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Education of a Dancer:
anatomy, notation



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Dance in Canada

SUMMER 1977 ETE

The Terminal City Connection
Elizabeth Zimmer

TRAINING THE DANCER I:
The Roots of Today
Rhonda Ryman

The Bournonville Schools
Sondra Lomax

PROFILE:
Mikhail Berkut
Eileen Thalenberg

Graham Training Settles in Canada
Graham Jackson

EDITORIAL
LETTERS FROM THE FIELD
IN REVIEW
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Editorial

Susan Cohen

In this issue *Dance in Canada* takes a brief look at the education of the dancer today: Sandra Caverly, York University professor, talks about her upcoming notated collection of the complete Bournonville classes which all dance teachers will thus have available for the first time in history; Graham Jackson gives us an overview of the Toronto Dance Theatre's School, the first modern training institution in Canada to be recognized by a Canada Council grant; and with particular pride, *Dance in Canada* publishes the first in a series by University of Waterloo Faculty member Rhonda Ryman on ballet technique, how it has developed and been taught. In later articles Ms. Ryman will be assessing contemporary instruction manuals and will present new scientifically-based approaches to training movement.

In addition, regular contributor Elizabeth Zimmer looks at a company that is making waves on the west coast, a co-operative, collaborative experiment called Terminal City Dance, and Eileen Thalenberg, a Toronto freelance writer, profiles Mikhail Berkut for us. Berkut, a recent Russian émigré, sensitively, eloquently and thoughtfully shares with us the difficulties of being uprooted from your country, a difficulty no less painful in a profession whose vocabulary is universal.

By the way, we welcome a number of new contributors this issue: Rhonda Ryman and Eileen Thalenberg, both well known but new to these pages; the young Toronto writers, Sondra Lomax and J. Groo Bannerman, making their first professional appearance in the magazine; and journalist Doug Gallant from Prince Edward Island. Notice too the expansion of **In Review** to include book reviews as well as coverage of some performances from across the country.

Once again let me remind you that *Dance in Canada* publishes in the language of origin, English or French, and that we will be returning to our complete bilingual format whenever sufficient funds become available.

Dans ce numéro, *Danse au Canada* jette un bref coup d'oeil sur le système d'éducation contemporain du danseur: Sandra Caverly, professeur à l'université York nous présente sa prochaine série complète de cours Bournonville. Ce sera la première fois dans l'histoire que tous les professeurs de danse pourront l'avoir à leur disposition. Graham Jackson décrit brièvement l'Académie du Toronto Dance Theatre, première maison de formation en danse moderne au Canada à recevoir un octroi du Conseil des Arts du Canada. Et c'est avec juste fierté que *Danse au Canada* publie sa première série sur la technique du ballet, son développement et son enseignement. La série a été préparée par Rhonda Ryman, professeur à l'Université de Waterloo. Dans des articles subséquents, Mlle Ryman évaluera les manuels d'instruction contemporains et présentera de nouveaux abords scientifiques de la formation au mouvement.

En plus de sa contribution régulière, Elizabeth Zimmer nous présente une compagnie qui a fait couler de l'encre sur la côte Ouest, une troupe expérimentale de coopération et de collaboration appelée Terminal City Dance. Et Eileen Thalenberg, écrivain pigiste de Toronto nous trace le profil de Mikhail Berkut. Berkut, récemment émigré de Russie, partage avec nous, de façon sensible, éloquente et pensive, les difficultés d'un déracinement du pays natal, opération toujours douloureuse, même dans une profession au langage universel.

En passant, nous souhaitons la bienvenue à nos nouveaux collaborateurs pour ce numéro: Rhonda Ryman et Eileen Thalenberg, toutes deux bien connues, mais nouvelles dans nos pages, les jeunes écrivains torontois Sondra Lomax et J. Groo Bannerman qui publient pour la première fois dans la revue, de même qu'au journaliste Doug Gallant de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. À remarquer également, l'expansion de la section **En revue** qui offrira des revues de livres aussi bien que des critiques de spectacles à l'échelle du pays.

Permettez-moi de vous rappeler encore une fois que *Danse au Canada* publie les articles dans leur langue d'origine, anglais ou français. Nous retournerons à notre formule bilingue dès que nous disposerons des fonds nécessaires.

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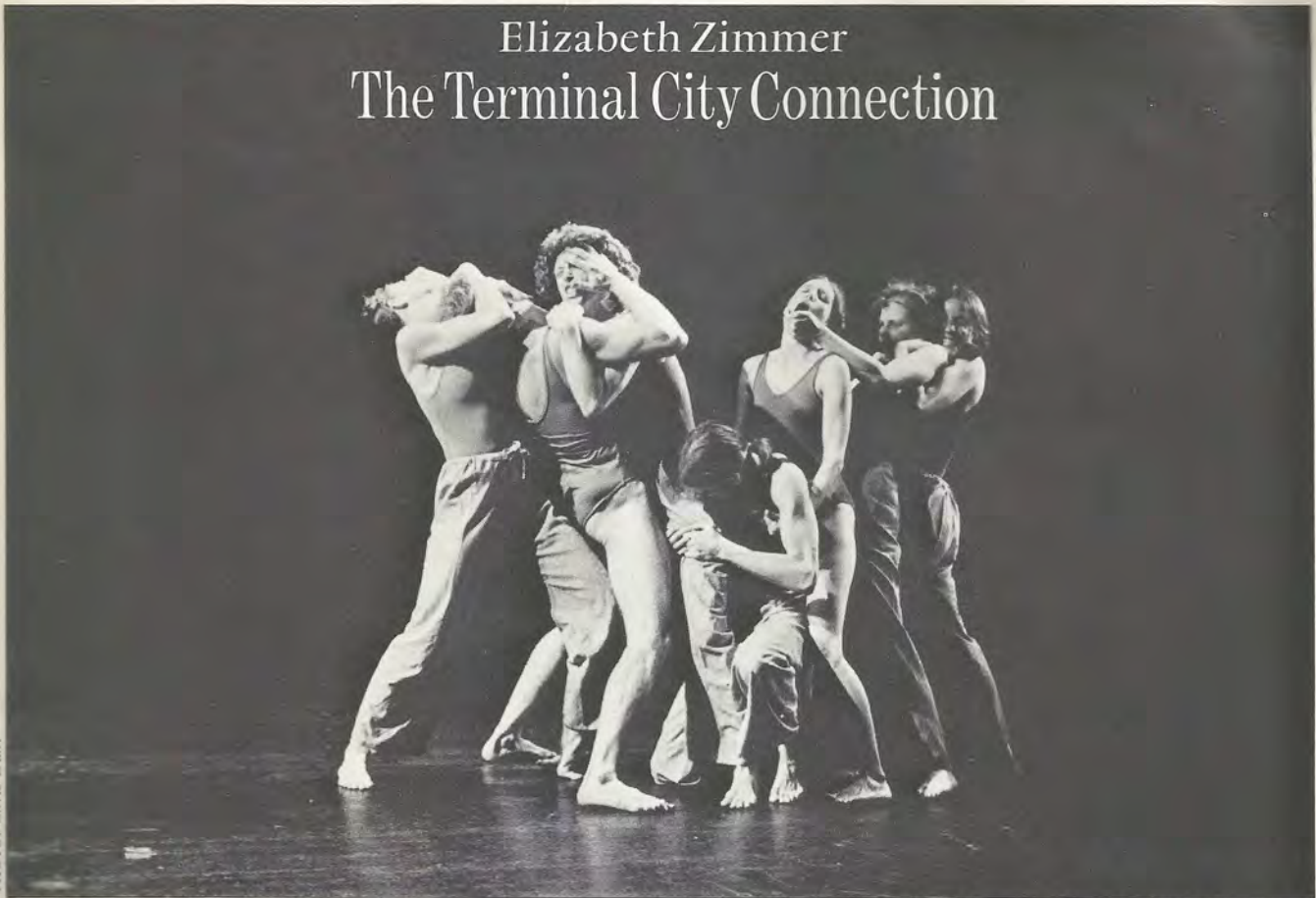
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Elizabeth Zimmer The Terminal City Connection

photo: Chris Dahl



terminal adj. growing at the end of a branch or stem (BUD) terminal n. 1. a part that forms the end. 2. a terminating usu. ornamental detail. 3. a device attached to the end of a wire or cable or to an electrical apparatus for the purpose of making connections. 4a. either end of a carrier line (as a railroad, trucking or shipping line, or airline) with classifying yards, dock and lighterage facilities, management offices, storage sheds, and freight and passenger stations. b. a freight or passenger station that is central to a considerable area or serves as a junction at any point with other lines. c. a town or city at the end of a carrier line.

As Savannah Walling reads the definition aloud, something none of them have ever thought to do before, the other members of Terminal City Dance, scattered around the chilly room, laugh and nod and agree. They are warming up in their small studio, once a corporate boardroom and then a Krishna residence, in the 'penthouse' of an industrial building, near the waterfront, in Vancouver's railyards. They do yoga-like stretches, headstands, various vocal exercises. Outside, traffic roars; train bells clang periodically.

'If you want to get a feeling for what it's like, come here and sleep and get woken up by the train at 6 a.m.,' mutters Terry Hunter, who lives with Savannah in an apartment adjacent to the working space.

Despite the pessimism implied in their name (which was Vancouver's, back in the eighties, when the CPR arrived), the seven members of Terminal City see their work in a positive light. Karen Rimmer, on her knees, wagging her

hips from side to side, observes that the title 'is a very potent metaphor. People in North American cities are operating within a framework of values that is very sick and destructive.'

TCD is working co-operatively, seven performers who have known each other as long as forever (Rimmer and Marion-Lea Dahl are sisters, and both mothers), as briefly as a couple of years. About seven years ago, several of them were introduced to contemporary dance at Simon Fraser University, where Iris Garland invited Phyllis Lamhut and Albert Reid to teach. Rimmer, Walling and Menlo Skye MacFarlane followed them to New York, studying and performing for several years. Walling had studied folklore and anthropology before coming to Canada; Rimmer has degrees in philosophy and education; Dahl attended the Vancouver School of Art.

Peggy Florin, who studied at Julliard in New York, is the only ballet-trained member of the company, and a fairly recent addition. After spending time in Toronto, she came to Vancouver to work with Anna Wyman and has been with Terminal City since September of 1976.

Though they have just completed their first season under their present title, the nucleus of the group has been collaborating on various dance and mime projects for several years. During the summer of 1976, several of them studied contemporary dance in Seattle with Rob and Marcia Esposito, and then returned to Vancouver in September for a workshop called *Acting: Exploration and Discovery*, led by Polish performer Jerzy Bogawewicz. The stress in this work was on tapping creative sources, getting in touch with the streams of creative energy which live behind defenses; they learned to 'work through' their tiredness, continuing exertion to overcome resistance.



The material from his workshop has been incorporated into the company's process; warm-up exercises, movement vocabulary and attitude have been shaped by the young Pole's theory and practice. Inspired by Grotowski, it encourages spontaneity and 'aliveness'. They will work with him again this summer.

As they continue their warm-up, and later, at a meeting to discuss the group's future direction, I observe their process, attending particularly to the things they say about what they do. They accept the difficulties of their role-free structure. Says Rimmer, 'You can take on a role, — student, teacher, choreographer — and then relinquish it, rather than having the role rigidify around you. I don't want to harden myself into any particular role. The more people develop themselves as choreographers, the more interesting they are as dancers, the more dimensions they have. It's more difficult, but it's also more interesting.'

It's also enormously time-consuming. Each member is allowed several hours of company time a week for choreography and rehearsal; they take turns 'leading'. Sessions must be worked around various part-time jobs and child-care responsibilities. There is anxiety about the structuring of time. There is also a lot of trust among them.

'You want to believe enough in what other people are doing that you're willing to take a chance on it,' murmurs Savannah Walling.

'The theme we are constantly working on is interpersonal relationships, between men and women, between artists,' says Menlo MacFarlane, who, with his old friend Michael Sawyer, an actor, writer and filmmaker, joined the group in November. MacFarlane is bulkier than the others, a glowering blond Neanderthal who sometimes resembles an unmade bed. Sawyer, like Hunter, is a

slightly built man. Hunter and Florin, both curly-mopped, look and move sufficiently alike that they are sometimes referred to as Teggy and Perry. Hunter, at 25 the youngest member of the group, has a background in music, theatre and mime.

The discussion continues. 'My interest in the interpersonal is an elucidation, a microcosm of a larger thing,' observes Walling, choreographer of *Klangenfort*, a long duet exploring the crises of dependency in a male-female relationship, meticulously observed and timed, distilling universal emotions from particular acts.

Terry Hunter thinks aloud. 'What I'm very much interested in is change... conflicts and directions about where people go and how they do things always resolve around different ways to make change, different roads to take. I have a theme, and everybody can work on that theme; can I work with their method of change? And if I don't agree, do I do it anyway, because they're doing mine, or do I say no, I don't agree with it and I won't do it?'

Marion-Lea Dahl observes that a group statement takes longer to make than a personal one. She sees their task as 'speaking clearly and addressing ourselves to social change. One of the things I've realized this year is that what seems clear to me is often unclear to other people.'

The process, then, is a clarifying one, a sense of searching alongside six other artists. The product is quite various, ranging from evocative ceremonies to commentaries on agribusiness in British Columbia. In addition to shaping the choreographic and managerial tasks, the company members also take turns supplying live musical accompaniment, mostly percussive, but including flute, recorder, harmonica and guitar.

On May 15, 1977, Terminal City performs two different concerts in two different theatres. In neither place do they have more than about three hours for a technical dress rehearsal. Nevertheless, their energy is high. They have previously toured this repertoire to Edmonton, the Slokan Valley and Vancouver Island, refining the continuous 100-minute program, deciding to have an intermission, sharpening up the verbal exchanges. The tour, they say, was 'under-audience.' In Vancouver, at the Cultural Centre, the house is nearly full.

When the lights come up, Savannah Walling is running in place. She continues to do that for nearly 15 minutes. Occasionally her gestures alter; she seems to be fighting, swimming, eating, harvesting, aching, hallucinating in an endurance-athlete's trance. Suddenly the stage space is invaded by a comic wrestling match, every hold a sight gag, with a witty commentary by referee Hunter. The performers wear tank suits and cotton drawstring trousers; knee pads are frequently necessary.

Dahl performs a delicate solo, a resting-place in the otherwise frenetic opening section. Then Walling and Florin, like big sultry leopards, prowl into the space chanting, 'I want money. I want power. I want everyone to look at me.' Their seductive gyrations are counterpointed by the rest of the group's reluctant procession, muttering 'I'm afraid,' cowering, trying to obliterate themselves.

