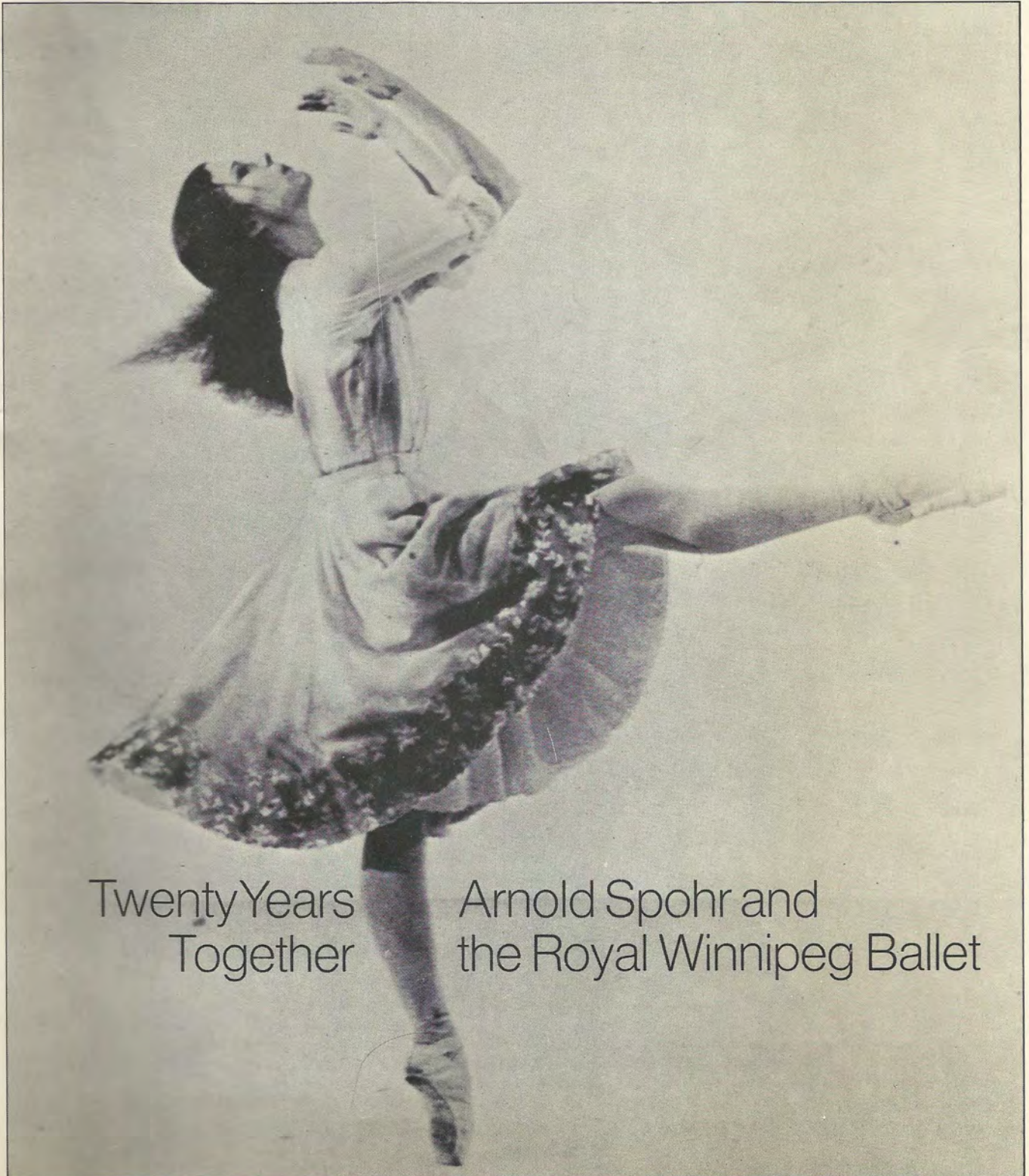


\$2.

Spring 1978 Printemps

# Dance in Canada au Danse



Twenty Years  
Together

Arnold Spohr and  
the Royal Winnipeg Ballet



How can the fleeting movements of dance be captured on paper, so that they may be studied, perfected and passed on from one generation to another? An Austrian named Laban devised written symbols that can record any sequence of dance positions. But, working by hand, the use of Laban's system is complex and laborious. IBM has created an element for the Selectric typewriter with the complete Labanotation system to make the recording of choreographic steps as efficient as typing.

In business, science and the arts, the creative use of IBM products and services is helping man create.

**IBM**  
IBM Canada Ltd.

York University

## Master of Fine Arts Program in Dance

Applications are invited to the Master of Fine Arts Program in Dance (History and Criticism) for the academic year beginning September 1978. Application deadline is April 1, 1978.

Graduate Faculty includes Selma Odom, Coordinator, Dianne Woodruff, and Sandra Caverly.

This program is supported by extensive undergraduate studies in performance, history and criticism, notation, dance therapy, teaching, and composition.

M.F.A. Programs are also offered in Music and Visual Arts.

For application forms and brochure write to:

Graduate Admissions Officer,  
Faculty of Graduate Studies,  
York University,  
4700 Keele Street,  
Downsview, Ontario,  
Canada M3J 1P3  
or call (416) 667-2426

## York University Faculty of Fine Arts Summer Studies in Dance July 4 — August 11, 1978

### Special Dance Studio

studio classes in dance technique featuring an international roster of notable dancers and dance instructors  
CREDIT: 3 classes daily. NON-CREDIT: 1-3 classes daily anytime during session.

### Introduction to Movement Exploration:

#### The Young Child

Designed for teachers and therapists. Taught by Brian Morgan. Credit and Non-Credit.

### Choreographic Seminar

Intensive seminar in the process of dance-making. Directed by Robert Cohan, Adam Gatehouse, John Herbert McDowell. Credit and Non-Credit.

N.B. THIS COURSE RUNS FROM JUNE 5 —  
JULY 1, 1978

For further information, applications and brochures, write or call:

Ms. Anne Camozzi, Fine Arts Summer Studies Co-ordinator,  
Room 219, Fine Arts Phase II, York University, 4700 Keele Street,  
Downsview, Ontario, Canada, M3J 1P3  
(416) 667-3615

## Dance in Canada

ISSUE NUMBER 15  
SPRING 1978 PRINTEMPS

'I could have been lying in the sun' 3

ARNOLD SPOHR AT THE RWB

Troubled Decades 7

LES GRANDS BALLETS CANADIENS AT 20  
Lauretta Thistle

Greener Pastures 11

LE GROUPE DE LA PLACE ROYALE IN OTTAWA  
Charles Pope

Training the Dancer III 14

NEW APPROACHES AND A CHALLENGE TO TRADITION  
Rhonda Ryman

EDITORIAL  
IN REVIEW  
NOTICEBOARD

EDITOR: Michael Crabb

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Holly Small

BUSINESS MANAGER: Nikki Abraham

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Lauren Drewery

DESIGN: Dreadnaught

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Ontario  
The Canada Council  
BC Cultural Fund

COVER:

Bonnie Wyckoff of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in *Family Scenes* (see interview with Arnold Spohr, page 3).

PHOTO CREDITS:

Peter Garrick, cover; Andrew Oxenham, pp.9, 11, 14, 29; Christopher Darling, p.19;  
Rudi Christl, p.21; Erik Hart, p.30; M. Elaine Bowman, p.31

In our last issue a picture credit was omitted.

The photographs for Maria Formolo's *Northern Saskatchewan Diary* were taken by Patrick Hall.

*Dance in Canada* is published quarterly in Toronto, Canada by *Dance in Canada Association*. The views expressed in the articles in this publication are not necessarily those of *Dance in Canada*. The publication is not responsible for the return of unsolicited material unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.

*Dance in Canada* publishes in the language of origin, English or French. We will be returning to our complete bilingual format whenever funds become available.

*Dance in Canada Association* is registered as charitable organization number 00441-22-13. Donations are tax deductible.

Subscription: \$6.50 per year. Single copy \$2.00.

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

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior written permission of the individual contributor and the *Dance in Canada* magazine.

Back issues of *Dance in Canada* are available in microfilm from Micromedia Limited, Box 502, Station 's', Toronto, Ontario M5M 4L8.

ISSN 0317-9737  
Second class mail registration number 03874  
Return postage guaranteed.

Please send notification of change of address, subscription orders and undeliverable copies to:

*Danse au Canada* est publiée trimestrielle à Toronto, Canada par l'Association de la Danse au Canada. Les opinions exprimées dans les articles de cette publication ne sont pas obligatoirement celles de *Danse au Canada*.

Le rédaction n'assume aucune responsabilité quant au renvoi de matériel non sollicité, à moins que celui-ci ne soit accompagné d'une enveloppe-réponse affranchie et adressée.

*Danse au Canada* publie les articles dans leur langue d'origine, anglais ou français. Nous retournerons à notre formule bilingue dès que nous disposerons des fonds nécessaires.

L'Association de la Danse au Canada est enregistrée comme organisme bénéficiaire. Le numéro d'enregistrement est 00441-22-13. Les dons faits à l'association seront admis en déduction.

Abonnement: \$6.50 par an. Prix du numéro: \$2.00.

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

Tous droits réservés. Il est défendu de reproduire toute partie de cette publication sans avoir préalablement obtenu le consentement écrit de tout auteur et de la revue *Danse au Canada*.

Pour recevoir les vieux numéros de *Danse au Canada* en microfilm, adressez-vous à Micromedia Limited, Box 502, Station 's', Toronto, Ontario M5M 4L8.

ISSN 0317-9737  
Le numéro recommandé de la poste deuxième classe 03874

Le frais d'envois payé.

