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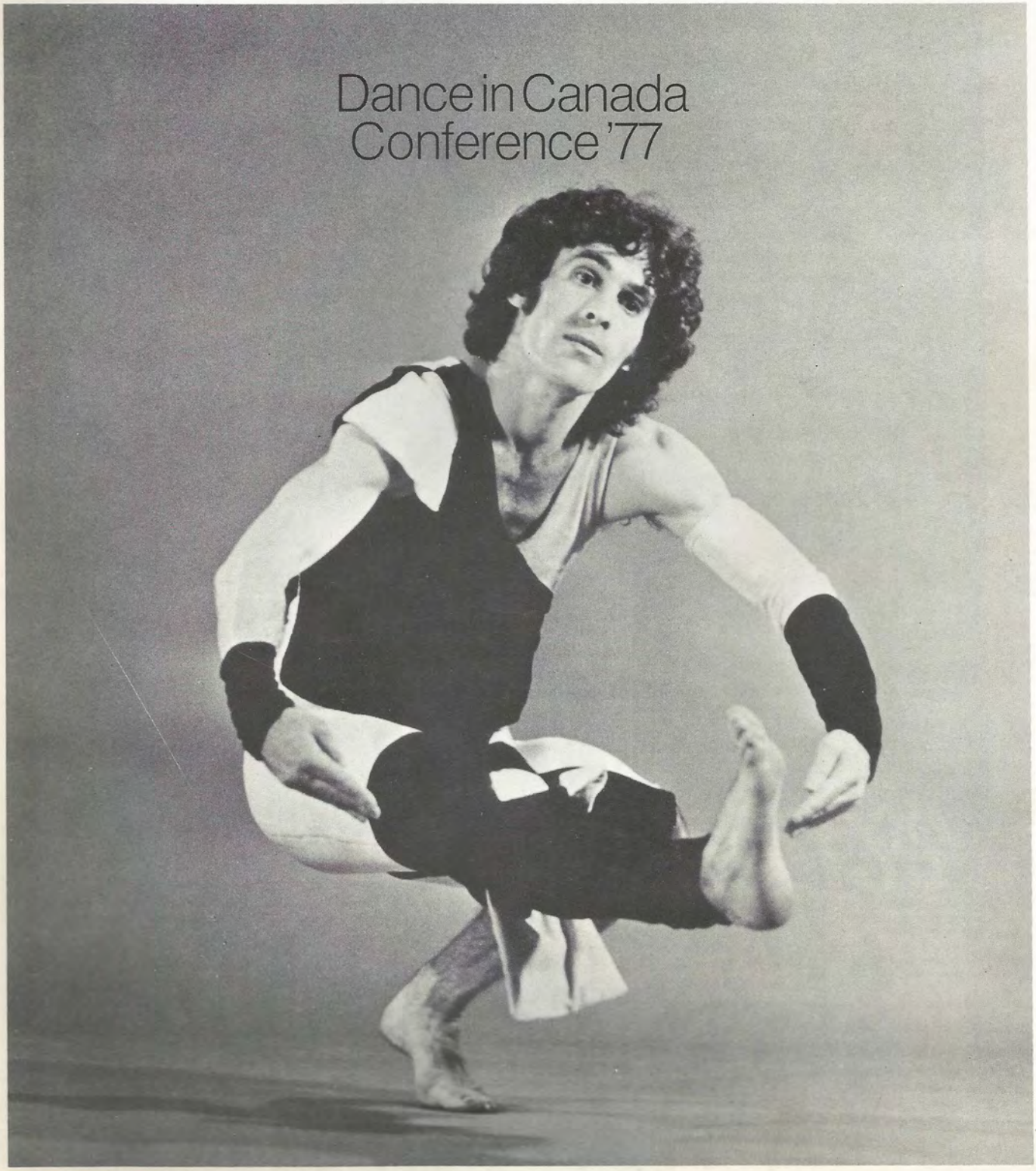

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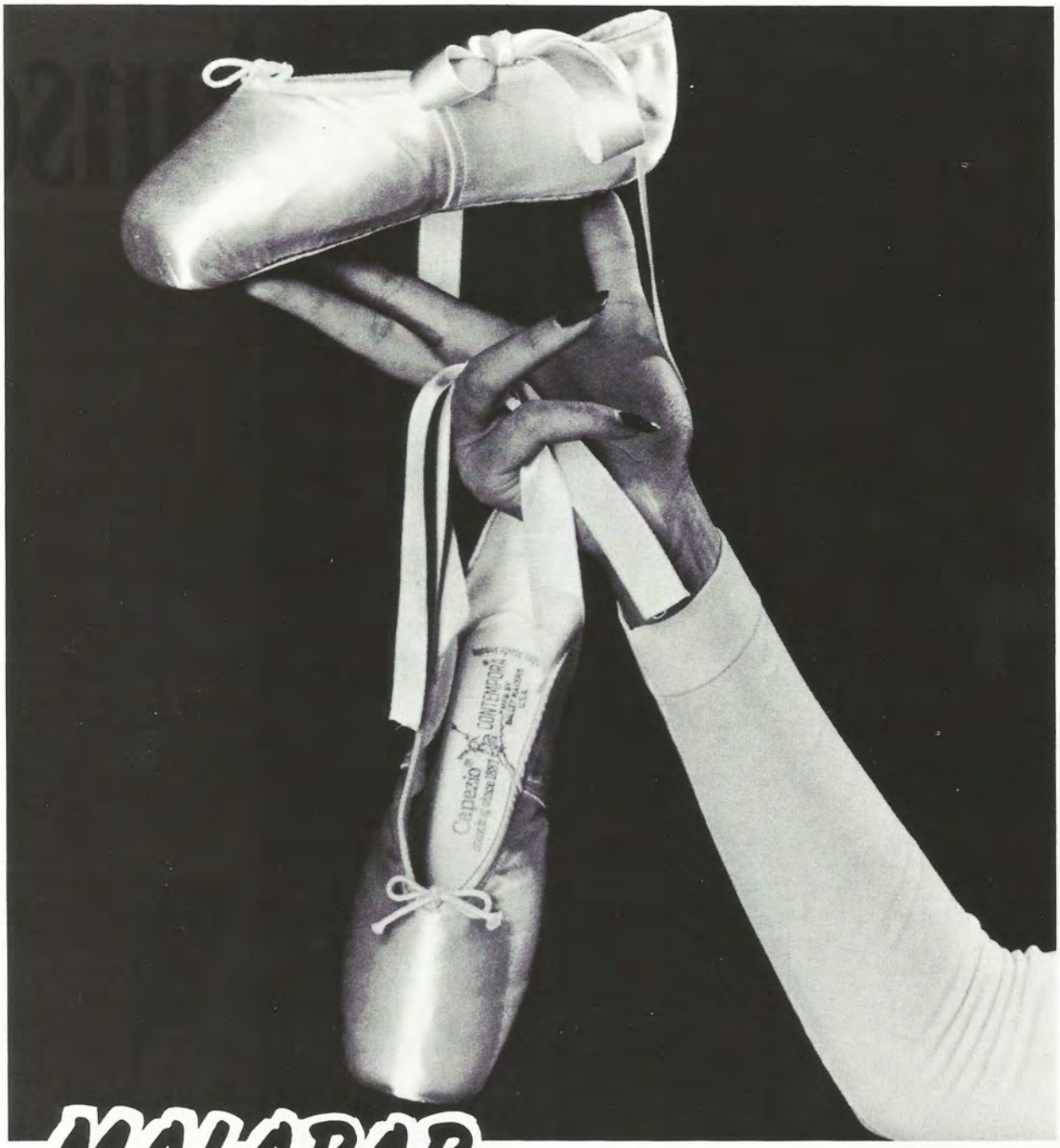

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Gros Ile Conference

Dance in Canada

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Danny Grossman in *Curious Schools of Theatrical Dancing, Part 1* (see Joan Sinclair's review of the Dance in Canada Conference '77).

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Editorial
Susan Cohen

Dance in Canada, the association and the magazine, are both at a point of transition. The Association's rambunctious, raucous five-day conference in Winnipeg last August served notice on the arts community and on funding agencies that the stereotype of the dancer is no longer acceptable. Whatever else that conference demanded (and it was not always compellingly or logically argued by its most vocal members), the dance community made one major statement – artists now want a say in how decisions that affect their lives are arrived at and want to be responsible for themselves and the presentation of their art. By providing an atmosphere of questioning and an opportunity to exchange artistic and political ideas, the Association has been responsible for that. This issue deals mainly with the Winnipeg conference, that extraordinary emotional orgy. Elizabeth Zimmer and Michael Crabb look at it from two different perspectives – the personal and the general. Rose Hill's lecture on dance aesthetics, one that tended to get lost in the welter of name-calling, tirades and political exchanges in Winnipeg, is reprinted here; its preliminary work on comparing three philosophers on dance cannot help but challenge us to think about the art and its place in education and society. Rhonda Ryman, who presented a paper on anatomy at the conference, continues her series on dance training and points out that new ideas in training will demand a different breed of teacher, as familiar with anatomy, principles and theory as with techniques.

The magazine too is at a point of transition. Next issue, Michael Crabb will take over as editor and I will have moved on to a new position. I am pleased with the accomplishments of *Dance in Canada* in my three years as editor. The magazine was founded with the idea that Canadian dance and dancers had something distinctive to say – but they had no written outlets, there were few writers to discuss the ideas in and about the art, and there was little or no point of communication among the regions, companies and artists producing that art. Since I became editor, we have gone a long way towards creating that forum for the exchange of ideas. We have begun to develop a stable of Canadian writers who can communicate about dance sympathetically and knowledgeably. By looking at personalities and artistic ideas, I hope we have challenged many of the assumptions about dance in this country which motivate everyone from the bureaucrat to the teacher, from the performer to the audience. Although Canadian dance is our main concern, we have looked at it in the international context by presenting significant international developments for comparison.

Michael Crabb will expand on my spade-work. He has demonstrated curiosity about the field, a knowledge of the art in Canada and outside, and a sensitivity to the spectrum of contemporary dance. Michael is an example of the new, pioneering Canadian dance writer. I am proud of the part this magazine has played over the last three years in establishing a body of literature and promoting a generation of readers and writers of Canadian dance. Dance in Canada will never again be an art with no one to speak for it.

Danse au Canada, association et revue, se trouvent tous deux à la croisée des chemins. Lors des cinq jours de sa conférence impétueuse et harassante à Winnipeg en août dernier, l'association a signifié au monde des arts et aux agences de financement que le stéréotype du danseur était maintenant devenu inacceptable. Quelque autre chose qu'ait pu exiger la conférence (ce qui n'était pas toujours exprimé de façon irréfutable ou logique par la plupart des membres présents), le monde de la danse a fait une déclaration d'importance, à savoir, les artistes veulent désormais un mot à dire dans les prises de décisions qui affectent leur vie; ils veulent être responsables d'eux-mêmes et de la présentation de leur art. Et l'association a été le principe moteur de ce changement en créant un climat de mise en question et en permettant les échanges d'idées artistiques et politiques. Ce numéro traite principalement de la conférence de Winnipeg, orgie émotionnelle extraordinaire.

La revue traverse aussi une période de transition. Le prochain numéro présentera Michael Crabb comme nouveau rédacteur et j'occuperai alors de nouvelles fonctions. Je suis très fière des réalisations de *Danse au Canada* au cours de mon mandat de trois ans à la rédaction. La revue a pris naissance parce qu'on croyait que la danse et les danseurs canadiens avaient quelque chose de concret et personnel à dire, mais qu'ils ne disposaient d'aucune ressource pour l'écrire; il y avait peu d'écrivains pour discuter la philosophie de notre art et peu ou point de communication entre les diverses régions, compagnies et artistes. Depuis mon arrivée comme rédactrice, nous avons parcouru une longue route vers la création d'un échange d'idées. Nous avons entrepris le développement d'une école d'écrivains canadiens capables de communiquer sur la danse de façon sympathique et bien informée. Un regard sur les personnalités et les idées artistiques me permet d'espérer que nous avons relevé les défis que les nombreuses hypothèses sur la danse chez nous posent à tous, du bureaucrate au professeur, de l'exécutant à l'auditoire. Quoique la danse canadienne demeure notre souci principal, nous l'avons étudiée dans un contexte international en présentant les développements de signification internationale aux fins de comparaison.

Michael Crabb ne se contentera pas de poursuivre mes travaux de sape. Il en élargira les cadres. Il a démontré une curiosité du milieu, des connaissances de la scène artistique au Canada et ailleurs ainsi qu'une grande sensibilité envers le monde de la danse contemporaine. Michael personifie ce nouvel écrivain de danse canadien qui fait oeuvre de pionnier. Je suis fière du rôle que notre revue a joué au cours des trois dernières années dans l'établissement d'un corps littéraire et la création d'une génération de lecteurs et d'écrivains de la danse canadienne. La 'danse au Canada' ne sera jamais plus un art sans porte-parole.

Dance in Canada Conference '77

Elizabeth Zimmer

Many Minutes of the Meeting

Rose Hill, quoting Harold Osborne, in her paper on aesthetics at the conference: 'We move forward with our own generation, but we think and speak in the terms of the preceding generation.'

Laurence Adams, at the Dancers to Dancers Forum: *'Pension plans are part of the 1950s myth of securing our lives. Rather than worrying about them, we should be discussing alternative ways to support ourselves, examining the lives we're living now and the implications of those lives.'*

Robert Greenwood, at the Annual General Meeting: 'Let's stop being each other's problems and start being each other's solutions.'

From the moment I stepped off the bus at the University of Manitoba, I felt tension in the atmosphere. A particularly thorny meeting of artistic and administrative directors was in progress, the entire registration office was being turfed out of its nest to make room for a dance performance, and Linda Rabin, choreographer of that performance, was gliding across the lawn of Tache Hall, gathering branches to use as props.

By Sunday 320 delegates, all told, had appeared. Conspicuously rare, at registration and throughout the conference, were non-professional Winnipeg participants, or for that matter, non-professionals from anywhere. Even the professional dancers from Winnipeg were hard to locate; the Contemporary Dancers left for east coast touring in mid-conference and the Royal Winnipeg were busy rehearsing.

The two Manitoba companies had contributed a great deal to organizing the program and performance aspects of the fifth annual Dance Canada conference, leaving the Manitoba Department of Recreation the task of coping, as best it could, with the complexities of on-site management. Anything that could go wrong, did; schedule changes were constant, communication difficult, hospitality rudimentary.

In any case, the conference was in Winnipeg, but not of it; it had less a regional quality than an emotional tone, a fever pitch of commitment by a number of people to ideas neglected until recently by the dance community. In my view, the importance of this meeting, and I thought it a very important meeting indeed, lay in its exposure of these ideas – the political and economic realities facing the professional dance community – and in its debate of the relationship between art and politics, between training and creativity, between the search for standards and the opportunity to survive and experiment.

Of course, it was impossible for one person to be everywhere; meetings spread over acres of campus; thundershowers caught us unaware; sometimes the imperative of a midnight conversation overruled the intention to take a morning technique class. Almost always several sessions ran simultaneously, and I, as dance writer-cum-student, had to choose between exercising my body and expanding my mind. Saturday morning I took a class with Rachel Browne of Contemporary Dancers, played hooky from what turned out to be a tempestuous session on *Teaching Standards in Dance,* listened to a fascinating paper on *Philosophical Approaches to Dance* by Rose Hill of McMaster University, missed a session on preparing dance programs for children during the same period, took a ballet class from Contemporary Dancers' Kenneth Lipitz in the afternoon, spent an hour with some folks from Saskatchewan demonstrating contact improvisation, and barely had time to grab supper and catch a bus to the theatre.

John Juliani, over and over at the conference: 'Why are we being so polite?'

Sunday was the Annual General Meeting, during which Betty Oliphant pulled the National Ballet School out of Dance in Canada Association, Roger Jones, the Association's treasurer, resigned and someone stood up and accused Canadians of being turkey farmers, slow to

Tension at the Annual General Meeting. From left to right, Lawrence Adams, Jackie Malden, Robert Greenwood and (standing) Iris Garland.

Grant Strate making a point during the conference.

comprehend what is going on around them. When some members wondered what the Association was doing for them, others countered by asking what they were doing for the Association.

The meeting started off on a strange footing when Jones interrupted his treasurer's report to announce his resignation because of the continued vendetta by members of Dance in Canada Association against the dance officer of the Canada Council, sniping by independents and small groups against larger institutions, the low organizational standards in the Association's programs and doubts as to whether Dance Canada had anything to offer professional companies. A faction of the Association's membership (including Jones and other Toronto Dance Theatre personnel, Betty Oliphant, Joyce Boorman and Jacqueline Lemieux-Lopez, both former members of the Dance Canada board), it seemed, wished to have no part in any action critical of the Canada Council, while other members, notably Lawrence Adams, saw themselves as gadflies whose role it was to make Council aware of changing trends and values in the dance community. Adams, himself a drop-out from the National Ballet, functioned as a Lord of Misrule at the conference, reminding us at many junctures of the options down unfamiliar roads.

Driven to the edge of the meeting hall by an agitated, chain-smoking majority, I listened with growing distress as Toronto Dance Theatre co-director Peter Randazzo, wearing dark glasses, took the podium. Clearly offended, with his voice barely under control, Randazzo was obviously shaken by an article in Adams' fringe newspaper *Spill* in which Adams himself questioned whether Toronto Dance Theatre's new facilities would give its directors more opportunities to make dance. Betty Oliphant was also incensed by the piece which cast a cynical glance at the financing, landholdings and standards of the National Ballet School. By an obscure train of association, Adams likened arts institutions to the Mafia – both are up to no good.

The presentation of a slate of new officers for the coming year set off a fresh round of wrangling. Although Adams was not named in the 1977/78 slate, he was promptly re-nominated from the floor. Joyce Boorman spoke for an ad hoc group which deplored the continuing appearance of Adams and Grant Strate, both charter members of the Association's board, among the nominees. No one ever articulated the reasons – beyond personality conflicts – for these objections. Though they were unable to prevent the subsequent election of Strate and Adams to the board, they did register strong support for a bylaw change favouring proxy votes. Since rehearsal commitments prevented their participation in the elections, several dancers were vocal in support of that resolution.

I watched with amazement as all pretence at procedure was abandoned. One member after another took the floor to support or denounce the Association and its executive. Metaphors of marriage and divorce abounded. The nadir came when Joseph Shulman, from the Toronto Dance Theatre administration, went so far as to propose non-confidence in the board and to suggest that the Association consign itself to limbo for the coming year, abandon plans for its 1978 conference, and take time to re-think, retrench – or self-destruct. His motion was deemed unconstitutional.

