

# Dance in/au Canada Danse

FALL 1975  
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1975: The Creative Woman:  
*Patricia Beatty, Anna Wyman,  
Ann Southam*  
Women in History

# Editorial

Susan Cohen

Editor / Rédactrice

Simone de Beauvoir's oft quoted remark that "it is in culture that women have best succeeded in asserting themselves" is especially true in dance and particularly true in Canadian dance in 1975, International Women's Year. As Selma Odom, a professor of dance history at York University, puts it in her article, "it is almost giddy" to find the number of their accomplishments today in the field. The Canadian women who have made contributions to dance are many. As teachers, organizers and performers, they have genuinely shaped the dance culture that we know. In the list we find the three founders of our major ballet companies, Gweneth Lloyd, Celia Franca and Ludmilla Chiriaeff, Betty Oliphant, principal of the National Ballet School, Monique Michaud, first dance officer of the Canada Council, not to mention performers like Lois Smith, Karen Kain and Veronica Tennant. What marks this decade off from the preceding is the growing number of women involved on the creative side — as choreographers, designers and composers in dance. In this issue celebrating women's accomplishments for International Women's Year, those are the talented individuals upon whom we have concentrated. Selma Odom traces for us the woman's image in the Western dance historical tradition while Penelope Doob, a professor of English at Glendon College, introduces a new feature in the magazine, *Review*, with a consideration of four feminist ballets. Anna Blewchamp, a Toronto choreographer, talks to and about Patricia Beatty, co-director of the Toronto Dance Theatre. Beatty's frequent collaborator, composer Ann Southam, is profiled by music journalist Ulle Colgrass. Finally, Vancouver freelance dance writer, Elizabeth Zimmer, introduces us to Vancouver's demanding, reserved choreographer, Anna Wyman. The list of women writing and being written about in *Dance in Canada* is by no means exhaustive. Nor have we discussed all the activities taking place during this year. (Toronto's Festival of Women and the Arts, the only major exhibition of women's artistic accomplishments during this year, will be the subject of a piece in a later issue.) But the fact that we have had to deliberately limit our choices is in itself a sign of how healthy the field is and how many women are participating in it today.

As you will see, finances still preclude our returning to the strict bilingual format. In the meantime, translations of each article are being made in mimeographed form and slipped into the pages of the printed magazine. We hope this is a suitable, if temporary, compromise between lack of funds and our commitment to bilingualism. We regret any inconvenience to our readers. ●

La remarque familière de Simone de Beauvoir à l'effet que "c'est dans le monde culturel que la femme a le mieux réussi à s'affirmer" s'avère particulièrement vraie dans le domaine de la danse et surtout sur la scène canadienne, en 1975, année internationale de la femme. Pour emprunter quelques mots de l'article de Selma Odom, professeur d'histoire de la danse à l'Université York, "il est presque étourdissant" de constater la latitude qu'on a accordée à la femme aujourd'hui et l'ampleur de ses réalisations dans ce domaine. On ne compte plus les canadiennes qui ont contribué à la danse, leur nombre est trop imposant. Comme professeurs, organisatrices et artistes, elles ont laissé leur marque; elles ont en fait façonné l'art de la danse que nous connaissons. Parmi ces femmes, nous trouvons des Gweneth Lloyd, fondatrice du Ballet Royal de Winnipeg, Célia Franca, fondatrice du Ballet National, Ludmilla Chiriaeff, fondatrice des Grands Ballets, Betty Oliphant, directrice de l'Académie du Ballet National, Monique Michaud, première représentante de la danse au Conseil des Arts du Canada, sans oublier les artistes du calibre des Lois Smith, Karen Kain et Veronica Tennant. Et la liste est encore longue. Mais ce qui caractérise la dernière décennie, c'est le nombre accru de femmes qui contribuent au côté créateur de notre monde. C'est à ces femmes que nous consacrons ce numéro. Selma Odom nous esquisse l'image de la femme dans la tradition historique de la danse occidentale tandis que Penelope Doob, professeur d'anglais au Collège Glendon, apporte un nouvel élément à la revue dans notre section intitulée "Review" qui examine quatre ballets féministes. Anna Blewchamp, chorégraphe torontoise, observe les travaux de Trish Beatty, co-directrice du Toronto Dance Theatre. Nous retrouvons aussi la compositrice Ann Southam dont Ulle Colgrass, journaliste du monde musical, nous trace le profil. Finalement, Elizabeth Zimmer de Vancouver nous offre quelques notes biographiques sur une chorégraphe sévère et pleine de réserve: Anna Wyman. Notre répertoire de femmes, celles qui écrivent aussi bien que celles sur lesquelles on écrit dans la Revue, n'est nullement épuisé. Au contraire, nous nous sommes contraints à une sélection arbitraire, mais c'est là l'indice de l'abondance du choix et de l'importance du nombre de femmes qui collaborent aujourd'hui.

Un dernier point. Comme vous le verrez, l'état de nos finances nous oblige à retourner aux mesures plus strictes en ce qui concerne l'aspect bilingue de la revue. D'ici à ce que tout aille mieux, les traductions des articles seront photocopiées et insérées entre les pages de la revue. Nous osons croire que vous verrez là un compromis convenable, sinon temporaire, entre le manque de fonds et notre politique de bilinguisme. Nous regrettons tout inconvénient causé à nos lecteurs. ●

# Dance <sup>in/au</sup> Canada Danse

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AUTOMNE

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Anna Blewchamp

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Ulle Colgrass

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### *Cover/Couverture:*

*Photograph by Elaine Bowman of Patricia Beatty in her own piece Rhapsody in the late Afternoon.*

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# We Are Magicians

Patricia Beatty's philosophy  
reflected in her work

Anna Blewchamp

**On being a choreographer/performer/teacher/  
artistic director at Toronto Dance Theatre:** \_\_\_\_\_

The problems are small in comparison with the joys and rewards. I must dance my own dances, especially the new ones, rather in the same way that I must live my own love affairs and give my own interviews. In choreographing or dancing a work, the puzzle is mine. I love it and I must follow it through. I must find the solutions and experience the results. For me, there is only one problem. I can't do and see at the same time. I can't be the outsider and insider simultaneously. I am getting closer to it but can't yet manage it all. As a choreographer, I would like to watch my works from the house — but, to use a slightly shaky image, I must stay close to the stove and the market place in order to keep cooking.

I love to teach, to direct rehearsals and to study and receive direction and insights from others, and in a company structured as ours is, with three choreographers and a small group of dancers, this is possible.

*Dancers too must tap all areas of their being. I suffer anguish and disillusionment when some dancers don't realize the challenge and the opportunity, when they seem to want movement and 'steps,' and balk at too much direction. This is a tender area; it is made of a very delicate balance. I know this well because I am a dancer myself. I think that we work in fertile ground at the Toronto Dance Theatre, though at the moment we do need more trained dancers who want to put their lives on the line on the stage, who do not want to dance about dancing, but about the poetry of their experience and of ours, their choreographers'.*

**Study for a Song in the Distance**

One of Trish Beatty's wittiest pieces, particularly so because there is not a single movement or relationship explored between the dancers that could be expressed in words. It is movement logic at its very best, removed from narrative strictures, defined by its own necessity. There are three dancers, alone and separate in the vastness of the theatrical space. The work begins as if a flow of breath, or thought, is passing between them, but without recognition of it, without contact. The dance is arranged in parts that blend into each other unexpectedly; the dancers reflect movements, pass movements back and forth, respond unaware of another's actions, but never in the specific context of action-response, more as if they are all 'being' simultaneously. A logic develops out of the contrasts, the coincidences, the unisons. It seems as if a funny conversation is happening, an overheard confusion of half-sentences, disjointed phrases, that interweave and connect with ironic appropriateness. It is pure activity following its own rules — elegant, precise, intriguing. Every time I see the work, I notice more and more connections — how a gesture here is balanced by another somewhere else; how a confrontation is created between two of the dancers, and the third, seemingly uninvolved, accidentally comments on their activity. It is rather like sitting in a restaurant and suddenly focusing on all the conversations happening at other tables: there is a multitude of cross-references, of zany connections. The actual dancing is delicate and spare: nothing jars, nothing is inappropriate. It is organized, complete in its perfect visual simplicity and immensely enjoyable for its wit.

**On choreography:** \_\_\_\_\_

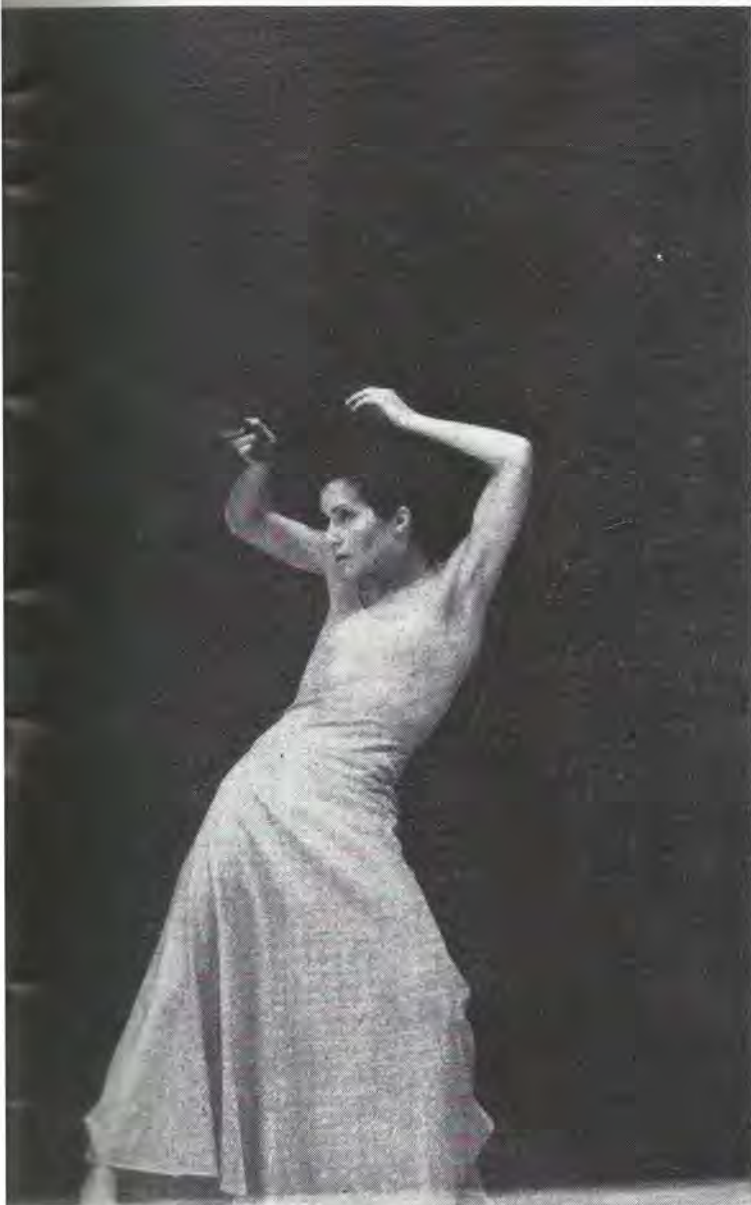
*To choreograph is a magnificent opportunity to say things that can't be said. A new piece is presently brewing in me, criss-crossing in my mind, coming in and out of focus. My dances seem to take anywhere from three to six months before the actual six weeks of work in the studio can begin. Dances are not made from the body alone — the full force of the mind, the soul and the body must come into play. In other words, the choreographer is called upon to use each of these to his fullest. This is also true of the dancers whose task it is to make the dances live, to make them actual reality.*

**Against Sleep**

A work that incorporates all the elements that contribute to dynamic theatre, a statement that drives home with

Photo: Elaine Bowman.