S'il vous plaît faites parvenir votre changement d'adresse, les abonnements et les numéros non livrés à:

Dance in Canada/Danse au Canada  
3 Church St., Suite 401, Toronto M5E 1M2

Spring 1978 Printemps

## Editorial

For dance in Canada, 1978 is going to be a year of anniversaries. This March, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens celebrates its 20th anniversary, and Arnold Spohr will have completed two decades as Artistic Director of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

Later in the year, the Toronto Dance Theatre and Groupe Nouvelle Aire, in Montreal, will each be able to look back on ten years of achievement. These have not always been easy years but both companies have succeeded in establishing for themselves distinctive artistic identities and can look forward optimistically.

In this issue, we look at those celebrating 20th anniversaries. Laretta Thistle, dance critic of the *Ottawa Citizen*, who has been writing about Canadian dance for more than 30 years, casts a cool, dispassionate eye across the mixed fortunes of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. Our cover story lets Arnold Spohr speak for himself in an interview with Casimir Carter who, apart from being the present dance critic of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, was one of the first men in the original Winnipeg Ballet—40 years ago. It is hard to imagine dance in Canada without Arnold Spohr and we are delighted to have his thoughts recorded here.

Rhonda Ryman of Waterloo University contributes another of her valuable series of articles about the training of the dancer, and Charles Pope writes from Ottawa to assess how well Le Groupe de la Place Royale has settled into the nation's capital after its move from Montreal last year.

Finally, in our review section, you will discover everything from John Travolta in the film, *Saturday Night Fever*, to Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn in a book by Christopher Darling and John Fraser.

Read, learn, enjoy!

Dans le domaine de la danse au Canada, 1978 sera une année d'anniversaires. C'est au mois de mars que Les Grands Ballets Canadiens en célébreront leur vingtième et qu'Arnold Spohr aura réussi vingt ans comme directeur artistique du Ballet Royal de Winnipeg.

Un peu plus tard dans l'année le Toronto Dance Theatre et, à Montréal, le Groupe Nouvelle Aire fêteront dix ans de succès. Cette période ne s'est pas écoulée sans difficultés, toutefois chacune des deux troupes a réussi à se créer une identité artistique bien distincte et peut s'attendre avec optimisme à encore des succès.

Dans ce numéro on va jeter un coup d'oeil sur ceux qui vont célébrer leur vingtième anniversaire. Laretta Thistle, critique de danse de l'*Ottawa Citizen*, qui décrit depuis plus de trente ans la danse au Canada, nous présente ses opinions posées et impartiales sur les fortunes mixtes des Grands Ballets Canadiens.

Dans notre article principal Arnold Spohr s'exprime librement dans une entrevue avec Casimir Carter qui, en dehors du fait qu'il est critique de danse actuel du *Winnipeg Free Press*, était un des premiers membres du Winnipeg Ballet au moment de sa formation il y a quarante ans. On ne peut parler de la danse au Canada sans tenir compte de la contribution précieuse y apportée par Arnold Spohr. Nous prenons donc un vrai plaisir à pouvoir vous présenter ses opinions.

Rhonda Ryman, de l'Université de Waterloo, nous régale d'un autre article précieux dans sa série sur l'entraînement des danseurs. Charles Pope nous a envoyé d'Ottawa une appréciation des progrès du Groupe de la Place Royale qui s'y est installé l'année dernière après s'être déménagé de Montréal.

Et enfin, dans la section consacrée aux revues, vous trouverez un peu de tout, depuis John Travolta dans le film *Saturday Night Fever* jusqu'à Karen Kain et Frank Augustyn dans un livre de Christopher Darling et John Fraser.

À vous maintenant de le lire, d'en savourer et d'en jouir!

**Les Ballets Russes  
de Montréal**

Dance Institute  
director MIKHAIL BERKUT

CLASSICAL BALLET (Russian method)  
ballet - pointe - pas de deux  
boys' technique - workshop  
JAZZ - TAP - MODERN - FLAMENCO  
CHARACTER - RUSSIAN - UKRAINIAN  
POLISH

write for details of  
SUMMER SESSION BALLET July & August  
CHARACTER DANCE SESSION August 1-31  
1231 Ste. Catherine St. W., Montréal, PQ  
Tel: (514) 288-1677

**DANCEMAKERS**

AT  
HART HOUSE THEATRE  
TORONTO  
APRIL 11 - 15

Tues. to Sat.  
at 8:30 - \$5.00

Students & Senior Citizens \$3.50

Sat. matinee  
at 2:30 - \$4.00

\$2.50

RESERVATIONS (416) 978-8668

# 'I could have been lying in the sun'

## Arnold Spohr at the RWB



Those of us who have watched Arnold Spohr at rehearsal with the company, or backstage on a first night, have wondered at the apparent ease of his direction. If we were to single out the one particular quality which distinguished him as a man, I think it would be his ability to command the loyalty of his dancers because of – and I do not think I need elaborate phrases – because of his love for them and for the form of art in which they express themselves.

From a citation, honouring Arnold Spohr on the award of a Molson Prize of the Canada Council. 18 March, 1970.

Arnold Spohr became Artistic Director of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in March, 1958. He succeeded to the leadership of a company in some disarray. In June, 1954, shortly after the company's return from a successful engagement in Washington DC, with Alicia Markova as its guest artist, a fire destroyed the company offices and studio, along with sets, costumes and the choreographic notebooks of Gweneth Lloyd. She and her partner Betty Farrally had founded the company in 1938 as the Winnipeg Ballet Club. It was Lloyd's ballets which were the mainstay of the repertoire. In February, 1949, the Winnipeg Ballet was incorporated, becoming the first professional dance company in Canada. Four years later it was granted a Royal charter.

The fire of 1954 ushered in a difficult period for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Gweneth Lloyd had moved to Toronto in 1950 to set up an Ontario branch of her ballet school, and although Betty Farrally continued in Winnipeg and Lloyd maintained a close association with the company, by the end of 1954 both had withdrawn from the scene.

The task of rebuilding the company at times seemed hopeless. Lloyd and Farrally's successors, American dancer/choreographer Ruthanna Boris and her husband Frank Hobi, brought energy and expertise to their respective positions of artistic director and ballet master. However, there were personality conflicts which did not disappear with Benjamin Harkarvy's arrival in 1957. He left the Royal Winnipeg Ballet on the brink of an important season and it was then that Arnold Spohr was asked to help.

He was born around 1920 (he likes to keep the exact year a secret) in Saskatchewan, the son of a Lutheran minister, and came to dance relatively late. Although he studied with teachers in Hollywood and with Edward Caton in New York, his main schooling was from Betty Farrally and Gweneth Lloyd. Apart from an engagement in London, England, where he danced with Markova in a pantomime called *Where the Rainbow Ends* (1957), his dancing career was with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. He was of the RWB and today its name and his are inseparable.



Arnold Spohr in *Ballet Premier* (1951)

Casimir Carter, one of the first boys in the Winnipeg Ballet Club (way back in 1938!) and today dance critic for the *Winnipeg Free Press* interviewed Arnold Spohr, for *Dance in Canada Magazine*.

**CARTER:** You were asked to head the Royal Winnipeg Ballet 20 years ago. Had you anticipated such an offer?

**SPOHR:** When the position was offered to me I was pretty startled. I had never really thought of becoming director of the company. I wanted to remain part of the company. Actually I wished to become ballet master. As my dancing days drew to a close I looked forward to teaching and coaching. In fact, I was teaching one day in February, 1958, when I noticed Kathleen Richardson and two other board members standing at the studio door. They smiled at me when I looked up and I smiled back, not having any idea why they were there.

#### Gweneth just said 'Try!'

Anyway, after, they wanted to talk to me. The previous director had left suddenly. They were in a mess and they asked me to help. It was two weeks before the season, so of course, I said I would. The performances turned out quite well and they came and offered me the job. I didn't know if I'd be good enough so I called Gweneth Lloyd and Betty Farrally. They were always my friends and advisors. Betty doubted if I'd be able to get the company back on its feet because there were so many problems. Gweneth just said, 'Try!'

**CARTER:** Let's go back a bit if we may. I believe you started out to become a concert pianist. How did you come to dance?

**SPOHR:** In 1942, my sister took me to see a performance

of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. There were Toumanova, Massine, Riabouchinska and all the greats. It was a new world to me. I started going to see the Winnipeg Ballet. I had always been quite athletic and eventually it was my brother who thought I might like to go into the Winnipeg Ballet. He made all the phone calls and arrangements. I saw Gweneth and Betty and was performing by 1945.

I still debated about whether I should stay or not. It was a very insecure job then. I had gone to teacher's college to please my father and I finished that as well as my piano degree. So I felt I had something to fall back on. I had the look of a classical dancer, but they also used me for my comic ability. Remember *American In Paris*? Me as the Dashing Young Man in *Pleasure Cruise*?

The Canadian Ballet Festivals, which we started in Winnipeg in 1948, pushed the company on towards professional calibre. I was invited to join the National Ballet in 1951 but decided to stay in Winnipeg. I felt a loyalty to Gweneth and Betty and it was where I was happy.

**That's what I brought to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet – honesty and integrity.**

You know those two and David Yeddeau, our stage manager, had so much taste; and they gave me a sense of discipline, dedication and integrity. They were working from raw material but they had this genius to make it look good. Gweneth knew how to use dancers to make them look their best and yet still said what she wanted to say in her ballets. This was my background. That's what I brought to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet – integrity and honesty. I think that's what gives it its mark. It always had something unique, which was a joy, and it stemmed from those people.

**CARTER:** Before you became Artistic Director you had created three ballets: *Ballet Premier*, *Intermède* and *Children of Men*. Would you like to have gone on creating ballets?

**SPOHR:** Well, you know, it all began almost by fate. Gweneth said I should do a ballet and so I said 'okay, I'd love to'. But then I had this fear of whether I was going to be good enough. All my life I've had this fear. Anyway, one day I'd just heard the Mendelssohn *Piano Concerto in G Minor* and it thrilled me so much I went straight and told Gweneth I'd found the music for my ballet. So that was the beginning. It was as simple as that. I'd made a commitment and I'm always as good as my word.