Acting chairman Iris Garland steered the meeting between the Scylla of hysteria and the Charybdis of paranoia using her inimitable, inexplicable brand of personal radar. Sounding the emotional depths of the meeting from moment to moment, she permitted everyone to be heard – an important catharsis for wounded egos. The meeting adjourned for lunch while votes were counted, reconvening in a somewhat calmer atmosphere. Participants seemed willing to give this unlikely, unwieldy organization, hobbled by competing interest groups and fiscal strains, another year of grudging attention and cooperation. The newly elected board includes Iris Garland (formally elected chairman), Brian Macdonald, Martine Epoque, Grant Strate, Lawrence Adams, Maria Formolo, Gerry Eldred, Robert Greenwood, Iris Bliss Hamilton and Gisa Cole.

Iris Garland, at the Annual General Meeting: 'It's time to stop dividing ourselves up as the haves and have-nots.

We're a family and regardless of what we're doing, we should respect one another.'

I came to the conference eager to dance as much as possible, but the lure of the forum became so great that I spent most of the last two days listening and talking. With critics Max Wyman, Bill Littler, Michael Crabb, Casimir Carter, Lauretta Thistle and Diana Brown, I participated in an exchange with dancers who seemed less inclined than in previous years to regard the critic as their enemy; they are beginning to understand that arts journalists are in real ways their allies, hoping to educate the public, encourage them to attend performances and carve out attention for dance in the swamp of mass media whose chiefs often feel that the arts are not worthy of any space at all in daily newspapers or on the airwaves. Unfortunately, most of the Winnipeg press coverage of the conference showed a lack of sensitivity to any but the most conservative dancing, and wire services across the country picked up on all the political struggles, recalling that oft-repeated truism about CBC policy-makers: when it comes to the arts, the only good news is bad news.

Later that afternoon came a long, tense encounter with the Canada Council in which dancers demanded more say in who judges them, and in decisions about who gets the available funds. The Council, represented by, among others, its dance officer Monique Michaud, says it wants to fund good dancing by good dancers. Many young choreographers questioned the definition of 'good', emphasized the difference between their work and classical and even modern dance, and affirmed its value, demanding the right to work and be funded alongside the dance establishment.

The Canada Council programmed several lengthy speeches at the beginning of the session by touring officer John Cripton, Michaud, External Affairs representative David Anido and the Council's associate director Timothy Porteous. The speakers had barely finished their presentations by the time the meeting was scheduled to adjourn, leaving little time for questions and dialogue. Association members felt they had been filibustered – and erupted once again. They insisted on extending the time, missing dinner to pursue, with the Council representatives, questions about the quality of the relationship between the Canada Council and the dance field, about the make-up of Council juries and panels. After lengthy and emotional confrontations, it appeared Council was willing to reassess its policy on the make-up of evaluation panels.

Enroute to this forum, a few minutes late, I became practically the only observer of an environmental dance event, staged by some York University people, which occurred, unannounced, in the courtyard of the Fletcher Argue Hall (as pregnant a name for a meeting place as ever I've heard!). A man with a briefcase hurried across the space, sat down and read a newspaper, and hurried across again, continually appearing and disappearing. Other people did 'ordinary' things as well, over and over. I sat, delighted, as my perceptions of the changing day, the campus spaces, re-ordered themselves around these deliberately casual performers.

Planting the Annual General Meeting in the middle of the conference instead of in the dying moments at its end, helped maintain a level of political awareness throughout the five-day session. Opportunities to dance and learn related techniques were still plentiful, however. As the more politicized members of the community holed up in lecture-halls and caucus rooms, many others took master classes in techniques ranging from ballet to Limon, Cunningham, Graham and Lewitzky, as well as in Menaka Thakkar's brand of Indian classical dancing. They studied stage lighting and make-up, methods of publicity and fund-raising, took workshops in how to book a tour, watched films and demonstrations of historical dance, heard a variety of papers and were invited by Arnold Spohr to attend rehearsals at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet studio.

There's no way to hold a master class in the *New or Post-Modern Dance* but issues surrounding experimental dance were batted around in a forum devoted to that subject. One writer called it radical dance, subversive dance; a choreographer said it was a new way of organizing movement in the performing environment, taking a free fall from formal technique and movement, into uncharted areas. One thing is certain: Canadian dancers are no longer all the docile, well-trained, passive creatures of yore. They're demanding control of their own lives, the chance to be creative and innovative, to survive on the basis of their own radical visions, rather than by supporting antique visions of ethereal loveliness. Margaret Dragu, a Toronto choreographer who grew up on the Prairies, says she wants to do things that come 'from where we are, for the people who are here.'

In another forum, *Dancers to Dancers,* an interesting split emerged between ballet and contemporary dancers on the final afternoon. There was much discussion of pension plans for dancers, a subject complicated by relatively early retirement and high rates of disability. Dancers raised questions about their own relation to company direction and the quality of their participation in artistic decision-making. Political lines seemed very evident when one member of the National Ballet observed to a group of mostly hungry, mostly contemporary dancers, that he'd almost like to be unemployed for a while just to see what it felt like.

No account of the conference could neglect the five fascinating performances at the Manitoba Theatre Centre (see Joan Sinclair's review). The charter bus rides in and out of town provided opportunities to make and renew acquaintances, discuss performances and plan parties. At Monday's concert, Dance in Canada Association, in the person of Michael Crabb, anounced that this year's winner of the Chalmers Award in Choreography was Paula Ross of Vancouver.

It will be interesting to observe the future direction of the Association. My fear is that the so-called New dancers will find it more and more important, the more traditional dancers less so, and that will be a pity, because the entire community has enormous amounts to learn from one another.

Iris Garland to the host province at the last concert: 'Thank you for letting us have our riot in Manitoba'.

Dance in Canada Conference '77

Michael Crabb

Growing Pains

Childhood has its pleasures, a heady irresponsibility among them, but adolescence brings the agony of self-discovery. This is as true of human associations as it is with individuals. Anybody who has kept close to the Dance in Canada Association since its emergence in 1973 knows the truth of that. While unavoidable, however, adolescence can at least lead to a calmer maturity. If the people who got together in Winnipeg last August for Dance in Canada's fifth annual conference had kept this broader perspective in mind, the whole affair might not have become as grim and potentially suicidal as it was. Regarded from the right perspective, the 1977 conference can be seen as a positive step forward – possibly the Association's most productive conference ever.

There was a nice historical twist about holding the conference in Winnipeg. It was there 30 years ago that a still tiny and unsteady Canadian dance community signalled its will to survive. In 1948, the first of the Canadian Ballet Festivals was Winnipeg's creation. It was right that Dance in Canada should come back to the place where it really began.

Yet, ironically, the fact that Dance Canada was holding its conference in Winnipeg was the least apparent aspect of its complex and emotionally-charged activities. Contemporary Dancers, ostensibly one of the conference's co-hosts, made only a brief appearance and then left for Jacob's Pillow, while the Royal Winnipeg Ballet was preoccupied with rehearsals for its performance on the last night. Montreal, Edmonton and Halifax each had an engaging and distinctive regional flavour. But in Winnipeg there was far less sense of a local dance community than at these previous conferences.

Dance Canada does however leave the organization of its conferences to the local community. There is no dictation of form or content from the head office. Perhaps there should have been. Confusion reigned at the beginning, until a bewildering succession of program changes slowly knocked the conference into shape.

Fortunately, the organizational problems had no serious affect on the quality of the conference program. As in the past, there was a tightly packed schedule which encompassed things for doers: master classes, workshops and demonstrations; and things for talkers: forums, lectures and discussion groups. There was no distinguishable focus to all these activities, but that scarcely mattered when individually they were as outstanding as, for example, Rose Hill's learned paper on the philosophy of dance or Sandra Caverly's presentation on Bournonville technique.

When it was decided last year to extend the conference to five days the point was to reduce the pressure, to allow people to see and do more things at a tolerable pace. As it worked out, there was as much scrambling as ever. But nobody seemed to mind. It's exciting even if it leaves you physically and emotionally flattened.

Five days of conference also meant five evenings of performances. In a way they symbolize both the achievements and shortcomings of the association that produces them. They mix amateurs and professionals in what have sometimes been marathon-length shows, and present material which runs the full gamut of what may be comprehended by the word 'dance'. At its best the experience can be inspiring and at its worst, totally demoralizing. Programming and quality control, two elements in which one's naivety might seem to be vital concerns for the producers of a dance festival, have little obvious bearing. You have to take the festivals for what they are. As Grant Strate remarked, attending one of these performances is like going fishing. You don't know whether it will be an old boot or a sturgeon.

This year, the evenings of dance were generally shorter and there was some kind of programming. Even so, there was plenty of grumbling about this item or that. People would leave early, only to miss something important, or would hover around the close-circuit television in the lobby, where it was only a short step to the bar. Looking on the bright side, there was a clear impression that Canadian dance is vital, even if some of its forays may prove ultimately to have no point. It's good to provide a platform on which the avant-garde and the traditionalists can appear close to one another before an audience of their peers. It is hard on the audience in one way and refreshing for it in another.

Conference sessions and performances are, however, not the most memorable things about Winnipeg. What made the 1977 conference so exhausting and important was that it became a crisis of personality. The red-hot sessions were, in their essence, political. They brought into the open issues and personal conflicts which have been troubling Dance in Canada since it began.

Ronald Spohr, deep in thought, during Conference '77.

Everything was brought to a head in the stormy, traumatizing Annual General Meeting which might easily have moved from pantomime into the theatre of the absurd had it not been for the sane, compassionate direction given it by Iris Garland, newly-elected chairman of the Association.

Anyone for whom Winnipeg was his first Dance in Canada conference might find it improbable to realize that the Association grew out of the Canada Council. In August, 1972, Monique Michaud, then the dance officer of the Council and today the head of a much expanded dance division, invited a broad assembly of people from the dance community to meet in Ottawa. The agenda was designed to clarify and explore the role of the Council.

The people who met in Ottawa were so intoxicated with the pleasure of coming together and sharing points of view that plans were soon afoot for a permanent organization to serve the needs of dance in Canada. Idealism rather than practicability was the prevailing spirit and, when the Dance in Canada Association eventually became a legal fact on May 31, 1973, an impossibly ambitious list of objectives was drawn up – but from the best of motives. A healthy community is never monolithic, abstract or homogenous. Dance Canada (the shortened title most people use) included several very strong personalities with radically different ideas not only about what should be done with dance in Canada but about what dance itself is or might be. The new association was supposed to include everybody, professionals and amateurs, artists and managers, teachers and critics, anyone in fact who laid claim to an interest in, or involvement with, dance. This, coupled with the geographical fragmentation of the dance community, created a foundation itself deeply fissured.

It will take a political and social historian of remarkable patience and mental penetration to disentangle the complicated story of the Association's development. Two broadly separate trends, however, have been discernible. On the one hand, Dance Canada has worked hard to function as a communications network for the widely scattered members of the community. Two of its most valuable and practical achievements have been the newsletter, irregular but immensely informative, and the magazine which has grown rapidly under Susan Cohen's truly dedicated editorship to become a respected and imaginative publication.

On the other hand, Dance Canada began to assume an artistic and political personality of its own. Artistically it leaned towards the radical, experimental and avant-garde. Politically it became a mildly revolutionary force, dedicated to making the Canada Council listen to what the Association considered to be the needs of dance in this country. This trend, though perhaps not realized by those most immediately involved, was part of a much broader development within the arts generally towards a new definition of that vague word 'culture.' Similarly the Council, in all its various branches, found itself dealing with a movement to democratize the arts – one which did not make very much sense when fed through the outmoded conceptions of the Canada Council's godfather, the Massey Commission and its high-minded report.

Since the Council's reason for being is to spend money, it was money that became the issue between Dance Canada and the Council, or, to be more exact, the process through which the distribution of a fixed Council budget was made. Since the Council itself adhered to the principle of 'few ... but roses', the question became, 'How do you know when you've got a rose?' Those who already knew they were roses in the eyes of the Canada Council did not greatly like the idea of a self-appointed gardener introducing new strains that also claimed equivalent rosehood. Big companies felt threatened by the ravenous clamour of the unfed little ones, while the little ones themselves could not see why the big ones needed so much care. There were even people who said the big companies were part of a conspiracy to resist progressive horticulture. The argument became intensely inward-looking. Paranoia became the favoured neurosis and personal antagonism the order of the day.

As the rift between the Association and the Council deepened over the issue of assessment procedures for grants, it looked very much as if Dance in Canada was really concerned with the needs of professional companies. The issue, however, actually divided the companies as well since they did not all agree with the Association's stance – whatever that was. (It was never absolutely clear.)

Over the last three years, the inner stresses became more serious. A great deal of the Association's human energy seemed to be concentrated on making the Canada Council accept the idea that it, not a panel selected by the Council, must be listened to as the voice of the dance community.

The events of the Winnipeg conference cannot be understood outside this scenario of accumulating personal antagonism, deep-rooted ideological disagreements and a Council distracted by attacks, not just from the dance community, but from artists of all kinds on several discrete fronts.

At the Association's General Meeting, scheduled in the middle of the conference instead of being tagged on at the end, the tacit conflict of three years exploded into the

open. Names were named, accusations made, reputations laid on the line, self-flattering postures assumed, resignations tendered, thin skins punctured and the Association's whole existence placed in jeopardy. It was an emotional orgy which in fact had a tonic effect. The future looked brighter from that point on. Tempers cooled. Reason by and large prevailed and the Association, though shaken, emerged with a much clearer idea of what it is and should be.

It would not be true to say that any real solutions have been found for the inherent conflicts which divide the Association but a clearer sense of how such solutions might be developed certainly did emerge. At the root of it was an open acceptance that the Association's constituent elements must agree to differ, but respect each other in those differences. Instead of allowing unresolved problems with the Canada Council to envelope and throttle the general health of the Association, it now seems more likely that this problem will be localized in a continuing forum of artistic directors and managers. The newly elected board of directors, having seen the Association come dangerously close to self-destruction, has a more urgent awareness of the need to reflect all the diverse concerns of its members. Dance Canada is still in the midst of a difficult identity crisis, but the way through it is a bit clearer and less problematic.

The most fruitful direction, the one which emerged from the Winnipeg conference, seems to involve a remodelling of the Dance in Canada Association as an umbrella for a number of distinct divisions for dancers, for educators, for directors, etc. There will be things done in common and things done separately. Diversity is the key. Just as Canada itself defies homogenization so it would seem does its dance community. However, diversity does not prevent Canada from existing as a nation, albeit a rather quarrelsome one, nor should it prevent Dance in Canada from finding a role where it can make a significant contribution to its own membership and to the cultural life of Canada.

Dance in Canada Conference '77

Rose Hill

Three Philosophical Approaches to the Dance:

The Theories of Langer, Best and Sheets

It is the philosopher's responsibility to develop theories relating to aesthetics and the arts. But philosophers generally have paid little or no attention to dance. Yet we need explanations to queries such as: What is meant when we say dance is *expressive? Of what?* What is the explanation for an *emotionally charged* movement? If dance is expressive of the dancer's emotions, *can standards be set to judge such emotions* or *do we assess the physical performance?* What is meant by *aesthetic enjoyment and appreciation?* If the arts are primarily concerned with emotion, *what significance can this have for the teacher of dance?*

The philosopher accepts the responsibility of interpreting and providing explanations for these questions. As Suzanne Langer says, 'Philosophy is a living venture' (*Feeling and Form*). Its questions concern the implications and interrelationships of ideas; its answers are interpretations; and its function is to increase our understanding of what we know. So as philosophers attempt to interpret, they illuminate and reorganize our thinking.

It is possible to study dance in its cultural and historical aspects as physical activity – there are any number of 'how to dance and teach' texts. But the dearth of aesthetic and philosophical material is immediately apparent. As late as 1973, Selma Jeanne Cohen commented in *Dance Perspectives*: 'In this art (dance) most of the aesthetic problems are as yet not only unsolved but even unformulated.'

To become familiar with some of the literature dealing with philosophical and aesthetic problems with regard to the other art forms and to gain some appreciation of current thinking and writing related to music, art and poetry is therefore extremely important for the dance observer. For myself, an exciting reference book has been Harold Osborne's *Aesthetic and Art Theory* (1968). The comments give a concise and colourful backdrop to the theories of Suzanne Langer *(Feeling and Form)*, David Best *(Expression in Movement and the Arts)* and Maxine Sheets *(The Phenomenology of Dance)* whose writings are the major source of philosophical thinking on dance.

Osborne traces the mainstream of concepts which have governed Western art and contrasts them with Chinese and Indian aesthetic thought. He makes clear that in his view the field of art is not a tidy one:

In our aesthetic activities, as in many other walks of life, concepts are seldom clear and precise. Men can happily and on the whole successfully work with assumptions which when rendered articulate are seen to be conflicting. The lack of a clear tradition (in art) either in theory or in practice along with the doctrinaire repudiation of authority, healthy enough in itself, which is characteristic of the present age have brought about an almost hysterical jangle of confusion about purposes and ends which ultimately can only foster frustration and the dissipation of talent.

Would you say that applied to the current dance scene?

In the last chapter Osborne comments that the radical change in twentieth-century thinking about art and aesthetics is characterized by two important facts. First, the work of art, of whatever nature, is a *new* creation and the criteria by which it is valued *exist for that particular work of art*. Secondly, Osborne points out that the enjoyment of aesthetic experience, the cultivation of aesthetic sensitivity and the training in an individual of the capacity to appreciate works of art are some of *the ultimate values of human life, valuable for their own sakes*, and *not in need of any justification for any extrinsic benefits* which may occur.

If you believe either or both of these ideas, they have tremendous ramifications for dance education. They are not new concepts in the art world (Osborne traces the latter idea back to Aristotle), but as he points out:

Artists and their public being generally practical men, not always prone to analytical profundity, will sometimes profess the aesthetic doctrines that become current in the time immediately preceding their own without noticing that the assumptions implicit in their own practice are not conformable to these doctrines.

It is from this perspective of twentieth-century thinking

on art and aesthetics that I want to consider the three quite different theories of Langer, Sheets and Best. All are concerned with philosophical explanations about dance, stemming, of course, from completely different schools of philosophy. Langer and Best are both competent, even brilliant philosophers, with complex and fascinating theories. Maxine Sheets, foremost a dancer, has produced a reasoned explanation for the *felt* dance experience and for the nature of dance as a formed and performed art.

The introduction in each text immediately alerts the reader to the differences in each author's philosophical stance. Langer states that philosophy is the fabric of ideas, in which there is a stocktaking where beliefs, maxims and hypotheses are expressed and examined. Philosophy deals with the meanings, with the sense of what we say. Best (and the reader is immediately aware of the more dogmatic style) deals much more specifically and trenchantly with the purpose of philosophy. He says his book is intended to introduce those whose concern is primarily with the arts to certain aspects of contemporary philosophical thought, without which no consideration of aesthetics can be adequate. For Best, writing and discussion of the arts (read dance) still is characterized too often by:

. . . rapturous and soporific effusion. Work in this field is vitiated by underlying misconceived presuppositions about, for example, reasoning and the emotions.