Hunter's survey of agribusiness in the province is laced with references to children's games, little songs ('this little piggy went to market...') and a mime of chickens. The movement looks like work—scything, picking—human, animal and mechanical. The time is theatrical, but the task is real. They touch us in places we usually hold private, by touching each other in powerful, sometimes brutal ways. In *Klangenfort*, the dancers enter through the audience, dash into it when the going gets rough, and otherwise work, moment to moment, off the energy in the immediate environment. Though every turn and lift and pummel is carefully planned, though the choreography has been set for weeks, the work looks improvised because it is fresh and alive. Some other works, much to the dancers' trepidation, were being altered right down to the day before performance.

Perhaps the most 'traditional' piece in the present repertoire is Rimmer's *Generation*, a lyrical, precisely visualized work for three dancers who work solo, in pairs, and only occasionally together. Rimmer's attention to line is striking, especially in a section where two dancers begin in a "dog stretch" with hips in the air, and slowly float down and across the stage in an uninterrupted phrase which leaves them, centred, bracketing the third. Choreographed in silence, it has been performed to a Purcell string quartet and to improvised percussion and flute. At its conclusion, the dancers appear to be adrift in a wind.

There are slow moments in the performance, sections which seem naive or undeveloped; this may be weakness or a deliberate attempt to vary the dynamics of the event. Audience members are sometimes bewildered. They complain that it isn't pretty, or that it's 'too personal'. They are, it seems to me, asking a pineapple to be a bunch of grapes, wanting to smooth off the very rough edges, the irregularities, which give Terminal City its special place in the Vancouver dance community.

Because there is no hierarchy in this group, we get seven

fully engaged adult intelligences sending us messages in movement. They make few concessions to traditional sex roles, except to explore them microscopically in the stunning *Klangenfort*. They are concerned with power and energy, emotion, idea and movement: these things have no gender.

The problems they are having are not internal. There is no power-tripping; conflicts and doubts are aired and resolved. As I say, the working process is time-consuming, but critical.

Terminal City's problems are larger ones, involving the company's — and its members' — interface with the community and the world. How well are serious social concerns served by touring this quirky repertoire around western Canada? How long can college-educated performers, now in their late twenties and early thirties, survive on minimal incomes garnered from part-time jobs, while they spend 30 hours a week together rehearsing and creating, contributing \$20 a month each to the studio rent, paying baby-sitters, accruing no unemployment insurance?

During their final rehearsal, they seem to be beginning to blur around the edges. I have a hunch that they are not eating very well. Two days before the Vancouver opening, they are tired, coming down with headaches, stomach-aches. Once, in an unguarded moment during a run-through, I perceive that they resemble the children in *Lord of the Flies*, creating an entire civilization out of nothing, ungoverned, leaderless, a bit frightened.

But they come through marvellously. Hours after their last performance, they will disperse, to plant trees for the summer, to recuperate and plan in an island hideaway, to study and teach in New York and Toronto. They have decided to work together for at least another year.

The vital, sibling-like connections among them, the high level of trust and caring, allow them to take risks and grow in remarkable, unpredictable ways. Most of them are professionals who could survive anywhere in North America. They have chosen to work here in Vancouver, and to work together, without grants or subsidies. They are interested in communicating, with audiences and with each other. Sharing with us images of comfort, of violence, of mutual conflict and support, they are striving not for novelty, but for the discovery of personal truth.

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Rhonda Ryman

Training the Dancer: Past, Present and Future

I

The Roots of Today

The barriers are down. Twentieth century ballet has become the property of the masses as a result of rapid communications media such as the printed word, camera, cinema and open master class. In the past, candidates for entrance into the Ballet Academy were hand chosen for their physical attributes and personality; today any and every child has the option of studying. The few elite ballet masters of the past received and passed on the secrets of their art by word of mouth and personal demonstration; today's teacher must assimilate a mass of depersonalized information from published manuals, magazine articles, overcrowded master classes with numerous teachers and countless films.

The technical challenges by twentieth century choreographers place greater demands on the artist than ever before, not only on the few top artists but on every member of the corps de ballet. The corps is no longer background ornamentation; each member must be a technician in his own right.

The outcome of these changes is that today a great number of less physically and aesthetically perfect bodies are being trained in a less personalized manner to perform at a higher level of technique — a technique which many people strongly suggest is alien to the natural usage of the human body! Dame Margot Fonteyn, however, defends her art, saying that it is not the technique but rather its application and execution which leads to problems:

The technique of classical ballet is designed in such a way that dancers who execute it perfectly should never suffer injury. But since the necessary physical perfection rarely exists it is an advantage for us to understand how best to deal with our limitations. (DUNN, 1974)

Written documentation of Western social and theatrical dance technique dates back as far as the mid-fifteenth century. From these technical manuals, information can be gleaned as to the nature of the physical movements involved, and also the way in which the dances were instructed.

During the Renaissance, European folk and court dance apparently evolved side by side, influencing each other with respect to steps and music. The origins of classical ballet can be seen even in the earliest manuals describing fifteenth century basses danses. *L'art et instruction de bien danser*, first published anonymously in Paris (1488?), counsels that the dances be performed serenely without gesticulation and as gracefully as possible. The primary movements consisted of transferences of weight in various directions, according to specific time and space patterns. Italian court dances of this period, the ballo and basadanza, also emphasized grace, as described in the works of Domenicho da Piancenza and his followers. In addition, these dances called for dexterity and lightness in their more intricate use of time and space.

By the mid-sixteenth century, the rise of the era of court ballet, those characteristics still prevailed, although the basic stepping, springing or stamping movements had become expanded. This widened vocabulary is discussed in Thoinot Arbeau's *Orchesography*. Here, simple locomotor movements, such as jumps, are embellished by leg gestures (e.g., the 'caper' or 'capriole') and the rhythmic components are more intricate and varied. At this point in time, Italian manuals such as Negri's *Le gratie d'amore* begin to discuss body attitudes involving the functional use of arms to facilitate turning movements.

The Italian style seems to have been much more ornate and vigorous than the French, since it included more gestural embellishments, stronger leg movements and more rigidly erect deportment. This acrobatic or at least athletic predisposition may have been inspired by travelling bands of *Commedia Dell'Arte* players. Although the dances required considerable lightness, coordination and endurance (dancing masters tutored their aristocratic pupils for up to three hours daily!), they most likely did not demand the rigorous physical preparation we know today.

By the advent of the seventeenth century, resemblances to the technical practices of today are more readily discerned. Movements became increasingly complicated and involved a higher degree of expertise and training. In 1661, Louis XIV founded the Royal Academy of Dancing in Paris, and the art of dance began to evolve a theoretical basis. Professionals began to replace aristocratic practitioners and women took an increasingly active role in court entertainments. Describing the method for ladies, F. de Lauze, in his *Apologie de la Danse*, stated the following:

Many masters consider that it is not necessary to oblige a lady to turn her toes outwards, and this is founded merely in that, as they are not subjected to view, it matters not what action they have.

He goes on to say that 'turnout' is a functional practice which enhances freedom and grace in the legs, and therefore should be practised by both men and women. De Lauze suggest that difficult leg movements, such as beats, might be practised with the aid of a table for support. Using a table, and eventually a 'barre', to help maintain equilibrium and concentrate the attention on leg gestures, became a standard practice which is used even today.

In the eighteenth century there was an increasing rift between the kind of dance enjoyed at court entertainments and balls and that performed in theatres. In Rameau's *The Dancing Master*, the author reminds us that he is dealing with court dance and that the movements performed on-stage, although based on the same technique, are more complicated. He lists five basic positions of the feet (first codified by his contemporary Beauchamps), various steps ('pas'), and small sequences ('temps'), and describes the subtle accompanying wrist and elbow gestures. Rameau's teaching emphasizes balanced movement. He continually stresses the importance of moving with the body held erect, allowing the motion to proceed freely from the hip and executing smooth transferences of weight from foot to foot. One of the integral positions of eighteenth century dance was known as 'the equilibrium' and was accomplished by balancing the body on the ball of one slightly out-turned foot, while the other foot hung freely beside the heel of the supporting leg. Many movements were performed on the quarter point (with the heel slightly off the floor) and required considerable strength and control in the calf muscles. This might account for the appearance of males with bulky calves and slim ankles in many lithographs of the period, although it is understood that artists often tended to idealize their subjects according to the fashion of the time.

In 1721, the English dancing master and essayist John Weaver published his *Anatomical and Mechanical Lectures upon Dancing* which attempted to link a proper study of anatomy to the teaching of dance, and to suggest the importance of symmetry and proper body placement,

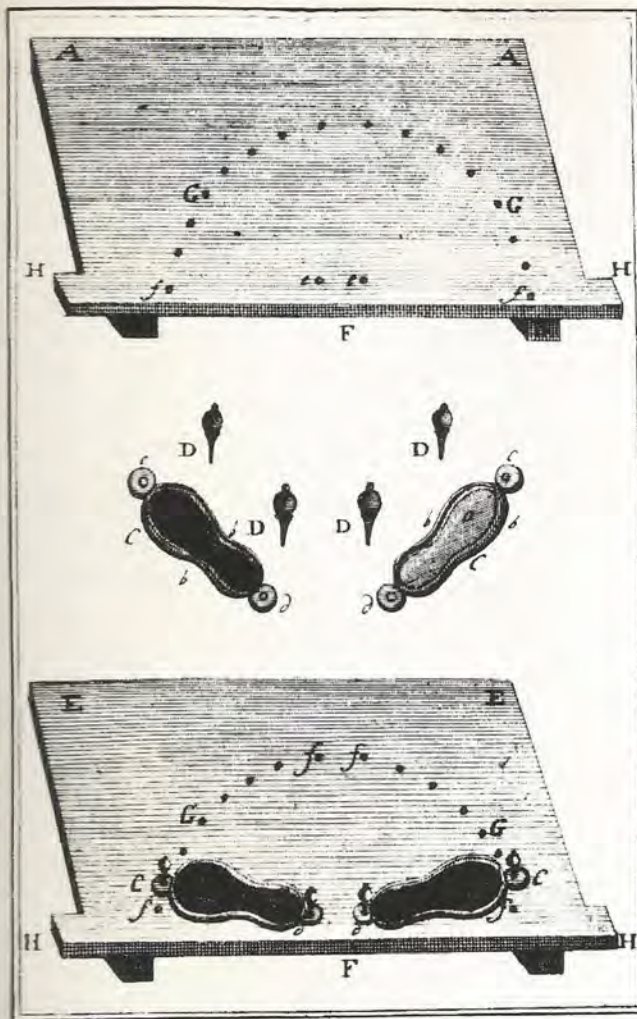


Eighteenth Century Dance: The equilibrium, pictured in Rameau's THE DANCING MASTER.

encouraging use of the natural opposition of the limbs. Weaver also emphasized the distinction between 'Common Dancing' and 'Stage Dancing' saying that the softness used in the ballroom could never be perceived in the theatre. The steps and gestures, he advised, must be exaggerated and embellished, and the springs must be higher and more dynamic. Despite the increased use of ornate, plastic poses and gestures, the balance between the dynamic and the static elements of dance was maintained. This condition was reflected in the dance notation system used during the early eighteenth century, called Feuillet Notation. It was a means of recording movement, and not merely the positions through which the movement passed.

Eighteenth century technical innovations were greatly facilitated by costume reform. For example, danseuse Marie Camargo was able to execute the intricate footwork required in various 'beaten' jumps when she shortened her skirt above her ankles, wore undergarments and removed the heels from her shoes. These and similar innovations precipitated the invention of various technical feats such as the 'entrechat six', 'gargouillade' and various 'pirouettes'. Audiences were greatly awed by the dancer's physical prowess.

Marie Sallé shifted public attention temporarily away from glitter and technical 'tricks'. By appearing without her panier, skirt or bodice, with her hair loose and unadorned, she focused on the natural simplicity and grace of the human form itself. Writing about the ideas Sallé had implemented 30 years before, Jean Georges Noverre warned that the integrity of ballet would be greater



The Tourne Hanche

threatened if the trend toward acrobatics continued to overshadow the physical expression of human sentiments. In his *Letters on Dancing and Ballets* (1803) Noverre admires 'the skill of the human machine' but advises that it must also reflect each artist's unique qualities. Both Sallé and Noverre were concerned with maintaining balance in dance, advocating that the elements of physical technique, aesthetics or style and expressive spirit must be developed symbiotically in the true artist.

Like Weaver, Noverre encourages the ballet master to study anatomy since this knowledge will

... render clearer the precepts which he will impart to the students he wishes to train: from that moment he will distinguish with ease the natural and habitual defects of physique which so often impede a pupil's progress ... It is due to this lack of study of their pupil's physique which varies as much as their physiognomies, that we owe that swarm of bad dancers which undoubtedly would be less numerous, if care had been taken to place them in a suitable calling.

Noverre's *Letters* give us a unique picture of the peculiar teaching methods of the early nineteenth century. He opposes the use of a strange contraption called the "tourne hanche" which seems to have been popular at the time. This machine was used to improve turnout by strapping the feet to a movable platform which was then twisted

open toward 180°. Of course it succeeded only in wrenching the ankle and knee joints and did little to open out the hip joint where correct turnout must occur.

The French Revolution precipitated further changes in the late eighteenth century. The atmosphere of growing concern for social and political democracy inspired a return to the classical tunics of the Greek and Roman republics. These were shorter and lighter than the elaborate Renaissance version of this same garb. By the turn of the century, light gauzy costumes were introduced which revealed the human form and freed the breathing, making possible a more dynamic way of moving. Marie Taglioni's costume for *La Sylphide*, tight-fitting bodice leaving the neck and shoulders bare, bell-shaped skirt reaching midway between the knee and the ankle, pale pink tights, and satin shoes, came to characterize the Romantic ballerina. The noted dance historian, C.W. Beaumont, related this costume innovation to the Romantic preoccupation with the supernatural. In addition to freeing the limbs for a wider range of movement, it idealized the female form, distinguishing the theatrical artist from the pedestrian theatre-goer.

This change in costume was accompanied by an expansion of the technical vocabulary to include broad, bounding leaps, especially for men, and delicate balances on the tips of the toes for women. These practices allowed the dance to appear to transcend all normal physical limitations and to create an illusion of easy weightlessness. In response to this, the audience's expectations changed: it looked for the extraordinary and the sensational. A sound theoretical basis was necessary to prepare the dancer for these expanded physical demands.