*Ballet Premier* was a success and got good reviews. It was performed before Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1951. So then I went on to *Intermède* and everyone – Anatole Chujoy and Walter Terry said this – your choreography is like Balanchine. Well I'd never seen Balanchine, so I went and looked and saw this remarkable work of his. I thought, that's it! Who needs two Balanchines?

Actually, I don't miss choreographing that much. Getting back to the creative process, I feel so much fear and agony about whether something will work. I prefer teaching and coaching, helping dancers, and keeping other peoples' work *alive*.

**CARTER:** It has been said that the Royal Winnipeg Ballet

has a unique style. What is it? How did it come about?  
 SPOHR: Well, I think we got a unique character right back with Gweneth and Betty. At that time it was a matter of necessity to create a public. They did entertainment-type programmes where they had a diversified repertoire that would appeal. It had to relate and stimulate and also make sense to people who probably had never seen ballet. That's where the format came from.

When I took over I had a respect for this tradition, for the company's roots. To an extent circumstances forced things. I did take over in a very troubled time and it was hard to get dancers. It's much better to have dancers looking good in specially made choreography than doing something that really isn't within their means. But I still brought in guests, from Leningrad, you know we were the first here to do that, and from elsewhere – and choreographers. We did set our sights on international standards right from the start. The dancers had to be good enough to manage our diverse repertoire. Actually, I was inspired by American Ballet Theatre. They go all the way from dramatic to comedy.

---

### I could have been lying in the sun.

---

I've always spent a lot of time when I could have been lying in the sun travelling around, learning. I went to Russia twice. I visited the Royal Danish Ballet school. That was so exciting. The dancers there have a clean, joyous, unpretentious style that brings a radiance across the footlights and there is that wonderful element of life in their dancing, coming from their balon and quick changes of direction. Then I met Vera Volkova in Stockholm and we became firm friends. I think she was the greatest teacher. We see ourselves as her disciples here. David Moroni became director of our professional programme in the school when he retired from dancing and he learned from Volkova. Now we also have Hilary Cartwright and other wonderful teachers. People think our dancers are not technically good. It may have been true once but it is not any more. How else could they do all the difficult ballets we have?

CARTER: That brings us very smoothly to my next question. Surely, choreographers help shape the dancing style.

SPOHR: Certainly, and I've always tried to bring the good ones here. As I said, I travelled a lot searching out people, sticking my nose into studios hardly big enough for four dancers and places and theatres that often seemed run-of-the-mill or plain run-down. I saw Oscar Araiz' work first in a little old movie house and then with the Norwegian Ballet and finally in a big theatre in Rio. I kept going back to see if there was a follow-through. It's tiring work but you must keep searching. I expect whoever comes after me will still have to do that.

---

### Norbert Vesak gave us a Canadianism and marvellous pas de deux.

---

We've been lucky, getting choreographers when they were just emerging or were not well known in North America. Each time, they've helped us reach a new level or plateau. There was Brian Macdonald who gave us our



Alicia Markova and Arnold Spohr

initial personality, a Canadian one, with I think about 13 ballets which gave us a tremendous success on our Hurok tour. There were serious ones and funny ones, and our first full length ballet, *Rose La Tulippe*. He tested our dramatic and technical ability and gave the dancers a real challenge. Brian was very demanding in his work. Then there was Agnes de Mille, her *Rodeo* and *Fall River Legend*. She helped us a great deal with our acting, and she's such a wonderful coach and had the dancers moving in a new way. Like Brian Macdonald, Norbert Vesak gave us a Canadianism and marvellous pas de deux, in the *Ecstasy of Rita Joe* and *What To Do Till The Messiah Comes*. That was an all-Canadian ballet with rock music by Chilliwack and others. Norbert again made great technical demands. Our dancers grew.

Then there is John Neumeier. His *Nutcracker*, which I think is the best around, has to be the most difficult ballet technically for the corps and the soloists. He was used to working with some very top-notch people and he came and gave us these incredible things to do. His ballets are in a contemporary vein but they use pointe work in difficult ways. Suddenly you have to do a pirouette from a turnout in fourth position on point, do a double pirouette from there without any help or preparation go into another double where you will land on your knee, fall with the other foot wrapped around the supporting leg, turned in and flexed – and then stretched out in agony, with motivation. Just try that one! Look at his trilogy, *Twilight*, *Rondo* and *The Game*. You'll see!

And then Oscar came. He was different again, working

in many different ways. He's very musical and placed extra demands on our dancers' musicality. Sometimes I think dancers aren't as musical as they should be. We have eight of his works, from a comedy, humour type in *Unicorn* to real drama in *Family Scenes*, the very contemporary and exciting *Rite of Spring* and his pas de deux *Adagietto* which is our most popular. Then there is our original from Oscar, *Mahler Four*.

CARTER: The company is going to New York at the end of March. Will you be taking any of Oscar Araiz' ballets?

SPOHR: Yes. We're going to do the *Unicorn and the Manticore*, *Mahler Four* and *Adagietto* for sure – and *Family Scenes*. Then we're doing Norbert's *Messiah*. Although it's from 1970 it has stood the test of time and will show New York what we've been doing: and it's Canadian. And then there's Brian's *Pas d'action*. We've brought that back. Brian was here. Remember, that's the one we got our medals for in Paris.

---

...you must have the courage to do what you are doing and believe in it...

---

CARTER: Are you nervous of the critics?

SPOHR: What can I do? We just have to do our very best. Critics? Oh, you like to hear beautiful things but you've got to move according to your own convictions. You must listen of course – to those who have something to say – but still you must have the courage to do what you are doing and believe in it instead of being influenced by what everybody says. If you listen too much you're going to get very confused. Before you know it, you won't know where you're at. You should be confident of your own opinion and true to what you're doing.

CARTER: And what comes after New York? You keep on looking for new things?

SPOHR: You'd better believe it! We never stop. We're always looking for something that has never been done or seen before, providing it's artistic. I don't mean doing new things for the sake of it. There has to be value and significance. We're not just going to throw up a garbage can and stick a few things in it and say this is where we're at today! I still want taste and value.

CARTER: As you look at dance in Canada today, what do you think?

SPOHR: Well, things have grown so much since we started. Dance is in a very healthy state now. Wherever you seem to go in Canada, something is happening. There's really a dance movement, as was shown by the Dance in Canada Association conference here last summer. So many people are interested and are doing things, good and bad. But the important thing is they're *doing*. And we're always being surprised. All of a sudden someone discovers something and you see it. It can happen like that. We see it at the conferences.

CARTER: Do you have any feelings about the proliferation of small companies, all demanding grants?

SPOHR: Things will balance themselves out. But, I find so many people get angry so early without doing their homework. All these youngsters who come along after taking six lessons with Madame Lazonga or whoever, and they want to have their own company. They're beginning to choreograph and they feel already they have to have their own company because nobody understands! It's not a

question of understanding. It's a question of discipline and talent and background. It's not easy directing a company. It's taken me 20 years to bring it to the point where I feel I can move out as I'm planning to do.

CARTER: Moving out? But you're too young. It's too soon. Is this a new idea?

SPOHR: Are you kidding? I've been thinking of it for years! You have to put things into the hands of other people so they can learn and carry on. That's what I'm doing. I've got these wonderful teachers and people in the company now who are all so dedicated. You need that: you cannot have ego. Just love of dance. That's what they've got.

CARTER: But you will still be associated with the company?

---

We will have continuity.

---

SPOHR: Well, I should hope so! I've put my whole life into it. I will be an advisor. But I want to see a transition begin. Everything is in order. Everything is on record. We will have continuity. I started where Gweneth left off and I want these people to take over. When you've got such talented people you must put them to function fully. They will carry on my work to a point, although they must follow their own way too.

CARTER: And you'll always be available?

SPOHR: You bet!!

# Summer School 78

**Canadian College of Dance**  
Ryerson Theatre Dept. In conjunction  
with Div. of Continuing Education

---

**Canadian College of Dance Presents:**

Teacher's Course July 10 - July 14  
Student's Course July 17 - August 4

**Ryerson Theatre Dept. Presents:**

Certificate Courses -  
Spring Session - May 22 - June 30  
Make-up; Speech for Teachers;  
Speech for Actors; Stage Production  
Management; Characterization; Theory &  
Practice; Pattern Drafting; Writing;  
Text Analysis; Creative Drama.

---

**Summer Course July 3 - August 11**

five full days a week for 6 weeks, also  
individual certificate courses as above.

---

**For more information contact:**

Brenda Rooney  
Continuing Education Division  
50 Gould Street Toronto, Ontario M5B 1E8  
(416) 595-5125

---



Lauretta Thistle

# Troubled Decades

## Les Grands Ballets Canadiens at 20

Along about 1952-54, a friend of mine was trying to get me interested in the new art form (or industry) called Canadian television, and especially the television coming out of Montreal. He even wrote anonymous reviews for the music and drama page which I edited at the time. He stopped writing those reviews when he, Peter Dwyer, joined the new Canada Council.

Dwyer was especially interested in the telecasts of the New York City Ballet (all those priceless videos, are, alas, not available to the public), but he also drew attention to the small Canadian dance troupe headed by Ludmilla Chiriaeff, who had some experience in dance films, and arrived in Canada in 1952, just in time to talk herself into a job with the CBC.

Madame Chiriaeff did some 400 shows for French Canadian TV, though they did little to promote her name in English-speaking Canada. Then she withdrew from TV to found a small company called Les Ballets Chiriaeff, and on April 12, 1958, the company, though still miniscule, took on the grandiose name of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and gave its first regular performance at La Comédie Canadienne. So in 1978, chiefly in March, Les Grands Ballets is celebrating its 20th anniversary.