Because Sheets' concentration is on the *felt* dance experience, her theory is drawn from the phenom[illegible] logical framework.

All three writers, however, indicate that any p[illegible] sophical study of dance forces the student to re-exa[illegible] his/her ideas and beliefs in an attempt to achie[illegible] logical consistency in his/her thinking.

Although educated in the twentieth century, La[illegible] reveals herself in her writing as a sound [illegible] nineteenth-century philosopher. She has not in any w[illegible] been influenced by what Best refers to as 'the revolu[illegible] in philosophy in recent years initiated by the later wo[illegible] of Wittgenstein.' Best so obviously has and he takes a [illegible] at some of her assumptions which are highly sus[illegible] according to contemporary philosophical analysis [illegible] rigorous Wittgensteinian philosophy.

The three writers follow a similar pattern in begin[illegible] their texts with a brief description of their partic[illegible] philosophical frame of reference. It is therefore poss[illegible] to gain a grasp of the theory within each spe[illegible] philosophical framework.

At the beginning of her book, Langer develop[illegible] generalized theory of art into which she fits all [illegible] differing art forms, showing how her theory [illegible] aesthetics can embrace them all. Her writings resem[illegible] an enormous medieval tapestry full of contras[illegible] stitches and colours in which every piece is an elem[illegible] of the whole. She herself is a musician and an artist, [illegible] this fact adds a further dimension to her writing.

Conversely, David Best starts out with the simple [illegible] basic problems of internal emotions and exter[illegible]

behaviour. He attempts to convince the reader that it is impossible to begin to consider problems in dance until the ground has been cleared of a lot of loose and chaotic thinking. He is rather like a gardener who must get rid of all the weeds, even if this at first necessitates destruction by fire before the soil can be ready for the new seeds.

Maxine Sheets' book is of particular interest to dancers because she writes as a dancer. She builds her entire descriptive analysis of dance on Langer's theory, but adds her own detailed superstructure translating Langer's concepts to dance. The actual language she uses opens up exciting ideas about the fabric of the dance, the elements from which she considers the dance to be constructed. Perhaps because the phenomenological stance in philosophy most accurately explains her own dance experience, she has used this philosophy as the basis of her theories.

Without a grasp of phenomenological thinking, the value of her writings is largely lost. Dance is a phenomenon. According to the phenomenologist, there is first the appearance of the thing, then the conceptual framework which is built up in describing it. Further premises of phenomenology as articulated by Sheets are:

The actual theory emerges from phenomenology because phenomenology is concerned not with theories about phenomena, but with descriptions of their existence.

Fundamentally, man is not an objective structure to be known but a unique existential being, a unity of consciousness body, which itself knows.

Sheets rests her work on the claim that her writing develops a conceptual framework for dance resulting in a descriptive analysis and *not* a body of definite knowledge. The terminology of her descriptive analysis, built on Langer's theory, is very akin to Laban's 'effort' concepts. Of course, in her writings Langer draws from the same source.

Suzanne Langer's thinking has been triggered by the work of the German philosopher, Ernst Cassirer. (Eleanor Hanstein's work on movement theories has been built from both Cassirer and Langer.) Langer has theorized that all works of art are symbols or iconic signs of emotions, not that any art form expresses *directly* the artist's experienced emotions, but rather his *understanding* of what emotions are and the nature of emotions. She does not consider art to be a language with its own system of communications built from separate elements such as words, each having its own emotional significance. Each separate work of art is a unique symbol. The actual work of art symbolizes the distillation of different forms of the inner life. It imitates or reproduces in itself the form, the rhythm or, as she calls it, the 'gestalt' of emotional situations. The vital thing to recognize is that the art work is not the felt emotion but the apprehensions and understanding of emotion or of a particular emotion. The work of art therefore reproduces in its own form and structure the actual structure and pattern of feeling and emotion. Hence, of course, her title *Feeling and Form*. Her writings provide a language and a springboard for a growth in concepts about what moves an artist to compose, how he creates, what he means by it and what works of art mean to the observer.

Certain of her theories are a beautiful target for critics. How can the inner emotional life of experienced feeling be thought to have a structure or rhythm which is reproduced in an often very elaborately structured work of art? Nevertheless, the theory is persuasive. It deals in masterly fashion with many of the problems of art: whether it is representational, how the emotions are involved in a work of art, how the work of the artist is interpreted, whether it should be valued for its associations or for itself alone. (Remember that today the art world considers that the art work is valued for itself.)

She then describes exactly how each particular art form fits into her symbolic theory. The two chapters on dance are illuminating. She weaves the entire fabric of expressive movement into her theoretical tapestry.

Her theory of art as symbolic language is explained in dance through the use of the term 'gesture'. (This term and its accompanying explanation I find incomplete.) In ordinary life, gesture is used as a form of language. *This is not art*. But, when the gesture is imagined and used by the dancer to convey ideas of emotion and combined with other imagined gestures, then the movement becomes the art form. It is the *imagined* feeling, translated into the gesture, that governs the dance, not real emotional conditions translated into movement. While the actual physical movement is real, the feeling thought motion (Laban's terminology developed by Langer) is illusory. The dance is actual movement but symbolic in its intention. Because this particular art form is built from the gesture, the dance elements that emerge are space-time tensions, body tensions, in Langer's language the interplay of virtual forces. In Langer's theory the artist creates the illusion – the work of art – and the term 'virtual' suggests something self-contained and independent; for example, virtual space, existing as one of the dancer's tools. Similarly virtual time and virtual force are other tools at the command of the dancer. In order for the dancer to symbolize his movement, the virtual forces, space-time, body tensions, and in a secondary way, dance tensions created by lights, music, decor, masks, etc., are the dancer's vocabulary. The actual physical movement is the means by which the dancer creates the illusion and this he does by an interplay of all the virtual forces.

Sheets describes in detail what Langer's terms, 'illusion of force', 'virtual force', 'the imaginative virtual space', mean to a dancer. Remember that from the phenomenological stance Sheets' concern is to clothe concepts with language or to provide the language which will develop the concepts to *describe the lived experience of the dance*. Her writing with regard to the terminology she develops I found elucidating and crystal clear. It also made me realize very forcefully how *impoverished* our dance language is. We are dependent on scientific and anatomical descriptions of body movement – flexion, extension, contraction, etc. – to describe the fabric of dance. The same paucity of descriptive language is obvious in dance criticism. We do not yet have the language to communicate the dancer's world to the non-dancer. Read Sheets' descriptive analysis with this is mind and think what it would do for dancers and dance performance if both dancer and viewer had clearer concepts and language with which to enjoy and appreciate it. Sheets' writing is one of the first attempts I have read to explain dance in terms which are specific to dance and which can be grasped by the non-dancer.

Osborne's text provided the perspective for viewing the philosophical school from which Best derives his theories. Osborne gives a little of the historical background which had given rise to radical changes in philosophical thinking. He regards the ideas of a nineteenth-century philosopher Dugald Stewart as the precursor of some of the Wittgensteinian writing, particularly his belief that words do not have an essence or single meaning, but instead tend to have a family of resemblances and gain their meaning from the context in which they are used. Implicit in all of Best's writing is the idea that what there is in the external environment, the world itself, is all contained in how we see it. Another way of saying this is to say that there is a fundamental sense in which everything, to be understood at all, must be interpreted, must be seen, under some description or other. Working from this premise it becomes evident that *our concepts and language form reality*. The ability to reduce *all* experience to intellectual reasoning is central to any theory or argument based on philosophical analysis. Without concepts and language we would not know that we viewed the outside world nor would we be able to interpret it.

Best's text demands sustained, hard, intellectual concentration to grasp his meanings; even then some of them prove elusive. His writing follows a stylized pattern of a tightly framed argument, taking theories and definitions and, through logically structured debate, showing the weaknesses, fallacies and sometimes absurdities of the particular subject. It is a skilful means of concept presentation because the particular word game played has been set up by the writer who knows exactly the conclusion at which he wants the reader to arrive. Such a style, though making demands on the reader's intellectual capacity – especially if he or she is unschooled in logical thinking – is excellent in terms of teaching correct word usage and points up the absurdities created through slipshod thinking and speaking. It also brings home to the reader interested in dance (and in physical education too) the poor quality writing which we have accepted and made use of in our respective fields.

Best says his book is primarily intended for students, teachers and lecturers concerned with dance and the arts. He gives as one of his reasons for building his theory around dance the fact that:

Perhaps the most important of the philosophical areas of enquiry about which we need to be clear in order to understand any of the arts is that of the relationship of mind and body; for example, what it means to speak of an emotion being expressed in physical behaviour. In this respect, dance is surely unique.

For Best, a conceptual framework in which to discuss logically all the problems in art and aesthetics is essential. At least half of the book is devoted to pointing out the mistaken concepts of the traditional mind/body theories and the damage they do to any coherent understanding of the emotions and their meaning in expressive movement. Inner feelings and emotions are separated from their observable movement manifestations and it is only possible to make inferences about the emotionality of movement. The conceptual inadequacies of behaviourism, solipism, mysticism are quite brilliantly exposed, the former because it cannot be scientifically explained and the others because they depend for the explanation of a seen emotion in physical behaviour on the mystical, transcendental and spiritual, all of which are unacceptable to reasoned thought.

Any theory must provide a logical connection between the emotional, the mental and the physical. Best uses the Wittgensteinian theory of 'criteria' (logical connections between two events.) Movement may be regarded as containing two aspects: the physical, the prerogative of scientific study, and the emotional, the prerogative of philosophical study, each perceiving the particular type of movement within its specific context. Within an adequate theory of meaning, the mind does not work as a separate entity, but as a part of the whole mechanism. Also the physical movement is expressive emotionally; a particular organization or pattern of movement is performed and recognized as the criterion of the particular emotional experience. Remember here that emotion in movement may be compared with a conceptual theory of meaning and, just as Best claims that words derive their meaning from their own context and certain family resemblances, the same is true of a dance movement charged with emotion – the context gives the clue to the observed emotion. The dance is viewed as an entity in order to be grasped, just as the sentence or paragraph must be read in its entirety for the reader to gain the sense of the words.

He builds his theory of aesthetics into a similar conceptual framework. If it is important in aesthetics to consider emotional feelings and reactions to the dance, can these be related in any way to reasoned discussion? If not, the teacher and the critic are not in a position to criticize or communicate; the felt emotion remains on the subjective level, part of the private and personal world of the experiencer and inaccessible to the outsider. But people talk about dance and their feelings to it. So Best postulates that interpretive reasoning (acceptable philosophically) brings emotional feelings into the realm of reasoned examination, either by the individual analyzing his own emotions or by interpretive reasoning on the part of an outsider, a dance teacher, or an art critic, or any interested person. It is through this interpretive reasoning that an individual's way of looking at a dance may be changed. Through discussion he or she sees things differently – though, for Best, the reality is in the conceptual meaning which is capable of change. One literally sees the work of art differently. It is obvious how this theory stresses the importance of education in aesthetics.

To recapitulate: in Langer, the world of art is the symbol and the apprehension of emotion is expressed symbolically by the artist; in Best, it is the use of criteria and interpretive reasoning which makes possible the logical explanation of the emotionally charged movement and reasoned discourse about the world of art. Sheets' description of the dancer's felt experience offers different concepts completely, suggesting a descriptive language for dance.

These theories raise certain questions. Should we be developing concepts which would enlarge and enrich our language of dance? Does dance need a language more descriptive of the physical movements performed, but of the art form created by the choreographer and interpreted by the dancer?

Does the primitive nature of dance theory explain the ignorance and lack of acceptance of dance as an art

by a large proportion of our society, even by other artists?

Dance departments in Canadian universities must accept the responsibility for providing greater educational opportunities which permit the emergence of the dance scholar, whether historian, philosopher, anthropologist or critic. On university campuses, we need inter-faculty and inter-student seminar groups, drawn from the philosophy, music, art and dance departments, to ponder and discuss aesthetic problems common to all art forms.

We need symposia and conferences where dancers, performers and teachers, musicians, critics and philosophers exchange ideas and discuss mutual problems in theories of art and aesthetics.

Finally and perhaps especially for those of us who are impatient of anything to do with dance which is not 'a thing,' the presentation of dance theories may serve to underline to the dance world the importance of the thinker, the theorist, the teacher and the critic. They are vital to interpret the essential nature of dance within the fabric of our society.

I am indebted to Dr. Gene Simpson of the philosophy department at York University who has guided my readings. Our discussions have been absolutely invaluable in giving me added perspective and knowledge.

Maria Formolo

Northern Saskatchewan Diary

There are eight full-time members in the Regina Dance Works: Pearl Louie, Patrick Hall, Allan Risdill, Connie Moker, Belinda Weitzel, David Weller and myself. On this trip to Northern Saskatchewan by plane, Susan Arnold stayed home to hold down the fort with Sharon Amyotte, our secretary and company mother. Linda Zaremba joined the company to teach in our community school while we were off gallivanting. Richard Rose came with us as our tour manager.

Our trips in March and May of this year were financed by the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the Indian Band at Stanley Mission, and a Canada Council Touring Office Grant, the Northern school board, and the people of each community who housed and fed us. We visited five communities, some for the second time: Stanley Mission, Sandy Bay, Pelican Narrows, Green Lake and LaLoche. Each one proved to be very different economically, socially, culturally. Also, the acceptance and receptivity to the dance group varied a great deal. We didn't always know what to expect from the various cultures of Dene, Cree, Metis, Treaty and Non-Treaty Indians. In one place the children might be disorderly and rambunctious, in another very shy. Some teachers were enthusiastic, others passive and perfunctory.

With every experience, we learn and adapt. For example, most native people are non-verbal in group sessions with us, but are more inclined to open up on a one-to-one basis. Their children are not disciplined at home, so we cannot expect them to conform to our notions of order and attentiveness. Body-fitting costumes offend a sense of modesty. Adult native people seldom consent to dance unless drunk. Nor do we schedule important activities in competition with a bingo game or the riot of a weekend party.

In our residencies, one of our aims is to leave the teachers with stimulation and ideas for incorporating creative movement into the school curriculum. In the places where we had a longer stay, special teacher's workshops were held. We would always plan our schedule around community events and in close consultation with what the teachers felt they wanted and needed. In every community we planned time for an evaluation session, about teaching and performance work with teachers, which was most helpful to us.

These are some of my notes taken on our tour.

Stanley Mission

MONDAY AFTERNOON: After lunch there were classroom sessions. I went with Allan to third grade. The class was taught in Cree, but the kids understood English fairly well. The teacher was great – joined in dance Allan made to Billy the Kid and had a great time. No trouble to get participation. Afterwards, I had the sixth grade – children very shy and difficult. All of us who had sixth grade and up had a hard time in classrooms. Sheila, the sixth grade teacher, was no help, as she was very shy herself. They loved the music, and during recess, four of the girls stayed in and we danced together. It was then that I met Adam for the first time.

Small, bony 13-year-old with dust-coloured hair; a kind of pixie looking person unlike the full lipped and wide boned type more common to the band. He'd hover outside the door while we were dancing, and when I'd turn my back, he'd flash in mimicry of what I was doing.

and when I would turn to look, he'd yell and run away. It was like someone who loved swimming and wanted badly to go swimming, but the water was too cold to step in.

Most of the people I find quite beautiful. The women are fast with lots of children and much work. The homes are shells packed with people, fragile ugly barriers against the winter. Not a place to spend more time in than a person would have to. Kids, even little ones, roam around well into the night. I look in windows and most places seem to have no furniture, pictures, plants, rugs, etc. A very different idea of a home than what I am used to.

WEDNESDAY: *Peter and the Wolf* performance/workshop in morning and afternoon. We had Cree translator for story. Most of the kids joined in workshop and all the teachers joined in. That evening we did community performance.

THURSDAY NIGHT: Community Exchange 1) *Bus Depot* dance in regular clothes. 2) Puppet stories from Allan's group – there was a story about five trappers and Hudson's Bay Store; quite a strange mixture of realism and naivete. Third and fourth graders already into who sleeps with whom. Allan mitigated their story by assuring the audience that Wanda and Jim were married. Everybody laughed. 3)Make-a-dance – it took 15 minutes of begging and games, turning out the lights, pleading, physically dragging to get my people on the floor. Allan said he'd do the dance with us and would make all the mistakes. Finally all but Betsy agreed to do it.

We did it twice. Then I asked who else wanted to learn it. There were so many who got up then that there was hardly room. I taught it, and we had a great time. Then I asked if there were any fiddlers around. Four men went off to find a fiddle (and take a swig, no doubt). Meanwhile we put on Jean Carignan. The kids are fantastic dancers. But we were the only adults who would dance. Adam and one little tiny girl about four or five stood out in my mind – incredible energy – inventiveness, fancy footwork and stamina. They would have danced all night – but we stopped about 10 to show a movie. The fiddler finally showed up and he was pretty good.

Sandy Bay

TUESDAY: The community exchange went well. The Band leaders took the opportunity to make speeches and thank the young people for bringing honour to Sandy Bay. Some of the older students did a 15-minute acrobatic presentation. They were good – fine strong bodies and fine sense of timing. Bob, the Phys. Ed. teacher, does a great job with them.

When we put on jig music, some of the elders jigged with us. Peter's trapping partner came and jigged with Belinda. What a beautiful man – thin, chiseled, wiry, dressed in spick-and-span shiny old black suit. He's about 60 and can out-hunt, out-trap, out-fish, out-hike, out-jig any man in town. He remembers before the white man settled in the area. He said that we didn't have the right music for him to jig to. Evidently Sandy-style jigging is different.

WEDNESDAY MORNING: Teachers spent the morning in workshops with us. David and Connie spent an hour on curriculum guide, and the teachers were crawling, skipping, floating and falling around the gym. I noticed that the native teachers dropped out and watched. Afterwards I asked them if what we were doing made sense. They answered, 'Oh yes,' and then started cutting up and mimicking and laughing at the movements. We went back to Home Ec. room for a break, and had an evaluation session.

The native teachers did not open their mouths in the discussion. The comments and observations about our first evening performance were most encouraging. (We had been somewhat depressed, because it felt so rough and the audience was very noisy). They said the balance of program was good. Explanations of dances very important, because dance is not part of tradition in North, except for jigging. They thought it most important to show some of our more difficult-to-understand pieces, even though a lot of people might be puzzled. They thought *Whales* was not a difficult piece to understand. They said that the kids liked it, though during performance, kids were noisy. During a performance, the kids do anything they want to. We bashed around the pros and cons of not allowing kids to adult performances. To do so would really be stepping on a tradition. I think we all feel that we should learn to cope as performers. Kids go everywhere with parents.

Pelican Narrows

Real strange lost feeling that first afternoon and evening. I go with Richard to see community hall. It is gruesome filth and cold and plywood. No gym. Only a double classroom that smells like a spittoon.