*The temptation of suicide: what happens next time?*





great force the meaning of contemporary dance as catharsis, drama, symbolic action. The theme is the temptation of suicide and, in discussing the creating of the work, Beatty felt that she had to find an image that would instantly force recognition of her statement on the audience. She created a duet between a male guest and the woman who entertains him and is tempted by his offers, offers that lead to death. After the completion of the work, she realized that the *image* itself, an erotic conflict, replete with violence, attraction and repulsion, physical and spiritual antagonism, was too close to our vulnerable, emotional fears regarding sexuality. The image is so powerful, in fact, that most audiences lose sight of the basic idea of the fear of capitulating to the temptation of suicide. The dancers tantalize each other, play an intensely erotic power struggle; the man seduces and uses force, and as the woman realizes what he is demanding of her, she begins to succumb to the luxury of the idea. But the acceptance is brief. She teases him, seduces him and strangles him after capturing him in a

lover's embrace. The work begins with the two dancers suspended in space, in abstractions of beds which almost resemble cocoons, a stage set designed by Ursula Hanes with one bed above the other, both connected by a slender pole. The interesting feature that occurred to me in the resolution of the piece, the triumphant victory of the woman over death and the resurrection of her own life force, was that the dancers reverse their original positions. The dance begins with the man awake, looking outward and the woman lying asleep beneath him; it ends with him wrapped up or covered by a shroud, dead or perhaps asleep, at the base of the pole as the woman climbs to the top and sits, contemplating the space ahead I felt that this cycle would inevitably begin again, the dancers alternating as guest and sleeper, with no final resolution possible. I think it is this abeyance that gives the work its power. Not the conquest, but the sense that "this time I won, but next time? And next time? What then?"

**About her own works:**

*I'm fascinated by reality and surreality, with different states of consciousness and with how to make these visible and beautiful physically. I'm fascinated with the profoundness and clarity of visual symbolism and the unquestionable powers of magic found when equal amounts of formality and vulnerability are called upon, from the dance and the dancers themselves.*

**First Music**

Trish Beatty's aesthetic could be described as the expression of a sustained attempt to render all phenomena, life, death, man with his infinite possibilities and experiences, as aspects of one timeless event, something that has to do with the nature of 'being.' Her works are essentially statements of affirmation, a personal manifesto that speaks of man as both temporal and eternal. *First Music* is possibly the clearest example of this belief. The dance contains not more than perhaps 30 movements and travels spatially in one simply sustained diagonal, with each dance gesture united by stillness. It has been danced by other members of the Toronto Dance Theatre but I think it is Beatty herself who imbues the work with an intense sense of wonder. The *Toronto Telegram* described her stillness as "more eloquent than another dancer's frenzy." It is this stillness that connects each vibrantly immediate movement and imparts to the spectator the shape of energy, of life, that went before and continues after. Her individual choice of movement, the sustained, open extensions, the plunging, yielding



*Above and left, studies of Trish Beatty by Elaine Bowman. We're magicians, creating visions*

contractions and the continuity and flow of motion, are captured in timeless space. It is as if we have caught a glimpse of a wonderful creature and in turning to see it again, the sense of its existence remains, but not its actual presence. It has a lot to do with immediacy and 'being' and is almost impossible to define in words. She has taken a few movements and made them eternal, etched them in our minds. All we can do is look and see that it exists, caught in the moment, still resonating, still speaking to us, still vibrant.

***On the meaning of dance:*** \_\_\_\_\_

*Modern dance has something to do with excellence, with getting as close to the truth as you can.*

*We're magicians, creating visions to transport you*

*to different worlds, inspiration to turn you on, to make your blood flow with hopes, flights, ideas, life.*

*What interests me in dancing is a profound sensuality and a profound innocence. It is the deepest philosophy made physical. It is great, ultimate lyricism — the lyricism of muscles framed by the knowledge of bones.*

*When I speak of innocence, I mean an earned, sought-for innocence, one that is willing to live fully against all the erosive powers of cynicism and indifference.*

*Photo: Elaine Bowman  
Movement logic at its very best*



# In Search of Women in Dance History

Selma Landen Odom

Trying to learn about the life of an ordinary woman in Elizabethan times, Virginia Woolf observed, "One is held up by the scarcity of facts. One knows nothing detailed, nothing perfectly true and substantial about her. History scarcely mentions her." That statement was published in 1929, in *A Room of One's Own*, a brilliant pioneering study of women and the art of fiction. Since then many efforts have been made to fill in the gaps in our knowledge about women. Revisionists, no doubt encouraged by the women's liberation movement, are now actively at work in traditionally male-oriented fields such as social and intellectual history and history of art.

What about women in dance? Surveying what has been written thus far, the reader is at first relieved to find that western dance history has not neglected women altogether. Women are at least *there*: Elizabeth I dancing La Volta, and countless other women, named and nameless, dancing the minuets, waltzes, and Charlestons of their respective eras. We have glimpses of ladies of the French court joining in the elaborate figures of the primarily male *ballet de cour*; Mlle de la Fontaine first gaining recognition as a professional dancer; Marie Camargo shortening her skirts to show her intricate footwork; bebies of young women giving shape to the lightness and whiteness of the Romantic ballet; Isadora Duncan "seeking that dance which might be the divine expression of the human spirit"; Celia Franca coming from England to found and direct what would become the National Ballet of Canada.

The problem in dance history is not the absence of women, but the way in which they are present. Like the proverbial good children, they are seen but not heard. Paintings, prints, and photographs show us some of their individual qualities, but, until the twentieth century, the written sources of dance history are almost exclusively the province of men — Arbeau, Beaujoyeux, Ménéstrier, Feuillet, Weaver, Noverre, Blasis, Bournonville, Gautier, to name the obvious examples. Except for a handful of letters and diaries, we know early women dancers largely through the filter of a man's perceptions.

## Renaissance

Arbeau's dancing manual *Orchesography* (1589) provides an acute view of the place of women in French society of its time, even though the dialogue occurs entirely between two men: the seasoned Arbeau shares his experience of dance and music with the young, enthusiastic Capriol, who wants to learn to dance in order to "please the damsels." Arbeau acknowledges near the outset that "some temperate exercise" can dispel the ill-humours to which girls are subject in their sedentary lives "intent on knitting, embroidery and needlework." Capriol chimes in, "Dancing is a very suitable exercise for them since they are not free to take walks, or go here, there and everywhere about the town as we may without reprehension. In fact, we need to dance less than they..."



The only image of a woman in Arbeau

From reading Arbeau, we gain an image of how the ideal woman should appear in the dignified pavanes and basse dances: she ought to have "demure mien" and "eyes lowered save to cast an occasional glance of virginal modesty at the onlookers." For Arbeau we could substitute Toulouze, Domenico, Cornazano, Guglielmo, Caroso, or Negri, all men who wrote manuals on dancing in the Renaissance, or we could turn to Sir John Davies' *Orchestra* (1594), which sings the praises of Queen Elizabeth and her ordered world. But we would inevitably come back to the problem posed by Virginia Woolf about the elusive sixteenth-century woman: how did *she* feel? What were her experiences and thoughts? As Woolf put it, "All the conditions of her life, all her own instincts, were hostile to the state of mind which is needed to set free whatever is in the brain." One can only hope she found some freedom and joy in dancing. Just as women did not write poetry in the Renaissance, so too they did not leave words to tell us about their dances. These predecessors remain ultimately unknown and indistinct.

## Eighteenth Century

Coming to professional dancers such as Marie Sallé (1707-1756), Marie Camargo (1710-1770), and Henriette Hendel (1772-1849), we realize at once that we are dealing with singularly gifted human beings — artists who are also women. We see them dancing in their portraits; we know some facts about their lives, the movement vocabulary available to them, and the response to their dance. Camargo's technique was highly regarded by Voltaire, for example, who noted that she was "the first to dance like a



man," a compliment since ballet had been until then mainly developed by and for males to perform. Sallé and Hendel were among the first women to distinguish themselves in choreography, and though they did not leave us the quantities of libretti nor the reasoned statements on dance of a Noverre, we are able to discern a certain sense of what they believed possible in their art. We can tell, for instance, that Sallé's work toward an integrated dance drama anticipated Noverre's, but unfortunately she did not, probably she could not, write a book. By Sallé there is only one remaining letter, which according to Parmenia Migel is "a pathetic jumble of non-grammar and naive spelling." (*The Ballerinas: From the Court of Louis XIV to Pavlova*, New York: Macmillan, 1970. p. 15.)

Simone de Beauvoir would identify Sallé and Camargo, and the many who followed them, in the category of actresses, singers, and dancers, who for three centuries "have been almost the only women to maintain a concrete independence in the midst of society." Prior to the twentieth century, the stage provided women the opportunity to have a profession, a nearly unique path to achievement and recognition, power and money. In the theatre a woman could succeed with the public, gain the support of patrons, and rise to prominence regardless of her social and economic background. But again, we do not really know many women dancers, famous or obscure, through their own thoughts or those of other women.

What does the great ballet master, Noverre, say about women? Very little, specifically. He granted that Sallé's dancing "was full of feeling" and that Camargo "had intelligence and she made use of it in choosing a style which was lively and quick and never gave the spectators time to examine her and observe the shortcomings of her figure." Most of his *Letters on Dancing and Ballets* (1760) speaks of the dancer without regard to sex, though language of course renders this person a "he," and Noverre assumes that it would be a young man who might aspire to become a *maître de ballet*. In his discussion of physique, he wrote, "Nature has not spared the fair sex from the imperfections which I have mentioned to you, but artifice and the fashion of petticoats have happily come to the aid of our *danseuses*. The panier conceals a multitude of defects, and the curious glance of the critics cannot rise high enough to pass judgment." He goes on to explain that women beat only with the lower part of the leg, creating a more brilliant effect, whereas men, "concealing nothing from the spectator, are obliged to beat theirs with stretched muscles and to make them come chiefly from the hip." Are we to conclude that only the men understood how to beat correctly by our standards? But see how he finishes the point: "Besides, Sir, a pretty face, beautiful eyes, an elegant form and voluptuous arms, are the inevitable rocks on which criticism founders, and powerful claims to the indulgence of the spectator, whose imagination substitutes for the pleasure which he has not received, that pleasure which he might possess off the stage." Pleasure off the stage — the female dancer may be "intelligent" and skillful in her art (though perhaps faulty in her technique), but she *must* seem beautiful, and it is understood that she will engage in the extra-curricular activities associated with those in her profession.