I have seen the company countless times, in Ottawa and in Montreal, since those beginning days, and I know of a lot of interesting things that have happened to it. Yet I have a hard time getting a handle on it, and I think that is because it is essentially a faceless company.

Interesting things? Well, yes. In the 1950s the Roman Catholic church still had a firm grip on Quebec, and the church considered putting 'naked' men and women on stage and TV as essentially wicked. Putting short classical tutus on little girls was for some reason especially repulsive.

The church, of course, had not been able to keep commercial companies such as Les Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo out of the province. I well remember shedding tears over Margot Fonteyn's *Swan Lake* in His Majesty's Theatre in the late 40s. But putting native Quebecers on a ballet stage was somehow different. School teachers burned the pamphlets announcing Chiriaeff's ballet schools.

Yet by 1970 this dauntless Chiriaeff had won the church over to her cause so efficiently that three performances of Fernand Nault's new ballet *Symphony of Psalms* (Stravinsky) were given in St Joseph's Oratory, high in the heart of Montreal. And soon there was a network of ballet schools over the province.

Fernand Nault returned to his native Quebec in 1964,



Ludmilla Chiriaeff

after 20 years with American Ballet Theatre. So he missed the company's first appearances at the Place des Arts, in 1963. Anton Dolin's *Pas de Quatre* and David Lichine's *Graduation Ball* were the big attractions that year, along with ballets by Chiriaeff and Eric Hyrst. Some of us have been less than overwhelmed by Nault's abilities as a choreographer, but he soon showed an uncanny ability to produce ballets that made money.

Made money? That's gross overstatement for any ballet company, of course. But Nault is the man who created the company's rather gross version of *The Nutcracker*, which the company solemnly promised would be buried in 1976, and revived again in 1977, because it could bring in something like \$170,000.

Nault is the man who created the company's first Carl Orff ballet, *Carmina Burana*, for Expo '67 (it later got the Orff trilogy, with John Butler's *Catulli Carmina* and Norman Walker's *Trionfo di Afrodite*). Incidentally, an amusing footnote to this Orff trilogy in a province formerly ruled by the church is that critics in both North America and Europe complained that the choreography was much too bland to fit the lascivious Latin verses. *Carmina Burana*, visually very striking, was one of the company's greatest successes. But most of all, Nault was the choreographer who created the rock ballet *Tommy*, which was at once the blessing and the curse of the company.

*Tommy* began *pianissimo*, but erupted to a huge *fortissimo*. Only four performances were scheduled for

the first run in Montreal, beginning October 16, 1970, when it shared the bill with *Hip and Straight*. Curiously, it was the latter ballet which got immediate repetitions, though *Tommy* was brought back just before the annual rash of Nutcrackers.

1971 saw the real beginning of the *Tommy* craze. Its first New York run, at the old City Center on 55th Street, began on April 13, and lasted two weeks. Then came Chicago, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Quebec, Ottawa, Detroit, Chicago again, St Louis, New York again, Boston, Providence, etc. Altogether, more than five months of nothing but *Tommy*.

1972 found *Tommy* on the road again, playing New York for the fourth time, and even venturing the Kennedy Center in Washington. In 1973 it was flogged at the Expo Theatre in Montreal. The dancers were tired to death of it, and critics threw up their hands in horror at what was happening to a company with classical pretensions.

In 1974, when Brian Macdonald came on the scene as artistic director, there was a brief excursion into classicism, with *Giselle*, and into the Macdonald repertory, with *Time out of Mind*. But then the company was forced into the *Tommy* galleys, once again, with a tour of Western Canada.

When a visit to Paris was announced for June, 1974, some of the company rebelled, and refused to go. But the 281st performance of *Tommy* took place in Paris, and then the company came home to do it at Expo Theatre. *Tommy*, incidentally, was pretty much of a hit in Paris, whereas the company's previous tour in Europe, in 1969, sponsored by the Department of External Affairs, had been pretty much of a critical disaster, with the repertory (created largely by Chiriaeff and Nault) considered old-fashioned.

Nor was 1974 the end of *Tommy*. It was revived, presumably by popular request, in the spring of 1977, in a series called *Greatest Hits*.

For five years, then, this company was not at all faceless – it was the company known for *Tommy*. But that wasn't the reputation it wanted to keep for evermore.

But – to go back to an outdated slogan – what did Quebec want from a ballet company? At one time, in 1971, Ludmilla Chiriaeff said in an interview with *Dance Magazine* that she wanted to get down to French-Canadian roots. But there are those who believe that Madame Chiriaeff's devotion to things Canadian is not very deep, and the record seems to uphold this.

In the early days there were a few French-Canadian ballets, like *Suite Canadienne*, *Canadiana*, *Payse*, and *Le Corriveau* (the latter by Brydon Paige). But there was a greater number of classical ballets, like *Coppélia* (by Eric Hyrst); *Jeu de Cartes*, to Prokofiev music rather than the Stravinsky; two versions of *La Fille mal gardée* (the 1962 version derived from Edward Caton, the 1964 version, which is being revived in 1978, by Fernand Nault); a *Cinderella*, to Mozart music; a *Firebird*, by Nault, preceding by some years the Béjart version; *Les Sylphides*; and *Giselle*.

There were even some pre-classical ballets, like a commedia dell'arte *Farces*, by Chiriaeff, and *Folies Françaises*, to Couperin music, by Brydon Paige.

The company did a good bit of casting about for new choreographers. There were single items by Lawrence Gradus, now of *Entre-Six*, Geneviève Salbaing and Eva von Gencsy, now both in *Les Ballets Jazz*. Long before he

became artistic director, Brian Macdonald gave the company his *Prothalamion* (Delius), which I remember as an exquisite pas de deux.

A recurring text of my sermons to Canadian ballet companies at this period was to get some ballets by George Balanchine. And indeed the company has acquired several Balanchine ballets over the years – *Pas de deux* (Tchaikovsky), *Allegro Brillante*, *Theme and Variations*, *Four Temperaments*, *Serenade* and *Concerto Barocco*. How well the dancers did these works is another matter, and I often think it must hug to itself Balanchine's statement that he does not want to see other companies copy the New York City Ballet's style exactly!

But what about French-Canadian content? And how much danger is there of financial support being linked to a certain amount of dictation of artistic policy?

Brian Macdonald came to the company in 1974, on the heels of a management upheaval, and the first ballet he created after he became artistic director was *Tam Ti Delam*, using music created by that enormously popular Quebec folk artist Gilles Vigneault. A second Macdonald ballet using French-Canadian music is announced for March, 1978.

The provincial government has pulled the chestnuts out of the fire on more than one occasion – once to the tune of \$206,000, in 1965. In 1973, the deficit had grown to \$200,000, which the Bourassa government wiped out, along with a guarantee of \$150,000 for the next year, but with a warning that this was not to be considered a precedent.

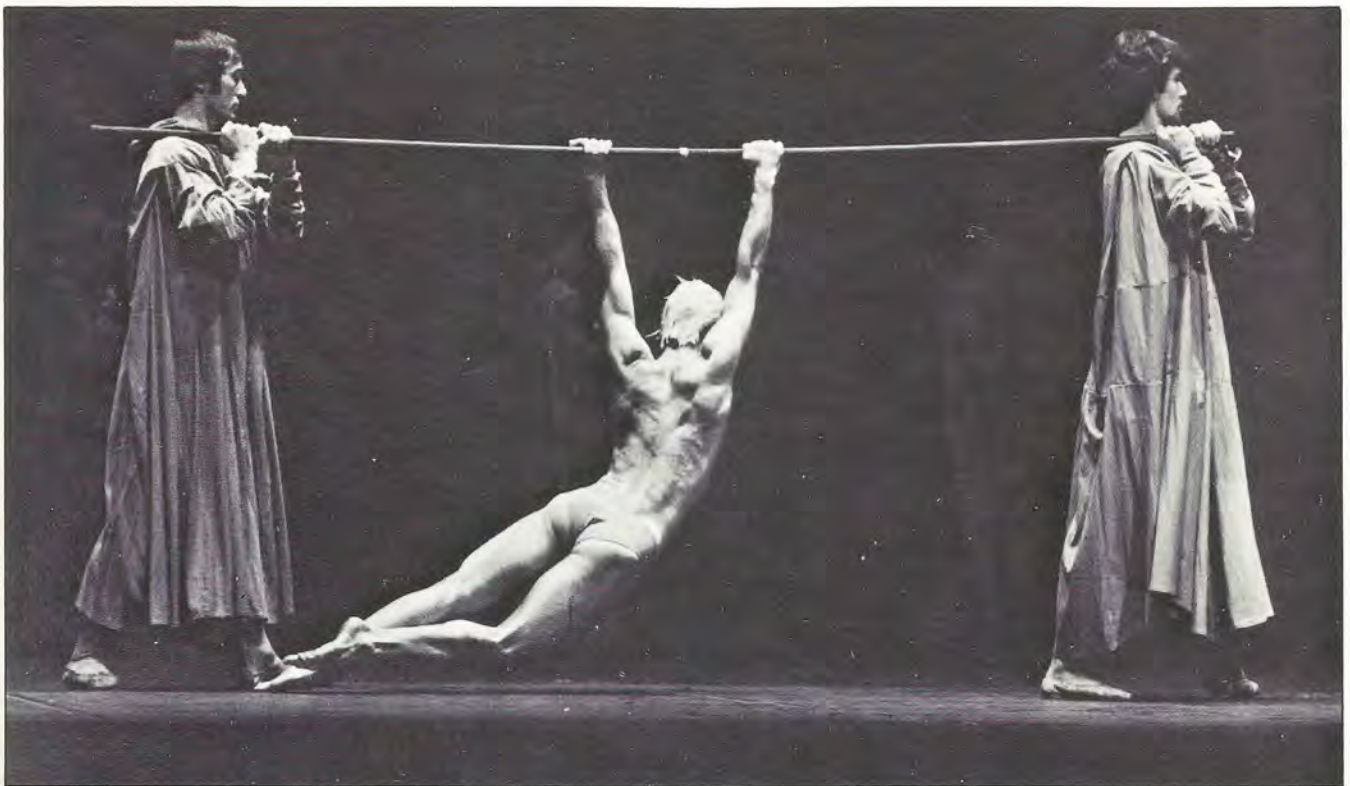
At the beginning of 1978, the company was carrying a deficit of \$335,236, of two years' standing, and the provincial government was not making any commitment to render the company solvent. Moreover, commercial and individual support was at the very low level of \$133,000. (The Du Maurier company is no longer a big-spending patron).