There are about 30 teachers and they are very close. Don't mix socially with natives, from what I can observe. My first reaction is to look down on white supremacy attitude. Yet they are one of the steadiest staffs in the North and seem dedicated to children. They seemed really excited about having us. We concentrated classroom sessions only on Kindergarten, Readiness and Division 1. Older ones got demonstration and after school sessions with puppets and make-a-dance.

THURSDAY: In a small room, did two lecture-demos with a little participation. I have got a handle on a workable format and a clearer way of explaining and talking. Also, real little ones not there and the room is smaller. Two factors to keep in mind for lecture-demos in the future.

Format after introduction of names:

1 Sun salutation and short explanation of how it works with breathing (with older group, talked about people in sports warming up muscles before a game.)

2 Travelling brushes and push to *Hoyt Axton Blues*.

3 Travelling combination with slow turns and extensions.

4 Travelling adage.

5 Jean Carignan jig music – series of simple jump and jump turning combinations – developing into the more spectacular.

This part took 15 minutes. I talked to people all through – showing and explaining what we were working at. Asked them questions about what they thought was harder, etc. Kids were fascinated. Room was hot and stinky and crowded, but there was something in the intimacy of the situation that made these lecture-demos better than any we have done.

6 *Charlie McCoy* – Company dance which is a mix between modern and a square dance.

7 Pearl did rhythm clapping and repeat of *Charlie McCoy* with younger group.

8 I did a stretch session working with internal muscles (lots of imagery), push and reach. Younger kids jumped in right away. Also worked with breath and relaxation.

After five minutes, I talked about housing problems in Regina – related it to Northern housing problems – asked for comments on their problems.

9 Company danced second section of *Housing* with ladder.

10 Asked children where they had to wait – they said the nurse and the Bay on Saturday morning. Told them about waiting in Regina Bus Depot.

11 Set up chairs and did *Bus Depot*.

Company taught class sessions all afternoon. My make-a-dance after school was crammed. One of the developments of this tour which is so good is that in workshops and classrooms we teach some of the dances we do – in performance – like *Charlie McCoy* and *Bus Depot*. These kids are quick to pick up. Faster than Southern city kids in general. They love dancing.

Thursday night the hall was packed and beastly hot. Richard and crew had cleaned it.

I think because we felt so appreciated all day, we found extra energy to give our best performance so far.

The kids were much better behaved here, so the solo and *Whales* weren't so difficult. Most of the teachers were there and quite a few adults from the community.

FRIDAY MORNING: It was hard to get it together for *Peter and the Wolf* at 11:00. Many more classes had been added to my original schedule, so we cancelled *Peter and the Wolf* at 1:00. It is imperative to good work, to have a chance to get away from it. Especially on tour – otherwise we make ourselves unseen and untouchable and untouched except by our own work. The workshop felt chaotic but teachers said they were getting good ideas from us – feedback was tremendous.

That day was beautiful. It had been cloudy all week but on Friday it was a warm and sunny spring day. Everybody got good hikes in. Richard and I went out to an island and perched on some rocks – it was almost hot in the sun. At 3:30 I had make-a-dance again. I had three teachers in the session. At 8:30 we had community exchange evening, where we did *Peter and the Wolf* without the workshop for the whole community, plus puppets, make-a-dance and jigging. Mostly kids but some adults from the community – many of the teachers came. *Peter and the Wolf* was the best we've ever done. The ceiling was so low, the 8-foot ladder barely fit. Allan and I had to improvise our tree section. Nobody minded. It's funny – in the place with by far the worst working conditions, we did our best work.

The teachers had a party for us. Beer, wine and beer like water – fancy foods. I left about 1:00 because I was tired but I guess it went on til 3:30 am. The company is pretty tired today. But I think that everyone is generally positive with of course innumerable germs, injuries,

complaints, questions, criticisms. I am so cramped in the pillbox of a wart-nosed, toad-hopping plane right now, I am ready to scream. They told us not to fly at mid-day....

Seldom were we able to get a clear idea of what the native community thought of the work we did. When the parents came to evening events, they seemed to enjoy themselves, especially the community exchange evenings when their own children were doing a dance or a puppet story.

Here are two comments:

First, a letter from a Mr. Bear, Band Overseer of Sandy Bay, saying that they liked so much what we did, that they would like to have a dancer come live with them and teach their children full-time and maybe form a group.

The second was a Saturday morning conversation with the janitor of the school at Green Lake where we had been teaching for four days. The evening before we had done a performance and community exchange. I'll try to recall the gist of it...

'I don't want to hurt your feelings, but I don't think you guys are very good dancers. It's not like the old way of dancing. You practise every day and it's still not as good as what the people used to do. Can you make the rain come?'

'No, I wish I could.'

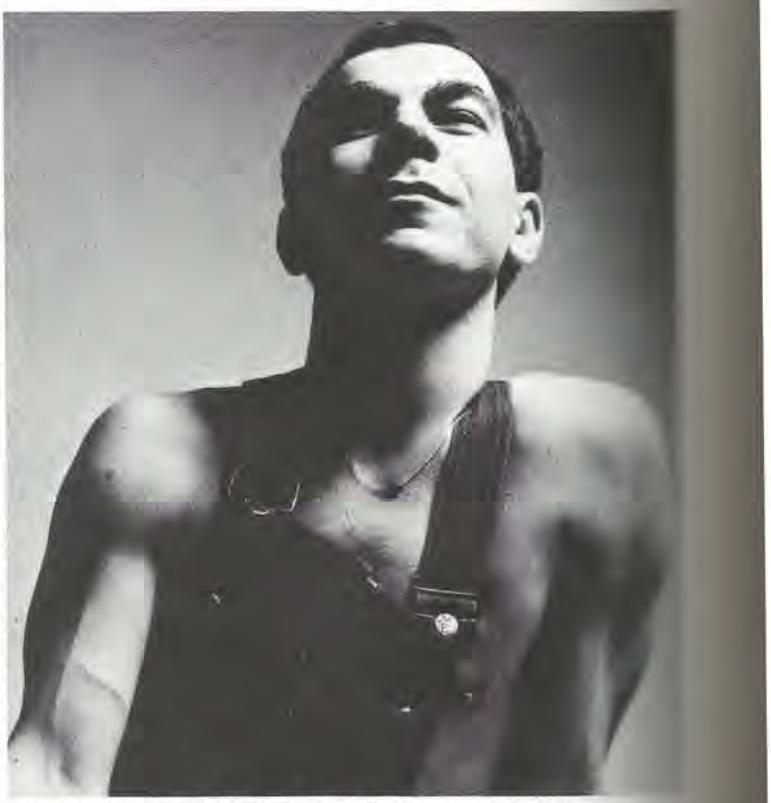
'What are you teaching the children? It's nothing at all there. How much money do you get?'

'We don't get much money. The children love dancing. They are strong and quick to learn. If you don't like us teaching them, then why don't you teach them?'

'I should teach them. Yes I should teach them....'

Profile
Virginia Solomon

Peter Randazzo The Man in his Work



I'm not concerned with dance heroes, but I am concerned with dance as a means of exploring, evolving and expressing myself as a human being, and having people see who that person is. It has been said that there is only one of us in all of time and that we will never repeat ourselves. I want my dancing and dances to celebrate this.

For Peter Randazzo, the act of creation is an act of discovery. When speaking of the creative process, he talks of moving from the 'personal to the universal' and of starting with 'feelings first. I don't start by saying 'I'm going to make a dance'. First , I'm a person, then I'm a dancer.' Nor is music the springboard for many of his dances. In fact, as in the solo for one of the four male dancers in *Voyage*, some of his choreography is done in silence.

Randazzo was born in Brooklyn and commenced training at 16 with the Martha Graham School. Two years later he joined her company and remained for six years during which she created nine roles for him. He also studied with Anthony Tudor and Jose Limon. In 1968 with David Earle and Patricia Beatty, he founded the Toronto Dance Theatre and now has 25 works in the repertoire. In fact, however, these biographical details do not matter in understanding him because it is in the works themselves that his personal as well as his artistic development may be charted.

If his evolving world view is reflected in thematic treatment and his artistic growth in stylistic change, it is still not possible to treat Randazzo's work so simplistically. What makes his work so interesting is the link between these two elements. Style has two facets – the first, characteristic of an individual dancer, which bears his imprint only; the second, characteristic of the choreographer, which can be translated from one dancer to another. In Randazzo's case, his personal style seems to coincide with his evolving world view. Not only are his dances philosophically grounded, but his very dancing as well. How he moves through an action is as revealing as the action itself.

This manner of moving might best be called absurdist or existentialist. While it is commonly thought an artist puts his soul into his work, Randazzo seems to disassemble body and soul. There is a curious lack of connection which allows him to abstract himself. He can be spectator and participant at the same time. Arms and legs move as if pulled by strings (as in the tap dance of the assassin in *L'Assassin Menace* or in Randazzo's bounce-shuffle as the loner in *Nighthawks*), giving an element of soullessness to his dancing. Through this kind of body language, Randazzo becomes a true twentieth-century man.

Randazzo's early pieces do not contain this kind of philosophical predilection nor does his dancing have this abstract characteristic. *Untitled Solo* (1970), where, in a symbolic act of birth, the nude dancer painfully emerges from a cocoon-like covering, and *Starscape* (197[illegible] where as dancer/choreographer he is so concerned with altering the quality of his own movement within the weighted confines of ropes, demonstrate instead an intense preoccupation with self-discovery, with exploring his own body. It is only in later works such as *Nighthawks* and *Recital* that he moves to a broader concern for the state of human relations and the predicament of modern man.

It would be unfair to consider *Starscape* merely as a trendy exercise, reflecting movement cliches of the late sixties or early seventies. While the dancer has a curious anti-gravitational bounce resulting from the pull of the arms and legs against the counteracting pressure of the weighted lines, the quality of the movement slowly becomes secondary to the awesome effect of this central white figure radiating ropes like rays and glittering like a star against a stark blue background. The echoing, reverberating music of Syrinx communicates a tremendous sense of open space, the night sky of the prairies and the vast reaches beyond the earth itself. Slowly the music and dance affect a gradual transformation in the audience's attitude, drawing it from scientific observation to a kind of hushed reverence. There is brilliance in this accomplishment.

Dark of Moon, choreographed in the same year for Barry Smith, reveals that Randazzo is beginning to look outside himself, moving from the individualistic preoccupation of *Starscape* and *Untitled Solo* to the psychological effects of male-female interaction. According to Randazzo, it portrays the relation of one man to three female dancers, each of whom represents but one aspect of a single woman. Although these three women seem to overpower him at the end of the piece, there is still none of the stark social commentary of later works like *Nighthawks* and *Recital*. In fact, the plot seems slightly

[illegible]cal and secondary to Smith's exotic and powerful [illegible] which conjures up a world of primitive ritual and magic.

I Had Two Sons (1969) also deals with human interaction at a theatrical level that bears little connection to the circumstances of everyday life. Possibly based on the Biblical story of Cain and Abel, it concerns fratricide. As the curtain rises, the sounds of a solitary flute set a primitive note which removes the audience from contemporary life. Randazzo is seen seated cross-legged on a rock with his arms oustretched. The work expresses the tensions and clashes intrinsic in the legend, but also contains elements of style which it takes from earlier pieces and on which later pieces are based. For instance, the slow back bends which Randazzo does with a straight spine on an almost bent knee repeat those of the first couple in the opening section of *Continuum* (1969). Also typical are the semi-oriental jumps done on flat feet in an open second and the staccato-like movements of his bent arms which foreshadow gestures used two years later in *Visions for a Theatre of the Mind*. Moreover the way in which Randazzo runs, with a sharp kick of the back leg outwards from below the knee, is seen later in the chase sequence of *L'Assassin Menace* (1975).

Both *I Had Two Sons* and *Dark of Moon*, however, deal with human situations in a magnified, theatrically intensified way. How many of us see the three faces of love or murder a brother? As Randazzo's work develops, this concern for the larger-than-life image lessens and he brings to the stage human situations which lie within our grasp and our own experience in the daily world.

In *The Amber Garden* and *The Letter*, he focusses on love. *The Amber Garden* (1972) deals with open emotion – two couples whose interaction leads to a re-coupling for two of the four people; *The Letter* (1974) deals with secret betrayal – a cuckolded husband, a wife and her lover, all of whom are caught in the conventions of society. In both Randazzo sensitively portrays the human dilemma, particularly in his masterful portrait of the anguish of the spurned woman (danced by Susan Macpherson) in *The Amber Garden*. Instead of leaving her seated on the bench at stage left, he moves her to centre stage where she stops in an uplifted gesture of despair ... fade-out. Through her placement on stage and through her exploratory turns and bends, one senses that she is feeling out life again – that this tragedy for her might become a voyage of self-discovery. (Perhaps this is the optimism Randazzo spoke of when he talked to me about his attitude to life.)

The Letter does not contain the same soulfulness as *The Amber Garden*, since the quest for intimacy is merely frustrated rather than thwarted. Surely the letter is evidence that the liaison will continue, that the lovers will meet again. But there is a curious feeling of detachment when Randazzo dances the lover. The intensity of their relationship, and therefore our involvement, is moderated by his stylistic peculiarities. We question whether he has invested as much in the relationship as the woman. The flippant swirl of the feet as he crosses his legs prior to sitting down reinforces this feeling (and is actually omitted in later versions). Yet whether the lover is serious or not, the anonymity of the figures who *must* pass as strangers *before the husband's* [illegible] speaks of the loneliness of modern man. We are all trapped by conventions which are themselves superficial and yet do not allow us to fulfill the longings of the heart. This conclusion, only implied in *The Letter*, is much more evident in Randazzo's subsequent pieces.

Randazzo and David Earle in *I Had Two Sons:* the theatricalized image.

In *L'Assassin Menace* (1975), based on a painting by Magritte, Randazzo takes his stylistic qualities as an absurdist and translates them to an entire piece. It might first appear as light-hearted burlesque, but it reveals Randazzo at his most profound. Here we see a robot-like assassin, bouncing mechanically in his early tap sequence and then moving soullessly through events which he manipulates. He is the original trickster, who murders and then returns to provoke his pursuers, to enjoy the confusion which he creates. In our interview, Randazzo calls him 'the arch-enemy' – and yet he flits in and out of the setting creating havoc in such a dispassionate way that he becomes more interesting than repulsive. His hollowness makes him less reprehensible; he performs actions without the enjoyment of the macabre. It is the manipulation of the events which attracts him rather than the actuality. And in any case, what happens? There is a certain ambiguity in the work. Was the girl not really murdered, or does she in fact return as some kind of frenzied white spirit in the last sequence, giving warning in her frantic gestures to live, to live, to live? The assassin exits with her. He alone seems to know the truth and yet with his eyes that see, he is the most hollow of all men.

Randazzo is again able to convey this hollowness through his unique way of moving. His flat-flooted walk becomes a smooth glide which gives the impression of his sliding across the surface of events. And his stiff angularity combined with immense agility reinforces the impression of a puppet-like puppeteer.

In *Nighthawks* (1976) and *Recital* (1977), he is finally able to harness these stylistic tendencies to give a true picture of his world view. Both treat the theme of loneliness: *Nighthawks* – the loneliness of a type of individual who dreams of finding himself in the small hours of the morning; and *Recital* – the lonely crowd.

Nighthawks: Randazzo, as the loner, alienated even from the alienated.

In *Nighthawks* one senses that the inhabitants of the night are alienated from the rest of society. But in their alienation they find a certain satisfaction, a certain company. Not for Randazzo; as the loner, he is alienated even from the alienated.

Recital opens with five persons on stage assembled around a piano. They engage in perfunctory social chatter which continues as the recital begins. It becomes apparent that no one is listening to the music; each person, caught up in his own world, slips into personal revelations both danced and spoken. But a moment of real intensity unexpectedly occurs as one of the woman has an apparent breakdown – a kind of symbolic death. And in one of those rare moments, a meeting of the spirit occurs. Almost tenderly they raise her aloft and carry her to stage right. All recognize the loneliness, the true loneliness, that exists beneath the facade. In anguish, they beat their chairs, but then the people remember where they are. Suddenly, the barriers begin to rise. They reassemble their chairs and resume their conversations. The two men bitterly stand up, turn toward the audience and with great sweeping gestures come forward to include us in the human dilemma. The shattered woman frantically joins in this recognition of a plight we all share and then stands on a chair as if orchestrating the whole party. Life is a play and the players have their parts. Not cynically, but painfully, they pick her up and seat her again.

With this, Randazzo acknowledges that society must have some set of external conventions if it is to function without chaos. But the point of the work is to reveal the very nature of modern existence. We live in a world where life exists in fragments, where the focus shifts from one second to the next, where we share intense feelings only to lose touch the next moment. Randazzo's understanding of this subtlety is developed in his later choreography. The sudden shifts in mood, music and style which the *Toronto Star* dance critic William Littler describes as 'the way Randazzo arrests motion, turns it into sculpture, then liberates it on a new dynamic course', cannot simply be accounted for as interesting handling of movement. In this kind of world, the knowledge that real moments may be grasped, *but only fleetingly*, gives Randazzo his particular intensity as a dancer and choreographer.

Rhonda Ryman

Training the Dancer II

Today's ballet teacher is in a unique but not totally enviable position. He faces a barrage of information – films, television series, magazine articles, handbooks and technique manuals. These can never replace the actual physical experience of dancing but can complement it. The more progressive technique manuals add a new dimension by attempting to pose and resolve previously unasked questions — questions relating to the *how* of dance technique. But how well do these major technique manuals meet present day needs?

They fall into two general categories: those listing *steps, exercises* or *enchainements* through technical ballet terminology or narrative description; and those using scientific as well as traditional and lay terms to explain the *components* of ballet movement.

The first category consists of syllabi, such as those of the Cecchetti Society or Royal Academy of Dancing, which establish graded standards for training. They are directed toward teachers who have already mastered the terminology and, presumably, the technique, and provide the teacher with an organized pedagogical structure. Their value depends largely on the teacher's *intuitive* application of these guidelines to the individual student's needs. In any case, while all the systems are based on the five fundamental positions of the feet as outlined by Beauchamps, they do not share the same terminology for arms, alignment and steps. So it may be confusing for a dancer trained in the Russian system to learn a Cecchetti enchainement.

The solution may lie in the evergrowing use of notation which creates a symbolic and universal language based on observable physical phenomena, in effect, bypassing terminology for greater accuracy. (The Royal Academy of Dancing Children's Syllabus has recently been published in both Benesh and Labanotation.) Notation completely eliminates such questions as 'Where is the right knee on count 2?' or 'Where does the left wrist face on count 6?' The teacher can spend time on more crucial issues: *how* the knee or wrist is placed to give the mechanically and aesthetically correct line of the body.