In 1820, the Italian dancing master Carlo Blasis, often called the first pedagogue of the dance, published *An Elementary Treatise Upon the Theory and Practice of the Art of Dancing*. This manual is the first published work dealing specifically with theatrical dance technique and forms the basis for Blasis' magnum opus *The Code of Terpsichore* (1831). Blasis methodically describes the positions of the arms and legs, and various attitudes, arabesques, jumps, pirouettes, etc. He advocates a rational methodology for dance instruction, advising the dancer that 'keen observation and an analytic mind can be of great service to you.' He cautions about the dangers of trial and error learning, stating that 'a bad habit once acquired is almost impossible to eradicate.' He also emphasizes that the need for balance and control is fundamental: 'you should spare no effort to acquire steadiness and perfect equilibrium.' Like Noverre, Blasis reiterates that each dancer's physical structure must be carefully examined, not for the purpose of determining whether or not he can dance, but rather to discover how to overcome various limitations or to direct the performer into certain types of roles, i.e., serious, demi-caractère or comic. He prescribes anatomically sound ways of working with the 'knock-kneed' or 'bandy-legged' dancer, which can still be applied successfully today.

Despite this analytical approach, the illustrations in several editions of the Blasis books depict anatomically impossible body configurations, such as arabesques in which the leg is hyperextended 90° completely at the hip joint! In an attempt to idealize the form of classical ballet technique, the natural limitations of the body are overlooked and even denied.



The prominent French school of the early nineteenth century was that of Auguste Vestris the younger. In contrast to the rigid, perpendicular back and geometrically angled limb positions of the Italian school, the French school was characterized by relaxed elbows, curved lines of the torso and limbs, and a slightly abandoned, less controlled way of moving. Vestris' teachings were passed on through his Danish pupil, August Bournonville, and eventually influenced the Russian school through Bournonville's pupil, the Swedish dancer/teacher, Christian Johanssen. The latter first came to Russia with Marie Taglioni in 1860 and eventually became professor of the Class of Perfection of the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg. The Italian school of Blasis was passed on through his pupil and successor, Giovanni Lepri, and influenced the Russian school through Lepri's pupil, Enrico Cecchetti, who first came to St. Petersburg in 1897 as a dancer.

The teachings of Vestris have been preserved by the Royal Danish Ballet who have maintained in their active repertoire a ballet called *Konservetoriet*. Choreographed by Bournonville as a memorial to his great teacher's work, this ballet has been described as 'a living museum piece' of the technique and style of the French Romantic Ballet; it is an actual reconstruction of 'Friday's School' in the Vestris syllabus of set daily lessons.

Bournonville's major treatise, *Etudes Chorégraphiques*, published in 1861, was directed to his friends and colleagues, professionals who were well versed in the balletic terminology of the day. The manual listed five fundamental positions of the body, seven positions of the arms, five attitudes and arabesques, as well as combinations of barre exercises, adagio, petit allegro, pirouettes, beats and grand allegro. Although Bournonville does not deal specifically

with the manner of execution of these steps and positions, he advises that they must be applied according to the individual needs of the student. He points out that it is not the amount of practice of these exercises but the care of their execution and application that determines the progress of the individual. As I've mentioned, Bournonville's choreography is preserved today by the Royal Danish Ballet, and is characterized by lengthy passages of petit and grand allegro involving crisp, precise footwork and successions of quick rebounds which give the impression that the dancer barely touches the ground. The ballon and elevation required by his choreography greatly improved the level of male allegro work, and precipitated the wide range of leaps developed by Russian male danseurs.

Bournonville's fundamental classifications were further refined by Cecchetti in his *Manuel des exercices de danse théâtrale à pratiquer chaque jour de la semaine à l'usage de mes élèves*, published at St. Petersburg, 1894. It records the set daily practices conducted by Cecchetti at the Imperial Ballet School and, like Bournonville's *Etudes*, uses a highly evolved technical vocabulary of French terms.

So, Italian and French technique and style had been superimposed on Russian physiques and temperaments by the late nineteenth century to evolve the form known as classical ballet. If the French developed the practice of 'adage' (slow, sustained movements), and the Italians contributed 'allegro' work (jumps) and 'pirouettes' (spinning turns), the Russians perfected 'pointe' work ('toe dancing') and male virtuoso jumps (such as 'tours en l'air'). In the words of Mme. Nicolaeva Legat, wife of Johanssen's successor, the Russians '... embellished the Italian style rendering it more plastic and less acrobatic; they softened its lines and improved its technique, thus making it harmonious and balanced.' Nicolas Legat adds that a major Russian contribution was the extended use of the upper back and shoulders. He describes this practice, known as 'épaulement', as '... a feeling with regard to line and posture'. In addition to softening the lines of the body, 'épaulement' serves the essential function of integrating movements of the arms to the torso via the active use of the upper spine and shoulder girdle, especially in turning movements. Its functional, as well as decorative, value is reflected in the strong yet supple upper backs of Russian-trained dancers.

Many authorities consider that the pinnacle of Russian classical ballet technique was reached in the ballet *Swan Lake*. This work, as produced at St. Petersburg in 1895, was a choreographic collaboration of the Frenchman, Marius Petipa, and the Russian, Lev Ivanov, set on an Italian ballerina, Pierina Legnani, in the dual role of Odette-Odile. The second act, in particular, epitomizes the ideals of classical style and technique. Just as the costume of the Sylphide came to characterize the Romantic ballerina, so that of the Swan Queen came to characterize the Classical ballerina: the dropped waistline accentuated the verticality of the torso; the bared shoulders, neck and arms and the full tutu skirt reaching above the knees accentuated the lines and movements of the limbs, allowing them an even greater range of movement than before (i.e., broader arm gestures, higher leg extensions); the stiffly blocked satin toe shoes made possible a more stable balance on the tips of the toes. The technique emphasized the perfect geometrical relationship of arms and legs around the central vertical axis of the torso. Static qualities, such as purity of line, muscular and emotional restraint and

breathtaking balance on the tip of one toe for females, were idealized as opposed to the dynamic qualities, such as leaps and exuberant gestures, of the Romantic era.

From this description, it is evident that Western theatrical dance of the nineteenth century is visually dissimilar from its fifteenth century antecedent, the court dance of France and Italy. Although the emphasis on graceful movements and erectness of the torso persists, the main focus is no longer on simple transferences of the body's weight. The isolated arm and leg gestures of the late nineteenth century are so intricate and stylized that they threaten to distort the balance between limbs and torso. This is the state of classical ballet by the twentieth century.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, teachers and dancers dispersed to all parts of the world, introducing classical ballet technique to people of widely differing physiques and temperaments. The noted dance historian, Peter Brinson, has observed that the unique blend of the classic discipline superimposed on each country's physical and emotional nature has given rise to numerous national 'dances d'école' or schools of dance. That is, the particular set of mechanical skills allowed within the balletic framework has been adapted to the somatotype and dynamic qualities of each particular nation. This blend has produced the unique twentieth century form of classicism seen in the choreography of Robbins and Balanchine in America, de Valois, Ashton and MacMillan in England, and Petit and Béjart in France, to name but a few.

The basic costume of the twentieth century dancer (skin-tight leotards and tights) reflects these changes. The frills and adornments of the last century have been stripped away to reveal and accentuate the total human form more than ever before: the dancer is seen as a totality from the tips of the toes to the ends of the fingers and top of the head. The curved lines of the arms are extended to lengthen the overall lines of the body and increase the usage of its surrounding space. Thus, more than ever the technique demands the full, integrated contribution of every body part. The twentieth century dancer is striving to regain the balanced use of the limbs and torso in order to fully explore the widest limits of technical achievement and to create a bold, dynamic and adaptable style of movement.

The growth and development of classical ballet technique has been traced from its earliest roots as fifteenth century social dance to the twentieth century theatrical form which we know today. In its early stages, technical manuals suggest that the traditional method of instruction was primarily by imitation. One dance master personally tutored one or a few aristocratic students in the same manner as he himself had been tutored. Since the dance master was also a choreographer and dancer, he was able to compose and execute the particular step based on the teachings of his teacher. The student would then imitate and practise the step until he had mastered its execution. Learning was therefore basically a trial-and-error experience. The imagination and intuition of the individual dance master was his basic tool, since few fundamental technical rules had been codified.

From the time of Blasis, however, dance masters have become increasingly aware of the importance of a sound theoretical foundation. Nevertheless, in the search for these principles, the basic tool of each was still largely artistic perceptivity. From Blasis' day onward, numerous



The ethereal quality of the nineteenth-century ballerina.

dance manuals have appeared, listing in detail the position of the feet, arms and head and the combinations of these positions into poses or 'enchaînments' of steps. They have described the superficial position of the body, emphasizing that it must be maintained erect and under control. They have not, however, explained exactly what is involved in the erect postural stance. Nor have they dealt with the exact bodily actions required to put the body into the numerous positions and alignments.

These manuals were admittedly intended for dancers who had first-hand experience with the subject matter. They, therefore, assumed a great deal of 'a priori' knowledge on the part of the reader and dispensed with detailed descriptions by using the widely understood technical terminology.

In other words, traditional technique manuals were more concerned with describing *what* the position or step looked like on the surface, once it was perfectly understood and achieved, than *how* the body must act in order to produce the end result. In addition, the words and phrases used by the masters of the past were vague and connotative. They most often succeeded in being poetic as opposed to accurate, artistic as opposed to scientific.

ED. NOTE: *The next article in this series takes us into the twentieth century, evaluating the usefulness of the most prominent technique manuals currently consulted by today's ballet teachers.*

FEMALE VARIATION - "KONSERVATORIET"

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff contains a melodic line with various ornaments and slurs. The bottom staff contains a bass line with notes and rests. A circled number '9' is placed above the second measure of the bottom staff. Dynamic markings include 'A p' and 'A'. There are also some symbols like 'φ' and 'φ' above the notes in the second measure of the bottom staff.

A female variation taken from the finale of Bournonville's KONSERVETORIET ('Friday's Class').



Bournonville's choreography emphasizes softness of line, not high extensions; artistic subtlety, not acrobatics.

Sondra Lomax

PRESERVING HISTORY:

SANDRA CAVERLY NOTATES THE BOURNONVILLE SCHOOLS

Traditions. Classical ballet is full of traditions. From fifth position to barre exercises to tutus, the rituals of class and performance have been practised and preserved over the centuries. Dance historians wrangle over research on ballet traditions and try to reconstruct past works; choreographers' notes and iconography are studied for traditional steps and positions; and even movements from *La Sylphide* and *Sleeping Beauty* are discussed and disputed as to their authenticity.

Thanks to dance notation, films and videotapes, more and more of the traditional choreography of the great classics is being preserved, but what about the actual ballet techniques and styles? The Russian, French, and Italian (Cecchetti) styles, in very modified and mixed form, are in widespread use in dancing studios throughout Europe and North America, and technical manuals and dictionaries of the steps, arm positions, etc., have recorded the styles in print. In isolated Denmark, the nineteenth century tradition of the Bournonville school had been maintained in almost pure form over the last century, but it is even now in danger of being lost.

When the great Danish ballet master August Bournonville died in 1879, his works might have disappeared with him, but his students kept alive his training through an oral tradition, devising a syllabus of six weekly classes which was studied from the time the dancers were eight until they were retired from the company. This syllabus was handed down from one generation to the next which helped to preserve the unique Bournonville training, characterized by dancers with brilliant beats, effortless jumps, and fast, precise footwork.

But oral traditions can easily lose authenticity by means of human error and forgetfulness. To safeguard the Bournonville technique, Sandra Caverly, associate professor of dance at York University, has written a book entitled *The Bournonville Schools* which will be published by the Marcel Dekker company in the spring of 1978. The book is a result of over three years of research by Caverly and will preserve the Bournonville weekly classes in dance notation.

Caverly's association with the Bournonville style began in the summer of 1974, when she traveled to Denmark on a short-term Canada Council grant to study at the Royal Danish School in Copenhagen. The Bournonville classes, with their long combinations and continuous series of jumps, were like a new language to Caverly, who had been trained in the Cecchetti style at the National Ballet School.



So she began notating the steps to teach to her ballet students back at York. Armed with pencil and manuscript paper, Caverly crouched at the back of the Danish studio, notating movements in between dancing each combination in the two-hour long classes. Her manuscripts caught the eye of Kirsten Ralov, a Bournonville expert and ex-Royal Danish Ballet dancer, who coaches the Bournonville works for the company. Ralov, who was concerned about the preservation of the Bournonville classes, asked Caverly if she would notate the entire enchainements. Caverly agreed and soon began collaborating with Ralov whose astute mind had retained the actual Bournonville classes from her childhood training.

For over three years, Caverly worked intensively with Ralov during summers and Christmas holidays in Denmark, New York, and Chicago, wherever Ralov was demonstrating the Bournonville technique. From her nota-

WEDNESDAY No. 19

INTRO

The musical notation is presented on two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a '7' in a circle, indicating a 7/8 time signature. The music features a variety of note values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are several slurs and accents throughout the piece. The second staff continues the musical line, also featuring slurs and accents. The notation is detailed, with many small markings indicating specific performance techniques.

Wednesday's Bournonville Class: Enchaînement 19.



Postures reached during enchaînements appear to embrace the audience.

tion of the Bournonville school's centre exercises, Caverly formed the building blocks for the four-volume book which will capture the nineteenth-century style in Benesh and Labanotation with word descriptions of the steps and the accompanying musical scores.

For Caverly, the responsibilities of recording this unique ballet technique and style are overwhelming, but she feels that it is vital to preserve the Bournonville tradition. 'After the past years of fast, experimental choreography and the focus on new things, people have started to think back to their roots and traditions,' she believes. 'There is a reappraisal of classical styles.'

The Bournonville technique is linked to the French school of Auguste Vestris, one of Bournonville's teachers during the first quarter of the nineteenth century and the man who was considered the greatest male dancer of his day. And the Bournonville works have an integrity which follows the tradition of Noverre, the great eighteenth century ballet master who believed that technique is not an end in itself. Bournonville described dance as an art which aims towards an ideal of dramatic expressiveness, and his choreographic focus was on expression, through movement, of the daily lives and fantasies of people. In fact, Bournonville believed that art should help to develop the spirituality of a country.

Caverly says that the Bournonville ballets emphasize human relationships, unlike the works of twentieth century choreographers such as Balanchine who create abstract designs in an emotionless manner. This human element, inherent in the libretto of Bournonville dances, tends to involve the audience in what is happening onstage, an involvement which Caverly feels is missing in the computer-like quality of today's experimental modern dance works. She adds that the Bournonville style, with its energetic and rhythmic movements which seem to reach out and embrace audiences, expresses feelings and moods with an authenticity lacking in other styles, because the total body movement is geared towards expression and the portrayal of a role.