### Nineteenth Century

In *An Elementary Treatise Upon the Theory and Practice of the Art of Dancing* (1820), Carlo Blasis generously

addresses his instructions to "you young people who are about to take up dancing as a career." The majority of the drawings of ideal positions and movements present a handsome, curly-haired man, nude but for his high-waisted trunks. However, men and women are shown together to illustrate his discussion of serious, demi-caractère, and comic types, and indeed these women appear to be equal to their partners in technique. Gone are the restricting costumes and heeled shoes of the eighteenth century. Blasis' women have strong arches and a considerable freedom in space. Yet one detects in his rare mention of women the continuing assumption that they must be feminine according to convention: "A man's manner of dancing should differ from that of a woman. The *pas de vigueur* and bold majestic execution of the former is not for the latter, who should shine in graceful supple movements, charming *terre-à-terre* steps and a becoming voluptuousness and abandon in her poses." The word "voluptuous" would be fairly unlikely in dance writing today, even in George ("ballet is woman") Balanchine's *Vogue* meditation on his ballerinas and their perfumes.



*Femininity according to convention in Blasis*

When we seek the greater and lesser dancers of the Romantic period, the favored source is of course the prolific art critic and poet Théophile Gautier (1811-1872), who himself contributed the libretto of the archetypal Romantic ballet, *Giselle* (1841). Gautier and his contemporaries witnessed the shift in emphasis in ballet from men to women, who now filled the stage with their delicate light shapes, mysterious and supernatural characters, and the poetry of pointe work. Through Gautier's attentive eyes, we perceive visions of spiritual, unattainable women as well as vivacious, real personalities. His verbal portraits of women who danced are so many and varied, so full of observed detail, so authentically individual, that no single example can do them justice. Yet Gautier's is overwhelmingly the appreciation of a male connoisseur. His aesthetics led him to savour physical attributes and sensuous beauty, and

his gift of language served well to preserve the living form of the ballet in the pages of his reviews.

The problem is that the reader is often tempted to stop with the words of Gautier and his fellow critics. Who can forget how he saw Lucile Grahn (1819-1907) in her *début*? "Mlle Grahn, the Danish dancer, is tall, slender, small-jointed, and well-made, and would be prettier still if she did not wear such an obstinate smile; a smile should hover about a dancer's lips like a bird flutters about a rose. . . . A beautiful woman should keep her features almost motionless; the play of the eyes is sufficient to animate and brighten them." This same delectable creature worked as ballet mistress of the Leipzig State Opera and the Munich Opera, staged an early version of the dance in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* at Bayreuth, and is said to have left nearly a million marks to the city of Munich. As Selma Jeanne Cohen sums it up, "Few ballet fans are aware that Grahn was ever a choreographer, although all know of her as one of the idyllic sylphs that haunted the woodland scenes of the Romantic period. The image of woman in dance remained primarily that of the dancer: pretty, obedient, thoughtless." (See Cohen's "Woman as Artistic Innovator: The Case of the Choreographer," in *A Sampler of Women's Studies*, ed. Dorothy Gies McGuigan, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1973, p. 9.)

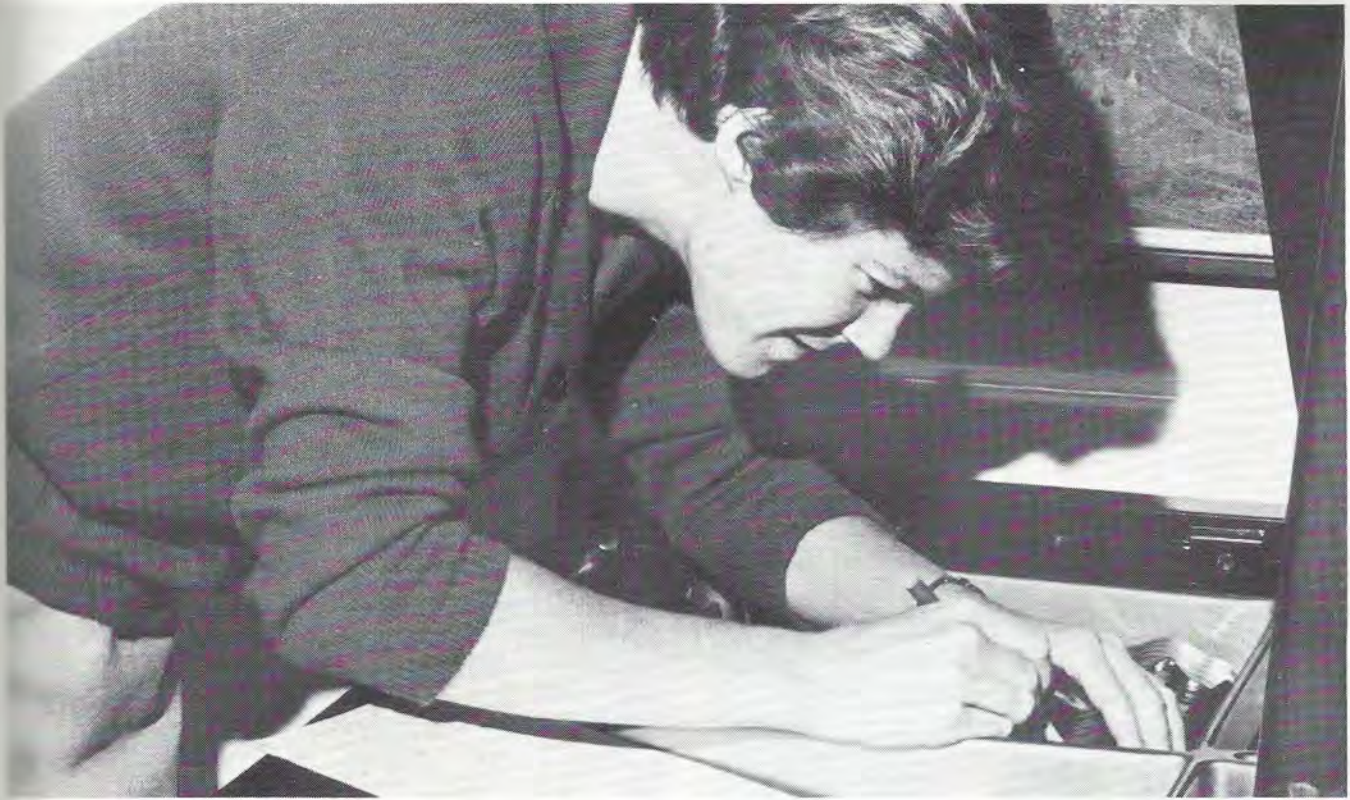
How refreshing it is, after reading dozens of impressions of Romantic ballerinas written by men, to come across Lady Blessington! She *does* see things differently. She is excited by movement straight away, skipping over the ritual of cataloguing a dancer's physical characteristics. Amalia Brugnoli, she wrote in 1839, "advances rapidly across the stage on the extreme point of her toes, without for a moment losing her *aplomb*, cuts into the air, and alights again on the point of her feet, as if she were no heavier than gossamer." Lady Blessington also saw Marie Taglioni in 1827: "Went to the Opéra last night, when I saw the *début* of the new *danseuse* Taglioni. Hers is a totally new style of dancing; graceful beyond all comparison, wonderful lightness, an absence of all violent effort, or at least the appearance of it, and a modesty as new as it is delightful to witness in her art. She seems to float and bound like a sylph across the stage, never

executing those *tours de force* that we know to be difficult and wish were impossible, being always performed at the expense of decorum and grace, and requiring only activity for their achievement." Here we have a woman's perspective of a particular ballerina's work, and it is indeed direct: "There is a sentiment in the dancing of this charming votary of Terpsichore that elevates it far beyond the licentious style generally adopted by the ladies of her profession, and which bids fair to accomplish a reformation in it."

### Twentieth Century

It is almost giddy to find how totally everything changes after 1900. Women gain suffrage, education, improved health, the chance to realize themselves in many new and different ways. We find a whole new world in the modern dance movement ushered in by Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, and after them Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Mary Wigman, and their many successors. Comparatively large populations of young girls begin to study dance, in neighbourhood studios or at school; women who dance become socially acceptable and in fact respected in most circles; they hail from a great variety of family and class backgrounds. There are ever-growing numbers of women who concentrate on performance, but women also take on new challenges and responsibilities in direction of companies, choreography, design, notation, teaching, history, and criticism. Women lead in creating new areas for dance in therapy, in anthropology and other social sciences, in film and television. One hesitates to name even the most prominent of these women, the list would be unwieldy.

Men are by no means displaced in dance, though in many situations women now outnumber them. But who could ever find a more fruitful choreographer than Ashton, or a more wise and humane critic than Edwin Denby? The point is simply that their fields are equally open to women with talent. Historians looking back on our time will not have to search thanklessly for the lone voice of a Lady Blessington. Women today are present in many ways, making dance and responding to it. Their views have become articulate, and the pattern of their lives and work, distinct.



*Ann Southam: A debt to dance repaid in sensitivity*

## Profile: Ann Southam

Ulle Colgrass

*A choreographer was looking for ways to avoid the high cost of using instrumental music for her pieces — no burning interest in electronic music there. A young composer was looking for an audience to keep her inspiration alive — a dance audience was not uppermost in her mind. This was in 1967. Since then, 30 dance pieces have evolved at Toronto Dance Theatre, and a marvellously creative partnership has grown between choreographer Patricia Beatty and composer Ann Southam.*

*"Without Toronto Dance Theatre I might not have continued composing — the whole thing might have fizzled out!"*

*Ann Southam, the foremost electronic composer in Canadian dance, is refreshingly frank about the debt she owes dance. But it is a debt repaid in her obvious sensitivity to choreography in such works as *Relieve*, *Against Sleep* and *Encounter*, created during nearly a decade of collaboration.*

*What started as a marriage of convenience has turned into love. The music that was expected to "make do"*

*became a major inspirational force to Toronto Dance Theatre.*

*Southam's career is unusual, not just because she has worked exclusively in the dance world, but also because she has developed quite on her own, without a mentor or close association with group trends in her field. In any art, that bespeaks an indomitable talent. It also speaks for the creative spark that is generated when dancers commission composers.*

*Ann Southam began with piano and became interested in composition at the University of Toronto. Her teacher there, Sam Dolin, fascinated by electronic music, steered his students through his own discoveries.*

**AS:** Right away I loved the sound — it just blew my mind! I worked for a year in the electronic studio in the Faculty of Music; it was fascinating, and I easily gave up the twelve-tone and serial music that I had worked on before.