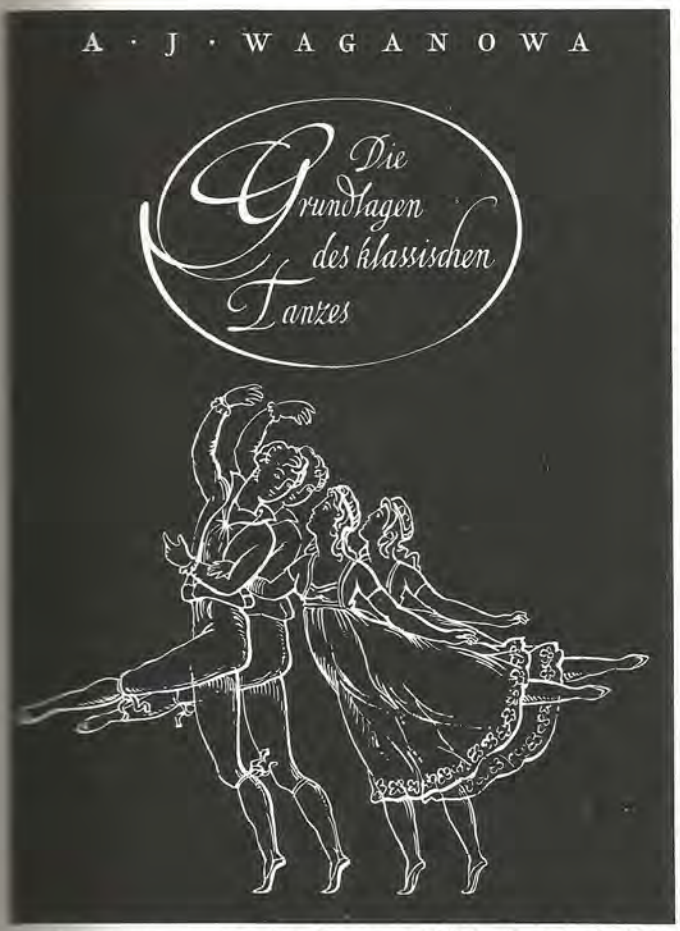
Most technique manuals combine the listing of steps with verbal descriptions. They acknowledge the need for a sound theoretical understanding as opposed to the rote memorization of terminology but they do not satisfy that need. The Beaumont and Idzikowski (1922) version of the Cecchetti manual, for example, includes less than 30 pages dealing with theoretical foundations and more than 200 listing exercises. The authors are still concerned mainly with *how things look*, rather than *how things work*. They still see arms and head positions in aesthetic rather than functional terms primarily as frames for the movements of the legs and torso. Margaret Craske restates this idea in *The Theory and Practice of Allegro in Classical Ballet (Cecchetti Method)* (1968). Her description of the harmonious correspondence between arms and legs is reminiscent of St. Blasis' directive, almost 150 years earlier, to use the arms 'like the frame to a picture.'

Certain manuals, like those of Bournonville and Cecchetti, are intended for the use of professionals who wish to improve their technical and artistic proficiency. *Technique for the Ballet Artiste* (1967), written by Olga Spessivtzeva, records a series of set daily lessons from barre work to centre practice. Such books are effective only in proportion to the amount of understanding the reader brings to them.

The most recent syllabus-type manual to appear from a Russian source is Asaf Messerer's *Classes in Classical Ballet* (1975). He recounts the difficulties he found as a beginning teacher: in trying to explain movements and analyze their execution, he and his colleagues received contradictory responses, which were later seen to be alternate ways of illustrating the same underlying principle. Different students respond to different images so it is imperative for the teacher to understand the basic technical principle and 'translate' it into images through which the student can discover the movement. But nowhere in the book are these images given and nowhere are these principles described! Instead we are presented with six specifically constructed lessons, each stemming from a central choreographic theme and progressing in complexity. Since there are less than 20 pages of discussion and almost 400 listing the class exercises, the value of Messerer's text is once again derived primarily from executing each class. Through this physical experience, the artistic logic of his teaching becomes apparent. But, again, the manual is aimed at the mature professional who has already mastered ballet vocabulary and has a high level of technical proficiency.

Other manuals pay more attention to explaining the *how* of various movements. Vaganova's *Basic Principles of Classical Ballet* (1934) has long been considered a classic for its comprehensive description of movements from the classical repertoire. In it, she discusses how, by rational analysis, she assimilated the French and Italian heritage into her own conception of the Russian school. Her teaching stresses a firm mastery of the trunk and a functional as well as decorative use of the arms in jumping and turning. She does not presume to offer detailed anatomical justifications, but what she describes is based on logically thought-out conclusions arrived at through keen observation.

Many twentieth-century manuals try to explain the mechanics of movement. In *Preparation for Ballet* (1955) Mme. Nicolaeva Legat advises serious dance students not to imagine that all dancing is spontaneous and emotional. Her descriptions, often colourful, emotive, and as



…lt, vague, require the dancer to 'fill in the blanks' by …ing on his personal experience for meaningful …rpretation. In *Ballet Education* (1947) she indiscrimi…ly uses words such as 'contracting', 'tightening' and …xing' – but not in their precise anatomical sense. Like …r contemporaries she realizes the need for explanations …t lacks an effective vocabulary.

Legat's conclusions, however, are surprisingly valid. …e understands the potential problems caused by the …trary (i.e. non-functional) involvement of large …scle groups, criticizing 'teachers who overemphasize …e importance of drawing in the buttocks, which throws …e body out of balance by distorting the easy alignment …f the spine and the head.' She also suggests that arm …vements serve a function in conjunction with leg …ion to provide impetus for pirouettes and turning …mps: 'The arms help to swing the body round, the …esponding arm being brought forward at the same …me as the foot.'

Tamara Karsavina's *Classical Ballet: The Flow of …ement* (1968) and *Ballet Technique* (1968) provide …ther excellent insights into body usage, but her valid …nclusions often result from weak or even incorrect …guments. She describes numerous procedures for …ieving elevation which are mechnically sound: the …ucial importance of correct timing in the use of arms, …gs and breath, and the practice of a slow fondu (knee …nd) followed immediately by a quick relevé (spring …to the ball of the foot) in order to prepare the leg for a …werful push-off. The underlying principle on which …e bases these practices ('the lower the crouch, the …gher the spring'), however, is fallacious.

Examples of acute perceptions explained with weak or even erroneous arguments abound in the literature. It is as if these great masters had to make excuses for instinctively understood truths.

Muriel Stuart tries to present a more comprehensive and detailed approach in *The Classical Ballet* (1952) by giving a description of 'Posture and Muscular Control' for each step ('Hold shoulders down'; 'tighten buttocks, abdomen and thighs'; 'tense knees'). Current research, however, suggests it is more profitable to concentrate on the action and let the appropriate muscles come into play. Adopting arbitrary muscular stances, as she proposes, does not enhance control but restricts freedom of movement. As an accomplished dancer and teacher she has thoroughly mastered the use of her muscles, no doubt. But does her book reflect a complete enough understanding of the functioning of the human body to benefit her readers?

So the paradox remains. The greatest ballet masters have stressed the need to *thoroughly understand* a movement. Yet they have somehow almost *instinctively* understood. And it is their intuitive perceptions which have advanced ballet technique. Unfortunately, most ballet teachers do not possess such insight. They need to know *why* and *how* as well as *what*.

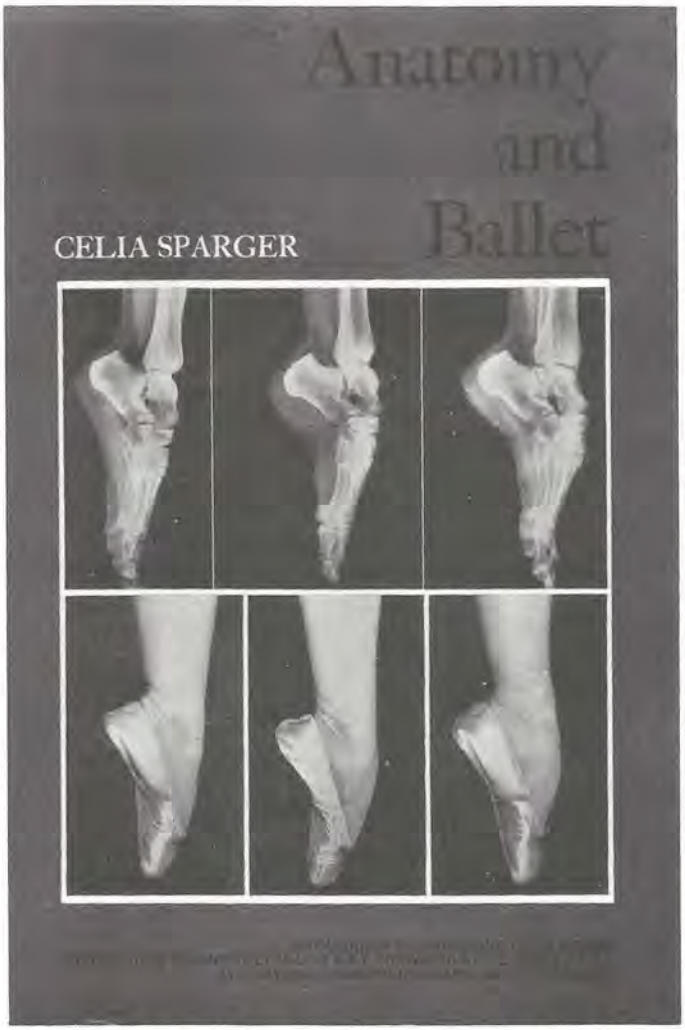
There is now a small nucleus of pioneers who are finally pursuing the directions set by Weaver more than 200 years ago. The initiative was taken by Celia Sparger, student of Margaret Craske and consulting physiotherapist to the Royal Ballet School. Her book, *Anatomy and Ballet* (1949), is the prototype for texts which have finally brought ballet technique into the twentieth century. They concentrate on movement *fundamentals* as opposed to particular *steps* and demand a new breed of dancers and teachers whose understanding of the human body is as comprehensive as their understanding of technique.

Sparger observes that the great ballet masters of the past 'were content to follow the inspiration of their eye and that unerring sense of line and form which guided them and led them to the results they sought.' She suggests, however, that the artist's instincts could well be 'reinforced, but not replaced, by a more academic approach.' Her ideas are based on an accurate conception of the skeletal action involved in movement:

'If these movements are performed correctly, the correct muscle will work.... The teacher's real task is to go deeper, in fact to the skeleton itself, to the joints, the bones, the bony structure of the body. See the moving body as a moving skeleton and very little more is needed.'

Her book remains the classic text on anatomy for the dancer.

Anatomical information clarifies the ideal execution of dance movements and can also provide valuable knowledge about the body's limitations and susceptibility to damage. Beryl Dunn, formerly physiotherapist to the Royal Ballet, has written *Dance! Therapy for Dancers* in the hope of diminishing the risk of injury to ballet dancers by explaining the dangers of improper mechanical usage of the body, especially of the joints. Like Sparger, she suggests that the dancer attempt to look past the superficial shape of a movement or pose, and isolate each joint movement, since 'any given shape is the summation of movements in a number of joints.' Dunn notes that the perfect physique is the exception rather



than the rule, and that any physique can be harmed by incorrect training and improved by correct training.

American-based physiotherapist/dance teacher Raoul Gelabert has also been influenced by Sparger. His two-volume work, *Anatomy for the Dancer*, offers a detailed foundation – based on anatomy, pathology and orthopedics – for understanding ballet skills. Gelabert discusses not only the skeletal components but also the muscles involved in specific movements and supplements regular ballet exercises with exercises he devised for dancers who had specific technical problems or injuries.

Joan Lawson was Vaganova's pupil and Sparger's colleague at the Royal Ballet School and she has written several comprehensive texts discussing the fundamental principles and conventions of ballet. In *Classical Ballet: Its Style and Technique* (1960) she describes the components of technique such as line, balance, use of the head and limbs, and qualities of movement. Lawson explains that ballon, 'the natural quality whereby the dancers seem continually to be moving away from the ground,' is accomplished by acquiring 'elasticity of feet, ankles and knees so that every movement is felt to pass through the entire length of the leg.' She emphasizes the need for correct timing of the push-off (weightbearing) leg and gesture (non-weightbearing) leg in propelling the body away from the ground, and for proper breath control in creating the illusion of being suspended in mid-air at the height of the jump:

The intake and momentary holding of the breath synchronize absolutely with the effort of leaving the floor and holding the position reached – still – in the air.

In *The Teaching of Classical Ballet* (1973), Lawson deals less with the anatomical background and more with the practical applications of theoretical information to ballet fundamentals. But Lawson's most recent book, *Teaching Young Dancers Muscular Coordination in Classical Ballet* (1975) is overambitious. It examines the correct classical stance, physical considerations such as sex differences and structural anomalies, and families of movements such as pliés, ports de bras and leg movements. However, in attempting to make the anatomical terms and mechanical principles meaningful to dancers, Lawson often misuses them, making her descriptions of questionable value to either dance teacher or anatomist. In discussing the muscle action of a grand battement devant, for example, she describes the *feeling* or *impression* of the leg 'being lifted from underneath by the biceps and gluteus maximus' – a physiological impossibility! The image may be helpful, but it cannot be taken literally. As Stuart and Legat do, Lawson speculates as to the exact nature of muscular involvement in ballet movements. The mind thinks in terms of movements, not muscles. A preoccupation with isolated muscle groups may merely complicate performance. (Not that a knowledge of muscles involved in a given movement is without value. It may help the dancer/teacher detect muscular tightness or weakness and therefore construct exercises to improve performance and avert injury.)

The idea of applying anatomical information is potentially valuable. But its inaccurate application may lead to problems. Effective movement images must be based on accurate scientific information. Frequently we have been offered *conflicting explanations* for the correct execution of certain steps. Admittedly there are many stylistic variations possible. But the physical factors are constant. There are certain mechanical truths at the basis of each movement which *must be identified and analyzed*. It must be the goal of contemporary manuals to isolate the *critical factors* necessary to the efficient, effective performance of a given movement, to separate the *visual end product* or illusion from the *mechanics* or means of creating that illusion.

The next article in this series examines dance technique from a different point of view, by exploring contemporary schools of body education based on anatomy and related sciences.

In Review

Watching the Dance Go By

Marcia B. Siegel.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977

Marcia Siegel is a serious dance critic. She watches what dancers do, records what they do, and also *thinks* about what they do, putting new dance into art-historical perspective. Part sociologist, she dissects the behaviours of dancers and choreographers as though they were significant cultural phenomena. Part moralist, she discovers what she believes, and what she likes, not afraid to complain when her time is shabbily rewarded. She is also a passionate devotee of many forms of dance, and a fluent writer.

Her recent book, *Watching the Dance Go By*, is a rich collection of her writings over the past five years for daily newspapers in Boston and Los Angeles, for New York's *Soho Weekly News*, several dance publications and a variety of quarterly journals of arts and letters. Her formats vary from short, white-hot, morning-after responses to long, analytical articles, from diaries of the seasons of New York companies to idea-centred 'think pieces', which explore decadence, growth and change in the art of dance. She asks herself, relentlessly, the key critical questions, probing for motive and meaning.

Take this paragrah from a 1976 review of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, created by Glen Tetley for American Ballet Theatre. Siegel asks: 'What is choreography anyhow? Is it an aesthetic version of a basketball game – a series of strategems for keeping many moving bodies on display?' She takes Tetley to task for making dance that merely *looks* impressive. 'His staging looks complex,' she says, 'because a lot is going on; it looks as if it's about feeling because the dancers are straining so hard to execute their tasks... It's this element of physical stress that so many modern choreographers use to excite the audience's passion. Tetley's *Sacre* is violent... His dance has no line, only mass. It has no rhythm, only the pounding of the blood.'

Siegel acknowledges her own 'Western roots' and her 'lingering romantic need to comprehend everything,' in a review of a concert by avant-garde choreographer Laura Dean. She is fascinated by the difficult, by choreographic and musical concepts which force her to work and think. Her discoveries are so illuminating, so clearly articulated, that we find our comprehension of the entire dance opus growing as we read. She is attentive to, and critical of, the present methods of subsidy to the dance world, which require companies to demonstrate popularity in order to generate public funds.

She believes, she says, in repertoire, in preservation, in being able to renew a deeply moving experience, especially since so much dance that she sees is not moving. But, she says, 'the experimental choreographer has a right to deny us the safety of predictable enjoyment, and to demand that we look and organize and react to dance freshly every time.'

I could go on quoting, but somehow snippets of Seigel violate the integrity, the enormous scope and intelligence of her work. Her careful attention to the productions of Twyla Tharp, of experimental choreographers, and her affectionate views of the classics are fascinating. She engages herself with the questions of androgyny and sexuality in dance, with the new pop audience, with the shifting emphasis in modern companies away from personal choreographic statement and toward a sleek, generalized virtuosity.

Her beliefs, values and point of view, all of which have become somewhat unfashionable, are apt to interfere with the simplistic function of the critic as an applause meter, a consumer service. The fact that she is based in New York means that she has 2000 dance performances a year to choose from, and the opportunity to return again and again to study a piece of choreography which interests her. *Watching the Dance Go By* allows us all to share in her superb perceptions of the moving art. It may be in print, but it's certainly a more rewarding experience of dance than much of what's happening in our theatres.

ELIZABETH ZIMMER

On Stage, Please

Veronica Tennant.
Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1977

There exists a certain type of storybook, written ostensibly for children, a storybook more intent on conveying information than capturing the imagination, more intent on teaching lessons than taking off on flights of fancy. As a child, I received my share of these. They dealt with every topic imaginable from horseback riding to scuba diving, vegetable gardening to figure skating.

Veronica Tennant, principal ballerina of the National Ballet, has just written such a book about a little girl who wants to be a ballerina. Jennifer leaves home at 10 to study at the National Ballet School – thinly disguised as 'The Professional School of Ballet.' The book seems to contain many elements of autobiography and is as level-headed and intelligent as the author herself.

Like Tennant, Jennifer has not been gifted with the ideal dancer's body, so she must work extra hard to keep up with her lucky classmate Maureen, blessed with long legs and perfect feet. Throughout Tennant stresses that it takes a very special person to make it in the world of ballet. It is indeed an extraordinary child who would face spending Christmas away from her family in order to dance in *Cinderella*. But for those of us who lacked that drive, there is something marvellous and enviable about a girl with such single-minded purpose.

Scarcely a page of *On Stage, Please* does not seek to educate the reader about some aspect of developing the ballet student's mind and body. We learn the fundamental lesson that hard work and determination are as good as, and sometimes better, than a classically perfect body. But let's not carry things too far. Fat is totally unacceptable in the ballet studio! So are flying hairpins from sloppy buns. In fact, at times like that, Tennant reveals the almost frightening underside of ballet training – the unremitting emphasis on humility, conformity and rigid discipline.