This is not to say that provincial support is lacking; business manager Colin McIntyre says that the province is very good about compensating for the blows of inflation, while the Canada Council tends to raise its grant by five per cent, when inflation is eight per cent or over. The Canada Council grant for 1977-78 was \$514,000, as compared with \$40,000 in the 1962-63 season. The provincial grant was \$321,000 in 1977-78, and the City of Montreal grant \$130,000.

Theatre rentals have gone up. Musicians' salaries have gone up. Ballet slippers, imported from the US, not only cost 10 per cent more, but have to be paid for in Canadian dollars, which have slipped by about 10 per cent.

The company is not unaware of money-raising possibilities. It has gone the Danny Newman ('Subscribe Now!') route, and raised its current subscription series from 3,000 to 4,800. Some people decry the use of Nureyev (with the National Ballet, at the beginning of the season) and *Les Ballets Jazz* (at the end of the season) as come-ons, but getting people into seats is the name of the game. The company is also in consultation with Arnold Edinborough and his Council for Business and the Arts in Canada.

Unlike Toronto's National Ballet, which gets Wintario grants, *Les Grands Ballets* gets no money from Loto Quebec. It is lobbying to get money from both Loto Quebec and from Loto Canada.



Carmina Burana

But all companies have financial woes. It's the artistic and personnel worries that concern friends of Les Grands Ballets. It is well known that there was a palace revolution towards the end of the 1977 tour of Latin America, (in Mexico, to be precise) and a board member had to be flown in from Montreal to persuade company members to renew their contracts.

Earlier that year, there had been rumours of discord when popular dancers Mannie Rowe and Maniya Barredo decided to leave. Now there was a more serious exodus including such stalwarts as Sonia Vartanian, David La Hay and Alexandre Bélin. Most of them went south, to such places as Atlanta and Cleveland.

The palace revolution may well have been the cause of Brian Macdonald's change of status from artistic director to resident choreographer, anticipated by some colourful rumours and confirmed in a press conference last December. But then, it can be argued that a choreographer should not be loaded down with administrative chores. Macdonald has choreographic jobs in Stockholm and Dallas and longs for time, 'to dream and travel'.

There is a trickle of dancers back to the company. Bélin returned for *The Nutcracker* and should be seen again in the spring. Sonia Vartanian and David La Hay are also on the company roster once more and Maniya Barredo will make a guest appearance during the 20th anniversary season.

As for direction, the company is being run by a committee (nominally of nine, but practically by five) and, of course, the old definition of a camel being a racehorse designed by a committee springs to mind. The fact that some of those committee members may want to use their influence to start choreographing again makes some of us uneasy.

Incidentally, the company has run students' choreography workshops for years, without notable results in contributions to the repertory. But it was Brian Macdonald who reintroduced Canadian choreographer Judith Marcuse to Canada (at the Centaur Theatre, in 1976) and she has been working with several companies since then. There was also an apprentice company called Les Compagnons de la Danse which provided a platform for new choreography but died a financial death in 1974.

The question about repertory brings up that old bogey of facelessness. One questions the wisdom of reviving the Nault adaptation of an earlier *Fille mal gardée*, which I recall as rather bland, when the National Ballet of Toronto is sweeping the continent with a brilliant production of the full-evening Ashton version.

The delayed Macdonald ballet to the Murray Schafer *Quartet No 1*, with the Orford Quartet on stage, promises to be interesting, but it and the other new ballets on the March programmes are unknown quantities, especially since some of the dancers are drawn from the schools. And is a company largely revamped in a hurry at the beginning of this season up to doing *Giselle*, even with Anton Dolin to guide it?

The company is facing its 20th anniversary in considerable disarray – with its plans for a full-evening Petipa-Ivanov *Swan Lake* frustrated for lack of funds, the artistic policy being shaped by a committee, and announcement about casting of principals being late because newcomers have to be tested or oldtimers lured back.

Let's hope that the 25th anniversary will present us not with a faceless company but one with a strong artistic profile – and I suspect that means a strong artistic director. To have the company turn 'provincial' in the artistic sense for political reasons would be a disaster.

# Les grands Ballets Canadiens

Les Grands  
Ballets Canadiens  
is celebrating  
20 years of joy.

Friday, Saturday, Sunday  
**March 3, 4, 5, 1978**

## L'aujourd'hui de demain Paige/Gagnon

with the participation of students of the École Supérieure de danse of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and the "Dance concentration" course of the École Pierre-Laporte (Premier)

## Try, Ready, Go

Nault/Chabrier  
(Premier, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens)

## A New Ballet Macdonald/Schafer

Av Paul, Warren  
with the participation of the Orford String Quartet

## La fille mal gardée Nault/Hertel

Barredo<sup>1</sup>, Bélin<sup>1</sup>, Bates, Stanzel  
with special appearances by  
Ludmilla Chiriaeff,  
Geneviève Salbaing,  
Fernand Nault

## Pas de deux, Swan Lake

Alicia Alonso<sup>1</sup>  
and Jorge Esquivel<sup>1</sup>  
of the National Ballet of Cuba

Tickets: \$12.50, \$10, \$7.50, \$5.  
Students<sup>2</sup>: \$6.25 (not available for March 3).

Sponsored by St. Lawrence  
Cement Company.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday  
**March 9\*, 10\*\*, 11, 12**

## L'aujourd'hui de demain Paige/Gagnon

## Icare

Hoving/Matsushita  
Robitaille<sup>1</sup>

## Giselle

Dolin/Adam  
Vartanian<sup>1</sup>, Bélin<sup>1</sup> (9, 11)  
Taverner<sup>1</sup>, Warren (10, 12)  
with special appearances by  
Ludmilla Chiriaeff  
and Anton Dolin<sup>1</sup>

Tickets: \$10, \$8, \$6, \$4.  
Students<sup>2</sup>: \$5.

\*Sponsored by B.P. Canada Ltd.  
\*\*Sponsored by Le Parfum  
PAVLOVA from Payot, Paris

Box Office now open at  
Place des Arts, 842-2112  
Master Charge, Chargex-Visa:  
487-2200

Casting and programme subject to  
change.

1. Guest Artists
2. Students: \$5  
Parterre T-Z, Corbeille E-J  
Students must have identification at the  
performance

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier,  
Place des Arts

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday  
**March 16\*, 17, 18, 19**

## Concerto Barocco Balanchine/Bach

## After Eden

Butler/Hoiby  
Barredo<sup>1</sup>, Rhodes<sup>1</sup> (16, 17)  
Dana, Bélin<sup>1</sup> (18, 19)

## Pas de quatre

Dolin/Pugni  
Tennant<sup>1</sup>, National Ballet of  
Canada  
Eglevsky<sup>1</sup>, Royal Winnipeg  
Ballet  
Av Paul, Les Grands Ballets  
Canadiens  
Vartanian<sup>1</sup>

## The Firebird

Béjart/Stravinsky  
Bélin<sup>1</sup> (16, 17)  
Rhodes<sup>1</sup> (18, 19)

## Suite Carignan Macdonald/Carignan

(Arr. Patriquin)  
played live by  
Jean Carignan  
(Premier)

Tickets: \$10, \$8, \$6., \$4.  
Students<sup>2</sup>: \$5.

\*Sponsored by Imperial Oil Ltd.



Charles Pope  
Greener Pastures



Le Groupe de la Place Royale in Ottawa

Nanti Malam

Jean-Pierre Perreault, co-director of Le Groupe de la Place Royale, the 12-year-old dance company which last July 1st kissed its native Montreal good-bye to relocate in Ottawa, insists the uprooting was unrelated to Quebec's problems of identity and survival.

'I never felt culturally threatened like other French Canadians', states the Montreal-born choreographer – yet his denunciation of the province's chronic unconcern for its performing arts is so severe, probably only a native Québécois would dare utter such public censure. Now 31, Perreault has been a dancer and sometime painter (he often designs as well as choreographs his works) since he was 17, and claims that all recent Quebec governments – Liberal, Union Nationale and 'probably now' the Parti Québécois – have been guilty of short-term thinking and plain ignorance when it comes to the arts. Shrugging his shoulders, he recalls one senior cultural affairs official who actually thought Liberace was the world's greatest artist.

'Imagine, a year ago they didn't even keep files on the companies they were giving money to!'

During 1976-77, Quebec's cultural affairs ministry, which until last fall had no specified dance department or officer, awarded Le Groupe a grant of \$18,000. It gave significantly larger sums to other younger companies, particularly those specializing in jazz. Les Ballets Jazz, for instance, got \$25,000. Perreault stresses he is grinding no axe against these companies on an individual basis – many of their personnel remain his good friends – but in recent seasons he has campaigned against Quebec's 'jazz bomb' and disapproves of what he considers misguided and flagrant marketing of grants to fit public taste.

'I really fought against their grants', he confirms. 'When there is so little funding, it shouldn't go to commercial art. Seven years ago Quebec was Canada's most advanced province for dance. When we moved last summer, there was only one modern company in Montreal left.' Perreault

adds that a few have sprung up since then. He isn't bitter—just sad 'to have to leave my home to be able to do what I believe in'. Quietly confident when we first talked last August, he gave the decided impression that he hoped Le Groupe's departure might prompt Quebec, if only subliminally, to re-examine its cultural priorities. That could take a while. However, Perreault believes the exit led directly to the culture ministry's long overdue establishment of a full-time dance bureau.