**UC:** You are really a pioneer in electronic music in Canada.

**AS:** Vaguely — I suppose there weren't many composers doing it then.

**UC:** There still aren't. Why do you think that is?

**AS:** It is difficult to get your hands on the equipment. A lot of young people would just love to work with electronic sound, but most of the studios are tied up at universities. The Conservatory here offers a two-year course, and unless you repeat the course there is no further access to the studio. In the Faculty of Music you can only use the facilities if you are fairly advanced — an undergraduate or postgraduate.

**UC:** Do you find it easier to compose electronically?

**AS:** Yes, because I really adore the sound — it's like making great big mud-pies of sound. And you hear the sound the moment you make it. You have the sound right there. I like that.

*Ann Southam has set up her own studio in her living room — the only electronic studio I have seen with wall-to-wall carpets and a terrace overlooking downtown*



*Peter Randazzo's Encounter to music by Southam*

*Toronto. There are three tape recorders for mixing and recording, a synthesizer and a mixer in a set-up that is small and compact. The sound it produces, though, is potent.*

**AS:** As far as I am concerned this is ideal. I like all the hacking and hewing of tapes and would not like to simplify that. I could use some more sound sources like oscillators, maybe another synthesizer and additional odd devices, but that's all gravy.

**UC:** What does it cost to set up your own studio?

**AS:** Well, this is expensive equipment. It could be done for less, maybe as little as \$4,000 - \$5,000.

**UC:** Do you ever go to a choreographer and say, "Hey, I have this idea, what do you think of it?"

**AS:** No, so far it has been the other way around. They come to me with the idea.

**UC:** And you do the score first?

**AS:** That depends on whom I work with. In the case of Peter Randazzo, I discuss the scenario with him first and then watch the choreography to get a feel for the style and

rhythm. Later I write around it.

**UC:** Do you prefer to make the music first?

**AS:** It depends. I don't ever try to match what the dancers do. With Trish the scenario comes first and we each do the music and choreography minutes at a time.

**UC:** Is there more freedom for you in writing the music first, rather than being presented with the choreography and asked to paint the background, so to speak?

**AS:** Both ways are challenging to me; so far I have not felt hemmed in.

**UC:** Electronic music is obviously ideally suited to dance. What other art forms do you envision it used in?

**AS:** Well, when I was in England this summer I visited the cathedrals. They have to be the most theatrical, dramatic spaces in the entire world! Listening to what happened with organ music in that kind of space, I thought how fabulous it would be to have — not necessarily a cathedral, but an equally dramatic space for electronic music — to have sounds happen in and through and around, with certain lighting effects. I would just love to do something like that. Another place that really excites me is the Cinesphere at Ontario Place . . . just an enormous space with a great number of speakers. If they had some sort of fantasy movie, a completely new visual world, I would like to do electronic music for that.

**UC:** Do you think electronic music should be combined with the visual, or does it stand well on its own?

**AS:** Oh, gosh, I don't enjoy listening to music in the conventional way. Electronic music is to me a very spatial thing and I prefer to work in a big theatre space with other expressions of art.

**UC:** Have you ever been to a concert with a tape-player on stage and nothing else in sight for an entire piece?

**AS:** Yes, and that is not where it is at. And that shows part of the problem: what are we going to do with this fabulous sound?

**UC:** It is fine for film and theatre. I know of someone in New York who was commissioned to write electronic music for elevators in a skyscraper.

**AS:** Oh, that is beautiful.

**UC:** How about electronic music combined with one or several instruments?

**AS:** I think that is terrific, but a very difficult thing to do.

**UC:** It has been done successfully, though; by Mario Davidovsky, for example.

**AS:** Yes, and Berio does it extremely well — it's magical.

**UC:** Have you attempted anything like that?

**AS:** Yes. It has always been a miserable failure, but I will keep trying. It is terribly hard just matching the timbres and sliding across that borderline to the electronic sounds.

**UC:** It takes so long to write a piece — about 3 months? It must be impossible to make a living composing for dance companies. How do you manage? Do you teach?

**AS:** Yes, for a time at the Conservatory, and now in Toronto. I have electronic workshops for the North York Board of Education. They have set up a nice small studio, and I find that the kids are great. It is also quite a challenge, because most of their previous knowledge comes from rock

groups, and I try to open them up to all the possibilities of electronic sound.

**UC:** Is there much potential talent?

**AS:** Yes, definitely so, and a great interest. The students combine the music with other art forms and put on their own performances.

**UC:** What is the ideal background for an electronic composer?

**AS:** That depends upon the individual. Sometimes a really heavy, straight academic background can lock a person into certain attitudes toward musical values that are hard to break free of. On the other hand, you meet kids with no experience whatsoever — this is their beginning, and that can work very well.

**UC:** I am asking, because in hearing your music it is apparent to me that you have a very solid background musically — the way it's structured. It feels free, but I sense your background. Of all of the arts music is the most abstract, and electronic music, I suppose, most of all. What I love is its volatility and dimensions — it may seem very distant, and a moment later it's right up against you. That is an effect you never get with conventional music. Do the choreographers have an idea about the kind of sound they want for a given piece?

**AS:** Not specifically the kind of sound, just the quality of the piece. They leave it largely up to me.

**UC:** Do you observe them working with the choreography, and do you get involved in that process?

**AS:** I do go to rehearsals and see how it matches up; I like to follow a piece from the beginning.

**UC:** Do you ever disagree with the choreographer?

**AS:** Yes, and I let my opinion be known, but I don't know how much good it does. Disagreements happen rarely, though; if something doesn't work, they are very good about trying again and again.

**UC:** What do you think about the way your music is received in concert — is enough attention being paid to the music at a dance event?

**AS:** I do get a certain amount of feedback from the audience. It's a different story with the critics. Somebody told me that if they don't have enough space for writing a review, the first thing that goes is the music. They will mention the costumes and the lighting, but the music goes. I don't know whether this is true or not.

**UC:** Did you ever have your music pirated and performed by a dance company without your permission?

**AS:** That hasn't happened yet.

**UC:** Do you have recordings out?

**AS:** Just one.

**UC:** That is when it starts to happen.

**AS:** Yes, I know that music is often just lifted off records, and I wonder how composers feel about that. . . .

**UC:** I have seen composers in that situation, so I could tell you. If dancers played their cards well, they would ask permission before starting a piece. Then the composer is a lot friendlier than he is when he finds his music has been lifted. There is also the real possibility of facing the lawyers of big-time publishers and the fines to pay — it's all such a waste. There was a case with the Joffrey Ballet

where the publisher literally marched into the pit and took the music off the stands! Why do you think dancers have this lack of propriety?

**AS:** Really, I don't know. Dancers tend to think that dance is *the* art, and that everybody owes them this.

**UC:** Of course, there is usually very little money. Do you think that people in dance feel their art is a stepchild, not given the proper attention and financial support?

**AS:** Well, I think that it has not been given the proper attention. To many people it lacks a certain vitality and reality. Financially, I think that dance has been very shortchanged by the funding agencies.

**UC:** Have you received grants?

**AS:** Yes, I have been commissioned to do several dance scores for Toronto Dance Theatre.

**UC:** Do dancers react differently to electronic sound than they do to instrumental music?

**AS:** Well, very often dancers don't *listen* to the music —



*Trish Beatty's Against Sleep to music by Southam*

they are so busy dancing. . . .

**UC:** Some find it more difficult to follow because they can't count the bars.

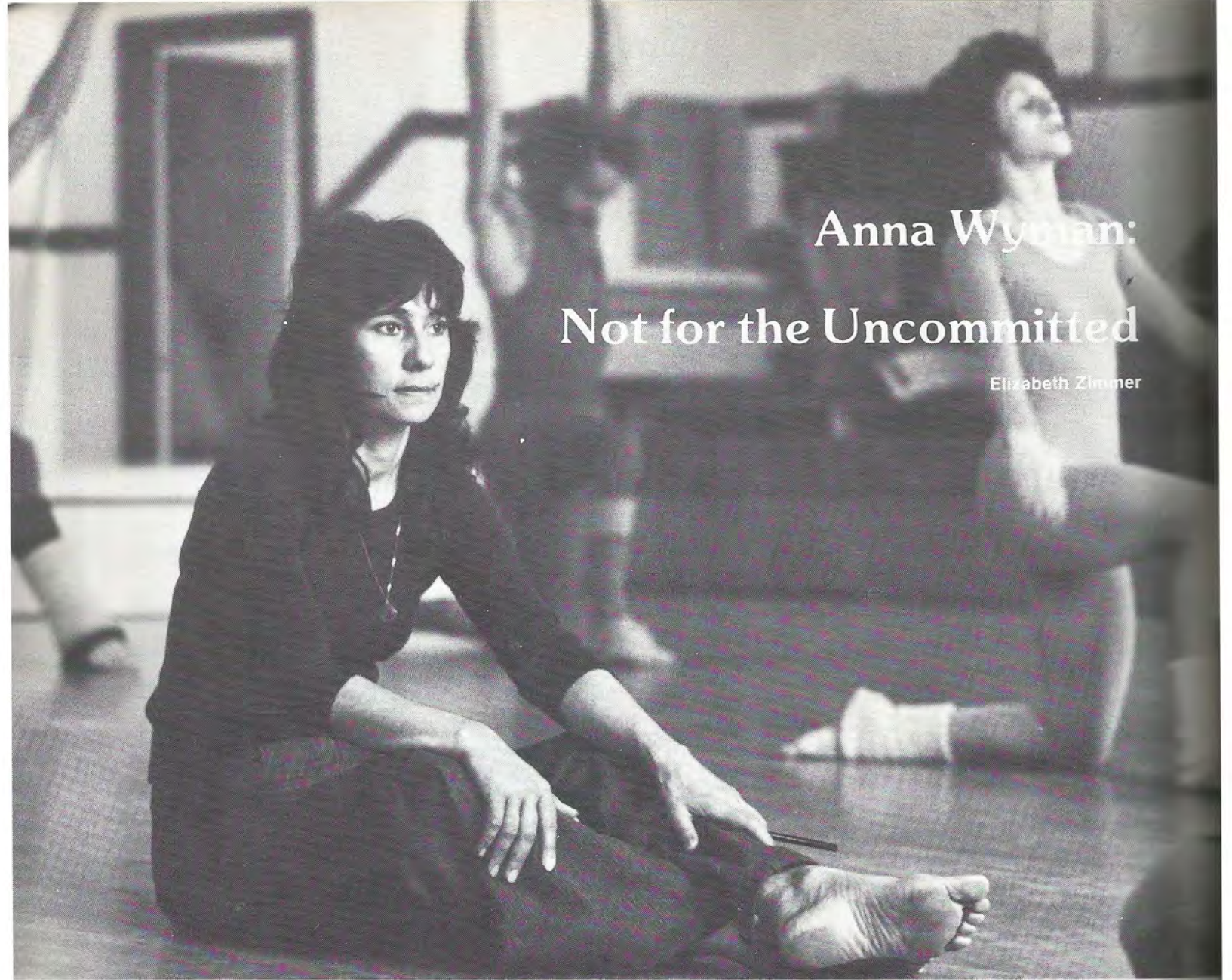
**AS:** Right, so they stop listening! Whereas they should listen all the harder.