Perhaps Noverre's heritage is most clearly apparent in Bournonville's *La Sylphide*, where the technique is totally integrated into the story. The Sylph performs tiny, lightning-fast steps on pointe, skimming across the floor to emphasize her ethereal qualities which contrast with the earthbound dances of Effie and her mortal friends. Here, virtuosity is not shown for virtuosity's sake, but solely as a vehicle for dramatic expression. And Caverly points out another characteristic of the human element in Bournonville technique: the dancing tends to be directed in a straight-forward manner towards the audience, without the aristocratic coldness so admired in other styles, such as that of Petipa and the Russian school, where wide-open arms and flung-back heads tend to direct the movement up into the air and above the audience's reach.

Bournonville's ballets are about people, danced by people, and enjoyed by people. 'Audiences are entertained by Bournonville's ballets,' explained Caverly, 'because one can enter into fairyland and enjoy the story without having to search for heavy, underlying symbolism.' The popularity of his style is evidenced by the success of the Royal Danish Ballet's recent tour of the United States, where people were flocking to the performances in New York. Caverly feels that there has been a recent discovery of Bournonville in North America, 'which has simultane-

ously brought about a re-awakening of pride in the Bournonville tradition in Denmark.' The Danish, Caverly says, have taken their Bournonville heritage for granted over the past years, turning to works by modern Danish choreographers like Fleming Flindt. But the Danes are beginning to realize the value of their unique style and tradition as the company tours receive international acclaim.

Caverly's book will preserve the Bournonville tradition in Benesh notation, a form of movement shorthand developed during this century as a recording system for ballet choreography. Caverly began learning the complicated system at 17, while recuperating from a serious back injury which ended her chances for a professional ballet career. She continued her notation studies in correspondence with the Benesh Institute in London and in 1970 passed her qualifying examination to become a Benesh instructor. Her combination of skills as ballet teacher and notator brought her to her present position at York University and also enabled her to record the Bournonville syllabus.

For the benefit of readers unfamiliar with Benesh notation, Caverly's book is also written out in word descriptions. She has had to outline in the traditional French terminology every minute detail of gesture and position, from the degree of the tilt of the head and the exact direction of the movement to the height of the arms. 'The Bournonville dancers, so isolated in Denmark, have strange names for some steps within the French terminology,' says Caverly, 'while some of the unique Danish steps have no names at all.' Translating the steps from notation into a written description has been Caverly's hardest task since it requires special attention to the peculiarities of the Danish experience and a thorough understanding of the classical phraseology most common in North America and Great Britain, where the majority of the book's potential market is located. Massive coordination has been required on the book which assembles choreographic material for the first time in three different forms: Benesh notation, Labanotation, and longhand. The notes had to be supervised by Ralov in Denmark for accuracy and sent to Ann Hutchinson in London, who is recording the steps in Labanotation. All of Caverly's Benesh manuscripts were mailed to the Benesh Institute in London to be double-checked by their experts, and proofs of the manuscripts were mailed back and forth between the co-workers and the publishing company in New York.

The authenticity and accuracy of the material gives a historical value to the book, but there is a practical side as well, in the retention of a training system which has produced such outstanding male dancers as Erik Bruhn, Stanley Williams and Peter Martins. Dancing in the Bournonville style demands a totally new range of movement for dancers such as members of the National Ballet of Canada, the only professional Canadian company which currently holds a full-length Bournonville work in its repertoire.

Veronica Tennant, a principal dancer with that company, said that she was surprised at the level of technical and stylistic difficulty when she first learned Bournonville's *La Sylphide*. 'I was trained in the Cecchetti system at the School of the National Ballet, and the jumps in *La Sylphide* are not in our technique. I felt tremendously earthbound at first, with sore legs and feet from rehearsing. Erik Bruhn coached me to find freedom within the bounds of this technique, but it is still very hard to do two acts of difficult jumps without showing the effort. There

are also recognized Bournonville steps which just don't appear in other ballets, such as the fast pas de bourrées which force the legs to constantly cross over one another.'

Tennant feels that the challenge of Bournonville work would be a good addition to the curriculum of the National Ballet School, especially for the boys' training, since it was the Bournonville school which maintained the integrity of male dancing during the last century when the female roles had gained supremacy in the rest of Europe. And Erik Bruhn expounds the values of Bournonville enchainements in his book *Bournonville and Ballet Technique* by saying, 'All my life I have attempted to master them, and I believe that they have great value when added to a good basic foundation. Properly applied, they are excellent for ballon, batterie and any allegro movement.'

Bournonville also builds stamina in dancers, since each daily class contains at least nine different jumping combinations and long, sustained adagio exercises. Teachers and dancers will be able to use Caverly's book of Bournonville classes as a new tool for developing qualities of technique, such as brilliant beats and soaring leaps, that are lacking in other styles.

If Erik Bruhn's dancing shows the strength and virility gained by a performer trained in the Bournonville school, Caverly also points out that the quick, unpredictable changes of direction in the Danish technique holds equal potential for training dancers. 'Another benefit of Bournonville movement is the contrast, the small, quick linking steps which contain compressed energy which explodes into large jumps.' Caverly feels that dancers today tend to give movements the same values in terms of dynamics, so that the contrasts needed to give colour to the classical works are missing.

Caverly explained that the linking of steps through dynamic changes is a distinct characteristic of Bournonville choreography: movements are tossed one to another by a change of weight which alters the flow of energy and varies the shape of a combination. The preparations for steps are given equal importance since the lead into a movement is the key to that movement's execution. And Bournonville enchainements employ distinct rhythms to facilitate the intricacies of batterie. The continuous flow of movement in Bournonville dancing thus prohibits any lull in the action; you never see a Bournonville dancer walk silently to centre stage and take a preparation for an elaborate variation as you often do in Petipa ballets. The choreography of Bournonville's *Napoli* and *Konservetoriet* moves from one scene to another, with lots of mime sequences and dancing to form the transitions without breaks in the story. The stage is always full of movement, people and life.

Perhaps it is Tennant's comment, from a dancer introduced to Bournonville late in her training, which best describes the potential of Sandra Caverly's book as a historical record and a useful teaching aid.

'All traditions have to be clung to,' she says. 'It's only through knowing roles and conquering them that we can continue on. It's always from the basis of traditions that people create. Bournonville is one of the great techniques, but it is underrated, undervalued and understudied.'

Caverly hopes that her book will help to change this situation.

(Photos by Andrew Oxenham of Sondra Lomax. Notation by Sandra Caverly.)

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1977-1978

MEXICO	— OCTOBER 3, 23
LONDON, ONTARIO	— OCTOBER 25, 26
KINGSTON	— OCTOBER 27, 28
TORONTO	— OCTOBER 29
FRANCE	— NOVEMBER 16 DECEMBER 11
U. S. A.	— FEBRUARY 8, 25
MONTREAL	— MARCH 30, 31 APRIL 1, 2 SALLE WILFRID PELLETTIER
OTTAWA	— APRIL 7 NATIONAL ARTS CENTER
SOUTH AMERICA	— APRIL 9, 23
QUEBEC CITY	— MAY 29, 30





Exile, refugee, displaced person (D.P.), émigré, expatriate. The English language is full of words describing people cut off from their native roots. Some have left their countries voluntarily, others by force and still others as a result of circumstances which made it impossible for them to remain in their native country.

Except for small forays of travel abroad, most people are born, live and die in one country, often taking for granted the organic bond they have with it. It is difficult to imagine the tremendous upheaval in a person's life when that person is forced to find roots elsewhere. Some undergo this change successfully; others, like an exotic species of plant or animal transplanted onto foreign soil, waste away and eventually perish.

For a transplanted artist, no matter how hospitable his new host country may be, the experience of 'singing the Lord's song in a strange land' is often very painful. Here we have a paradox: on the one hand it is true that the artist participates in an international community which often strives to express our common humanity, transcending national boundaries, but on the other hand, the artist can only achieve this "internationalism" by expressing it through the specific experience of a culture which gives him/her the language, the references, the images, the sense of place and spiritual life which feed the creative being. For obvious reasons, writers have the greatest struggle when transplanted, being so dependant on language, the tool with which they communicate. But it is no less difficult for visual artists, musicians or dancers who are cut off from the source from which they draw the concrete material later transformed into their art.

Someone once defined a 'Canadian' to me as a 'D.P. with seniority.' For Canadians, then, being for the most part a nation of immigrants, the problem of transplanting cultures is not a new one. The most recent immigration into Canada has come from the Soviet Union and among the

Profile

Eileen Thalenberg

Mikhail Berkut

Under New Skies

*By the rivers of Babylon
There we sat down
Yes, we wept
When we remembered Zion . . .*

...
*How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a strange land.*

immigrants are many creative artists. Some have been forced to take up other occupations (like the two Leningrad actors who run the Barmolai, a Russian restaurant in Toronto) and others, like Mikhail Berkut, have been able to continue in their own profession.

Berkut came to Canada in 1976. In his native Russia he was a prominent choreographer, ballet master and teacher of dance at such places as the Kirov School of Choreography in Leningrad and the Moscow Theatre Institute. He is the author of several books on dance and dance notation and has an impressive background in staging dances for theatre, television and film. Berkut has made his home in Montreal where he recently opened his own school: Les Ballets Russes de Montréal.

I approached him for an interview and told him I would like to talk with him about culture shock, about being Russian, about expectations, surprises, disappointments, what it felt like to be transplanted and after enjoying a reputation at home, to be forced in his mid-forties to re-establish himself in a new country. I made the mistake of bringing a tape-recorder to our first interview. The tone of the conversation was cautious. The second interview (without tape-recorder) was much warmer and more open. As we spoke, I observed that I was talking to someone still in the process of adjusting to a new society. Impressions were still fresh and time had not allowed them to be fully assimilated.

It was after a series of events both personal and artistic, protracted over a few years, that Berkut applied for emigration. The final weeks preceding his departure from Russia dragged on painfully. 'Two emotions dominated. One was fear — fear of the unknown that lay ahead; and the other was a feeling of great loss — the loss of a homeland, not in a political sense, but in a physical and emotional sense: a familiar rock, a street corner, the house where you were brought up, all these things that give you a

S.C. 20



PHOTO: Eileen Thalenberg

sense of place, of belonging, would soon be irretrievably lost. My one desire was to leave quickly and lessen the pain.'

His first contact with the West was Vienna, where Soviet emigrants are processed. Shortly thereafter he left for Italy, the country which offers Soviet emigrants transit papers before they decide upon their final destination. This is the period of decompression.

'Because I am an artist,' he told me, 'I think I was more conscious of my impressions and feelings. Not that others did not feel these things as acutely as I, but I was feeling them and at the same time trying to analyze what was happening and sort things out. When I first arrived in Vienna I was in a state of complete shock, as if I had either awakened from a difficult dream or had fallen asleep and landed in a fairy tale. I walked through the streets in a daze. I saw, I looked, but like a baby I was unaware of the significance of what I observed. I was completely disoriented. Every morning I organized excursions to the museums. I don't remember half of what I saw, but I went every day and couldn't see enough.'

'There were two groups in Vienna that helped the new arrivals. One was composed of official organizations like HIAS who understood our culture shock and cared for us as one cares for sick people. The other were the older emigrants; if a man arrived three days before, he was already a 'professor' and taught you survival techniques. In the Soviet Union he might not have helped you. He might have been suspicious of you; but in Vienna, Russians who differed from each other socially, psychologically, etc., were all thrown together because they shared a common

fate and interacted as one group.

'By the time I got to Rome, I was much calmer, more confident. And then again Rome... the museums, the cathedrals... too many impressions at once,' he says, shaking his head.

Canada, Winnipeg, to be exact, was the next stop. And that had its own surprises. 'In the Soviet Union we get a completely distorted picture of the West. The official propaganda tells us that in the West there is no culture, that talent is not respected but wasted, that the only advances are technological and that the first priority of a bourgeois society is money. Then an equally distorted impression filters through to us from immigrants writing home. So when I got to Canada, I was surprised to find arts councils supporting the arts, people interested in dance and taking classes not necessarily to become professional dancers but for their own personal artistic education, and in general a highly developed cultural life.' But other things were very upsetting: 'I was appalled by the poverty and living conditions of some of the Canadian Indians. I was disturbed by a certain xenophobic attitude that some Canadians have vis à vis immigrants. Then there were the buses and streets where everybody minded their own business and no one spoke to anyone...'

The surprises come daily in major and minor ways, often bringing overwhelming problems with them. Independent of the problems peculiar to his discipline, the social, political, ideological education which informs an artist's world view causes him to be constantly confronted with contradictions: 'He must either adapt and find points of contact with his new society,' says Mikhail Berkut, 'or change professions: Anything else means self-destruction. If he succeeds there will be growth as an artist.'

The contradictions and conflicts were there for Mikhail Berkut in Russia. 'An artist isn't only a product of his environment. Over the 30 years I have been involved in dance, I developed my own personal and artistic credo which I had never been able to fully realize in Russia. There came a point when I felt that I was physically and emotionally in chains. When I did my *Poem of Man*, a collection of dances using the music of Chopin, Debussy, Ravel and others, I became ideologically suspect because the theme of the dance was not political. I was accused in the press of being an 'abstractionist', a 'cubist', an 'impressionist', a 'cosmopolitan' (because I used the music of foreign composers). When I did my production of Beethoven's *Appassionata* for the Beethoven bicentennial and said that it was about the struggle of the artist for creative freedom, they asked me what 'freedom' I was talking about, since I was given my freedom by the Revolution. So although I am a part of my Russian culture, a product of it, it was that culture which prevented me from fulfilling my own artistic needs.'

In May of this year Mikhail Berkut gave his first recital in Montreal, at a matinee performance at Place des Arts. It was a demonstration composed of several character dances, some folk dances, classical ballet pieces and a modern piece. 'The character dances and folk dances were well received. People were not used to seeing this kind of dance. The classical pieces were admired for the purity and excellence of technique. But the modern piece did not impress anyone. They found it well done but old-fashioned. In Russia I was an 'abstractionist', here in Canada, old-fashioned!'

Berkut admits that there is a great gap in his education: 'My classical background is very strong: pas de deux, Baroque dances, historical and character dances, etc. But my knowledge of modern dance lags far behind. I am not ashamed to admit this and I have begun to re-educate myself. I go to modern dance concerts, observe modern dance and jazz classes, listen to modern composers, electronic music and read avidly. I am a good student,' he laughs. 'I want very much to work in various genres, jazz, modern as well as classical. My dream is to choreograph a ballet which incorporates several different kinds of dancing.'

Berkut's strong interest in folklore has led him to study the folk music and dances indigenous to the many places he has travelled to in the past. Coming to Quebec has allowed him to explore French Canada's folk tradition. In his recital at Places des Arts, he included a newly choreographed piece based on the Quebec Quadrille. He suggests that 'someone should be researching and collecting, categorizing and systematizing Quebec dances. Otherwise they will be lost. Right now every choreographer does his own interpretation of the dances and the originals are nowhere to be studied.'