Nonetheless, Le Groupe, which generally has received respectful if not ecstatic reviews in much of Canada as well as Belgium, Mexico and, last December, in New York, pulled up stakes for reasons that went beyond government apathy. Some observers considered the company in a rut, becoming unhealthily inward-looking. Its first experiments during the 1976-77 season, with dancers making their own music, drew an almost unanimously negative response from the critics not only in Montreal but, ironically, also in Ottawa when Le Groupe appeared at the National Arts Centre.

Heavy turnover among the dancers put an obvious strain on standards. Ideally companies can restock their ranks from permanently associated schools, sometimes with apprentice programmes. Unfortunately Le Groupe never managed to establish such an institution despite the repeated efforts of Perreault and co-director Peter Boneham, who with Jeanne Renaud, founded the company in 1966. A lack of financial and moral support thwarted their attempts. As Perreault ruefully points out, 'There is no future when the company cannot renew itself.' Le Groupe began to audition dancers in Toronto and New

York, soon finding itself only nominally a Quebec company. Its current roster of seven dancers contains not even one French name.

That winter Perreault and Boneham took stock of their situation and began to think seriously of moving to Ottawa. They sounded out representatives of the Ontario Arts Council and major federal funding agencies all of whom indicated that Le Groupe's move would not be unwelcome. Naturally, they could not issue formal invitations or make firm financial commitments until the company had reached its own decision and acted on it. However, the general response was encouraging.

In a lengthy press release issued last April, drafted by Le Groupe's manager, Lawrence Bennett, Perreault and Boneham bluntly stated: 'the majority of our dancers come from outside Quebec; it is easier to book performances outside Quebec; our audiences in Montreal are not growing despite frequent performances, extensive publicity and excellent reviews; enrolment in the company's school is down in comparison with other schools, specializing in jazz dancing; and our grants from the province and city are considerably less than those accorded to newer dance companies whose place in Quebec's cultural scene was made possible largely due to Le Groupe's pioneering accomplishments'.

And so, on Canada Day, 1977, Le Groupe officially took up residence in Ottawa. From the National Capital Commission, the company leased two floors of prime studio and office space in the Hardy Arcade, just off downtown Sparks Street Mall, at a monthly rental of \$1,000. Next season it will rise to \$1,500 but that is still

## THE SCHOOL

OF THE TORONTO DANCE THEATRE



PRINCIPAL: DONALD HIMES

The School offers instruction in Modern Dance at all levels.

Our next **Beginners Course** starts March 27th, 1978, and is 12 weeks/24 classes long.

A Student Choreographic Workshop will be held Saturday, April 15th, 1978 at 2:00 p.m.

**Stretch & Strength** — the ideal exercise class designed to maintain the body at maximum physical efficiency.

### SUMMER SCHOOL '78

A 4 week intensive course at the Elementary and Intermediate/Advanced levels.

#### Guest Teachers

Bertram Ross June 5-30

Mary Hinkson June 5-16

Linda Rabin June 19-30

Bertram Ross and Linda Rabin will also be choreographing works to be performed by selected students.

For further details contact  
Richard Mortimer 423-0562.

quite a bargain and represents the NCC's official financial contribution. For 1977-78 The Canada Council granted \$100,000 and the Ontario Arts Council \$20,000, and there may be a retroactive municipal grant, all going toward Le Groupe's total operating budget of \$228,285. For its capital budget of \$64,000, which covers moving and renovation costs and other such one-shot expenses, Le Groupe has received \$32,000 from the Secretary of State's department, \$16,000 from the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, and \$2,000 from the Bronfman Foundation.

Integration into the Ottawa community began almost the moment the company arrived. During the summer Le Groupe taught and rehearsed at Ottawa Teacher's College where it premiered Perreault's latest work, *Nanti Malam*, inspired by his visit to Bali two years ago. By September, the Sparks Street headquarters were ready and Le Groupe's dance school, Les Ateliers, was officially opened, initially offering beginner and intermediate classes. The company gave lunch hour performances on the Sparks Street Mall: students and public were invited to the studios for open rehearsals. Le Groupe performed at the University of Ottawa and at Algonquin College just before going to New York.

The company's mid-October appearance in Toronto at the Art Gallery of Ontario met a thinning audience and disappointingly curt press attention. In Montreal, however, the company, fearing the worst, experienced a warm reception. Perreault is delighted to observe the old wounds already healing.

Perreault and Boneham are optimistic about Le Groupe's development. Says Perreault: 'We came to Ottawa as a full-grown company. There is an openness here. It's a city, like Washington, that was made. It would be very hard for a new company to start from scratch in Ottawa; yet I think people will realize Ottawa can have a cultural energy of its own'.

'Artistic growth', says Boneham, 'takes off from the last piece you finished. We have used poetry and singing; possibly we're working towards a new choreography. I used to be more interested in *just* choreography. As a creator I'm interested now in lighting, all media. It's a renaissance—back to puberty. But I'm not interested in the past; I'm interested in the present and the future.'

To the frustration of Canadian and American impresarios who thrive on established stars and hits, Le Groupe has abandoned all notion of being a repertory company.

Even its most successful works will not be retained much beyond a single season. Creative searching would seem the operative formula. Says Boneham: 'Choreography is not merely a salad. You don't throw in a little this, a little that. It's not just a melting pot; the best teacher in my life didn't tell me what to do—he made me answer my own questions.' Perreault agrees.

'We don't use films or sets anymore', he explains. 'We have turned more and more toward new relationships between music and dance.' In *Nanti Malam* the dancers sing and in other ways perform a score by Claude Vivier, a student of Stockhausen who, like Perreault, was also deeply affected by a recent visit to Bali.

'I felt dance was always the slave of an orchestra or tape machine. I wanted Le Groupe to become completely self-sufficient. We have a vocal coach, Pauline Vaillancourt, and the dancers take music classes at the University of Ottawa. I want them to work with modern composers, to develop a good rapport with contemporary music. Classically trained musicians are always afraid to let go. Dancers are trained to adapt to other artists, to grasp concepts. A dance company should have its own creative flow. Dance is an art form that dates easily. Like popular dance forms, it's always changing.'

Perreault, whose pixie-like countenance slightly resembles that of Rudolf Nureyev, then adds, as if capsulizing the significance of Le Groupe's uprooting: 'Even though people don't like change—they need it.'

## George Brown College Summer School of Performing Arts Dance Programs

Ballet . Pointe . Modern . Jazz  
Pas de Deux . Repertoire  
July 4 - August 11, 1978

**Lois Smith**

Director

Faculty includes

**David Adams**

Formerly,

Royal Ballet Company

**Terry Westmoreland**

Royal Ballet School

**Donald Himes**

Principal, School of  
The Toronto Dance Theatre

**Kenneth Lipitz**

Winnipeg  
Contemporary Dancers

**Angela Leigh**

Formerly,  
National Ballet of Canada

Students may take part in performances of Swan Lake Act 2,  
and other commissioned works. Limited bursary assistance available.

School of Dance George Brown College of Applied Arts & Technology  
P.O. Box 1015, Station B, Toronto, Ontario,  
Canada M5T 2T9 (416) 363-9945

### Toronto Dancewear Centre

1922 Avenue Road, Toronto, Ontario M5M 4A1  
(416) 782-2292



Footwear, Legwear,  
Bodywear for Dance,  
Theatre and  
Recreation by

Capezio's  
been dancing  
since 1887.®

**Capezio®**

Rhonda Ryman  
 Training the Dancer:  
 III

# New Approaches and a Challenge to Tradition

Tradition constrained by artistic intuition has been the main avenue by which the great innovative dance teachers of the past have arrived at the 'truths' of their art. Today, a valuable source of insight comes not from within the dance community but from without, from physical educators. Their theories reveal fascinating perceptions about the workings of the human body, information which provides fresh insights into the learning and performance of dance skills.

One of the earlier pioneering theorists of body education was Mabel Elsworth Todd, author of *The Thinking Body* (1937). Todd's approach is based on the sciences of physics, mechanics, anatomy and physiology. Her theories emphasize the acquisition of good body alignment, that is, the vertical balancing of the large body masses (head, ribcage, etc.) so that the bulk of weight is transferred through the bones and joints and not the muscles. According to Todd, a clear understanding of the body's skeletal structure is crucial. Improvement in body mechanics must come from a re-education of the mind, which orders movement, and not just the muscles, which carry it out.

Todd's theories have been extended into a comprehensive teaching method by Lulu Sweigard, author of *Human Movement Potential* (1975). Sweigard emphasizes that the full potential for efficient, effective movement can be achieved only through the cooperative action of nerves, muscles and bones. She stresses the importance of acquiring a healthy stance for mechanical as well as aesthetic reasons: each individual's posture influences the



Dancer in the studio—Mary Jago

manner in which he performs any movement. Sweigard's teaching method, which she calls 'ideokinesis', is based on imagery. The student's concentration is totally channeled through a specifically constructed movement image, an image which is based on the lines of movement traced by the bones. In this way, the muscles are automatically programmed below the level of consciousness. For example, instead of throwing back the shoulders and lifting the chin in order to stand tall, the student visualizes the head as a helium-filled balloon which, being lighter



than air, rises higher and higher. This dynamic image acts as a mental stimulus, eliciting the proper combination of muscle actions throughout the body, a combination too complex to be consciously chosen.

The use of imagery as a teaching aid has been widely applied by Russian ballet masters since the turn of the century. But however poetic the image may sound, it is only effective in proportion to the principles on which it is based. Inappropriately chosen imagery can be useless or even detrimental if it directs the bones into anatomically dangerous positions. Furthermore, individuals may respond differently to the same images. So it is the responsibility of each teacher to formulate a series of appropriate images in response to each student's needs.