**UC:** Your works have all gone to Toronto Dance Theatre. Do you think there is enough growth for you in working with the same company?

**AS:** I would like to do pieces for other dance companies and for ballet as well. Maybe the answer is to send tapes around and do a little P.R. work, but I am not very good at promoting myself.

*It is a surprise that Ann Southam has not been wooed by all of the performing arts, not even by film and television. Measured by any international yardstick, her work is fine and often surpasses that of well known electronic composers south of the border.*

*Perhaps Southam's career proves that modern dance is still an isolated phenomenon, too well hidden yet from the general public.*



## Anna Wyman: Not for the Uncommitted

Elizabeth Zimmer

*Anna Wyman, an enigmatic personality and deliberate composure*

Anna Wyman's flashing eyes, trim figure and deep tan belie the incredible fact that she is a grandmother. This Austrian-born choreographer has now invested seven years in British Columbia in the painstaking training of dancers, the development of elegant choreographies and the fielding of a full-fledged company.

A former national junior ski champion, she refers to herself as a "mountain goat" and enjoys the wild natural settings which abound in West Vancouver where she lives in a rented house near the ocean. "I can look out on the sea and think of new pieces. I can relax there. I like B.C. If I can live here and keep going away, that's good; otherwise I go stale." A few years ago, she took over the school formerly run by Norbert Vesak in a converted church which provides one of the loveliest studio spaces in greater Vancouver. She has spent the past three Augusts teaching intensive dance workshops on Vancouver Island and somehow finds time to sit on the Arts Advisory Panel of the Canada Council and on the British Columbia Interim Arts Board.

Her compositions reflect her cosmopolitan

background. She began her performing career with the Graz Opera Ballet in Austria and toured Europe as a soloist. Before emigrating to Canada in 1967, she had a performing group in London where she studied and taught. She's also taken contemporary classes with Wigman and Laban.

"It fascinated me, but didn't satisfy me. I thought there wasn't much technique to it. I was a snob. After a few years I found out there was another kind of technique. I developed my own contemporary feeling — though nothing is ever your own in dance." Her professional kin, she feels, are men like Neumeier and Cranko; she's also fond of the work of Nikolais and Béjart.

An enigmatic personality, she takes some getting used to. Generally she is inaccessible and protected by her company members. One senses that, like certain wild animals, she's more afraid of you than you are of her. Her composure seems deliberate rather than natural, as though she feels a polished exterior will protect her from the internal pressures and increasing responsibilities that come along with her new prominence.

She is also a perfectionist, driven by her vision of technical excellence and driving her dancers in turn. Her group is no place for the fragile or the uncommitted; signing on with Anna Wyman means long, irregular hours, punishing classes and rehearsals, constant weight-watching, gruelling tours. She is always on the watch for dedicated dancers who want to come and work with her, people with developed skills in ballet and contemporary movement ("except maybe Graham," a style she finds uncongenial).

Her technique is balletic, gymnastic, similar to the Nikolais-Louis style, which also derives from Wigman. A 1975 tour took the company across Canada, displaying her spare, controlled work in centres from Salmon Arms to Halifax. Reaction was mixed. Some critics said her choreography lacks emotion, that the dancers seem to be performing in a vacuum. Actually, her group is in a state of transition, from a basically homegrown ensemble who grew up under her rigorous training to a hand-picked troupe of the best-equipped dancers she can find and entice to move to B.C. The change is a significant one.

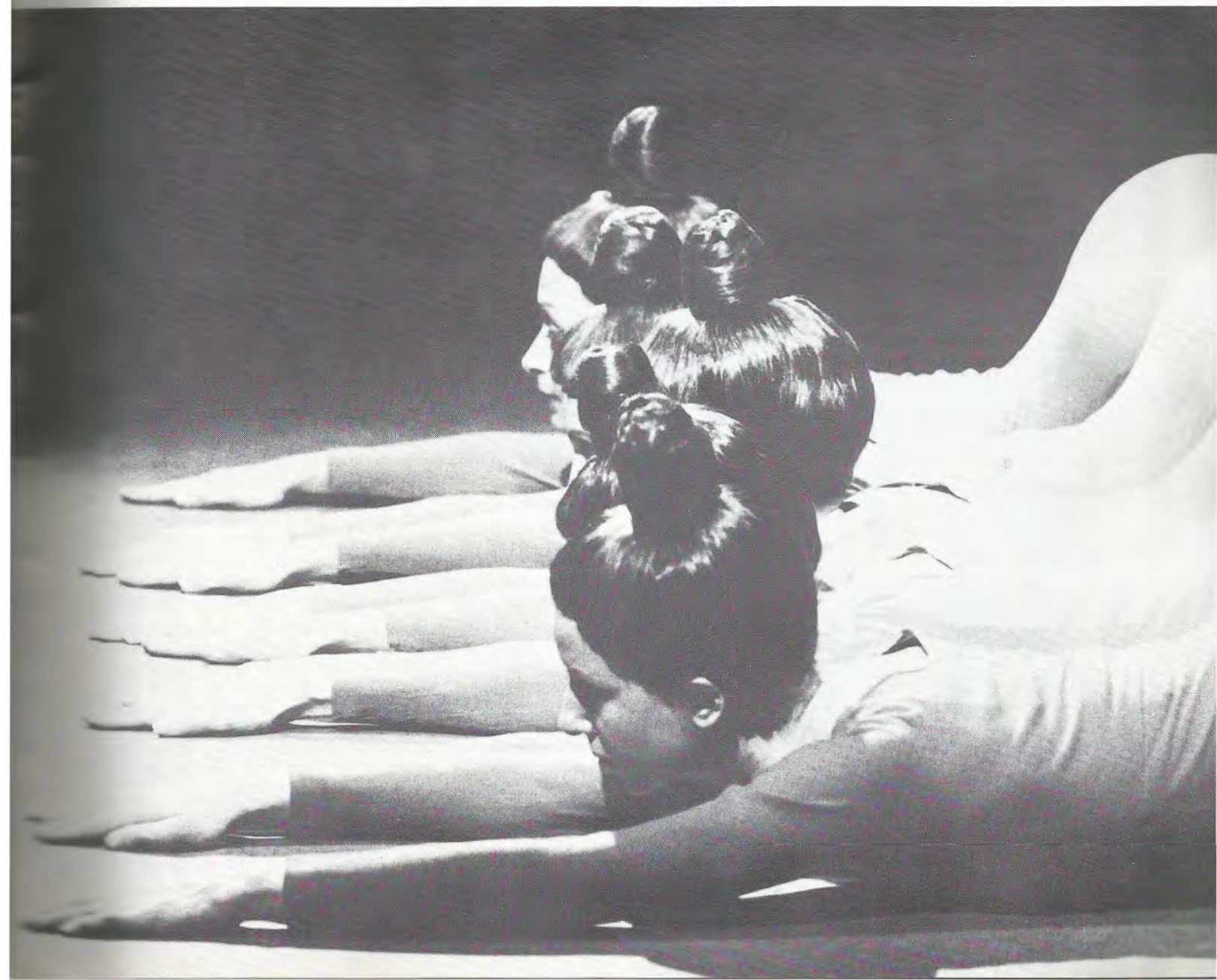
Some of the vacuity people may have observed can perhaps be attributed to the original company's youth and general lack of life experience.

Until now, the company's repertoire has consisted entirely of work by Wyman herself, some of it developed improvisationally in collaboration with the dancers, and all of her works developed very slowly.

*Here at the Eye of the Hurricane*, composed to a sound score by Stockhausen, won a Young Choreographers' Competition at Cologne, Germany in 1973. It is a dance of stillness and procession, of whirling centred energies and great mystery. The dancers enter and leave in formal clusters, experimenting with balance, wearing an assortment of brightly coloured body-altering costumes: yellow 'pods,' red diagonal stripes, exotic wigs with smooth buns on top.

A lighter but equally powerful work is the bicycle section of *Dance is*. . . . Wyman has raided an antique cycle museum and sends a silent parade of cycles in silhouette across the stage, followed by the yellow-clad dancers'

*Here at the Eye of the Hurricane, a dance of great energies and great mysteries.*



lyrical interpretation of wheel motion. The effect is kaleidoscopic, balanced, symmetrical, centred; the piece generates its own accompaniment, provoking gasps of delight from the audience.

Her most recent works, *Number One*, *Undercurrents* and *Klee Wyck*, are more ambitious and varied, departures to some extent from the formal simplicity of the earlier pieces. The first is a comic collage of associative imagery, from crazed rock-concert audiences through a speedy satire on ballet swans to a surrealist display of three-dimensional silver geometric figures, dancing trippingly. *Undercurrents*, to a score by R. Murray Schaffer, is her most "emotional" work so far, hinting at the struggle and dislocation in Canada's north, displaying passion and excitement between couples.

*Klee Wyck*, an 18-minute dance, a tribute to West Coast painter Emily Carr, choreographed under a \$25,000 grant from the Secretary of State's program for International Women's Year, is perhaps the least successful of her recent works. Nestled in among the slide projections, painted teepee-tree and the fine lighting, bathed in an improvisational score by Ann Mortiffee, clothed in lots of hand-painted costumes, Anna Wyman's choreography almost seems to disappear. She has given us some ingenious personifications of mystery and dream: a golden spirit emerges ponderously from a stylized tree

*Klee Wyck in rehearsal*



*Klee Wyck, a tribute to Emily Carr without Wyman's usual strength of vision.*

trunk, lit from within by a golden light; anonymous figures, exceedingly tall and moving with religious solemnity, starkly garbed and lit in greyish gold, loom through the woods and then vanish. The main trouble with the dance is that its series of impressions lack a central, structural theme. One senses an uncertainty, a lack of confidence, in her approach to the works, perhaps because the project is a commissioned work, albeit a lucrative, prestigious one. But it is not something that took possession of the artist and demanded expression. The piece seems insubstantial, lacks the clarity and strength of vision that characterize Emily Carr's best work, and Anna Wyman's.

These are nevertheless good times for Anna Wyman. Her company is acquiring a national reputation, generous grants such as the IWY one indicate growing recognition, the calendar is marked with commitments to perform around this country and abroad. This year her top dancers are taking home \$115 a week and got a paid holiday. The envious remark of a Halifax dance student remains in my memory: "What are they doing, being Canadian and so professional?"