There is also an attempt to correct some longstanding errors and misconceptions about ballet. For example, ballet dancers do not wear 'toe' shoes, but pointe shoes – which *do not* have wooden blocks in the toes. It is the dancer's own strength that holds her up.

In a relatively short book Tennant

manages to encompass just about every classic situation and character one might find in a ballet school. Jennifer's first, and very nearly her last, teacher is the vile Mr. Vincent, who insists that 180-degree turnout must be achieved immediately and with the maximum of pain and suffering. In creating this nasty caricature, Tennant has found a more clever and effective way than the National Ballet School's current publicity drive to expose the fraudulent, unqualified dance teachers that abound.

And then there is Danielle, the advanced ballet student and recent company member who always has a kind and encouraging word for a frustrated beginner, even doing Jennifer's hair and make-up on the night she makes her debut with 'The Performing Company.' Then there's the girl with a weight problem, the boy whose parents think dance is 'sissy' and others.

The drawback to this didactic approach is its decidedly flat effect. One keeps waiting for the lecture to stop and the drama to begin. Jennifer's wild 'Dance of Fright' in *Cinderella* is the climax of the story. It could have been spellbinding. All the elements were there – excitement, tension, suspense. Instead of allowing the situation to develop freely and involve the reader in its delicious power, Tennant has smoothed over the essence of dancing in a few sentences. The story has ended before you know it.

Rita Briansky's illustrations are unusual for a dance book. You won't find any exquisitely pointed feet or graceful swan-like necks – these are the obsession exclusively of dance fiends. Her curious etchings are loose and relaxed, as unaffected as children. They really grow on you.

Published just in time for Christmas, Veronica Tennant's first book is informative and easy reading. Children 10-12 should enjoy it and would no doubt appreciate it as a gift for the Christmas season.

HOLLY SMALL

Joffrey, Graham, Feld and Tharp

Artpark
Summer 1977

Since it opened in 1974, Artpark has become the dance-lover's Mecca. Situated on 60 magnificent acres of sloping land in Lewiston, New York, overlooking the Niagara River, Artpark is operated by the State Department of Parks and Recreation. It offers crafts, the fine and performing arts in a parkland setting, and at the same kind of prices one might spend camping, swimming or fishing in another park.

The focal point is a striking 2400-seat theatre with a back wall that can lift to accommodate an overspill audience on a steeply raked lawn. Here, each summer, Artpark has presented a season of concert music, opera, musical theatre and dance on its large stage. Partly because of its popularity and as a result of executive director David Midland's personal taste, dance has in fact come to occupy pride of place in the performing season.

This past summer, four major companies appeared, those of Martha Graham, Eliot Feld, Robert Joffrey and Twyla Tharp. It is only a courageous management that can take box-office risks with such imaginative programming. The Joffrey Ballet is a sure sell, but the others have no guaranteed appeal for regional audiences. Yet, so successful has Artpark been in building a local audience, that overall the season was sold to 65% of capacity – a thoroughly respectable figure.

Taken individually, all the companies who appeared this summer at Artpark are distinguished. Put together in a season, they represented an interesting cross-section of American dance from Martha Graham, 'historical modern' as it has been called, through Joffrey eclecticism and Feld off-beat classicism, to the hyper-kinetic and unique movement of Twyla Tharp. Although Eliot Feld occasionally includes works by other choreographers, his, Graham's and Tharp's companies are essentially one-choreographer institutions. Happily, they each chose programs which ranged widely over the historical gamut of their repertoire.

It is fashionable among the real modern dance radicals to discount Graham as dated and irrelevant. Certainly her new work, *Shadows* and *O Thou Who Art About To Sing*, suggests the imaginative well has dried up; and when one considers how far advanced is the dance revolution she helped start, works such as *Diversion of Angels* and *Dark Meadows* do look very set in their period. However, just as one goes on seeing *Swan Lake*, it would be foolish to write off a modern classic like *Appalachian Spring* or *Seraphic Dialogue*. Their directness, simplicity and economy still hold lessons for a new generation of choreographers and in themselves are powerful works of dance theatre. Graham's company has rendered them better than at Artpark, but even a mildly casual and poorly energized performance could not disguise the strength of the original design.

The Joffrey Ballet, an old favourite at Artpark, drew the biggest audiences. Blighted by injuries, the company nevertheless managed to summon up that happy, giving spirit which compensates so much for their lack of discipline and insensitivity to style. Joffrey brought a big repertoire to display his company's range: all the way from Saint-Leon's *La Vivandière* pas de deux to Twyla Tharp's *Deuce Coupe II*. In between, we had a heavy and ill-judged dose of Frederick Ashton, administered with a heavy hand. It is odd that Ashton can be so careless of his ballets. At their best, *Façade* and *Jazz Calendar* are not masterpieces, while *Monotones* and *The Dream* each make special demands in style and characterization of the performers. *Monotones*, a work of stunning beauty in its complete form, was the only Ashton ballet the Joffrey appear to have mastered. They misunderstood *Façade*, hamming it to extinction, and did little better with *Jazz*

super-kinetic movement of Twyla Tharp's dances.

Calendar. Kevin McKenzie and Denise Jackson, the leads in *The Dream*, were very fine, but the corps was a ragged mess and utterly missed an evocation of the Romantic ballet intended by Ashton.

Yet despite its failings, there is something very winning and irresistible about the Joffrey's exuberant vitality. One never regrets seeing them.

Feld and Tharp provided the real meat of the Artpark dance season. Both, in very different ways, are difficult personalities and revolutionary choreographers. Whatever his debts to other choreographers, Feld has given us a very individual and positive proof that the classical vocabulary still has lots to say. There is no question of his position among the very best of the younger generation of choreographers. Unfortunately, Feld has a silly thing about letting his work be danced by other companies. It's selfish and ultimately self-destroying – unless he can get a better company and keep it working longer each year than he does now. His ballets are so infernally good, it's infuriating not to see them more often. At Artpark we saw his first and best, *Harbinger*, with another classic, *At Midnight*, a new gem, *Footstep of Air*, and respectable though less distinguished works such as *The Consort* and *Cortège Parisien*. Versatility, musicality and emotional intensity shine through in Feld's work. Men and women dance together as equal partners. While classicism is the point of departure, Feld enjoys throwing it off balance. He is not attracted to creating illusions of lightness and beauty. There is an earthiness in his choreography. If only somebody would bring him to Canada so we can take a longer look.

Twyla Tharp's choreography is an acquired taste that soon stimulates insatiable appetite. Right now, she is all the rage in New York. Yet acceptance and popularity have not turned her head nor affected the outstanding quality of her dancers – probably the best ever seen at Artpark. Seemingly casual and unstructured, Tharpian dance is as complex and rich in texture as the most sophisticated choreography around today. It expands the music it uses and is musical even when there is no music. It covers space, makes energy into something you can almost reach out and touch, pays hommage to popular American composers, comments humourously on both dance and life, touches its audience with its surprises and seemingly impossible off-balance movements – and never takes anything for granted. Tharp brought the season to a close on the kind of up-beat Artpark's management deserves.

MICHAEL CRABB

Dance in Canada Conference

Manitoba Theatre Centre
Winnipeg
19-23 August 1977

One of the unique features of the annual Dance in Canada Association conference is the series of performances by dance companies and individual performers from across Canada. The last two years they have been called a 'Festival', a term whose connotations are not altogether appropriate. Someone at this year's conference suggested 'Inventory' which *is* very appropriate, since, much to the consternation of some and the delight of others, a wide gamut of what is being performed in the name of dance in Canada today can be seen in four nights. If one takes a longitudinal view of the three previous years of these 'Inventories', one can see that, in what is still a relatively young art form in Canada, the quality of Canadian dance has improved.

Perhaps these changes are less apparent in the presentations of the large ballet companies – represented this year by the National Ballet of Canada and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet – if only because they have both been companies of international calibre for several years now. Frederick Ashton's intricate manipulation of three dancers in *Monotones II* (to music by Satie), danced by the National Ballet, demonstrates the new directions that company will be taking in repertoire under artistic director Alexander Grant. Ashton's *La Fille Mal Gardée* was highly successful in the National's recent New York run at the Met, and the acquisition of more Ashton masterpieces is likely. There are some, including Clive Barnes, who consider Ashton as possibly the greatest choreographer of the twentieth century, and seeing more of his work performed in Canada is a special privilege.

The Royal Winnipeg performed Oscar Araiz's *Le Sacre du Printemps*. A tour de force, it captures the angularities and primitivism of the music; by costuming the dancers in practice clothes, letting their hair flow freely and by totally exposing the back stage areas, it suggests the timelessness of ritual. This particular selection also reflects artistic director Arnold Spohr's forte; that is, acquiring relatively unknown choreographers just before they become known in the international market. One might even say he helps to catapult them into prominence. However, the large ballet companies really make only token appearances on these programs, and perhaps are better judged in the context of their full-scale productions which tour the country at least once a year.

The majority of works performed come from the small chamber ballet companies,

Royal Winnipeg in *Rite of Spring.*

the vast proliferation of modern dance companies and independent choreographers. Whatever is indigenous in Canadian dance is likely to emerge from these segments of the dance community, since they are less able to afford international choreographers or are philosophically committed to performing only original works.

Canadian modern dance is a strange hybrid. Strongly influenced by European immigrant teachers with Wigman and Laban backgrounds and by the close proximity of the American modern dance scene, it is not surprising that most early Canadian modern dance seemed clearly derivative. Even three years ago most dances had literal meanings, if not actual plots, and seemed imitative of what was going on in the 1940s or 1950s elsewhere. Modern dance was heavy and any evidence of humour or satire was rare indeed. There was a lyrical trend too among former ballet dancers who had recently discovered modern dance and their works often looked like ballet in bare feet. The choreography was typically naive with a lack of concept or depth of involvement with the movement material.

Are we progressing toward assimilating our foreign influences and developing distinctive Canadian choreographers? From the array of work presented August 19-23 in Winnipeg, the answer seems to be yes – and no.

Generally, the roots of particular styles of modern dance were not clearly recognizable – with the exception of Marie Marchowsky's *Image of Obsession* and Peter Randazzo's *Recital*. Marchowsky's *Image of Obsession* (music by Herbert Haufrect), very much in the Graham idiom, had a dramatic intensity that bordered on melodrama. The Toronto Dance Theatre, on the other hand, chose to send up their Graham roots in Randazzo's *Recital* to music by Michael Baker, played by Ricardo Abreut. Here we had archetypal Graham steps interspersed with pedestrian gestures and the bizarre juxtaposition was very funny, particularly to a well-informed dance audience.

The tendency of today's dancers to study several modern styles and even ballet (an act of heresy in the early period of modern dance!) has been decried by some as the death blow to modern dance. Optimistically, one could argue that such merging of styles might provide the choreographer with a more extended movement vocabulary upon which to draw. This seemed to be the case with several of the more interesting works. The movement selected seemed less constrained to familiar steps and more motivated by choreographic structures. Pure movement and relationship to space characterized Andrea Smith's *Jupiter's Moons*. Performed to Steve Reich's music, it utilized repetitive movement phrases for five dancers. After figuring out the astral pattern, the effect was mesmerizing. The predictability was strangely satisfying because of the ebb and flow of energy. There was great promise in Judy Jarvis' *Bella*, a dance satire on grand opera to a Puccini aria. The curtain opened to reveal a delicately painted horse (I kept thinking of the Trojan horse) upon which reclined two lovers, Jarvis and Danny Grossman, in commedia dell'arte attire. Their vacant romantic gestures in contrast to the lush melodic aria created a parody of romantic love. Unfortunately, as the piece progressed the humour became a bit threadbare. The idea needs more development. Jarvis often seems to devote herself completely to a single choreographic idea. This occurred also in the manipulation of the wide sleeves of her Oriental costume in *The River*. Unless that idea is allowed to spawn some surprises and offshoots, the work remains merely a dance study.

Humour and satire were more predominant during this year's festival. The most sophisticated satire came from Danny Grossman's *Curious Schools of Theatrical Dancing* to music by Couperin. Grossman placed his solo in what appeared to be a circus ring and displayed his own curious and amazing pyrotechnics.

Canada has an avant-garde in dance now that is alive and well and incurring its fair share of skepticism and wrath from

segments of the more traditional community. While it may be argued that the Manitoba Theatre Centre may not be the ideal performing space for all dance pieces, their place in the spectrum of dance activity at the conference is very important. There have been suggestions from time to time that some sort of quality control be imposed on the works to be performed at the conference. How this is to be accomplished becomes the bumblebee's nest! An adjudicating team could travel around the country auditioning companies and individuals, but artistic censorship could be more harmful in the long run than enduring a few mediocre works. The role of the avant-garde is to challenge the traditional standard bearers of the art. Examples of this included Margaret Dragu's tactile piece, *Canajun Burgers*, which took place in the theatre lobby during an intermission; *Balloon* 2, which featured Diane Garfield and her partner, a balloon ten feet in diameter; Jennifer Mascall's piece which challenged the notion of conformity to an ideal body by the visual counterpoint of one fat and one thin dancer; and Ernst Eder's memorable exit where he slowly walked across the stage and up the aisle while the train of his cape was the longest piece of material I've ever seen touched every member of the audience on the main floor.

With dance companies from across Canada represented at the conference one would expect to notice some regional differences in style. However, most of the companies are utilizing more than one choreographer (unlike many of the modern dance companies in the United States), and increasingly choreographers are being commissioned from other parts of the country. This makes regionalism and even company style harder to pinpoint. Also, since the conference does not pay fees for the performers (token honorariums were given this year) most young companies cannot afford to send their full complement of dancers. Consequently, this year the programs consisted of many solos and duets. It is difficult to judge a company on this basis. Ballet Ys performed two quite different works and I was disappointed in both of them. Eve Lenzner's *Up On Cloud Nine*, surely meant to be a domestic farce, fell into the trap of cuteness. This young chamber ballet company needs choreographers to challenge and make better use of these capable dancers. Sonia Perusse's *Split Second* had pretensions to profundity that I usually associate with high school modern dance classes turned loose on a creative project. The few ballet choreographers represented among the festival performances suggest that perhaps they are not being developed at the same rate as their modern dance counterparts.

The Regina Modern Dance Works seems to have gained much in the way of polish since last year. Maria Formolo's *Hot Dog* had the folksy charm one associates with the Prairies. Too bad she couldn't have chosen a song with lyrics about Saskatchewan instead of Texas. David Weller's *Housing* with a taped voice collage on the perils of finding a place to live afforded the company an opportunity to display more humour as they made social comments in movement. Juxtaposing movement with narration or dialogue can be tricky as the concentration of the audience can be drawn to following the story or content of the dialogue rather than watching the movement. The visual images must be very striking and Weller succeeded at least in part with his clever use of a ladder to signify a high rise, the isolation of apartments, or a tenement (I was never sure).

With all of the sound and fury which took place in the political arena at the conference this year, the glue which held all the delegates together was the excitement and genuine appreciation displayed by the audience of peers warmly approving each other's artistic endeavours. The performers enjoy dancing for each other and that feedback produces some very special performances. People remember when Lawrence Gradus was discovered at the conference in 1974 and was inspired to form a company called Entre-Six. There are other success stories in the making.

JOAN SINCLAIR

American Ballet Theatre

Metropolitan Opera
New York
September 1977

Among all the great classical ballets, *The Nutcracker* has demonstrated an enduring marketability. However grotesque the production – and there have been more than 40 major ones – audiences seem unable to resist the charm of Tchaikovsky's score, arguably his best for ballet, or the magical twists and turns of the Hoffman story. A good run of *Nutcrackers* can do wonders for a ballet company's coffers, even if it bores dancers and outrages snobby, highfalutin' balletomanes.

In December 1976, American Ballet Theatre, which is systematically developing its repertoire of full-length works, unveiled yet another new *Nutcracker*. Of more interest than most, since it was conceived, directed and choreographed by Mikhail Baryshnikov, it is the first significant choreographic undertaking by the brilliant former Kirov dancer – and one likely to reach more than 40 million viewers at Christmas when CBS broadcasts the television version made in Toronto during October.

Baryshnikov's production includes elements from two important Russian versions of *The Nutcracker*: Vasily Vainonen's for the Kirov (1934), and Yuri Grigorovich's for the Bolshoi (1966). The delightful 'Snowflakes Waltz' is borrowed directly from Vainonen and the mixed ensemble work in the equally attractive 'Waltz of the Flowers' is also reminiscent of his version. Like Grigorovich, Baryshnikov gives the roles of the Stahlbaum children to adults.

Although given the traditional setting of a Christmas party, Baryshnikov's *Nutcracker* is inspired by a fashionable belief that the great classical ballets, our nineteenth-century inheritance, should be adapted to contemporary tastes in dramatic logic and psychological realism. Stories that were little more than excuses for a string of interesting dances emphasizing spectacle and virtuosity, now have to serve a deeper purpose.

Baryshnikov's *Nutcracker* presents a study in adolescent fantasy. As Clara stands on the brink of sexual maturity, Drosselmeyer, the central figure in the drama, leads her through a dream world virtually denuded of sugary candies and tiered cakes. Instead of sitting to one side as the Prince and the Sugar Plum Fairy dance, Clara herself performs the Sugar Plum variation and the grand pas de deux with the Nutcracker-Prince. This in fact becomes a pas de trois with the reappearance of Drosselmeyer, ready to lead Clara back to the symbolic dawn of her newly gained maturity.

John Neumeier's justly celebrated *Nutcracker* also set Clara on the brink of

sexual maturity and gave her lots of dancing.Neumeier was clever enough to shift his ballet from Christmas to a birthday party, giving it year-round appeal. Baryshnikov's, however, is firmly set in the traditional Christmas mould with a tree that grows and grows. This has not inhibited Ballet Theatre which chose to exploit the ballet's market potential by opening its September mini-season at the Met with a whole week of *Nutcrackers*.

Despite a ponderous beginning in which Drosselmeyer is observed adjusting a collection of dolls prior to the party, Baryshnikov soon moves us into the Stahlbaum home for some very interesting dancing, especially that for three life-size dolls mysteriously brought to life by Drosselmeyer.

The guests at the party will later reappear, with masks, as the mice. Their king is the drunken reveller who at the party almost breaks Clara's Nutcracker doll. As he leaves the party he makes a gesture, as if stroking animal whiskers – a clever anticipation of his reappearance as Mouse King.

The traditional battle of mice and toy soldiers ends with Clara's rescue of the Nutcracker who is revealed as the prince of her dreams. Act I concludes with the complex, marvellously executed designs of Vainonen's 'Snowflakes Waltz' with the girls leaving via a ramp – almost *Bayaderka* in reverse.