The importance of good skeletal alignment is also a central issue in the teachings of F. Matthias Alexander. When doctors were unable successfully to treat his loss of voice, Alexander set out to cure himself. Through careful self-examination, he observed a tendency to tense the muscles of his neck and throat as he talked. By improving the alignment of his head on his spine, Alexander was able to relax these muscles, and so to restore his full vocal capacity. In his writings, compiled under the heading *The Resurrection of the Self* (1969), Alexander tells us that each individual has the capacity actively to change and improve the way he uses his body. Like Todd and Sweigard, he urges that the most effective, efficient means of reconditioning habitual movement patterns is mental activity involving the thought of a particular movement. By increasing one's concentration and sensory awareness it is possible to break down useless, that is non-functional, muscle tension which interferes with the easy accomplishment of an action.

Alexander's principles for re-educating the body involve verbal direction and also subtle manipulation. The teacher carefully guides the subject who actively responds to such concise instructions as 'neck free, head forward and out, and back lengthen and widen'. Through repetition and increased awareness, the subject's body usage is altered toward the ideal.

Repetition is of course a basic ingredient in all dance training. But there is a fallacy in the saying 'practice makes perfect'. It is obvious that only perfect practice makes perfect, since repeating a bad habit merely reinforces it and makes it all the more difficult to change. Manual guidance of the student by the teacher is likewise an age-old teaching practice. Many a student has been poked and jabbed into position without really understanding why that pose is correct and, therefore, learning nothing. It is a rare teacher who possesses the sensitivity subtly to guide the student into learning.

When bad habits become so ingrained and muscle patterns so set that they cannot be changed by concentration alone, it becomes necessary to use other means. Biochemist Ida Rolf has devised a technique called Structural Integration which requires the passive involvement of the subject. The treatment, also known as 'rolfing', involves a deep and sometimes painful massage which breaks down the tough and restrictive membrane surrounding abnormally tensed muscles. When this membrane or fascial sheath is broken down, the muscle may again function freely in cooperation with its surrounding muscles. By reintegrating its structure, the muscle's normal usage may be restored. However, after the treatment, if old

habits are resumed, the same problems will recur. So Rolf has formulated a series of 'patterning exercises' to re-educate the body. Chiropractor David Drum has suggested a combination of rolfing, to relieve dystonic or imbalanced muscular conditions, and Alexander technique, to retrain the body. But what is it about the human condition that predisposes us toward bad posture, muscle tension and generally poor body usage? Several neurophysiological reasons have been proposed by the noted author/teacher Moshe Feldenkrais.

In his book *Body and Mature Behaviour* (1949), Feldenkrais links all physical and psychological growth to the development of movement skills. Human intelligence, emotion and motor development are intrinsically related. Man has a distinctive and unique capacity for learning. Feldenkrais attributes this to his minimal degree of genetic scripting and the relatively small size of the human brain at birth. That is, at birth the paths and circuits of the human nervous system are incomplete. Most human behaviour is learned as opposed to instinctive. Whereas a calf can walk a few hours after its birth, it will take a human child more than one year to learn the necessary motor patterns. Ironically, this great capacity for learning can lead to the acquisition either of appropriate or faulty response patterns. For example, children may often imitate the posture or walking style of a parent for social as well as functional reasons. But these acquired motor patterns are more transitory than genetically inherited patterns and therefore can be more easily unlearned and relearned.

Through the 60's and 70's a preoccupation with 'body language' has become a popular cocktail party affectation. It seems obvious that the way we choose to stand or move reflects a complex combination of how we feel at a particular moment or what message we would like to convey to those around us, as well as what task we intend to perform. Feldenkrais describes how the body may acquire chronic emotionally-linked postures reflecting, for example, fear and anxiety. Such a stance is characterized by increased tension in the muscles on the front of the body, which produces a hunched-over, introverted position. This imbalanced stance predisposes the body to further imbalances during the movement. So in order to correct a movement pattern it is very often necessary to go back to the basic postural stance and to realign the body so that its bones are balanced and its muscles free from emotionally-induced tensions.

Feldenkrais' second book *Awareness Through Movement* (1972) presents a series of simple exercises designed to increase the individual's sensitivity to movement. By directing the bones and experiencing the muscular sensations accompanying these movements the individual becomes 'tuned in' to his own particular tension patterns. As this awareness increases, he becomes more and more capable of detecting imbalance and muscle strain. This capacity is very often lost in people involved in continuous intense physical activity. It is not uncommon for a dancer to ignore or even block out awareness of minor muscle strain until the point where these strains become serious enough to cause major damage. Vancouver teacher/dancer Morley Wiseman has actually incorporated Feldenkrais exercises into his classroom warm-up, encouraging his dancers to maintain the sensitivity so often dulled through the rigorous drilling of ballet technique.

Feldenkrais' most recent book *The Case of Nora* (1977)

provides a fascinating insight into the process of learning. He emphasizes that it is not enough merely to present the correct answer. Applying this idea to dance training, we can see that knowing exactly how a grand battement *should* be done does not necessarily mean that it *will* be accomplished in that way. The teacher must create a situation through which the student can somehow discover the movement for himself. Rote learning and imitation, which have traditionally been the dance teacher's main tools, produce temporary learning at best. Unless the actual physical sensation is experienced and appreciated, true learning cannot occur.

Although dance technique, and especially classical ballet, has often been described as contrary to the 'natural' way of moving, many dance exercises make extremely good use of basic neural reflexes. Los Angeles kinesiologist Valerie Hunt has examined several reflex reactions and applied them to dance movements which develop muscular strength and flexibility. Her work supports contemporary kinesiological findings which emphasize that muscle bulk is not a prime requirement for dynamic strength. More important is the neural component. That is, the mind must recruit all possible muscle fibres in the proper sequence in order to effect a powerful muscular contraction. No matter how massive the muscle, it is useless unless it can be activated in an efficient, coordinated way. This explains, for example, how it is possible to maintain slim tapered leg muscles while developing the considerable leg strength required in grand allegro work.

Hunt explains how flexibility, like strength, can be trained by making use of basic neuromuscular reflexes. When the range of motion at a particular joint is limited by 'tight' muscles (as opposed to short ligaments or a deep, closely knit bone structure), the dancer can learn to relax the restrictive muscle, to allow it to elongate in easy cooperation with its complementary muscle. Muscles work in cooperative groups, one group shortening while another lengthens. This reciprocal cooperation occurs reflexly, without our conscious direction. Dance teachers often instruct the student to 'use' a particular muscle, but by concentrating our attention on any one specific muscle group, we tamper with the automatically programmed sequencing which often causes general tension throughout all the muscles in a particular area. The mind thinks in terms of movements, not muscle and few of us have the sensitivity to command *one* muscle to contract, although

experiments in biofeedback are proving that this may be possible.

Hunt therefore advises that in order to lengthen or stretch a particular muscle, its complementary muscle must be actively shortened or contracted. For example, the hamstring group which runs along the back of the thigh often restricts the height of a leg extension in front. This group also makes it difficult to sit up straight with the legs stretched completely in front of the body. In order to stretch the hamstrings, try the following exercise: sit on the floor with the legs stretched straight out in front of you. Try to bend forward and note the distance between your upper torso and knees. Now have someone kneel in front of you with his hands on the front of your shoulders, strongly opposing you as you once again try to bring your upper torso forward toward your knees. Relax. Repeat the forceful push against your partner's resisting hands five times, holding each push for a count of five. Now see how far you can bend simply by hanging your body over, unopposed. The distance between your upper torso and knees should be considerably less than when you started. As you forcefully contracted and shortened muscles along the front of the body, those groups along the back lengthened reflexly. The principle on which this exercise is based is called 'reciprocal innervation'. Understanding this and other muscle reflexes allows the teacher to devise a wide range of exercises to improve muscular tightness or weakness.

The theories presented in this article provide a brief introduction to contemporary trends in physical training. Their recommendations should cause us seriously to question traditional teaching practices which have been accepted mainly because of a strong regard for heritage. By objectively assessing dance exercises and movements in the light of contemporary scientific findings we will be able to evolve more efficient, effective training methods—methods *based* on tradition but not *limited* by it.

*The next article in this series will show how an understanding of bones and joints in the body can lead to a better appreciation of correct placement in ballet. If you have any questions arising from this or earlier articles in the series, or if there are any areas of a dancer's training you would particularly like to be discussed, please write to Rhonda Ryman, care of this magazine.*

## Mount Allison University Summer School of Dance

July 2 - July 22 1978

includes a two-week School of Ballet  
and one-week schools of Highland  
Modern and Folk Dance.

For further information contact:  
Department of Extension  
Mount Allison University  
Sackville New Brunswick

## Toronto Summer School in dance

BRANKSOME HALL  
JULY 17 - AUGUST 13

### Professional Faculty:

Diana Jabloková-Vorps, Artistic Director, Victoria Carter, James Colistro, Gabriela Grigoras, Iolanda Pascaluta-Giurgiu, Jon Rodriguez, Sergiu Stefanschi, Elena Zhuravleva

### Dance Curriculum Includes:

Classical Ballet Technique, Pointe, Variations, Partnering, Character, National Dances, Jazz Ballet, Workshops And Adult Body Placement Classes for Elementary, Intermediate, Advance Students and Professionals.