Although he is very enthusiastic about Canada and optimistic about his new Montreal school, Berkut is not uncritical of the Canadian dance scene. 'Isn't it awful that, in a country this size, there are only four dance departments in Canadian universities? There are many faculties of fine arts, but they don't offer dance programs. Often dance is relegated to the department of physical education.' He also finds that many Canadian dancers are poorly educated: 'They should have a broader education, not just in their narrow field. A dancer must learn control of his/her art and learn everything that relates to it: costumes, lighting, music, physiology, history of dance, etc.'

Throughout our conversation, Mikhail Berkut is quick to assure me that all the adjustments he has had to face and the learning experiences he has undergone would not have been possible without the help of friends and fellow artists he has met in Canada; people like Mme. Chiriaeff of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens for whom he taught during his first year in Canada and who introduced him to French Canada's culture and its artistic community. There are many others, individuals and organizations; he remembers them all and feels that he has a debt to pay.

And then there is his British wife, Penny, whom he met in Rome. 'Without her I could not have done it. She has taught me to be more open with people, more trusting and not to be afraid to say what is on my mind. That is one major difference between the West and Russia. Here people say what they think. Artists will voice a personal opinion about an exhibition, a concert, a play. . . . They may be right or wrong, I may agree with them or not, but they are not afraid to speak. In Russia, most artists are afraid to venture a criticism which deviates from the official position.'

It may sound to us like a success story, but the process of transition into a new society has not been an easy one for Mikhail Berkut. He told me: 'To this day I cannot look at Russian paintings without familiar associations of people and places. This is so painful. I have brought tapes and records of Russian music from the Soviet Union and I still can't listen to them without being sick for days. If I don't hear Russian music I don't miss it, but if I do . . . it's awful. It's so personal, it's part of my nervous system; my response is purely emotional.'

Between every immigrant and his/her new home there is an exchange of what that immigrant has to offer and what the new environment offers in return. This process of exchange has already begun in the case of Mikhail Berkut. It will be interesting to speak to him again in a few years and compare his perceptions then and now, to see how he has changed artistically in Canada and what kind of an influence his school, Les Ballet Russes de Montréal, has had on Canadian dance.

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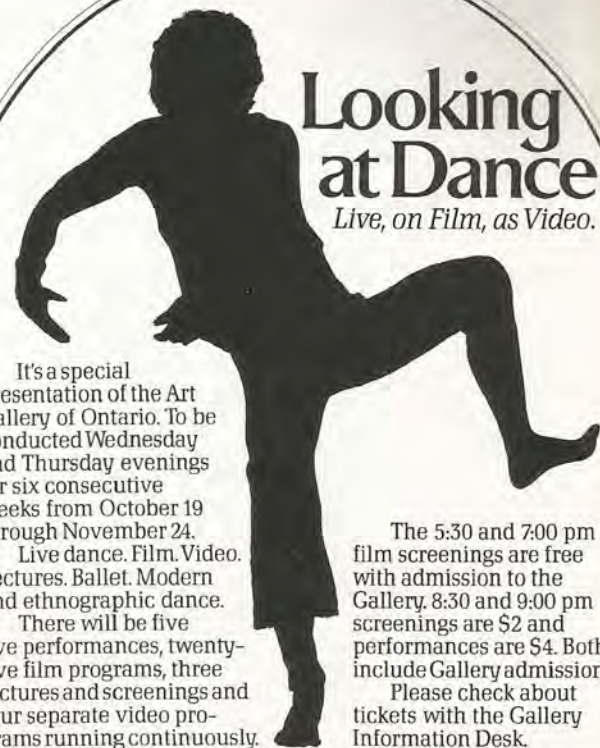
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Graham Jackson

Graham Training Settles in Canada



PHOTO: NIKI BUREKET



A dance school existing in tandem with the performing company it feeds is hardly a new phenomenon, certainly not in countries where ballet is part of the cultural tradition. Ballet companies have long recognized the need for solid training; schools are established to maintain standards, to uphold an image of the True Ballet. (Of course, like the True Faith, True Ballet comes in a hundred subtly different guises.) The schools have provided the nourishment for ballet's prolonged existence: the young, Spartan bodies able to carry on the tradition of ballet's special aesthetic. For their perseverance, ballet companies and, much more recently in Canada and England, the schools attached to them, have been favoured with extensive subsidies from government organizations, corporations and individual patrons.

Modern dance, not having the venerable traditions of classical ballet, has not had to worry too much about these things. Training has been more sporadic. The reformation of dance which took place in the twenties did not result in an alliance of the various discontented factions, and today the schools reflect the diffuse nature of modern dance, emphasizing the differences, not the similarities.

There has been no history of financial investment in

modern dance training separate from company activities as there has been with ballet and, as a result, it came as a pleasant surprise when the Canada Council announced recently that it was giving the school of the Toronto Dance Theatre a project grant of \$10,000. As principal Donald Himes says, this grant is not going to alter the school's immediate future; it's the recognition that counts, 'the pat on the head'.

The school began in 1968 as a complement to the Toronto Dance Theatre. Not only was it an extra source of revenue that helped to defray performance costs, but it also established a centre for training specifically in the Graham technique, which artistic directors Peter Randazzo, David Earle, Patricia Beatty, as well as Donald Himes, had all been studying in New York in the early sixties. After several abortive efforts to form companies of their own, Beatty, Earle and Randazzo joined forces in the Toronto Dance Theatre and the school followed quite naturally. Thus Martha Graham's technique with its idiosyncratic focus on pelvis and the 'interior landscape' made its Canadian debut.

Himes describes the prevailing atmosphere at TDT in the early years as *laissez-faire*: 'It was a little too free, too

open. People would take classes without paying. We suffered from that climate of the sixties where everything was 'Get in there and do your own thing, man'. But you really can't train yourself for a career in dance that way. It takes a long time to master your body.'

It was very hard on the teachers, this casual attitude. With some students coming twice a week and others coming once a month, teachers were constantly giving classes to students at different levels of accomplishment. 'They didn't know who to teach for,' Himes admits. This state of affairs persisted until TDT moved into the Don Hall, an old Finnish community centre, in October of 1974.

TDT's first studio had been in the old Yorkville area, above a body rub shop. Their second, on Lombard Street, had windows on three sides, but it was a fire hazard and had no washroom. (David Earle remarks that running a dance school without a washroom was an act of insanity, although he feels that these conditions radicalized his own creative efforts: 'My works became darker, more brooding...!')

In 1974, however, the school officially advertized itself as a school for the first time. Himes and Marie Marchowsky, a student of Graham's in the thirties, were appointed co-principals and the organization was tightened up considerably. The enrolment was pretty much the same as it had been in the first years — about 200 — but the emphasis had changed, from upper-middle class housewives wanting exercise classes for themselves and eurythmics for their kids, to more serious-minded students wanting to get thorough Graham training.

The exercise classes still exist. Having undergone considerable changes, these classes, now called 'Stretch-and-Strength,' have proven to be one of the school's most profitable programs. Himes discovered 'Stretch-and-Strength' on a visit to New York a few years ago. It was part of class given by a former Graham dancer, Matt Turney (*Seraphic Dialogue* and *Embattled Garden*): 'It's like doing your scales in piano. It's not that you throw beauty out the window, but what you're working at is the technical side of your body. These classes get you into shape very quickly because they're so intense. You work on one little area and then you move on to another and then another and at the end of an hour and a half you've covered the entire body.' At TDT, 'Stretch-and-Strength' attracts lawyers, students, actors and anyone else interested in keeping his or her body running efficiently.

Martha Graham continues to dominate the school activities, however. A 12-week beginner's course introduces the student to her particular philosophy of movement. A summer program offers courses at different levels; each year since its inception, Bertram Ross, a former partner of Graham herself and an authority on her technique, has been a guest teacher. But the beginner's and summer courses are the only courses to be strictly structured (in the beginner's course students *must* take two classes a week). Those who wish to go on with a view to performing can take classes on elementary, intermediate and advanced levels, but in a more haphazard fashion. Advanced students, for example, take company class, but, of course, this is only available when the company is in Toronto.

The school often invites guest teachers to give classes, mostly exponents of the Graham technique, but teachers with different backgrounds have offered *their* perspectives on modern dance training. Judy Jarvis, Danny Grossman,

Kenny Pearl, Lilian Jarvis have all taught at TDT. After an exciting one-shot performance in *Romeo and Juliet* during the National Ballet's anniversary season last fall, former National principal Lilian Jarvis taught a barre course at the school that attempted to analyze the origins of movement. This course was created, Himes says, to counteract the standard approach to dance teaching in which the teacher puts his or her students through a series of physical manoeuvres, an arcane ritual that has some rhyme, perhaps, but no apparent reason. The students, Himes says, were enthusiastic about Jarvis' course and the school hopes to persuade her to come back in the fall to teach it again.

This past year student enrolment has risen to 300. Some of these students come, not in hopes of becoming a member of the TDT company, but to diversify their dance training. Given the highly competitive state of the dance market today, few dancers can get by on ballet or jazz training alone: 'If dancers want to go out and earn a living in dance, they have to be prepared to do many things,' Himes explains. 'If you go to an audition for TV or a musical, they're always keen to see your double tours and pirouettes because these are useful. If you watch TV shows where there's a lot of dancing, you'll see dancers coming out on pointe one week, and the same dancers doing contractions to the ground the next. Dancers competing in that market have to be versatile.'

Other students are defectors from the anti-intellectual atmosphere of classical ballet schools. Claudia Moore and Nancy Ferguson both fled the National Ballet to study Graham which Moore calls more solid, more meaningful. (Himes put it another way: 'When you're told your lover has shot himself, your immediate reaction is not to put your arms in fifth position!') Both Ferguson and Moore eventually joined the company but not until they underwent a 're-organization of the body,' which, Himes claims, is crucial if a ballet dancer is to achieve the right look for modern.

'It takes a little while to move in the way that distinguishes modern from ballet. It's not that these people don't have beautifully-trained bodies. They're usually stretched, usually strong, usually capable of doing an extraordinary number of things; but they don't look right for what our choreographers want.

In ballet the centre of the body is held still and the legs and arms move around that, so the movement is in a sense peripheral. This means you have to have a very strong body, very lifted, to maintain that centre. In modern, movement spreads from the centre of the body to the outside. Your strength comes from the turn of the pelvis working against the stretch of the back and the spiral of the body around the spine. But ballet-trained dancers have been taught for 200 years to keep their pelvis upright, level, hips down, all those things that give that ballet-look, that elegance. As soon as ballet dancers start a Graham class, they must turn the pelvis constantly. In fact, a Graham class begins with everyone sitting on the floor in order to emphasize the use of the pelvis. Not that we don't have movements in which the centre of the body is kept still... We use the legs, too, but it's a whole different procedure, right from the beginning.'

Most of the 300 students, however, are novitiates in the Graham technique: many cherish a desire to dance with TDT. Few in fact will become performers, but those that

have are a fair measure of the school's worth: Ernst and Carole Eder (Tournesol), Kenny Pearl (Alvin Ailey, Donald McKayle, Martha Graham), Barry Smith (Martha Graham), Ross McKim (London Contemporary Dance Theatre) as well as the dazzling Moore.

With an enlarged student population to contend with, Himes finds very little opportunity to take classes himself. As sole principal (Marchowsky has her own school in Toronto), he has one assistant who takes charge of the daily running of the school, while Himes himself makes up the schedules, decides who will teach what, when, where, and sometimes even how. The school's relationship with the parent company has always been an easy, relaxed one, but Himes can cite one or two instances of dissension on the subject of *how* something is going to be taught. Like any school teaching a specific movement vocabulary, questions of interpretation, of aesthetic goals, often arise, but these are usually resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

School and company have shared the same facilities right from the beginning — at Don Hall, two studios plus offices — and this has occasioned confusion and chaos at times, with the company clamouring for rehearsal space and the school equally vociferous in its demands for class space. But Himes feels that even with space problems, shared accommodation has had its distinct advantages for both:

'Training, even for those who will never perform on a stage, is geared toward performance. To have the feeling that a performing company is there gives a great excitement to the school. I would hate to see them in different buildings. The performers of the Toronto Dance Theatre are our teachers as well so they're constantly experimenting with movement in the classes. Some of the class work is more or less set, but other parts of the class, the moving across the floor and the combinations, vary depending on the teacher. Creative juices are stirred up in class.'

This fall, company and school both take up residency in a new location, the Don Vale Community Centre, an old church in Toronto's Cabbagetown. Once renovated, their new home will contain four studios in addition to office space, a decided improvement, one that coincides happily with official recognition from the Canada Council.

The grant aside, the future of the TDT school seems fairly secure, as secure, that is, as TDT itself which was shaken by a few mild tremors of discontent this spring. Himes hopes to be able to produce more programs originating in the school itself, theatre productions like *Babar* and *Old Man Coyote and Creation*. With a cast of students from the TDT school, *Old Man Coyote* toured Ontario public schools last term under the auspices of Prologue. *Babar*, which Urjo Kareeda, on its debut, called the hit of the 1971/72 theatre season in Toronto, was originally set on members of TDT company, but for the last couple of Yuletide seasons, its cast has been made up solely of students from the school. Both productions have been enormously successful in reaching young audiences, and Himes, the mastermind behind their ingenious melange of theatrical effects, is eager to have them recognized as the school's own.

Besides the flattery of recognition and the financial boost, the grant has given the school an aura of respectability. As Himes says, 'We've never had any doubts about ourselves,' but proving their worth to a public not entirely sold on the aesthetic of modern dance, and to equally suspicious arts councils, has been hard. Everyone connected with school and company hopes that the grant will not only draw the timid-but-curious to the school but will also act as encouragement to teachers of modern dance across the country who have subsisted for too long in the shadow of the tutu. Perhaps this grant will even set a precedent for arts funding on the provincial and local levels in Canada, thereby ensuring modern dance steady growth rather than perpetual chaos.

Donald Himes

He came to dance through music. As a child in Galt, Ontario, he took the conventional piano lessons with the conventional one-and, two-and approach to rhythm. Dissatisfied with his training, he started investigating what was to become a major interest — not to say, obsession — in his life: eurythmics. Simply speaking, eurythmics is the teaching of music through movement; musical structure, harmony, and especially rhythm are all taught through movement. As Himes once said, 'Running, walking, the human heartbeat — those are all rhythmic procedures. We learn rhythm in music from the things that a child does naturally, but which we lose as we grow older.'

In Toronto, Himes studied eurythmics with Madame Lasserre at the Royal Conservatory of Music where he also taught piano. He later quit his job and went to Geneva to study at the Jaques-Dalcroze school which its founder, Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, had set up to teach his revolutionary 'gymnastique rythmique' (or eurythmics). Returning



photo: Chris Darling

in 1959, convinced that this was the only way to teach music to children, Himes accepted a post teaching along side his old mentor, Madame Lasserre, at the Royal Conservatory as well as resuming his job as piano instructor.