In Act II Clara becomes the honoured guest of the prince and a series of divertissements is performed for her. Again, Baryshnikov has created spirited, athletic dances for the Court buffoons. There is a Spanish, Chinese and Russian Dance and another for two shepherds. The elegant 'Rose Waltz', as it is called in the program notes, includes Clara and the Prince and provides a spectacular choreographic crescendo to the second act before Drosselmeyer returns to lead Clara back to reality.

Naturally enough, the best cast (Baryshnikov and Gelsey Kirkland) was selected by the television producers. However, on stage, Baryshnikov's *Nutcracker* tends to wilt when he is not dancing. Perhaps as a result of accusations that its management has been neglecting regular company members, ABT opened the September season with Fernando Bujones and Marianna Tcherkassy in the leads. It was a low-key affair. Small delights came from less obvious sources: Marcos Paredes' King of the Mice with its gentle touch of pantomime, George La Pena's mildly sinister Moor and Rebecca Wright's Doll. No doubt in preparation for the Toronto taping, the corps looked unusually well rehearsed, so far as actual dancing was concerned, but when required to simply stand around, it looked miserable and bored.

Boris Aronson's sets get better as the ballet progresses and could not be fully appreciated under Jennifer Tipton's odd, erratic lighting, always lacking in atmosphere. (Both elements have been improved for the studio taping.)

Given the right performance, Baryshnikov's Nutcracker has a direct, uncluttered character. The adjustments to the more familiar libretto are all acceptable and the new dancing is striking and original. It's sometimes hard to become enraptured with *Nutcrackers*, but this one is certainly worthy of respect.

MICHAEL CRABB

[illegible] in Adagietto

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet

National Arts Centre
Ottawa
20 September 1977

When King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola of Belgium visited Ottawa in September, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet was flown in to give a special performance at the National Arts Centre – a short performance, a prelude to the royal dinner – but nevertheless a command performance.

As a matter of fact about 1,700 of the 2,300 seats of the Opera were reserved for delegates to a Commonwealth conference also in progress and there was great public outcry about the taxpayer having to foot the bill for the performance from which he was excluded.

It was a pity that the publicity people for the RWB did not have a chance to ply their trade, for the occasion was a publicist's dream. The RWB, which had its royal charter in 1953, is by far the oldest ballet company in Canada, and therefore eminently suited for the honour of a command performance.

Assembling the program must have been a bit of a headache for artistic director Arnold Spohr. He had to keep it short, for as well as the state dinner, there was a long intermission, with a dreadful Ontario wine provided free to consider. And many in the audience were there out of courtesy, not because of love of ballet.

What he came up with was fairly representative of the company's eclectic repertoire – the divertissements from Petipa's *Paquita*, the pas de deux *Adagietto*, choreographed by Oscar Araiz to the fourth movement of Mahler's fifth symphony and *Rodeo*, which Agnes de Mille created to the Aaron Copland score.

The selection gave people from around the world a chance to see a work by Araiz, a rising young choreographer whom Arnold Spohr spotted in Argentina. The RWB now has eight works by Araiz, and only a fluke in booking dates prevented it from being the first company to show his work in New York; that privilege has gone instead to the Joffrey Ballet. Oddly, the programming contained no Canadian works – and this in a company which for many years presented a long procession of Canadian works.

Let's get the subject of the orchestra over with. The National Arts Centre Orchestra, a crack team, was still on vacation, and so the ballet had to use a pick-up orchestra, drawn partly from Winnipeg and partly from Ottawa. The result was execrable playing. It would have been better if Spohr and the Department of External Affairs had swallowed their pride and settled for taped performances.

It is unusual for the Winnipeg company to show itself in such an extended, exposed classical work as the *Paquita* excerpts. The eagle-eyed, globe-trotting Arnold Spohr usually has so many new choreographers

to show us – Vesak, Neumeier, Araiz – that he has little time for the classics.

Paquita, a series of solos, with some ensemble work, is not an exciting series of divertissements, and the Ottawa performance was interesting mostly because we are unused to seeing these dancers in the harsh light of pure classicism. Evelyn Hart was effective in a Sugar Plum Fairy sort of divertissement, Betty Carson was good in allegro work, and Sheri Cook elegant in arabesques. Marina Eglevsky showed lamentable lack of elevation, and travelled great distances in her fouettes, but unwound from them in graceful manner. The work of the ensemble seemed stilted in choreographic conception and only dogged in performance.

The *Adagietto* pas de deux by Araiz is a little masterpiece in legato movement, lifts, floor work and tender gesture. It is both lyrical and passionate, but it wins one over by its seamless quality. That quality derives from Araiz's ability to think through the bar-lines of music, in the same way Ashton thinks through the bar-lines of the Satie music in *Monotones*. Styles in choreography are difficult to define, but they do change, and there's something very much of the 1970s about both *Adagietto* and *Monotones*. (Think back to what Ashton was doing with music in *Symphonic Variations*, in 1946, if you want a vivid contrast.) Bonnie Wyckoff and Mauricio Wainrot (who created the role in Argentina, and is temporarily with the Winnipeg company) made a creditable showing.

The company acquired *Rodeo* only four years ago, but it is not new to Agnes de Mille's works, for she created *Bitter Weird* on it some years ago. But the personnel changes, and I wonder, if many of the present company have been drilled by Miss de Mille personally (someone else taught the RWB *Rodeo*).

This 35-year-old work, somewhat dated, is still a modern classic, a perfect vehicle for this company. Whether the limp performance of the score was entirely responsible is difficult to say, but the dancing made the work seem almost as faded as the shoddy reproduction of the Oliver Smith sets. Bonnie Wyckoff was tolerably convincing as the Cowgirl (the role created by Miss de Mille herself), and Bill Lark was doing his best as Head Wrangler, but the ranch drama never really came to life.

But help was on the way. In a typically thoughtful gesture, Arnold Spohr had invited Agnes de Mille, who is just recovering from a severe illness, to the performance. She was able to stand up to talk to the King and Queen of Belgium, on stage after the curtain went down, though she looked frail.

After the royalty had departed for their late dinner, the company crowded around de Mille, the living legend. She looked at the dancers, who were also hungry, and said, 'I'll give you my corrections tomorrow.'

But then, old pro that she is, she couldn't stop herself and started to give corrections, anyway. Spohr said, 'We must go to dinner', and led her gently to her wheelchair.

September 20 will probably be revered by these dancers as 'the day we met Agnes de Mille' as much as 'the day we were presented to the King and Queen of Belgium.'

LAURETTA THISTLE

Le Groupe de la Place Royale

Carleton University
Ottawa
September, 1977

As a prelude to talking about the move of Le Groupe de la Place Royale from Montreal to Ottawa, I'd like to point out that its publicity sheet calls it 'Canada's first modern dance company.' We've had similar claims, made either by publicity writers or by unthinking journalists, about the Contemporary Dancers of Winnipeg and the Toronto Dance Theatre.

It's true that modern dance did not really blossom in Canada until the 1960s but just as ballet did not begin with Celia Franca, so modern dance did not begin with Jeanne Renaud, who founded Le Groupe de la Place Royale.

In any case, what is Le Groupe, a company known for its far out experiments (though it has abandoned the Brechtian, no-audience-involvement aims of Renaud) doing in the small city of Ottawa, after moving from Montreal? How can it hope to command a larger audience in Ottawa?

The artistic directors, Peter Boneham and Jean-Pierre Perreault, speak vaguely of always feeling welcome in Ottawa. But the fact is that their appearances in the National Arts Centre never progressed beyond the Studio, which seats only about 200 to 300, depending on how the space is used.

The real reasons for the move seem to lie in government support and the drawing power of the company's school. Boneham and Perreault complain that the Quebec government was not really behind them, and was particularly remiss in setting up tours.

As for the school, in Ottawa, the spacious studios are at 130 Sparks Street, on a popular downtown mall, and the company is building its hopes on a drop-in trade – for lunch-time warmup sessions of 40 minutes, for instance. In addition, there is a full schedule of late afternoon and early evening classes.

The company is making a strong bid for the interest of university students. During the summer, there was a four-week residency at the University of Ottawa, sponsored by the Department of Continuing Education (and Wintario) and ending in three performances of a new work, *Nanti Malam*, at the Ottawa Teacher's College.

Le Groupe also presented Nanti Malam at Carleton University. A new work by Peter Boneham will be premiered at the University of Ottawa in November; *Nouveaux Espaces* will be performed at Algonquin College in December; and there are plans for performances in high schools and elementary schools in the area and choreographic workshops and performances by guest choreographers in the studios.

There's an all out effort, then, to get involved with many levels of society, including senior citizens and handicapped children.

Nanti Malam, the work which Perreault created in the summer, and repeated at Carleton University is a continuation of experiments in having dancers vocalize while they dance. It brings up problems of breathing, for the distension of the diaphragm for speaking or singing is often at odds with the contraction of the diaphragm for certain dance movements. And it also brings up the whole question of dancers being auditioned not only for quality of movement but for pitch and timbre of voice. Mix is important, too – obviously you have to have a good mix of sopranos, contraltos, tenors and basses.

The company is continuing the vocal training which it began in Montreal under Pauline Vaillancourt and for *Nanti Malam* there was a new score by the young Montreal composer Claude Vivier.

The score is modelled, perhaps, on some Stockhausen works. It has mainly vocalizing but at times brings in a sort of miniature gamelan (both Perreault and Vivier have spent time in Bali), consisting

Nanti Malam in rehearsal.

of glockenspiels. With their voices, the dancers ululate, hum, whistle, chirp, shout, yelp, scream. They sing in unison, or in polyphony. Occasionally there is a minimal tune, a sort of lullaby, and for an extended period there is repeated use of themes. Pitched sounds mingle with unpitched sounds, there is a great deal of use of glissando or portamento, and effective use is also made of silence.

We get accustomed to the abstractness of the sound, and it comes as a real shock when, in the closing procession, one of the dancers speaks sentences about the position of the stars, the number of light-years they are from us, and so on.

The quality of movement is overall on the meditative side, though there are many excursions into animated activity. Humanity itself, rather than individual human relations, seems to be the subject of concern, and though there are temporary pairings, both heterosexual and homosexual, we are not encouraged to regard them as the main theme.

One hesitates to impute a central theme to a work which is essentially plotless, but the final procession into a stream of light looks like a search for unity. And once you have postulated that, you can find all sorts of evidence for it in the preceding sections – the slow progress through a sort of corridor (made of black cylinders with lights in both ends) with many hesitations, reversals, and non-productive standing in place, for instance.

Or, on a simpler level, you can theorize that the whole work is Eastern and that the black sticks are an echo of the Balinese stick dance (with fleeting references to a Highland sword dance, perhaps).

The easiest approach of all is to regard the dance as a study in abstraction, as Twyla Tharp does in some of her more serious works, like *Fugue*. There are themes and reversals (a girl is first attracted by a man, then rejects him), retrograde motion, fugal sections. The dancers maintain a sort of purity, almost a trance quality, and in general are more successful at keeping this an abstract work than is composer Vivier, who lapses into astronomical lore at the end, to the detriment of his score.

LAURETTA THISTLE

Small Town Theatre Ballet Company

Toronto Free Theatre
22-24 September 1977

The foyer of the Toronto Free Theatre was an interesting place on September 22, the opening night of Small Town Ballet Theatre Company. The walls were hung with line drawings of the three dancers – interpretations by Toronto artists of an earlier performance – and as the viewers strolled among them, a man distributed informal program notes which stressed the on-going, experimental nature of the work.

The audience began slowly to enter the theatre, and focus shifted from the visual to the aural. Lubomyr Melnyk, alone at the piano in a pool of light, played from his *Endless Book of Unending Songs, Hymns and Prayers (Book of SHYPS)*. The music – a continual progress of arpeggios that shimmered and then swelled, suspending time, suffusing space – built tantalizingly toward cacophony, then waned to silence, and the hovering overtones were dispersed into the air. This mesmerizing process was resumed, and a young woman – a dancing apparition in Victorian white – entered and slowly, distractedly, crossed the space. A moment later, a 'white-collar worker' appeared, perhaps a twentieth-century equivalent – in terms of restriction and convention – of the quintessential Victorian. With the entrance of the third dancer – a nearly nude figure with the unmistakably male body of a young warrior but nonetheless an androgynous appeal – the process of releasing the free, natural beings from the restricting shells of the white-collar man and the Victorian woman began.

In the men's duet, Leslie Link, as the sensual essence of Man, alternately enticed and observed his white-collar partner (Sam Walton) in a tentative exploration of freedom. A couple of moments worked well – particularly at one point when each in turn lay in stillness and watched the other's movements – but for the most part, the action was repetitive and uninspired. The difference between the two men's technical levels, although it could perhaps be argued that it added to the dramatic impact of the work, was in fact distracting.

Grindl Kuchirka's slow, sinewy solo (she was by now stripped down from white ruffles to a lavendar leotard) was more effective. Exploring the differing dynamics involved in being inside oneself and being outside, she at times stayed close to the ground, legs wrapping around a spiralled torso, and at other times reached, extended beyond herself, turned, swayed.

When the men returned (Walton now also wearing a purple leotard – purple seems somehow to be equated with freedom and sensuality), each dancer retired to one of the palm branches lining

the brick walls of the stage. After a few short moments of circumspection, they made their way to the centre of the stage and then slowly out, as the sustaining energy of Melynk's music finally subsided.

In all, the piece lasted about 45 minutes. What was it all for? Artistic director Kelly Rude says the company's aim is 'communicating the subtleties of the human body in stillness and motion' and invites spectators to read whatever they may find into the relationships among the dancers and between dancers and music. The relationship among the dancers is either tediously trite or too vaguely drawn for recognition, and instead of working *with* Melynk's performing energy, they seem rather to depend on it (at least that seemed to be all that carried the piece through). Moreover, the dancers still need to grow – technically as well as artistically – if they hope to communicate the body's subtleties for more than a few discrete moments.

Of course Small Town Ballet Theatre Company is new and the evening was only a work in progress. I hope both the company and the work will progress further before they choose to show it again.

MARY FRAKER

Tav

15 Dance Laboratorium
Toronto
28-30 September 1977

Kyra Lober sits, shrouded in a black veil. She opens her mouth in a mute scream, her chest contracted with pain, arms helpless. A cymbal fills the awful silence where the scream should be. Suddenly, she begins to keen like some mourning widow and her body seems to relax with the release. As suddenly, she is quiet again. She rises and approaches a makeshift shrine with a slow, measured step, leaving behind her a trail of chalky white footprints. She kneels and lifts the veil away from her face. She lights a candle, incense; she purifies her brow with some holy water. As she performs each part of the rite, she utters a different chant three times. Her ablutions done, she sits back on her heels and removes the veil altogether. She rises, steps back. The lights come up full and the spell of *Luna* is broken.

The orientalism of the opening ceremony is reflected only briefly in the dance that follows. Lober's arms, tight to her sides, hands flexed at the wrists, fingers wriggling like serpents, remind one for an instant of the Indian dancing god, Shiva; but then she flies off on a tangent that consumes all but the last few minutes of the dance. A battery of modern steps is here and there punctuated with an Indian pose, or the angularity of modern arms is rounded, softened into something vaguely oriental. Lober can't regain the hypnotic hold she had on us at the beginning. Her use of the modern technique has an unstructured look that stands in sharp contrast to the deliberate theatricalism of the ritual; it seems bland, faceless. Out of this facelessness do emerge a few distinctive features. One sequence in particular had Lober on her knees, her uplifted arms and torso ebbing and flowing like moon-teased surf; but it was effective in isolation from the whole.

Luna is the latest manifestation of the 'new music and dance' which Lober and her collaborator, ethnomusicologist Bob Becker, call Tav. Tav, they explain, is the twenty-first key of the Tarot and the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. 'It represents the Eternal Dancer, the Shiva or Creator, in each of us.' It is a symbol of 'universal consciousness'.

I don't know exactly what is new about Tav. It's not its oriental ritualism or its use of modern dance forms, or even the pairing of the two: the combination is at least as old as Michio Ito and Ruth St. Denis and David Earle wove the two seamlessly in *Boat, River, Moon*. With Lober, however, one can almost see the line that separates

the one from the other; and the effect, at least in *Luna*, is patchwork.

Astral Light, an unstructured improvisational dance, is perhaps a more flattering demonstration of Tav because in it the spiritual element (that heightening of consciousness that leads one closer to the creative source of being) is realized through the clusters of free-form movement rather than pasted on. There was something spiritual in Lober's intensity, in her openness to the music and in some of the movement motifs with which she seemed to be wrestling. She would toss out her limbs from her body and then quickly snatch them back in the defensive way certain animals have when cornered; but, there was also an exploratory quality to the movement, a grappling towards understanding, towards calm, that reinforced the confessional aspect of improvisation.

The relationship between Lober and Becker was more interesting in *Astral Light* than in other works because of the palpable sense of give-and-take between them, a sense that they were charting unknown territory together. When Lober ran out of inspiration on opening night and couldn't continue, even with Becker coaxing her on cymbals and drums, she sat down cross-legged on the floor and watched him until he, too, stopped. At that moment of surrender, Lober challenged the old performer-accompanist relationship, all but daring it to re-establish itself without awkward transition on another footing. Watching it happen, one was aware of an intimacy between Lober and Becker that was almost sexual. One had the feeling, too, that one would never witness anything like it again.

Surrounded by his menagerie of eastern percussion instruments including bells, cymbals, *kulintang* (an instrument from the Phillipines that looks like a brass casserole dish), and a variety of drums (among them, four beautiful, red-lacquered Chinese drums), Becker offered two musical divertissements, one *Bell Pairings* (played on kulintang), serving as a preface to *Luna*. The other, a demonstration of the tabla, a high-pitched thin-sounding drum from India, preceded the final dance of the evening, called *Mbira*. The title refers to a thumb piano which Becker held in a calabash (vegetable gourd) on his lap; the calabash served to amplify the delicate burring quality of the *mbira*.

The dance itself was easily the prettiest and most accessible of Lober's works. Lober entered wearing a long sleeved blue gown with a silky, semi-transparent overskirt. She stood very still and then began walking in a large, slow circle. As the music, a kind of *perpetuum mobile*, picked up speed, so did she. The circle became tighter, smaller until, all of a sudden, she was spinning circles in a circle. As she spun, the overskirt billowed up making her seem weightless and wind-blown, but there was none of the dizziness or giddiness of waltzing or riding a carousel in the spinning; it projected instead a profound sense of calm. The simplicity of the movement also suggested calm and Lober's face, transfixed, radiant, together with the euphoric rise and fall of her arms, bespoke its freedom. After five minutes or more, the dance began to reverse itself, winding down to a standstill once more.

In *Mbira*, Lober achieved the perfect synthesis of spirit and dance that she strove so hard and so consciously for in other pieces on the programme. It proved, too, that her physical strength and discipline are formidable. Despite its calm, despite its airiness, *Mbira* demanded the discipline of a whirling dervish and the stamina of a saint.