## Review

### Feminist Dance in England

Penelope B.R. Doob

*Margo Sappington's Juice*

Is the expression of feminist concerns in dance a viable proposition? And if it is, are dance writers ready to respond with objectivity? Such questions are inevitably raised by last year's London dance season, which was marked by a number of ballets especially interesting to feminists: ballets about the role of women (and, by extension of men) in contemporary society, ballets made by women about women and their relationships with others, the stereotypes that limit them, the difficulties of living within the conventional definitions of womanhood. These ballets are flawed (aren't most ballets?), but several of them were received with undue hostility and total lack of comprehension by the (predominately male) critical establishment. I'd like to look briefly at four ballets by women — Margo Sappington's *Juice*, Judith Marcuse's

*baby*, and Jennifer Muller's *An American Beauty Rose and Strangers* — to consider their feminist content, their merits as dance, and some reasons for the critical responses they evoked.

Sappington's and Marcuse's works are the most conventional in movement, content, and attitude towards women, and perhaps because of this they were received favourably but patronisingly. *Juice* (1975), offered by Nederlands Dans Theater in their June season at Sadler's Wells, is a hip, vivacious ballet in the jazz idiom natural to an American choreographer with a Broadway-Joffrey background. An updated but lesser *Dances at a Gathering*, it shows the interplay of four men, two women, and a hammock. Although Sappington seems to have no

overt feminist preoccupations, analyses of sex roles add considerable seriousness to an otherwise lightweight but engaging ballet.

In one sequence Roslyn Anderson and Jan Benoit share a violent pas de deux leaving Anderson sullen and dejected, deserted by Benoit. Then follow two simultaneous duets. In one, Jeanne Solan woos Anderson with tenderness and delicate persistence, finally earning a trustful embrace. The implications are both sexual and sisterly; when hurt, women turn to other women to find comfort and sympathy. The two men, on the other hand, are far more antagonistic; the erotic aspect of the dance is undercut by rivalry as they strike arm-wrestling and boxing poses. If solace is needed, another man cannot provide it. The joy and mutual protectiveness of the women's pas de deux are wholly lacking.

*Juice* succeeds as unpretentious entertainment, and for me its serious centre lies in the dances for the women, in their creation of a warm sisterhood that can be disrupted but not destroyed by male intrusions. Sappington shows us both women's strength and their constraining need to play habitual flirtatious roles with men, and her ballet is all the more moving for the contrast between its occasional profundity and its youthful exuberance. But Sappington's submerged feminist message seems to have been missed by most critics; I wonder whether her reviews would have been as moderately favourable as they were had she made her point more obviously.

Marcuse, a Canadian dancer with Ballet Rambert, makes a far more explicitly feminist ballet in *baby* (1975), but she pulls her punches so much that the piece becomes static, non-threatening, and rather superficial. The work is framed by a prologue and epilogue in which segregated groups of men and women in unisex leotards confront each other. There is a basic antagonism between the sexes but also a common need to unite, to pair off. At the end of each section, the groups are separated by a white-faced man with bowler hat and umbrella — probably representing Society, in any case, a disruptive and alien force who initiates both the role-playing that constitutes the middle of the ballet and the pathetic ending. Marcuse seems to blame society for the difficulties of man-woman relationships. The three intervening "performances" (the term is as significant as Marcuse's choosing to set her title in lower case) also state the most obvious problems of being a woman, avoiding assessment of individual responsibility.

Each "performance" illustrates a stereotypic view of woman — playthings when young, sex objects and nurturers when older. And in each section, women are abused by men, react with strong emotions, and finally score very minor victories over their persecutors.

For example, in the first section two little girls with Shirley Temple curls, pinafores, and spanking white underpants skip on and play gleefully until two men hanging out in an on-stage bar molest them. The men manipulate the girls' arms and legs, they force the girls' heads down repeatedly as if they were balls; faced with male strength and size, the girls are reduced to poppet-puppets until they dare to push the men's heads down and run off in triumph.

I find both aesthetic and conceptual problems with *baby*. As critics have been quick to point out, there isn't much original movement — though in fairness to Marcuse I wonder how stereotypes could have been presented

effectively were they *not* based on the exaggeration of conventional gesture. And then there's the obscurity of the prologue and epilogue. I'd like to know, not guess, who the bowler-hatted man is and what the groups of men and women represent. This sort of ambiguity isn't really constructive in a semi-polemical ballet.

More serious, though, are conceptual problems that admittedly would disturb a feminist more than most balletomanes. The program note, presumably prepared by Marcuse, reads, "Men and women play out a multitude of roles assigned by society. These roles can bring us together ... often they keep us apart." That comment, reinforced by the occasional inclinations towards union shown in the prologue and epilogue, suggests an optimism that the performances do not support. The only ways that roles "bring us together" in the ballet are clearly destructive, both to the stereotyped women and to the predatory men they thwart. Nor does the organizing metaphor of "baby" work: in the first two sections, the women are clearly babies (or babes) of a recognizable type, but in the third, the woman is baby-maker and the men the babies.

Finally, and most important, Marcuse is simply *presenting* stereotypes, but I think she ought to have provided a more searching *analysis* of them — their causes, their effects on those involved, perhaps the possibility that an individual can choose *not* to live in a rigid sexual role. Unfortunately, we can all, regardless of sex, react with scorn and smugness to the parade of stereotypes — we aren't as bad as those men, or as mindless as the women who experience such pain in trying to live in the accepted definitions of womanhood, but who gain so little knowledge from their suffering. The ballet's blandness doesn't mean that it cannot be misunderstood, of course; Noel Goodwin in *Dance and Dancers* (June 1975) claims that "the two girl adolescents were portrayed as too innocent to be endangered; the two sex-figures [vamps in the second "performance" whose manipulation and rejection by a man lead to a moment of mutual supportiveness] too bored to be endangering." A neat play on words, but surely missing Marcuse's point that both sets of women *are* gravely endangered by the roles they choose to play. That Goodwin felt the sexy ladies should be *endangering* demonstrates a blatant albeit unconscious male bias in response to the stereotype as well as to the ballet. If points that seem so obvious to me can be ignored so completely by critics, maybe Marcuse's ballet is more necessary than I'd have thought.

The most interesting feminist choreography, and the most severely condemned by London critics, is Jennifer Muller's work for Nederlands Dans Theater, *An American Beauty Rose* (1974) and *Strangers* (1975). Muller seems to be a committed and militant feminist; although her ballets are funny as well as political, many viewers, and especially men, see only stridency (and there is a little, I admit). When Muller makes them laugh (too seldom for their tastes), that's fine, but when she gets down to the nitty-gritty of what sexual stereotyping does to women's (and men's) psyches, average London audiences almost scream "castrating bitch!" Personal attacks on Muller abound; the *Times* is astonished that a woman like Muller, clearly so happy and successful (she has her own company and a few grants), should be so ungrateful as to attack the establishment that nurtures her.

I don't want to argue that Muller's ballets are masterpieces but they are fascinating expositions of how

women themselves acquiesce in playing the roles ordained by society and of how great a price women who accept conventional ideology must pay to survive.

*An American Beauty* Rose uses the cheerleader-drum majorette as a metaphor for the life style of most young American women. Troops of girls flaunting sexy, skimpy, red-white-and-blue uniforms and high red boots strut their stuff with flags, guns, and batons, rigid caricatures of smiles on their faces even when they stumble and mess up their enthusiastic football half-time formations. A jock in a track suit arrogantly selects one of them for thorough mauling; when he can tear himself away from playing to the audience with exaggerated he-man poses (one London critic was outraged that a man should appear in ballet as a sex object), he throws the woman around to demonstrate his strength. At one point, she places his hand on her head — a wish for some tenderness? He grins and clutches her breasts and crotch before dashing her to the ground and striding off in imagined glory. What is interesting here is not Muller's consciousness that men are brutes (a common critical reading), but that she sees that the jock stereotype is as dehumanizing as the cheerleader stereotype, and that she shows that the women on the team actually want such treatment if that's the only way to get their man. Masochism is a crucial component of many female roles.

The women's flamboyant routines continue to excerpts from a documentary on an actual group of flag-swirlers: "A girl shouldn't stand out"; "she should perform in a group, not alone"; "beauty knows no pain." One girl can't keep in step and runs away in disgrace; another suddenly rebels, attacks the troop leader, and is peremptorily shot. Arlette Van Boven, the leader, is left alone on stage after the murder; slowly she begins to crack up, twitching and contorting, preserving what passes for her sanity only by retreating into bits of the familiar cheerleader routine as if to prove to herself what she really is, indeed *that* she really is because she has a role to play and an audience to play to.

The other girls return with suitcases (on to the next performance?), only to disintegrate when they see the corpse. But the music switches to a rock beat and the women automatically fall in line for still another routine, forgetting the tragedy. They grow exhausted, the lights dim, and they comfort each other — sisterhood for a brief moment. But as the lights go up, on go the pasted smiles and serious communion disappears. When they leave Van Boven again, she is desperate; she falls, crawls amidst the litter, and is horrified at the sight of her victim, still lying dead on the stage. Training prevails momentarily; she pulls herself together, flashes a smile, and poses provocatively on a suitcase, reassuring herself. But suddenly her face cracks, and she frenetically pulls the suitcases about to make a pyramid. She opens one case, hurls roses around the stage, pulls on a long robe, and mounts the dais of suitcases. A crown, a sceptre, and there she is, Miss America, psychological and actual murderer of her fellow women; the Statue of Liberty, who has freedom only to be the typical all-American girl.

What is striking here is Muller's perceptive depiction of how women oppress each other and themselves. The roles may come first, they may be created by society (whatever "society" is); but it's women who are the



Jennifer Muller's Strangers

enforcers. The lone jock is the carrot, and the Great White Cheerleader the stick. If well-defined roles exist, Muller seems to say, then women will fall into them as the easiest solution to life; the search for an independent identity, one where a woman might stand out as an individual, where beauty *does* acknowledge pain and decides to sacrifice beauty rather than self, is bluntly fatal. The only optimism the ballet provides is that women *do* rebel and that when the audience is away women will naturally comfort one another. Muller's ballet shows women that help is available if they'll only take the chance, but she doesn't underestimate the risks entailed. Obviously this is all pretty heavy stuff for a mixed audience, and it's hardly surprising that Muller is berated for dealing with subjects like these.

Her other NDT ballet, *Strangers*, is a full-length work difficult to summarize. Briefly, it presents a morning in the life of a couple who come to realize that they have nothing in common; the man is preoccupied with brute sexuality, and his fantasies (fantasies are danced, while "reality" is mimed by actors) involve apes and pop anthropology primeval families. The woman is nervous about sex and is imbued with an almost Victorian love of the superficial trappings of courtship and romance; her fantasies involve repressed young women in rigid poses and dapper young poets who offer violets and waltzes and innocent romps in the forest. There are twelve dance sections in the ballet, each with its accompanying and simultaneous mime scene, and some of the sections are superb in themselves, others clear in ideological content.