In the fall of 1959, he also taught the first class at the newly-opened National Ballet School, a class in eurythmics, and among his students that first Monday was Veronica Tennant (with Celia Franca sitting on the sidelines). Eurythmics was part of the course of instruction at Patricia Beatty's New Dance Group school in the mid-sixties; Himes was playing there as an accompanist for Beatty's classes and training as a dancer.

It was really inevitable that his study of eurythmics would lead him into another aspect of movement – theatrical dancing. Himes had been aware of dance before but only in the form of the Sadlers Wells Ballet which made a couple of visits to Canada in the early fifties with Robert Helpmann and Margot Fonteyn prominent in the ranks; these visits Himes remembers with the fondness of someone remembering a childhood romance. In the late fifties, he began to take modern dance classes at the Hebrew Y from Yone Kviety's whose style of teaching, Himes says, was modelled on Mary Wigman's. While studying with Kviety's, he met David Earle and Susan Macpherson (a charter member of TDT) and together they attended Martha Graham's summer school in New York City a few years later.

In 1967, Himes danced with Patricia Beatty's New Dance Group of Canada in its first public concert (which also featured a work by Peter Randazzo, at that time a recent defector from the Graham company). Himes was the featured performer in Beatty's *Momentum*, a study in psychological angst, based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (with the choreographer as Lady M), akin in style to José Limon's *The Moor's Pavane*. Nathan Cohen, always a friend to modern dance in Toronto, praised the performance in the *Toronto Star*: 'They achieve a radar-like connection . . . with their audience.'

His first reaction to a performance by Martha Graham, Himes recalls, was very similar to the reactions of people approaching TDT today for the first time, after being brought up on *Swan Lake*: puzzlement and frustrated expectations.

'I was shocked. I didn't see anything my eye had been taught to appreciate. I thought, my God! what are these people doing? Can't they get into the right shapes? It's only after a re-education of your aesthetic that you come to see what they're after. Someone once said that ballet is line and modern dance is volume – which is very true, I think. When you think of the Graham technique and several other modern techniques, you think of the sculpture around-the-body, rather than the line which is meant to be seen in a proscenium arch, to be seen flat, from the front.'

Himes has since become a champion of modern dance in Canada. He feels that it's as rich and vital an aesthetic experience as ballet, even more so, although Himes can be seen in attendance at most ballet performances (as well as at modern dance). He is the ubiquitous dance aficionado, a distinction he must share with the former prima ballerina of the National Ballet, Lois Smith, an old acquaintance.

In addition to his sundry administrative duties at TDT and his teaching responsibilities at Smith's School this summer, Himes has been working as resident choreog-

rapher at the Stratford Festival, staging, among other things, the Capulet Ball in *Romeo and Juliet*, the dance celebrating Titania and Oberon's reconciliation in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and an ugly bacchanale in *Miss Julie* in which a young girl is threatened with rape by drunken servants. Although he was given a free hand by the directors, the actors, particularly the older ones, wondered what dance had to do with them. Taking a Grotowskian approach, Himes tried to persuade them that their bodies are as important as instruments of expression as their voices.

In the fall, Himes will return to a full schedule managing and teaching at the TDT school. He will also resume his teaching post at York University and his job doing the music for CBC's *Mr. Dressup*. Most importantly though, with students back from summer commitments, he will be able to start work on *Little Red Riding Hood*, the successor to *Babar* and *Old Man Coyote and Creation*. *Red* will utilize the same melange of theatre, dance, and music that distinguished its predecessors, a melange based on the discipline called eurythmics which Donald Himes began studying 25 years or so ago.

As the rhythm of the human heartbeat monitors his physical life, eurythmics continues to possess his imagination and fire his creative genius. He has long served as its most eloquent spokesman, emphasizing its value in teaching movement control and music appreciation to dancers. But his other contributions, as principal, administrator, teacher and choreographer should not be underestimated; in each of these roles he has helped to give roots to Graham training in Canada.



In Review

Dance Beat

Selected Views and Reviews,
1967-1976. Deborah Jowitt.
New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc.,
1977.

It used to be that Edwin Denby was the only dance critic whose *pensées* on the dance were considered significant enough to be collected in book form, but in the last few years, several books of dance criticism have been published — as a gesture, one assumes, toward preserving that most ephemeral of art forms for posterity. Deborah Jowitt's *Dance Beat* is surely the best of the post-Denby collections.

The author's interest in dance is not that of your average dance critic. She has studied with (among others) Martha Graham, José Limon, and American Ballet Center. She has performed with Julliard Dance Theatre, Valerie Bettis, Jeff Duncan, Pearl Lang, Sophie Maslow and, in recent years, with Dance Theatre Workshop, where she has presented her own dances. Since 1967, she has been dance critic for the *Village Voice* and a frequent contributor to the *New York Times* and *Dancescope*.

Whether writing about ballet, first and second generation modern dance (Graham, Humphrey, Weidman, Merce Cunningham, Alvin Ailey, or Paul Taylor) or what she identifies as 'The Third Generation: Mostly Rebels' (i.e., Kei Takei, Meredith Monk, Yvonne Rainer, Douglas Dunn, Trisha Brown, etc.), she writes with an assurance and clarity that comes in part from her own active involvement in dance. Appropriately, at the end of a review of a concert given by Jeff Duncan in which she herself appeared, Jowitt writes, 'Oh, well, I've always felt that this column should be called 'Inside Dance'.' For some this familiarity would jeopardize their objectivity, but for Jowitt, it only enhances the relaxed good manners of her writing. Her mind is open; you never get the feeling she composes her reviews before seeing performances, as you do with some critics. Her way with words is casual, slangy, although the slang never seems arch or contrived. Because there's always reason for her words, her work has an intense, concentrated quality which her breeziness doesn't quite cloak.

As a dance reporter, Jowitt describes movement in great detail. In New York, she heads a campaign to do away with the kind of critic who goes to a dance and describes the ballerina as dancing gracefully with no reference to *what* she's doing. But it's not Jowitt's emphasis on technique or form or structure that gives *Dance Beat* its weight: it's her insight, her ability to interpret these so that someone without her background can see how they function as part of the choreographic art.

What's most important, however, (and this will sound like a ripe cliché) is that she obviously loves what she's seeing. Though her specialty is 'The Third Generation', she has a good time at *Pineapple Poll* and at the National Ballet of Canada's *Sleeping Beauty*, too. She's not always positive, of course, but her criticism is carefully weighed with a view to what is possible. In a review entitled 'The Glamor Trap is Closing... Run', for example, she pinpoints with deadly accuracy the hypocrisy and lovelessness of Gerald Arpino's *The Relativity of Icarus*, though showing how Lucas Hoving conceived the same myth complete with its psycho-sexual ambivalence more eloquently, yet more modestly.

In sum, she brings dance alive on the page. Performances she's seen are almost as vivid viewed vicariously as they would be if you'd been there yourself. Almost, because that's the perennial problem with reporting live performances, especially dance which can't be preserved the way a play or musical recital can. Jowitt can't do the impossible, so she does the next best thing. She writes a mean piece of dance.

GRAHAM JACKSON

Dancers on Dancing

Cynthia Lyle.
New York, London: Drake Publisher,
Inc., 1977.

After too long a silence, dancers are suddenly being asked their opinions about dance. The reading public is learning, with some surprise and possibly with some sadness, that dancers are thinking, feeling, often sensitive artists with strongly individual points of view. They are being revealed as more than the hyper-specialists trained to machine-like efficiency leading monastically dedicated lives that they were once thought to be.

Cynthia Lyle is the author of *Dancers on Dancing*. In the introduction, she mentions that her only brush with dancing was an imposed few weeks of ballet classes during a California vacation when she was seven years old, and that she has no desire to be a dance critic nor is she a dance academician. Strangely, this information is offered as proper credentials for her project. To compile her book she interviewed 12 well known dance personalities much as an anthropologist would approach an isolated New Guinea tribe.

The analogy to anthropology is not really far-fetched. Recently a number of writers have become fascinated with the mores and folkways of this exotic breed. Joseph Mazo wrote *Dance is a Contact Sport*, a sort of sociological look through a keyhole at the inner workings of New York City Ballet. Two years ago John Gruen provided us with *The Private World of Ballet*, in which he allowed the great and the almost great of the international ballet community to express themselves as eloquent, tunnel-visioned, neurotic, bad-tempered or whatever. All spoke briskly if not always well. Gruen is a master catalyst, sometimes allowing his subjects (victims?) to trap themselves in foolishness. While I regard *The Private World of Ballet* as voyeuristic material, I must admit that it has anthropological validity. It gives outsiders a true glimpse of the closed and cultist dance world.

Like Joseph Mazo and John Gruen, Cynthia Lyle is intrigued with the dancer: 'I have long wondered from afar what goes on in the minds and hearts of the dancers

who have spoken so intimately and eloquently to me with their bodies as I sat motionless in the balcony of a darkened theatre.' She then sets out through direct interviews to discover 12 dancers as people and as artists. If her format is similar to that of John Gruen, she employs none of his canny tactics; in fact, her ineptness for the task is too often evident. Commendably she does not alter the transcript in her favour. There are juicy moments during her interview with Agnes de Mille where it becomes obvious Ms Lyle is well over her head. But her naive innocence often has an unexpected payoff. We glimpse the cutting edge of Agnes de Mille's tongue and a directness that gives no quarter to the cub reporters of this world.

It is not proper to credit *Dancers on Dancing* as a book. It is a compilation of interviews strung together on the premise that, with rare exceptions, the best known dancers are in ballet and most established choreographers are in the modern dance field. The first part deals with dancers from American Ballet Theatre (including Martine van Hamel, well known to Canadian audiences) and from the New York City Ballet, with Agnes de Mille dividing the two companies, which I'm sure must please her. In the second part, one modern dancer speaks out followed by the three choreographers, Paul Taylor, Murray Louis and Anna Sokolow. Kei Takei is finally interviewed as the sole representative of the avant-garde.

Despite some gauche questioning, the dancers were, for the most part, revealed as intelligent and sensitive people. It was interesting to learn that Martine van Hamel is still the down-to-earth, generous person some of us remember her to be. Her career is still based on her enthusiastic love of dancing which overrides weight problems and the continual struggle for the right to dance in the way she wants to dance. Recognition is less important. Even so, she too humbly accepts a non-star status in view of her recently acquired enormous critical success.

Ted Kivitt's journey from an asthmatic childhood to an American dance hero is intriguing. He survived the taunts of schoolmates equally as well as he did Lyle's questions about ballet's 'gay' image. The questions were not really answered; he ducked behind the fact that male dancers are trained to move in a graceful way. Kivitt emerges as a fighter, mad as a wet hen about the kudos accorded Russian superstars at the expense of legitimate American stars. His tough attitude assures us of his essential survival whereas Ivan Nagy, also a principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre, is gently sensitive and sadly realistic about his own future. He has reached that age where the end is in sight and confesses he 'does not have the ego' to open his own dancing school.

Violette Verdy worships in the shadow of her master, Balanchine, while rationalizing her own individual 'coquette' identity. She is a dancer. Many possibilities are open to her but her only reality is dancing. She has earned honourable retirement. Doors are beginning to close. She does not disguise her despair and yet, we know that such an alert and productive mind will bridge the gap and go fruitfully on. Patricia McBride, unadulterated product of the New York City Ballet, makes no attempt to preserve her own psyche apart from Balanchine, and we sense the end-of-the-line syndrome associated with dancing careers.

Arthur Mitchell, the only black dancer to achieve high fame in classical ballet as a principal dancer with New York City Ballet, had a mission to establish the Dance Theatre of Harlem as a classical company. Now that this has been assured, he regrets his absence from the stage. His feelings about Balanchine, ballet and being black are obviously complicated. Judith Jameison is also black, and very tall. She unfolds as healthily simple, determined and unaware that there are, or ever were, any options besides dancing.

The three choreographers, Paul Taylor, Murray Louis and Anna Sokolow, have in common the belief they are the centres of their own universe — not from insufferable egos but because they are so absorbed in their work. Paul Taylor's pragmatism is surprising because it seems so unrelated to his choreography. Murray Louis is the extrovert we do expect and Anna Sokolow's youthful curiosity and enthusiasm for the roots of culture support her reputation as a choreographer's choreographer.

Kei Takei is not a representative example of the avant-garde as Lyle suggests. This enigmatic Japanese dance artist is too fiercely herself to be part of a movement. But, on second thought, such independence is probably what the avant-garde is all about.

GRANT STRATE

Marijan Bayer Dance Company

MacMillan Theatre, Toronto
21-23 April 1977

I think the highest evolution of any art form is reached in that form's ultimate simplicity. Marijan Bayer's choreography is beautifully simple. The spring season of his company showed that he has advanced a fair distance in this direction since the first performance of his company a little more than a year ago.

Bayer's work is contemporary, mixing both classical and modern in a style that is his own. The body of his pieces, however, consists almost solely of such basic elements as the five positions, pirouette, arabesque, port de bras, and so on. This foundation is often extended in his recent work by a great amount of repetition and an almost constant use of adagio. His pas de deux sections are nearly all punctuated by positions held for two or three beats and by lifts that are highly original. The effect is a clear and clean tracing of line in space.

Bayer uses mass movement extensively, usually building up groups from a beginning solo by adding one dancer after another in sequence. He seems more aware of the possibilities of stage line than he was previously and intermingles groups on the traverse with ease. The dancers perform in leotards and tights. The one set of the program, for *Echoes*, is several thick silver tubes suspended from above.

The music for the two longer works of the program, *Tubular Bells* and *Echoes*, contains long repetitive passages in which a sequence of approximately eight steps to one or two bars is performed more than 30 times by a large group. The minimal variation between dancers repeating sequences provides a subtle energy. It gives a quality of waves to the movement which is tidelike in its power. Contrast this performance with the company's performance last year of the first *Tubular Bells* (now completely re-worked) and *Poem to the Land* in which the use of repetition dominated and almost smothered. Bayer's control over this effective tool has reached the fine-tuning point; he has obviously worked on this dimension of his style.

Bayer's choreography is so lucid that it must be done perfectly for it to have an impact. The dancers of the company, although trained and certainly not amateurs, still have a long way to go before reaching professional standards. Their performance made many parts of the program ambiguous. It was often difficult to determine whether what was being performed was what Bayer intended or just the expression of the dancers' limitation.

these problems through Bayer's sensitivity to music. Again and again throughout the program, music and movement are blended together into an exquisite harmony. The contemporary elements of Bayer's work are juxtaposed with the classical foundation in such a way as to give maximum contrast to the movements.