GRAHAM JACKSON

Noticeboard

Judith Marcuse

Toronto Dance Theatre in *Simple Melody*.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The recipient of the 1977 Chalmers Award for choreography is Paula Ross. The recognition that comes with winning the award is gratifying to the Vancouver choreographer who says she intends to continue exploring the avenues of expression in her field. Miss Ross says, 'I have chosen Vancouver as a place to work because it is my home. My family has been here for a very long time. I have chosen to work where I was born in order to reflect in my work the political and cultural changes that have occurred in the 20 square blocks that is my home territory. My work reflects all the positive forces of my life in the last year and the questions it has raised.'

This summer **Terminal City Dance** participated in a month-long intensive **paratheatrical workshop with Jurik Bojagawiz**, a former member of Jerzy Grotowski's Polish Theatre Laboratory. After their August break they are working together again and will be giving an intensive Christmas workshop in Vancouver, followed by a series of rehearsal-in-progress performances at various Vancouver neighbourhood houses. Spring plans include a mini-tour of BC, culminating in a three-day stint at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre in April.

Pacific Ballet Theatre with guest stars Sonia Taverner, formerly of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, and Vincent Warren of Les Grand Ballets, performed with the Vancouver Opera Association in the production *Le Roi de Lahore* by Massenet. The ballet for this opera is by New York choreographer Martin Scheepers. While in Vancouver, Sonia Taverner taught company classes and Vincent Warren choreographed a new ballet for the coming season's repertoire.

Vancouver choreographer and '76 Chalmers winner **Judith Marcuse** has been busy setting a new piece for Mountain Dance Theatre. She also composed the sound collage that accompanies it. In December Marcuse will start on a new choreography for the Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers to a score by Vancouver composer Peter Bjerring.

Prism Dance Theatre performed at Pacific Contact '77 on November 11. Upcoming plans include engagements at the Surrey Arts Centre and at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre and school touring with workshops and performance/demonstrations.

SASKATCHEWAN

With generous financial aid from the Secretary of State, the Saskatchewan provincial government and the Canada Council, **Regina Modern Dance Works** are renovating their new home, the Labour Temple, and adjacent housing. The complex contains not only new theatre and studio space but also comfortable accommodation for visiting companies. Dance Works' Christmas show, *Goose*, is a dance/theatre extravaganza based on Mother Goose nursery rhymes with music by the Dumptrucks. A family entertainment, it will be performed throughout the Regina region in December and at the Labour Temple December 27-31.

MANITOBA

Combine the spirit of Rusalka, the Ukrainian dance ensemble from Manitoba **with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet** and you have the novel and exciting performing concept for the RWB's first program of the 1977/78 season. Rusalka performed *Hopak*, a cossack-style dance, and with RWB members Sheri Cook, Margaret Slota, Salvatore Aiello and Rodney Andreychuk danced *Legin*, a Ukrainian ballet by Dimitri Chutro. Winnipeg also witnessed the North American premiere of Oscar Araiz' *The Unicorn, the Gorgon and the Manticore*, a madrigal fable. The madrigals were sung by an 18-voice choir. The RWB will tour to Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, Saskatoon and Regina with the *Nutcracker*; then they touch home base to perform *Nutcracker* in Winnipeg in late December.

Contemporary Dancers appeared in three major US dance festivals this summer beginning with Jacob's Pillow, the oldest and most prestigious, followed by the International Children's Festival at Wolf Trap in Washington, and concluding with the New York City Dance Festival. The

company returned to Winnipeg September 11 to prepare for the fall season which premiered two works, *Lunaris* by Fred Mathews and Rachael Browne's *Just about Us*, featuring the live music of Winnipeg folk artist Jim Donahue who previously collaborated with Browne on *Interiors*. Also on the program were *Fragments from a Distant Past* by the new artistic director of the Royal Ballet, Norman Morrice, and *Baggage* by Toronto choreographer Anna Blewchamp. In January, singer Judith Lander, now based in New York but hailing from Winnipeg, will make her debut with the company as guest vocalist in Lynne Taylor's recent New York success *Spy*. Anna Blewchamp's *Homage* will make its Winnipeg debut as well. In March, Contemporary Dancers plans a special program with Annabell Gamson who recreates the dances of Isadora Duncan. By the way, Kenneth Lipitz, who joined CDW in 1975 as a dancer, has been appointed associate director.

ONTARIO

Looking at Dance – Live, On Film, As Video. From October 19 through November 24, the **Art Gallery of Ontario was inundated with dance and dancers** in the form of 27 film programs, five live dance performances and four video presentations. The films, spanning a range of styles from rare archival records of historic dance through Hollywood musicals to experimental film choreography, were selected and annotated by Selma Odom, dance historian at York University. Performers included David Earle and Danny Grossman, Sara Rudner, Trisha Brown, Charlotte Hildebrand, Missing Associates and Le Groupe de la Place Royale. Videotapes were selected by Peggy Gale, Toronto video critic.

Contact is an annual event, organized by the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council, which **educates sponsors and brings them into 'contact' with touring artists**. The first Contact was held in Toronto seven years ago and the concept has caught on, in the Atlantic and Pacific regions, in Alberta and in Quebec. This year's Ontario Contact was held in Toronto October 13-16. Artists in various disciplines were showcased in a series of performances, and workshops were given to aid sponsors, many of whom are volunteers with limited experience in booking and selling cultural attractions in their communities. Among the dance artists represented on two evenings of showcases were soloists, ethnic dancers, experimental groups as well as established performing companies. Realizing how many publicists would be in Toronto for the event, John Burgess, English-language publicity director for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, initiated the first-ever seminar for Canadian publicists specializing in dance. The all-day session, held at the National Ballet offices on October 15, covered a wide range of topics, including booking, series subscriptions, marketing methods and media coverage. Representatives from, among others, the Royal Winnipeg, Les Grands, The National Ballet, Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers, the Toronto Dance Theatre, Alberta Ballet Company, Entre-Six, the Marie Marchowsky Company, Ballet Ys and Groupe Nouvell'Aire attended as well as observers from the Canada Council, the CBC and Dance in Canada Association and several independents, including Helga Stephenson and David Y.H. Lui. The pioneer meeting proved so fruitful that the participants are arranging another for the next Contact in Montreal during February 1978.

Among the **guests expected at York University's dance department** this year are the Royal Danish Ballet's Dinna Bjorn, accomplished performer and teacher of Bournonville, Marion North, director of the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in London, England, dance filmmaker Margaret Dale, Nancy Goldner, author and dance critic, performers Sara Rudner and Trisha Brown and historian Selma Jeanne Cohen.

Following a series of video/theatre/dance performances this summer, from Vancouver to Halifax, choreographer **Margaret Dragu** and Enrico Campana have dissolved their partnership. This winter she will spend four weeks in Calgary as artist-in-residence at Arton's.

The Marijan Bayer Dance Company will be touring Ontario and Quebec with their own version of the *Nutcracker* from November 21, 1977 to January 8, 1978. Arranged by Sundance Promotions of Toronto, the tour will take in such places as Rouyn, Sault Ste. Marie, Kincardine, Cornwall, Hawkesbury and Thunder Bay.

Rina Singha, historian, teacher and choreographer, presented a solo classical recital in the Kathak style (ancient temple and Muslim court dances of North India) at 15 Dance Laboratorium November 25-27. Included were a series of recently composed dances based on the imagery of the poetry and paintings of the Mogul era. After, Singha's new company the Canadian Multicultural Dance Theatre, supported by Mariposa-in-the-Schools, will be conducting a children's workshop on the theme, *Christmas around the world*. The workshop will take place at Harbourfront, the waterfront arts/entertainment complex in Toronto.

After an arduous tour of Western Canada, **Ballet Ys** has returned to Toronto to prepare for a special Christmas run of the children's show *Clown of Hearts* December 19-30 at St. Paul's Centre. During this time, New York dancer/choreographer David Hatch Walker, who was trained at the National Ballet School and danced with Martha Graham, will be in residence to set his work *Visions* on the company. Walker and his wife, Graham company star Takako Asakawa, will be holding a three-week course in modern dance at the Ballet Ys studios. *Visions* and a new ballet by National Ballet dancer James Kudelka will be premiered during the company's Toronto season at St. Paul's Centre January 16-28.

Dancemakers started their season with a four-week tour for Prologue for the Performing Arts, which they will repeat in January. Dancers this season are co-directors Peggy Baker and Pat Miner, Pat Fraser, Allan Douglas and Stephen Karcher. Scheduled for November, February and April are performances at the David Mirvish Gallery as well as a choreographic workshop December 7-10.

Two young choreographers, Maxine Heppner and Ann Wootten have found a receptive and challenging environment to work in at the **Koffler Cultural Centre**. They are the **first two artists-in-residence** of the YMHA'S program in dance and will be teaching classes, conducting workshops and choreographing new works for students in the program. Both dancers are graduates of York University with dance/theatre experience in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. The artists-in-residence program is designed to give the serious student working towards a career in dance the opportunity of learning with choreographers and performing their work.

The Marchowsky Company like most modern dance troupes is relatively small, but has big ambitions, opening their first Toronto season of non-verbal theatre on November 9 at the Leah Posluns Theatre of the YMHA for two weeks. Three new works by artistic director Marie Marchowsky were premiered, *Ancient Voices of Children, Essay on Pigs* and *Age of Unreason*.

Members of the **Toronto Dance Theatre** courted a new audience at the Cabbagetown Cultural Festival on September 17 by bringing their art out of the theatre and into the street. TDT co-director Peter Randazzo's new work, *A Simple Melody*, premiered in October at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Toronto audiences will have an opportunity to see it in December at the MacMillan Theatre. The Toronto Dance Theatre won't be moving in October as originally planned but will remain in their familiar home on Broadview Avenue until April 1. Over the winter renovations will be made on their much larger new studios on Winchester

Street in preparation for the spring move.

Peter **Schaufuss** has joined the roster of principal **dancers of the National Ballet of Canada**. Schaufuss has been a principal dancer with the Royal Danish Ballet, the London Festival Ballet and the New York City Ballet. He has danced with both the Kirov and the Bolshoi Theatres and received the highest solo award in the Moscow International Ballet Competition.

Nureyev and Baryshnikov are not the only ballet dancers on the silver screen this year. Canada's own **Ann Ditchburn** of the National Ballet was chosen from 1,000 hopefuls who auditioned in the United States by director John Avildsen (of *Rocky* fame) to co-star in his new film. Avildsen said he was struck by Ann's beauty, her grace, and her face.' The film, called *Slow Dancing in the City*, is a love story about a journalist and a dancer in New York. Ditchburn, as a modern dancer, will perform a work which she has choreographed herself. She will return to Toronto and ballet in November for the National Ballet's O'Keefe Centre Season.

Groupe Nouvell'Aire in *Lianes*.

Borders, Boundaries and Thresholds, a **theatrical presentation** written, produced and directed **by Eileen Thalenberg**, was performed at the Benson Building, University of Toronto, November 19 and 20, by 35 dancers, actors, musicians and three drum majorettes. Assisting in the production were choreographer Linda Rabin, and Casey Sokol, musical director.

Rimmon gave a series of lecture/demos and performances for the Eastern Ontario library system in late October and in Western Ontario, beginning at the University of Waterloo in early November. Margaret Atkinson is presenting a series of her own works in conjunction with Rimmon in early December.

Celia Franca, founder and first artistic director of the National Ballet, has been **invited to teach in the People's Republic of China** next spring.

The first **International Dance Therapy Conference** was held in Toronto in October. For the conference, researchers, teachers, therapists and students from Canada, the United States and Europe assembled to explore and discuss *The Therapeutic Values of Dance/Movement Throughout the World*. Work in dance therapy was started in Canada in the early 1960s by Julianna Lau, one of two registered dance therapists in this country. As chairman of the conference, Lau hopes it will enhance communication among dance therapists the world over and increase Canadian public awareness of this important professional field. The research papers presented at the conference will be compiled in book form.

The National Tap Dancing Company of Canada makes its debut at Seneca College's Minkler Auditorium December 1-3. The first half of the show will be a presentation on the history of tap dancing. The second half will explore the range and diversity of tap.

The Young People's Theatre Centre for the Performing Arts will welcome the public to its new home in December with a month-long festival of art activities. The historic old TTC building at the corner of Front and Frederick Streets has been renovated and restored to house a theatre, a studio hall and a small restaurant as well as workshops for film making, carpentry, costumes, painting and photography. Youth-oriented theatre will now be presented with proper equipment and in a congenial atmosphere. Susan Rubes, the force behind the construction of the new centre conceived it as a place where children and young people will be treated as first-class citizens, a place where they feel they belong. Entre-Six Dance Company will participate in the opening performing a show created especially for young people.

Entre-Six also performed at the opening festival of the new **Oakville Centre for The Performing Arts** on October 20.

QUEBEC

Entre-Six's exhaustive tour of Eastern Canada began on September 15 at Place des Arts and will end with a Christmas program in Montreal's Centaur Theatre December 26-30. The company's repertoire consists of a work choreographed by Judith Marcuse *(Apart)*, and nine pieces by artistic director Lawrence Gradus, including some of his popular children's pieces.

The summer of '77 almost saw the demise of **Le Groupe Nouvell'Aire**, which would have meant the end of the last modern dance company in Quebec. But their vibrant 76/77 season at the Centaur Theatre and Choréchanges had captivated many dance lovers. So a rescue campaign was launched and finally at the end of August, the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs offered the company substantial financial aid for the next two years. Le Groupe now has eight dancers. Martine Epoque is artistic director, Richard Berneche is administrator and publicity director and Paul-André Fortier is director of Choréchanges. Montrealers can see this vital company December 8-10 at the Centaur Theatre 2 where they will show works by Martine Epoque, Edouard Lock and Paul Lapointe.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown residents had the opportunity to taste a bit of Elizabethan England this fall when the **Island Dance Ensemble** presented *A Royal Progress*, a program of dance, narration and music with a 60-voice madrigal choir. Jesters and jugglers and historical scenarios added variety to this performance evoking sixteenth-century England and the modes of entertainment devised for the amusement of Queen Elizabeth I.

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:

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Letters from the Field

To the Editor:

I am a native Torontonian who left 16 years ago for New York City to expand my horizons in the dance.

In the late 1950s until I left for the U.S., I was one of the few modern dancers, choreographers and teachers struggling to present dance when and wherever possible, in schools, churches, auditoriums, etc. At that time, there were no magazines or publications to tell me as a professional, or anyone else, what was happening in the dance locally and in the rest of the country. We had nothing really – only local papers writing criticism of the odd concert or performance.

Then, this past summer (July, 1977), I discovered your magazine. I was thrilled to see a publication that finally brings it all together – criticism, articles, conventions, teaching, places to study, you name it. BRAVO TO *DANCE IN CANADA*.

Merle Lister New York City

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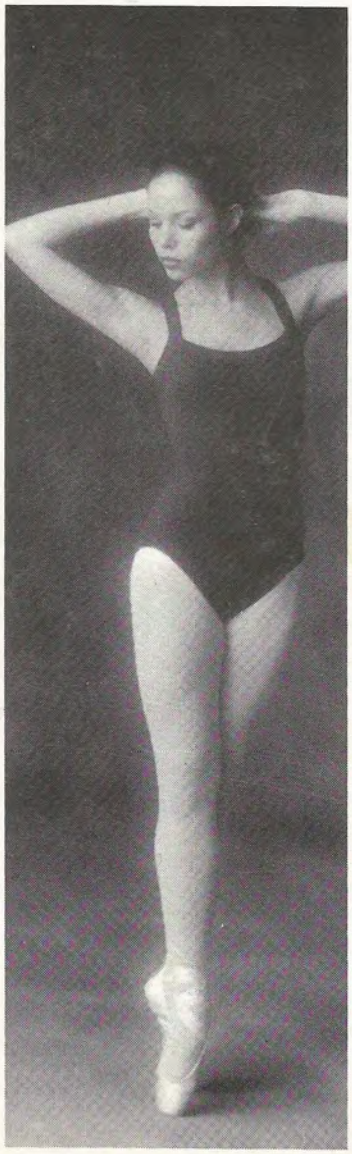

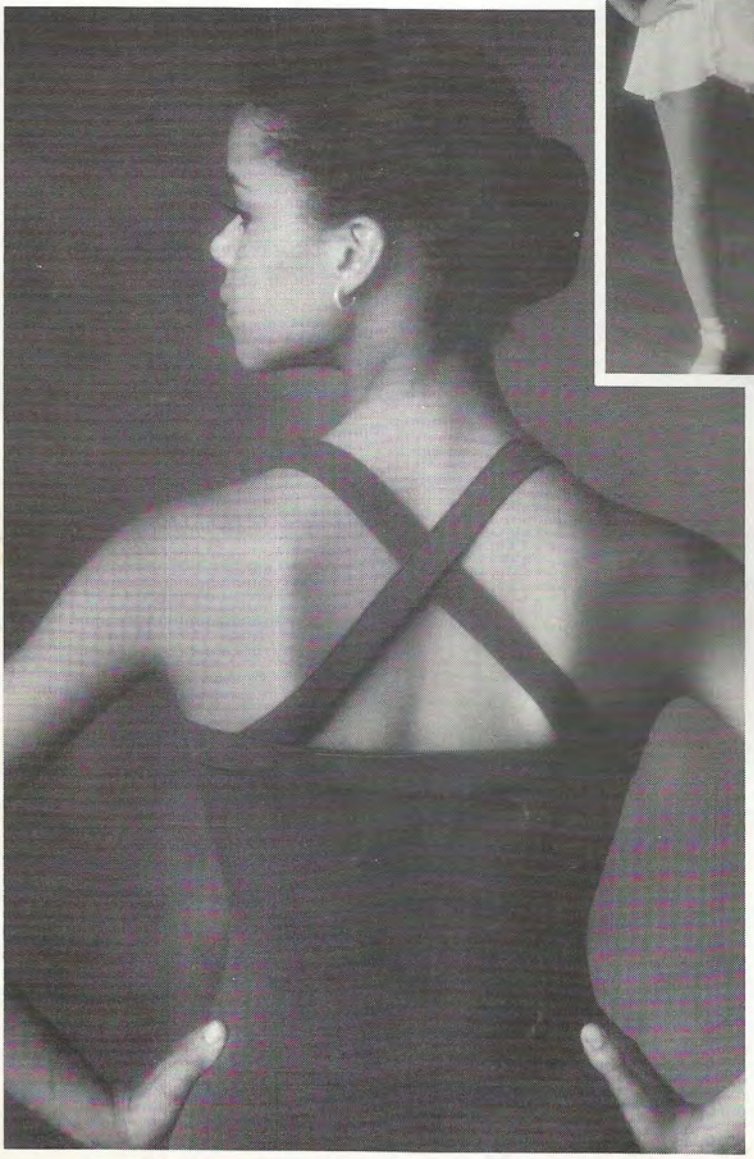

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