For example, in several places Gérard Lemaître, a kind of ringmaster figure throughout, appears in full dress with cane and top-hat, while Marilyn Lewis, wearing hot pants, boots, hat, dinner jacket, and red curls, is a sexy Shirley Temple. They mount several shuffle-off-to-Buffalo vaudeville routines, Lewis generally rebels, and Lemaître forces her into line so that the act can finish with something approaching Fred-and-Ginger polish. A lovely running commentary on the games people, and especially the couple in the ballet, play.

In the last section, *Slate Grey*, Roslyn Anderson dances a terrified woman surrounded by surrealistic thirties musical comedy men in long coats and enormous shoes who stomp around her, imprisoning her. The circle narrows, the woman grows more hysterical, and finally she escapes. In the mime that follows, the man walks in, takes the woman's hand, and both walk out. There's no sense of real contact or affection; instead the couple seem to have capitulated to their own internal need to be a couple, so that they will continue their terrifyingly mismatched life if only to avoid solitude and its terrors.

Critical comments that *Strangers* is "too busy," "too loud," "not inventive enough," seem facile and misguided,

but characteristic of general response to Muller in London. What strikes me immediately about the ballet is not its merit as dance, though merit it does have, but rather its content: the sophistication of Muller's analysis of sexual dynamics and her concern — a truly feminist one — with the constraints that all sex roles, male and female, place on the individual, and with the difficulty of contemplating living on one's own, not as half of a couple. I hope NDT dares to defy the critics and keep the work around longer. *Strangers* may prove mediocre dance in the end, but it should have the chance to establish itself as a feminist (and humanist) ballet of considerable interest.

Is feminist dance possible? I hope it is, although I agree with Virginia Woolf that an artist's anger almost always diminishes his work's quality from what it might have been had the artist's emotions been under stronger rein. Feminist ballet will probably be angry for some time to come — Muller's certainly is. Yet dance can be polemic, and the excitement of a passionately conceived work may well atone for some aesthetic errors of judgment.

But if we use "feminist" in a rather general sense, to connote a sympathetic consideration of the female condition even if no easy solutions are offered, then I think there already *are* good feminist ballets: Nijinska's *Les Noces*, Kenneth Macmillan's *Manon and Anastasia*, and Jiri Kylian's *La Cathédrale Engloutie*, to name only four offered in England this past year. And perhaps these ballets are more successful than Sappington's, Marcuse's, and Muller's simply because they aren't so explicitly political; they allow a greater breadth of movement, of conception, of characterization. But they also grow out of an older tradition than do the feminist ballets I've discussed here, and that's a great advantage. Possibly with more experience and some dissipation of anger (at least in her work), Muller may create such ballets; I feel less certain of Marcuse's and Sappington's potential. But these and other women must have the chance to prove and improve themselves as serious feminist choreographers.

What stands in the way is adverse critical response. So long as strong feminist statements in dance are discouraged as happened with Muller, so long as even conditional approval is reserved for easy works like *baby* whose ideological impact and intellectual content are slight and uncontroversial, it will take brave women to make feminist ballets, and braver companies to commission them. Meanwhile Muller and company may be reduced to taking jobs as cheerleaders or drum majorettes, and that would be a tragedy for dance as a vital art form which not only preserves the best of the past but also responds to changing human needs and preoccupations. Like other creative arts, dance should be able to shape as well as reflect society.

## Noticeboard



*The Royal Winnipeg Ballet in Rodeo*

**The Royal Winnipeg Ballet** was a major component of the two-week **Canadian Bicentennial tribute** in Washington in October. The Winnipeg company was at the Opera House of the Kennedy Centre during the first week (Oct. 13-18) giving three separate programs. Canada took over Washington theatres for the two weeks of the festival which was arranged by the Touring Office. In addition to the Royal, Canada presented Monique Leyrac, Maureen Forrester, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the National Arts Centre operatic production *La Belle Hélène*, the opera *Louis Riel*, and the Shaw Festival production of *The Devil's Disciple*.

**The Royal Winnipeg Ballet** is the subject of a major feature in the September issue of *Dance Magazine*, written by Vancouver critic Max Wyman. Wyman calls the company "Manitoba's most important export after wheat." The company's popularity at home and abroad is undeniable.

In fact, says Wyman, the company's at-home subscription audience is 9,000, higher than that of every other company on this continent except the New York City Ballet, and, on a proportion subscriber-to-population basis, the highest in North America. But, says Wyman, what makes the company unique is its artistic director, Arnold Spohr.

**For the first time** this November (Nov. 5-9), the city of Winnipeg will have a chance to see the trilogy **Pictures**, by John Neumeier, in full, when the Royal Winnipeg Ballet performs it during its home season. Toronto, Washington and other cities have already seen the full trilogy. Then from mid-November to mid-December, the company undertakes a tour of the Western provinces and of the northern United States, taking with its crowd pleaser *Rodeo*, as well as all its works by Argentinian choreographer Oscar Araiz.



Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in Macdonald's Bawdy Variations

**The Royal Winnipeg scored a coup** with the announcement that **Valery and Galina Panov** will guest star with the company during their Christmas Winnipeg season (Dec. 26-30). The Panovs, who were both harrassed by the Soviet government before their application to emigrate to Israel was accepted, were both leading dancers with the famed Leningrad Kirov Company (alma mater of Nureyev, Makarova and Baryshnikov). In Winnipeg, they will dance *Adagio* and *Harlequinade*.

**Les Grands Ballets Canadiens' November home engagement** at Montreal's Salle Wilfrid Pelletier at Place des Arts will not include a revival of Brian Macdonald's *Rose Latulippe* as previously scheduled. The piece was withdrawn because of technical difficulties and instead the company is presenting four new works by three Canadian choreographers: Macdonald, who is artistic

director of Les Grands Ballets; Linda Rabin and Brydon Paige. The two works by Macdonald are *Diabelli Variations* and *Bawdy Variations*, Linda Rabin is offering *A Yesterday's Day*, and Brydon Paige's piece is *Variations for a Dark Voice*. The company performs at Place des Arts Nov. 14, 15, and Nov. 20-23. Then the company will stage its traditional *Nutcracker* in Montreal and Quebec City. Les Grands Ballets has an exciting winter season ahead of it, an hommage to Canadian composer, the late Pierre Mercure. A number of choreographers will be taking part.

**Alexander Grant** has been named as the third artistic director of the National Ballet of Canada, effective July 1, 1976. The fifty-year-old New Zealand-born Grant was a top character dancer at the Royal Ballet for 30 years. Currently, he is director of the educational company, Ballet for All. Grant replaces David Haber who resigned from the company over irreconcilable artistic differences with the board, after 11 months as artistic director.

**Musicamera, CBC's impressive music television series,** has a lot of dance scheduled for this year: on Nov. 19, *Klee Wyck*, choreographed by Anna Wyman (see the current issue of *Dance in Canada*) to Ann Mortifee's music; Dec. 17 marks the turn of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet with its radically different *Nutcracker*, choreographed by John Neumeier and filmed by Norman Campbell; on Dec. 24, *Vienna Cinderella*, a ballet-mime on the Cinderella theme, appears; and on Jan. 28 *Loves* presents two ballets by Brian Macdonald danced by his company Les Grands Ballets Canadiens.

**Appointments:** Jeanne Renaud, founder and former artistic director of Le Groupe de la Place Royale, is taking a post with the Canada Council in the short-term grants section. . . . Lawrence Bennett takes over as general manager of the Anna Wyman Dance Theatre this month. . . . Susan Jane Arnold, who taught dance and theatre production at York University last year, has become general manager of the Regina Modern Dance Workshop. . . . Jeremy Leslie-Spinks is the new director of the Alberta Ballet Company. . . . David Williams is administrative director of the Contemporary Dancers of Winnipeg. . . . Jackie Malden has been hired as co-ordinating secretary of the Dance in Canada Association. . . . Jennifer Munroe became general manager of Tournesol Dance Experience in November. . . . since Martine Epoque-Poulin has gone to the United States to study for a PhD in dance, Christina Coleman has taken over as co-artistic director of Groupe Nouvelle Aire.

**Grants:** the Regina Modern Dance Workshop received \$8,000 from the Canada Council towards the preparation and performance of its spring productions. . . . Tournesol Dance Experience was awarded \$5,000 by the Canada Council for a special projects grant. . . . the Paula Ross Dance Company got \$7,000 in a B.C. cultural grant for the year. . . . the Touring Office awarded Le Groupe de la Place Royale \$35,000 for its nine-week Eastern Canada

tour. . . . Anita Anne Briggs won \$1,000 from the Canada Council's Explorations program for her summer program of modern dance conducted by professionals for the general public in Penticton B.C. . . . Eight dancers were awarded arts grants of \$6,000 in the last round (Rodney Andreychuk, Susan Bennet, Natalie Breuer, Eva Christiansen, Natalia Juga-Peria, Elizabeth Keeble, Barry Smith and Peter Ottman). . . . Terry McGlade, one of the directors of Visus, the video group which films dance events, also received an arts grant from the Council. . . . The Anna Wyman Dance Theatre received a \$2,625 Washington State Arts Commission grant to tour the state in 1976. . . . Anyone interested in a Touring Office Grant should realize that applications must be submitted at least six months before the program. For more details, contact Joanne Morrow, Grants Co-ordinator, Touring Office, P.O. Box 1047, Ottawa, Ontario K1P5V8. . . . Closing dates for senior arts grants and arts grants for the coming round of competitions is April 1, 1976. Applications will be accepted at any time for short term grants, travel grants and project cost grants. The Council's Aid to Artists brochure is available from Information Service Canada Centres or by writing to the Canada Council, Arts Awards Service, P.O. Box 1047, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5V8. . . . The Ontario Arts Council has set up a new grant program for choreographers of both proven ability and of promise. Applications for grants (up to \$3,000 may be awarded) will be screened by a selection jury. Deadlines for OAC grants are Jan. 1, Mar. 1, May 1 and Aug. 1. Applications and further details may be obtained from Charlotte Holmes, dance officer of the Ontario Arts Council, at 151 Bloor St., Toronto.

**Ballet Ys** had its Toronto premiere at Seneca College's Minkler Auditorium, from Oct. 8 - 10. The company soon travels to Montreal for November engagements which culminate in a December 1st performance at Centaur Theatre. From there it goes to the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake (Dec. 15-25) for a mixed bag of workshops, school concerts, and performances. Ballet Ys

*Ballet Ys in Ann Ditchburn's Nelligan*



gave a number of local choreographers opportunities and had particular success with Ann Ditchburn's *Nelligan* and Anna Blewchamp's *Relics*.

After a stay in Toronto where she conducted a special all-day event at Fifteen (Oct. 8), **Paula Ross** returned to B.C. to rejoin her company which was on tour from Oct. 14-17 in Merritt and Kamloops. The Paula Ross Dance Company gave a lecture/demonstration at Cariboo College in Kamloops and an interview/demonstration for Kamloops Television on Oct. 17.