There are elements of the Marijan Bayer Dance Company that are still vaguely irritating, as they were last year. For example, Bayer still seems more confident with mass groupings than in solo or pas de deux work. Yet all that is really needed to eradicate this is more rehearsal time. Considering the mileage that Bayer has made since last year, he is clearly worth more assistance to provide dancers' salaries for two extra weeks of rehearsal. The planned appearance of his company at the Leah Posluns Theatre in the fall will definitely be worth seeing.

J. GROO BANNERMAN

Paula Ross Dancers Vancouver East Cultural Centre 3-8 May 1977

Like several other local choreographers, Paula Ross has pruned her company; it now consists of six dancers plus guest artist Leslie Link, one of the most epicene performers I have seen on a local stage. Several of the dancers have distinctive individual styles, which the choreographer makes no attempt to homogenize. The dances themselves seemed fragmented, held together by the fact that they were being performed in the same space at the same time to the same music by people wearing identical costumes. *A Diary and Trips* were more like series of tableaux than tightly crafted artworks; they had populations of idiosyncratic performers, rather than casts. I found this interesting, at times even engrossing.

Paula Ross seems to be loosening up, opening out, letting her dancers leave the stage to work in the balcony, the audience, all the fringes of the performing space, as well as front-and-centre. Some of them, like Leslie Manning, work beautifully but seem stuck in movement clichés . . . hers is a leg in *développé* in second position, arms extended like semaphors, one up and one out.

The works are discontinuous, floating their structure, if they have such, seems associative rather than strictly formal. The opening work, a carousel fantasy, is longer than it needs to be. All three major works seem made to fit available music, which is composed by Anthony Braxton and Olivier Messiaen. The dances are essentially private, meditative, soul-searching works; they offer us random assortments; we take from them what we can.

ELIZABETH ZIMMER

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PHOTO: Pascal Rieff

Tournesol

Théâtre des Deux Portes, Paris
20-22 May 1977

Dix ballons aux dix noms des provinces du Canada pour le thème *Séparation* que le groupe canadien TOURNESOL a dansé à Paris au Théâtre des Deux Portes-MJC du XXème. Séparatisme, problème du Québec à fleur de peau, un théâtre de danse sous-tendu de couleur et d'émotion sonore.

Pour son premier spectacle en France, le travail chorégraphique de Tournesol s'oriente vers le théâtre, sous l'impulsion du metteur en scène John Juliani, canadien du Québec, vivant actuellement en Alberta. En scène, deux danseurs, un couple enroulé sur lui-même, Carole et Ernst Eder: complémentarité, ying/yang, blanc/noir, masculin/féminin. Reliée en différents points de leur corps, la grappe de ballons se dresse verticale et forme avec le couple une sculpture qui lentement, va vivre sa séparation. Triple problème chorégraphique, humain et politique qui passe à travers la cinétique des corps de couleur, dont le bleu/jaune/rouge contraste avec le blanc et le noir des deux danseurs.

'Le processus par lequel toute séparation s'accomplit, dit Eder, est un processus douloureux, imprévisible, d'une durée indéfinie. C'est par là même un stade

inévitabile et indispensable pour tout état de chose ou individu en quête d'une propre identité.'

Recherche d'identité au delà des masques au son du souffle et de la voix qui s'échappe en cris, soupirs et chansons. En voix off, Gilles Vignault intervient, le temps d'un tableau éclaté où la vie devient plus légère. Théâtre populaire dont la lecture peut se faire à plusieurs niveaux, *Séparation* échappe à l'anecdote. Aux couleurs primaires s'associent les symboles primaires, le thème fondamental l'homme, la femme, le couple, l'accouchement. Naissance d'un enfant? ou libération de l'homme en une renaissance qui passe par la femme. Les ballons se séparent mais la Colombie-Britannique tente un rapprochement avec le ballon Québec. La femme chante et tire son fardeau. Lien rouge, cordon de vie d'où l'homme libéré, s'échappe. Révolution ou archétype? Symboles archaïques, universels. Arrachement de masques; au-delà du couple, les régions, les pays, l'univers... peut-être un accouchement cosmique. La spécificité des couleurs, la composition des ensembles relèvent de qualités plastiques.

'Je ne suis pas peintre, dit John Juliani, mais j'aime le théâtre visuel et les éléments qui le composent: l'espace, la couleur, la lumière, le son, le temps (la durée). Je m'intéresse beaucoup à la couleur, c'est

une chose très importante sur le plan social, du point de vue éducatif d'une ville par exemple. Mes couleurs sont aussi primaires que l'image de la femme qui enlève le masque de l'homme.'

Masque blanc, masque noir, symboles de vie et de mort?

'Pour moi, poursuit Juliani, ils sont davantage. Les deux ensembles ne font qu'un, les deux masques séparés n'existent pas. Ils représentent aussi les oppositions qu'on croit ne pas pouvoir réconcilier. Comme le bien et le mal, c'est une fausse dichotomie.'

Dans le théâtre de Juliani se mêlent l'essence du Bauhaus, la rigueur du Nô, les sonorités du Kabuki, la cruauté d'Artaud. C'est à travers la poétique de Yeats qu'il a découvert l'art du Japon. Dans l'interprétation de Carole Eder, la violence du jeu japonais et la tendresse de Meredith Monk. Sans doute l'espoir qu'elles chantent est-il le même. Au-delà des frontières, au-delà des races 'c'est l'être humain de la planète terre qui est en question', Ernst Eder le précise; et la solution qu'il propose est celle des ballons réunis 'une fois que, par la séparation, chaque être, ou pays, aura retrouvé sa propre identité.' Alsacien d'origine banataise (région de l'Autriche rattachée à la Yougoslavie), il a depuis peu obtenu la citoyenneté canadienne et s'en réjouit à bien des points. En tout cas, pour

la danse, créer est là-bas une chose possible et se réunir aussi, puisque chaque été, tous les groupes de danse se rassemblent pour quatre journées d'échanges et de spectacles.

De cette expérience avec le théâtre conduit Ernst Eder, je garderai sûrement le travail avec la voix; son et geste se complètent, et cela m'a apporté beaucoup. Il est vrai que mon idée de la danse n'est ni formelle ni technique, je vois plutôt le mouvement en tant qu'énergie communicative.

LAURE BRUNEL

Anna Wyman Dance Theatre

Queen Elizabeth Playhouse,
Vancouver
2-4 June 1977

There's been a spring thaw at the Anna Wyman Dance Theatre. Chunks of the old ice, the seamless, smooth, controlled manipulation of body shapes are still there, but bubbling around the edges is new softness, lightness, craziness and warmth.

Nowhere is the change clearer than in the opener *Deflections*, a two-part work, the first part of which premiered last year. The dancers, wearing sleek electric blue leotards, perform the same careful, well-placed unison movements we have come to expect of Anna Wyman, while the electronic score by John Mills Cockell pounds our ears.

The second part, which follows the first without a break, sees the dancers in white jumpsuits, full cuffs tucked into blue socks, a casual touch which signals an attempt at Tharpian ease. Shadows of Twyla are all over this work.

The dancers are permitted some individual play of personality; they are working their bodies in new ways. They jitterbug. They twirl. The transition is not entirely comfortable, not completely relaxed, but it's coming, and I, for one, welcome it.

Another new work is *Sixes and Sevens*, a comic mélange in two parts which recycles bits of old Wyman costume dances, but which projects, overall, a new complexity. Part One happens on and around a park bench, where an attempt at seduction is taking place, complete with cupids and the obligatory flasher. Part Two, apparently the wedding of seducer and victim, is a rogue's gallery of characters, three women under a grotesque flowered hat, another with a rose in her teeth, a central figure, Vickye Wood, who changes from an overdressed child to a bride in full regalia. Social dance forms are spoofed. The whole thing takes on aspects of a mad dream. It's an exploration of the games people play at parties, a study of courtship-as-nightmare. Wyman's standard campy images are still here; what's new is the freedom and individuality the performers are developing. Several new women have joined the group, which no longer looks like it was mass-produced in a mannequin factory.



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Tremolo, another premiere, may be a new direction for Wyman, but seems to be following a path well worn by Alwin Nikolais. Elastic tapes crisscross the stage and the dancers. To a score by Keith Jarrett, too long by half for the available movement ideas, the dancers writhe in their cages of elastic, or play in a very effective scribble of light. A startling, interesting moment is the appearance of Denis O'Brien dancing on pointe, extending the stretch metaphor to its outer limits. This dance needs some editing, but again, it takes the company in a new, softer direction.

The biggest surprise of the evening was *Two People*, in which Trevor Schalk and Vickye Wood explore a love relationship, an attempt at lyrical pas de deux. Wood, in a filmy greenish costume with bare shoulders, reveals new range as a dramatic dancer, as does Schalk, who has improved enormously in his three years with the group.

Quicksilver, with its neon-decked spiderweb backdrop, is another 1976 piece which serves, with *Deflections*, to bracket the strange with the familiar. It is vintage Wyman, cold, soulless, the performers staring blankly into space, the special effects sometimes overwhelming the choreography.

Anna Wyman seems to be reinventing twentieth century dance on her way to finding herself a truly authentic style. She's relaxing a bit, allowing her dancers their own heads, permitting sensual, unpredictable, faintly dangerous things. There are new cracks in the Wyman facade, in the tasteful, contemporary, metallic surface she's been showing us for years.

ELIZABETH ZIMMER

Entre-Six

Queen Elizabeth Playhouse,
Vancouver
9-11 June 1977

Now entering its fourth year of existence, Montreal's Entre-Six Dance Company seems to have hit some sort of plateau. Artistic director Lawrence Gradus showed but one new work since the group's last visit; the evening belonged to his comic masterpieces, and to Judith Marcuse's first work for the company.

The Entre-Six repertoire is not large, and one New York dance critic has observed that Gradus' dances all tend to look the same. I would qualify this observation by saying that the soft, romantic ballets tend to look alike, collections of ingenious ways to connect people in couples, set to music laden with emotional nuance. The opener, *Nonetto*, is like that: light, polite, delicately detailed, a careful wrapping and unwrapping of curled bodies, a dance which seems to be about the socialization of love.

Coming after this pink-and-orange study, Judith Marcuse's new ballet, called *Apart*, leads the company in a strong new direction. The dancers, who generally work in ballet slippers or pointe shoes, here go barefoot. Their spines, elsewhere held stiffly as most ballet requires, move fluently. The choreography is complex, often as intricate as the score by Vancouver composer David Keeble; there are several sections where Marcuse seems to have choreographed separate moves for every quarter-note in the music, producing a rapid, deliberate, nervous quality of movement.

Apart uses five dancers. Four of them, three men and a woman, wear grey, and seem to be in league with one another; the fifth, danced by Shelly Osher, wears fuchsia and stays separate, somehow special, more alive, more daring, and finally, painfully alone.

The grey-clad ones move tensely, mechanically, clutching at space, contracting their bodies. When the bright one moves with them, taking more chances, they seem to blight her; one of the men lifts her, and her descent is a fascinating staccato melting, a disintegration, joint by joint.

Following the Marcuse-Keeble premiere was an old favorite, *Blue Danube*, the ape duet performed to a Strauss waltz. Identified as part of a children's program, it has nevertheless appeared in several Entre-Six adult concerts, and never fails to raise a chorus of laughter and delighted bravos. My companion observed that it's just about the only work in which the dancers use their eyes and faces in a fully expressive way, relating to each other and to the audience. The two men, wearing ape headdresses, enact a delightful ritual of



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1

Sherbrooke,
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5

Massena,
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11-12-17-
18-19

Montréal,
Place des Arts

25-26

Ottawa,
Centre National
des Arts

28-29

Kingston,
Grand Théâtre

Casse-noisette / The Nutcracker

Décembre /
December 1977

15-16-17-18

Québec
Grand Théâtre

22-23-24
26-27-28-29

Montréal,
Place des Arts



conflict and cooperation, an aggressively playful dialogue for not-so-dumb animals.

The second half of the program included *Sentiments*, to music by Ravel, a dance of unrequited love during which I found myself drifting. This was followed by the premiere of *En Mouvement*, which choreographer Gradus says is part of a longer work. I found Vincent Dienne's score for one instrument at a time the most interesting thing about the dance; it began with chimes, followed with various other percussion instruments including a vibraphone, and finally a juicy solo for string bass. Meanwhile the dancers, wearing gold and brown leotards covered with doodly designs, did a progression of rather doodly abstracted movements, many of them peripheral, involving hands and feet. I'll be interested to see where this piece is heading. Right now it spends a lot of time just standing around in fairly static poses.

The finale, as usual, was *Toccata*; Gradus' tour-de-force, a playful, acrobatic dance to music by Benjamin Britten, in which the performers explore every possible way to connect four bodies in almost constant motion. There is an element of male bonding, setting the three men up against the lone woman, which I am beginning to find arch and somehow extrinsic to the design of the work. This byplay, however, always gets a laugh.

ELIZABETH ZIMMER

London Festival Ballet

London Coliseum, England

June 3-25 1977

By whatever criterion he is judged, Rudolf Nureyev has made a deep impression on the history of twentieth century dance. Although it is now fashionable in some circles to decry him, although something of the mystique which used to surround him has evaporated through familiarity, Nureyev continues to dominate. As a performer, as a choreographer, as an inspiration and as a popularizer, he has significantly influenced the development of ballet in our era. Now close to 40 and visibly waning in physical strength, he nevertheless continues to grow as an artist.

Reasonably enough then, the advent of a new version of *Romeo and Juliet*, to the Prokofiev score, choreographed by Nureyev for Festival Ballet, became the object of enormous excitement and controversy in the recent London ballet season.

The diverse range of critical reactions which the new ballet evoked aptly reflects the disconcerting complexity of the ballet itself.

Quite clearly, Nureyev was determined to approach an old theme with a fresh viewpoint. His motives were no doubt artistic but also have proved to be fortunate for London Festival Ballet in that this *Romeo and Juliet* is quite unlike the MacMillan version for Covent Garden with which London audiences have become almost jadingly conversant during the last 12 years.

Nureyev's fundamental inspiration appears to have been Shakespeare's play. Of the six major versions I have seen, Nureyev's is by far the most literal. He also appears to have listened to current opinion about how Shakespeare should be presented. His characters emerge boldly and unsentimentally with traits of violence and passion which seem entirely fitting for a late medieval subject.

If this had been the sole inspiration, or at least a unifying one, the results might have been less disturbing. Unfortunately, however, Nureyev decided to embellish his scenario with heavy-handed symbolism and dubious dream sequences which not only involved some scissors-and-paste work on the score but introduced a fundamental aesthetic inconsistency which is the major weakness of the ballet as a whole.

