
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