*Ballet Ys in Anna Blewchamp's Relics*



**Menaka Thakkar, the Indian dancer** who bowled critics over during Toronto's Festival of Women and the Arts in June, has opened a new school, NRUTYAKALA, to teach the two classical Indian dance styles, Bharatanatyam and Odissi, to 3 levels — beginners, advanced and children's.

**Dance in Canada conference reports** from Edmonton and Montreal will both be ready in the new year, although, because of financial pressures, in the language of origin only. Both will be available at a small cost. For more information, write the Dance in Canada office, at 314 Jarvis St., Suite 103, Toronto.

**Dance in Canada's Conference 1976** has been scheduled for Halifax Aug. 6-10. Companies and individuals are asked to plan for this event in their budgeting if they wish to attend. Provincial governments were helpful in providing assistance to conference delegates for Edmonton 1975 and the association suggests participants apply immediately for this kind of assistance again for the upcoming conference.

**Our apologies to Iris Garland** for dropping her name from the list of board of directors of Dance in Canada as announced in the summer issue of the magazine. Iris Garland is artistic director of the Simon Fraser Dance Workshop and a member of the faculty of the University.

**The Touring Office of the Canada Council** has announced two tours by leading international companies for 1976. From Sept. 7 - Oct. 21, the Roland Petit Ballet de Marseilles will undertake a national tour from Quebec City to Vancouver. Karen Kain, for whom Petit choreographed an original ballet last year, and who danced with his company in October in Paris, may be dancing with the company on tour. Then from Oct. 18 to Nov. 7 the Dutch National Ballet visits Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba.

**Eight dancers** are participating in an unusual series of concerts and activities at Toronto's Fifteen Dance Laboratorium Nov. 24-29. The eight (Susan Aaron, Lawrence and Miriam Adams, Peter Dudar, Lily Eng, Jill Bellos, Elizabeth Chitty and Margaret Dragu) will give performances, show videotapes and make dance events all day each day during the period.

**Anna Wyman has added Catherine Lee** (C. Lee) to the staff teaching creative-contemporary dance at the Anna Wyman School of Dance Arts. . . . **Savannah Walling** joined the dance teaching staff of the Simon Fraser Centre for Communications and the Arts this year.

**The Vancouver Ballet Society** plans a series of guest classes with visiting teachers and stars. First on the list is a class with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Nov. 28, and then on Dec. 12 or 13, Maurice Béjart will be guest teacher. Students must belong to the Vancouver Ballet Society to take part.



**In Vancouver, the Contemporary Jazz Dance Studio** (Prism Dance Theatre) plans to have, as guest teacher, Albert Reid from the Merce Cunningham Studio. Reid will give two classes daily in Cunningham technique during the Contemporary Jazz Dance Studio's Christmas course (Dec. 29 - Jan 9) which covers beginners to advanced. The studio, at 518 West Hastings St., in Vancouver, can be reached at 681-6715.

**York University opened its Performing Arts Series** on October 8 with the Dancers and Musicians of the Burmese National Theatre. In the winter, Lar Lubovitch and Entre-Six appear as part of York's dance series. . . . York's Christmas concerts will be held from Dec. 11 to 13 of this year and include new pieces by Sandra Neels, Yves Cousineau, Grant Strate, Jane Beach and Noemi Lapsezon.

**On October 24 the Paula Moreno Spanish Dance Company** began a seven-week tour of 40 towns and cities across Canada and in the northwestern United States before appearances in the Ontario region. Accompanying the group on its current swing is classical-flamenco guitarist David Phillips.

**The Phyllis Lamhut Dance Company** is in residence at Simon Fraser University Nov. 3-7 and tops off its residency with a performance at the university's theatre on Nov. 6.

**The Marijan Bayer Dance Company** performs at Minkler Auditorium, Seneca College, Friday evening, Nov. 14 in Toronto.

**The Marie Marchowsky Dance Company** makes its debut at the Minkler Auditorium of Toronto's Seneca Theatre Centre on Friday, Nov. 28. Marie Marchowsky is a former soloist with the Martha Graham Dance Company.

**Groupe Nouvelle Aire** has added three new works by choreographers Edward Lock, Christina Coleman (the company's co-artistic director) and Margaret Goldstein to its repertoire. Nouvelle Aire begins its season at the end of November.

**Dancemakers performs** at the UC playhouse on the University of Toronto campus on Dec. 6. The company has had a big turnover. Only Noelyn George and David Langer remain of the original dancers.

**The Regina Modern Dance Workshop** presents a dance program in a circus format for children (of all ages) at the Globe Theatre in Regina, Saskatchewan for 10 performances between Dec. 10 - 14. The company is also scheduled to present a series of dance improvisation workshops at Mackenzie Hall in Saskatoon the last week of November.

**The Regina Modern Dance Workshop is seeking** one male dancer for January. For more information, call founder



*Entre-Six*

and co-artistic director Marianne Livant at (306) 522-1029.

**Entre-Six**, directed by Chalmers Award in Choreography winner Lawrence Gradus, is now on a Prologue tour of Ontario Schools. From Dec. 26 - Jan. 4, Entre-Six performs its Christmas Montreal children's show at the Centaur Theatre. Gradus has choreographed works to such favourites as *Clair de Lune*, *Peter and the Wolf* and the *Blue Danube*. . . . Entre-Six embarks on a Western tour from Jan. 15 - Feb. 14.

**Judy Jarvis**, 1974 Chalmers winner, holds an open demonstration in improvisation in Toronto at her top floor studio at 9-11 St. Nicholas St. (one block west of Yonge and one-half block north of Wellesley) on Nov. 22 at 8:30 p.m.

**Larry McKinnon is teaching** and choreographing as a guest with the Saskatchewan Dance Theatre this season.



Mikhail Baryshnikov and Veronica Tennant in National season

One of his works, *So Anyone's Any*, is already included in the fall performances of the company. The Saskatchewan Dance Theatre appears in Regina Nov. 16 and Saskatoon on Nov. 29.

**Aaron Shields**, a graduate last year from the National Ballet School, will be dancing with Vancouver's Pacific Ballet Theatre as leading dancer.

**Synergy**, directed by **Linda Rubin**, received a Canada Council Explorations grant to conduct weekend workshops for dancers and social workers.

**Toronto Dance Theatre** mounts its children's production *Babar* at the Central Library Theatre in Toronto Dec. 23 - Jan. 3 (no performances on Christmas day) with two performances daily in the morning and afternoon. . . . From Jan. 16 - 24, the company restages *Parade*, a recreation of La Belle Epoque, first created last year for the Art Gallery of Ontario. This time the Toronto Dance Theatre produces it at the St. Lawrence Centre in Toronto. . . . TDT's first major Toronto season of the year is from Feb. 16 - 21 at the MacMillan Theatre. . . . Two of its original dancers, Barry Smith and Merle Salsberg, are off in New York for the year studying.

**Globe and Mail** dance critic John Fraser has moved over to the theatre beat. Lawrence O'Toole has taken over as dance critic.

**The Contemporary Dancers of Winnipeg** opened in Winnipeg Oct. 24 - 25 with Rachel Browne's new choreography, *Woman I Am*, before embarking on a Western tour. The company has two more home seasons in Winnipeg this year (Nov. 16 and Jan. 9-10). . . . Norbert Vesak arrives in Winnipeg the end of November to stage *The Gift to be Simple*, based on Shaker hymn tunes of the 1850s and 1860s, for the Contemporary Dancers.

On Nov. 23 the **Alberta Contemporary Dance Theatre** gives a performance in Edmonton and two more in Jan. (23-24) before embarking on a Western and Northern Alberta tour (Jan. 26 - Feb. 15).

**The Théâtre de danse contemporain** is giving a unique series of performances for 24 Saturdays beginning Dec. 6 at the Eglise St. Cunégonde, Ville Emard, Québec.

**The National Ballet**, back from its Western tour, is about to undertake its annual *Nutcracker*. The production raises the hackles of most local critics but is the company's surefire moneymaker. The *Nutcracker* can be seen in Hamilton (Dec. 10-12) and in Toronto (Dec. 23 - Jan. 3) at the O'Keefe Centre. . . . The company continues its association with Mikhail Baryshnikov when he appears during the National's home season in Toronto (also at the O'Keefe) from Feb. 7 to March 6. The company will be presenting Rudi van Dantzig's *Monument for a Dead Boy* during that time.

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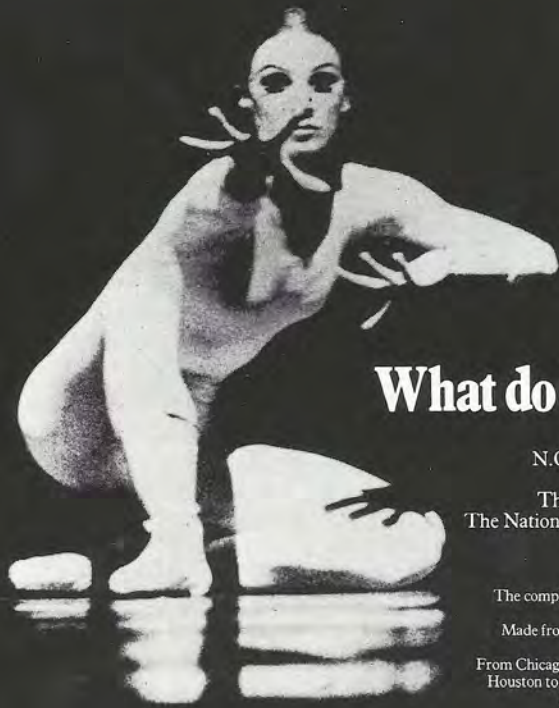
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Scholarship auditions for the Toronto Dance Theatre School will be held on Monday, January 12, 1976 at the Toronto Dance Theatre studios. For further information please contact Donald Himes at the Toronto Dance Theatre, 957 Broadview Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4K 2R5 or telephone (416) 423-0562.

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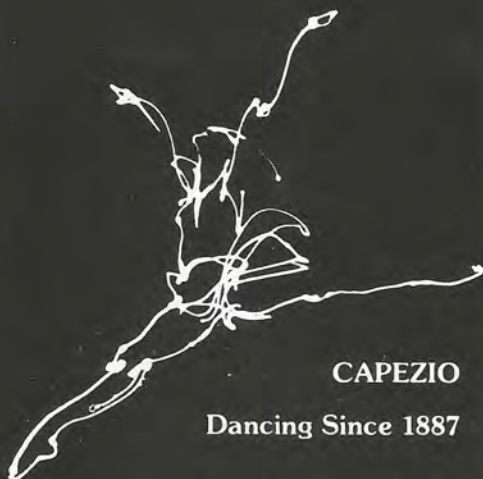
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