It is always a danger signal in the assessment of a full-length ballet when the things which spring most readily to mind are those least associated with actual dancing, yet this is the case in Nureyev's *Romeo and Juliet*. Where MacMillan and Cranko imprint on our minds their poignant yet ravishing pas de deux, Nureyev's ballet stirs one by its visual splendour, dramatic complexity and mysterious symbolism.

The designer, Ezio Frigerio, is better known for his plays and operas but here he has proved amply his capacity to create architecturally convincing, historically true yet danceable sets. He leaves the stage generously open for fights and crowd scenes, has made intimate corners within the larger setting, has produced marvelously atmospheric backdrops and given the dancers costumes in which they can move while still looking very much like characters come to life from a Piero della Francesca or Mantegna. His costumes and sets deserved to be lit by one of the best in the business—precisely what they got in Tharon Musser.

Nureyev's adhesion to Shakespeare works best in the robustness and larger-than-life quality he has given to his leads. It needed the maturity of Patricia Ruanne (the only Juliet throughout the June season) to handle Nureyev's strong-willed and forward youth as much as it did Nicholas Johnson's bouncy, lithe technique to manage the gruelling and almost acrobatic work given to Mercutio. His view of Tybalt was far more sympathetic than most interpreters have allowed, and the gentleness of Mercutio's affection for Juliet was nicely contrasted with his passionate hatred of the Montagues. Nicholas Johnson and Frederick Werner together managed to divert so much attention to themselves that Nureyev, who reserved all performances of *Romeo* for himself, was partly eclipsed.

Yet the difficulties remain. Nureyev's own personality as a creator of dances does not yet appear to have surfaced above the welter of choreographic influences to which he has so adventurously exposed himself during a long career. One found oneself spotting bits of Graham, bits of Limon, bits of this and that, but very little that could be experienced as unmistakably Nureyev.

There is no question that this new *Romeo and Juliet* will continue to attract audiences for Festival Ballet when Nureyev himself is not dancing in it. Its merits are so attractive that they will always outweigh the irritations and awkwardnesses. And just as he has done with so many companies around the world, Nureyev has infused Festival's dancers with an energy and discipline which has raised the already admirable company to new heights of performing excellence. Certainly, there is no reason to regret yet another *Romeo and Juliet*.

MICHAEL CRABB

Island Dance Ensemble

Confederation Centre Art Gallery,
Prince Edward Island
June 15-16, 1977

M-M-M! (Masks, Mime and Music), staged by the Island Dance Ensemble, was a fresh, vital and highly entertaining production.

Created and directed by company member Erskine Smith, the production was very much a reflection of its mentor: Smith is an imaginative and highly creative young man with a highly-developed sense of humour and the production bore all of these characteristics.

Performed in simple black tights and tops with large sculptured maché head-pieces, the production consisted of five actual mimes and two short musical numbers.

Goin' Fishin' was the most classically-oriented mime. A solo effort by Smith, the mime took the audience from the shore to the middle of a lake in a pole-propelled scow. Anchored in the lake, Smith created all the adventures and misadventures of the catch in a somewhat Chaplinesque manner.

An almost burlesque situation was created in *The Waiting Room*, a full company segment, which related the tale of a somewhat stuffy young lady with an incurable itch passing her predicament on to the entire body of people waiting in a doctor's office.

The Chase offered a foot chase in the manner of the Keystone Cops. It worked extremely well with the exception of a rather awkwardly-inserted and poorly-executed tap number.

In *The Outside*, a humorous characterization was used to portray the not-so-humorous situation of being the only stranger in a circle of friends, and the unsuccessful efforts of that stranger to enter the circle.

The Bus Stop was a classic example of making a work build to a climax. Two totally opposite individuals, one very conservative and snooty and the other, a totally extroverted and rather madcap character, were placed on a corner waiting for a bus. The simple but annoying over-the-shoulder reading of a newspaper on the part of the extrovert leads to a litter-throwing free-for-all in the end.

Throughout the segments, movement was clean and fluid. There were no spastic or jerky movements, no puzzling gestures and not a single deathly pause.

Smith is to be praised for his accomplishments with the production, for mime is not an area he was known to be seriously involved in prior to the production of *M-m-m!*

Masks worn all the way through the performance were designed by Stu MacLean, a scenic artist and former head props man with the Charlottetown Summer Festival and Confederation Centre of the Arts. By interchanging them, the company could duplicate any character trait, whether arrogance, pomposity, strength, weakness, genius or stupidity. The masks coupled with the competently executed movements of the performers were an impressive and interesting combination.

The program by the Island Dance Ensemble was complemented by a piece of abstract dance theatre by Sherrie Waggener presented by three former members of Alberta Contemporary Dance Theatre, Don Burnett, Cathy Cahoon and Waggener herself, as well as by Island Dance Ensemble member James Drake.

Portrait was a sensitive portrayal of dream, fantasy and emotion which featured a combination of jazz and ballet movements. Its seriousness of theme was a well-timed contrast to *M-m-m!*

DOUG GALLANT

Letters from the Field

To the Editor:

I have just finished reading *Dance in Canada* and my initial reaction is that you are not really interested in dancing in Canada but just in the formal forms of dance, that is, ballet and modern.

I hope my initial reaction is wrong. If you intend to be an Association that represents dancing in Canada, should you not include jazz, song and dance, and tap? These are forms of dance that the public loves, given the opportunity to see them. However, there seems to be a definite problem with government agencies and people such as yourselves who attempt to suppress the fun forms of dance.

Regardless of how much these forms of dance are ignored, they will not go away. True, ballet may be good training for musical theatre, but it is not the only form of dance required. I feel you should give recognition to show groups of which there are some fine examples here in Calgary. We are blessed with seeing their art on local television almost every month.

If you are truly interested in representing the dance community in this country, I trust that future editions will reflect this.

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Noticeboard

Coming Up

ALBERTA

A special Alberta project, a one-time only concert, combining dance, cello and piano, *Variations* is the collaboration of dancers Sonia Taverner, Vincent Warren and others in Alberta. They will perform a program of new works by Peter Boneham, James Clouser, Fernand Nault and Brydon Paige on September 3 (Banff Centre) and September 9 and 10 (Citadel Schoctor Theatre).

Tournesol, after an exciting spring in Paris performing John Juliani's *Separation*, and a lively summer presentation of various pieces and workshops at home, will embark on its third cross-Canada tour in September. They will begin in the tiny village of Ucluelet on the west coast of Vancouver Island and finish in mid-November in Halifax. The repertoire is still to be announced.

SASKATCHEWAN

Regina Modern Dance Works has a permanent home in the Labour Temple now, and they hope to start fixing it up in the fall. A series of dance events, including Tournesol, Judy Jarvis, Menaka Thakkar and others will also start there this autumn.

MANITOBA

The Contemporary Dancers of Winnipeg have pulled off a coup by engaging Norman Morrice, the Royal Ballet new artistic director, to set two dance pieces for them by September. The company has also been invited to perform at the Jacob's Pillow dance festival, and by the Canadian embassy in Washington to dance at a children's festival in Wolf Trap.

ONTARIO

Le Groupe de la Place Royale is now settling in to its new home in Ottawa. As co-artistic director Jean-Pierre Perreault points out, this is the first time a major dance company in Canada has uprooted itself from one province (Quebec) to another. They will also be opening a new dance school (above the Sparks Street Mall) that will be open to the public during lunch hours. Innovative courses will be offered to the deaf and dumb, senior citizens, and under-privileged children. New address: 130 Sparks Street, Ottawa K1P 5B6, Ontario.

Ballet Ys will now be staging three workshops each year, the next one coming up in November. An ambitious 1977-78 season promises a 5-1/2 week tour of British Columbia in October, a Christmas children's show (the restaging of *Clown of Hearts* with a musical score by Ted Moses) and continuing classes in ballet and jazz. They will also host Tournesol in October. Among the choreographers scheduled to premiere new works are David Hatch Walker, Anna Blewchamp, James Kudelka, and artistic director Gloria Grant.

The Paul Gaulin Mime Company will be touring central Canada from Winnipeg to Ottawa in September and October this year.

The National Ballet's tour of Europe is scheduled to open in Frankfurt on May 17, 1978, and continue through various cities in Germany. Then on to Holland and finally to London for three weeks with Nureyev as guest artist. The repertoire is still under consideration but will likely include *La Fille Mal Gardée*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Giselle* and an

evening of shorter works. Anyone who would like to go along on that tour should note the following. The Toronto Branch and board of directors are putting together a 17-21 day tour for fans and friends. It will go with the company to Germany and Holland, with an option for London. The itinerary is still in planning stages but it has been announced that there will be a specialist in the fields of music and art who will accompany the tour.

QUEBEC

Le Groupe Nouvelle Aire will bring a number of companies to their studio this season. Among them are Tournesol, Ballet Ys, Entre-Six and Toronto Dance Theatre. In December the company will present a series of performances at Centaur 2, and in spring they're off to Calgary and Edmonton.

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens' 20th anniversary season will begin with *Graduation Ball*, choreographed by David Lichine (November), and will be followed by Balanchine's *Themes and Variations*, and a new ballet created by the company's resident choreographer, Fernand Nault. The report of the death of LGBC's *Nutcracker* was greatly exaggerated. It will return, by popular public demand, at Christmas. In March, LGBC will give 11 performances over three weekends, including *Giselle*, choreographed by Anton Dolin. The company will play host to two guest companies as well. The National Ballet will perform their sumptuous *Sleeping Beauty* with Nureyev as guest artist, and Les Ballets Jazz will conclude the season with a program of ballets choreographed by Eva von Gencsy, Norbert Vesak, and Rael Lamb.

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Recent Events

The Island Dance Ensemble of Prince Edward Island has just performed two new works over the summer. One was of special interest as it was sponsored by the Extension Services of the Art Gallery of the Confederation Centre. Held in conjunction with an exhibition of paintings, photographs, weaving and sculpture, this work, choreographed by Barbara Zacconi, and entitled *Island Impressions* became a celebration of Island life as seen through the eyes of its artists. The second piece, *M-m-m!* (mime-mask-music) is a series of vignettes incorporating mime and dance with original music and songs composed by Ensemble members and associates. Primarily conceived by company member Erskine Smith, there is considerable choreographic input from the rest of the community.

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens completed an ambitious and very successful tour of Latin America in July: seven weeks, 9 ballets, 10 countries, 19 cities, 41 performances. Their repertoire included: *Carmina Burana*, *Time Out Of Mind*, *Tam Ti Delam*, *Concerto Barocco*, *The Firebird*, *Allegro Brillante*, *Lines and Points*, *Diabelli Variations*, and *Jeu de Cartes*.

Timbrel, a Toronto group known for its church performances, branched out to give its first concert in late June.

A beaten-up Rambler sedan starred in the latest offering at 15 Dance Laboratorium in Toronto. The evening was called *Automyths*, choreographed by Carolyn Shaffer with participation by Melanie Danson, Valerie Dean, Martha Lovell, John Oughton and Carol Siegel. Shaffer, Danson and Siegel drew on their experiences over the last six months as dance therapists for one creation.

The National Ballet of Canada appeared in New York in July for the first time without Nureyev, but with Peter Schaufuss and Fernando Bujones. They performed *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *La Fille Mal Gardée*, and a mixed program of one-act ballets, as well as *Collective Symphony* by the three Dutch National Ballet choreographers.

Alberta Contemporary Dancers have hired their first full-time artistic director: Marian Sarach, who had her own company for several years in New York. Her background is in Graham, Humphrey-Weidman and Holm techniques.

Dancemakers enters its fourth year with an exciting company for the 1977/78 season. Anna Blewchamp, whose choreography has been delighting audiences, critics and dancers alike, joins the company as associate director and Araby Lockhart, noted Canadian actress, will assume responsibility as manager.

Artistic Director Honoured

Rachel Browne, founder and artistic director of Contemporary Dancers of Winnipeg, was honoured in May by the YWCA as one of the five recipients of its first annual Women of the Year awards. Her citation is for her outstanding contribution to culture and education in Manitoba.

Tour of Indian Dance and Music

Menaka Thakkar, a noted exponent of Indian classical dance, is realizing a long-standing dream to bring four musicians from India to work with her in live performances. Subsidized by the Touring Office of the Canada Council, the musicians, all highly esteemed artists in their own country, will be touring with Menaka Thakkar during September and October across Canada.

Dance Finds a Home

The Leah Posluns Theatre has opened its doors to dance in Toronto, the first theatre in Canada to be designed exclusively for dance. The atmosphere is intimate, the seating comfortable. A gala opening in June featured the National Ballet, EntreSix and the Toronto Dance Theatre. Any group wanting to book the theatre should call the artistic director, Reva Tward, at (416) 630-6752.



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Dance at a Glance

Dance-at-a-Glance is a new advertising feature in Dance in Canada Magazine. Its aim is to provide our national and international readership with a quick guide to resources in dance which are available throughout Canada. To arrange your listing in the Dance-at-a-Glance section, just write or phone: Nikki Abraham, Business Manager, Dance in Canada Magazine, 3 Church Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5E 1M2 (416) 368-4793

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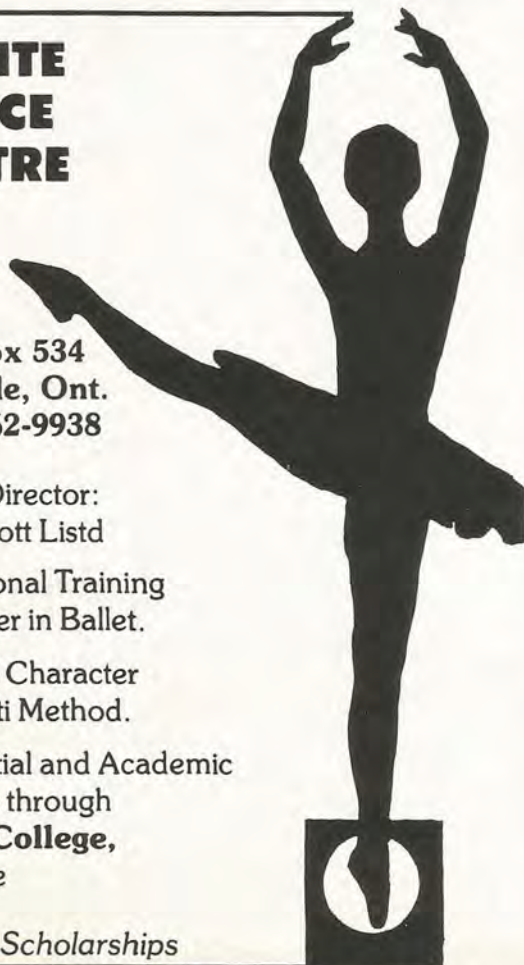
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