### Teachers Seminar:

In Internationally Acclaimed Kirov Method  
Residence Accommodations For Students 10 Years Old And Up

### For Brochure Write To:

Carl D. Vorps, General Manager, Toronto Summer School In Dance  
15 Armour Blvd., Toronto, Ont. M5M 3B9 Tel.: (416) 489-7597

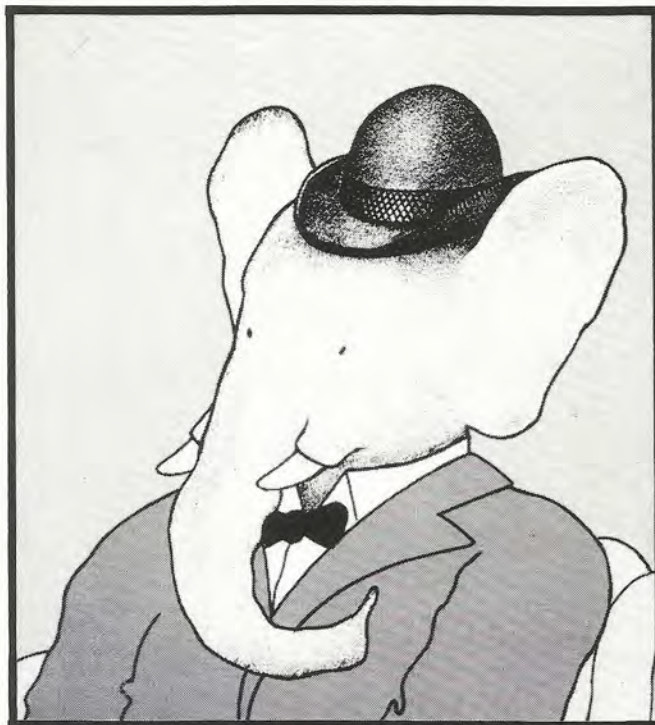
# B★A★B★A★R

*the little elephant...*

*presented by the Toronto Dance Theatre  
and Donald Himes  
at the Town Hall  
in the St. Lawrence Centre*

March 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28  
performances 1:00 & 3:00 p.m.  
children \$2.50 adults \$4.00

*for information call 423-0562*



## Dance in Canada

# Conference 78

## August 13-17

Five full days of classes, seminars and performances, at Vancouver's idyllic University of British Columbia (evening performances downtown at the Queen Elizabeth Playhouse).

## Vancouver is the place to be.

 **Marley Floors  
International Ltd**

W. G. McMAHON LTD.,  
P. O. Box 639,  
Winnipeg, Manitoba,  
R3C 2K6.  
Tel. (204) 633-1020



## What do all the following have in common?

Koninklijke Vlaamse Opera, Antwerp, Belgium.  
N.O.S. Televisie, Hilversum, Holland. Oslo Ballet Kompani, Norway.  
Opernhaus, Zurich, Switzerland.  
The Royal Opera House & Sadlers Wells Theatre, London, England.  
The National Arts Centre, Ottawa, Canada. Toronto Dance Theatre, Toronto, Canada.  
The Dance Theatre of Harlem, New York.

## MarleyStageFlooring

The completely unique reversible (black or white) sheet flooring which has been designed for all dance, opera and theatrical applications.

Made from fully-flexible vinyl, it will not tear or crack and the surface has a matt slip-resistant finish.

Stage Flooring is light and easy to transport – ideal for tour companies!

From Chicago to San Antonio, Los Angeles to Brooklyn, Washington to Florida, Louisiana to Vancouver and Houston to Springfield, the orders have come flooding in. Contact W. G. McMahon Ltd., the Commercial and Domestic Flooring Specialists, for a quotation and free sample.

## In Review

### Kain and Augustyn A Photographic Study

Christopher Darling  
Text: John Fraser  
Toronto: Macmillan  
1977

I looked forward with great expectations to the release of this book when it was announced last summer. First, it was to be about one of Canada's most talented and popular dance partnerships. Second, the photographs were to be by Christopher Darling, a top-notch photographer with a special interest in dance, and the text by John Fraser, an experienced and perceptive writer on dance.

The book has arrived! The posed and action shots of the two dancers have been carefully selected to present the subjects at their best, and Fraser has written a psychological analysis of their approach to the art of dance.

However, the production of the book was put into the hands of professionals who have drained all the humanity out of the subjects involved, resulting in a book that is arty rather than artistic, intended to impress rather than inform. It puts one in mind of one of those slick annual financial reports put out by wealthy corporations to dazzle their share-holders.

The introduction states that the book is not intended to be a photographic record of the many roles the two dancers have performed. I am sure Kain-Augustyn fans would have preferred a book crammed with photographs of the ballets in which their idols have danced, rather than pages of tiny photos surrounded by large black or white spaces. Another aggravation is the splitting of photos across two pages, two-thirds on one and the remainder on the opposite page. I suppose this was to avoid the need to turn the book sideways. Another inconvenience is having to turn to the back of the book for captions.

But this may appear to be quibbling when one comes across such lovely shots as the *Romeo and Juliet* series (pages 85-89), the *Giselle* action shots (pages 90-105), the arabesque pose from *La Fille mal gardée* (page 128), and the action shots following, as well as *Swan Lake* (page 147). These reveal the two artists at their greatest.

In years to come the book will remain an historical record of two of Canada's most talented dancers of this generation.

CASIMIR CARTER



### Ballet and Dance

Linda Doeser  
London: Cavendish, 1977

### The Encyclopedia of Dance and Ballet

edited by Mary Clarke and David  
Vaughan  
New York: Putnam, 1977

Two new dance reference works have appeared, both originating in Britain, both handsome, one unique, but neither a god-send to the scholar or the serious dance devotee.

Ms Doeser examines the contemporary dance scene in terms of companies. This is a new approach and a welcome one. Except for the New York City Ballet, which has been given a blow-by-blow developmental history by Lincoln Kirstein, there are no readily available chronicles of the other five 'mainstream' ballet companies (Russia's Kirov and Bolshoi Ballets, Britain's Royal Ballet, the Royal Danish, and American Ballet Theatre). In the modern dance area, the author places also in the major league the Martha Graham Dance Company, Ballet Rambert, the Twyla Tharp Dance Foundation, Nederlands Dans Theater, and Alvin Ailey's company. She tells us in an introductory essay that modern ballet began with Diaghilev, and she surveys his twenty years of activities in Western Europe, passing lightly over the subsequently formed Ballet Russe companies which brought ballet to the Americas and Australia in the 30s and 40s.

When accounting for some thirty of the second-string dance organizations on six continents, Ms Doeser has been selective, preferring to deal mainly with those which have achieved international recognition by touring. In these terms, omission of Béjart's Ballets du xxième siècle and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, which tours more than most, is likely to raise some questions, particularly when she affords a thorough report of the Irish Ballet (established in 1974) and the Gulbenkian Ballet of Portugal, both virtually unknown outside their immediate spheres. However, her scholarship has been solid, and most of the histories make fascinating reading.

As one scans the writings on these companies, two issues relative to our age become clear: the line between ballet and contemporary dance becomes less distinct in the productions of all companies outside the Soviet Union, and the works of a few living choreographers have become the mainstays of the various national repertoires. Ashton's *Fille mal gardée* may now be seen in London, Budapest, San Francisco and Toronto; Tudor's *Pillar of Fire* is the property of companies in New York, Stockholm and Buenos Aires; Balanchine works are more universally performed than those of Petipa.

The book is uneven in the provision of company rosters and repertoires. The former are subject to perpetual change, particularly in the North American groups where company-hopping is a professional pastime. For some companies, Ms Doeser gives full historical listings of the entire repertory (The National and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens fare particularly well in this respect). Others are represented only by items currently being performed. For reasons best known to the publisher, documentation for personnel and production of the Royal Swedish Ballet is conspicuously absent.

The black and white photographs are uniformly interesting and well-integrated with the text, and the historical content of the book can't be easily found in any other single source. As dancers come and go and as new ballets replace older ones, most of the personnel listings and hierarchies will shortly become out of date.

The Clarke and Vaughan *Encyclopedia* was advertised for \$25.00 in the December *Dance Magazine*, but the copy examined was marked up by a Vancouver retailer. Superb and copious colour and black and white illustrations put this volume in the category of a high-priced coffee table item. Despite the impressive list of erudite contributors, the text is uneven, and the selection of the 2000-odd entries seems totally arbitrary. For company histories, the entry

on the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo is perhaps the best in print for an organization with an exceedingly complex development; other groups are covered with a few brief facts. There are probably more biographical items for dance artists born since 1950 and for choreographers currently active in today's performance scene. The prolific Leonide Massine is covered in half a column. So is Eliot Feld. Herbert Ross and his works are ignored. Three of Massine's major works are omitted from the 350 ballet and dance productions described.

The ever-controversial birthdate of Alicia Alonso is given here as 1917. Reyna (*Concise Encyclopedia of Ballet*, Collins, 1974) says 1909, and Koegler (*Concise Oxford Dictionary of Ballet*, Oxford, 1977) offers the more likely date of 1921.

Canadian coverage is exceedingly spotty. Celia Franca is given eleven lines, while Brian Macdonald and Fernand Nault are omitted. There are brief biographies for Karen Kain and Veronica Tennant, but none for Lois Smith nor Frank Augustyn. Despite the 1977 imprint, Alexander Grant, who took over the National in 1975 is not acknowledged as its current director.

For accurate reference material, the Oxford item is still the best and most factual source, with over 5000 entries (including several cited here which the Putnam book ignored) and, at \$14.95, is by far the best buy. The Clarke-Vaughan effort is in fact equally concise but makes claims to be considerably more than what it actually is. There are other equally lovely productions for those interested in the photography of the dance at less than the price pegged on this loser.

LELAND WINDREICH

## Toronto Dance Theatre

Macmillan Theatre  
University of Toronto  
14-16 December 1977

It was, as they say, a night to remember. In fact, the best night TDT has given us since the premieres of *L'Assassin Menace* and *Field of Dreams* one fateful February night three years ago. The programme consisted of two new works, David Earle's *Mythos* and Peter Randazzo's *A Simple Melody*, and two not-quite new works, Randazzo's *Recital* and Danny Grossman's *Curious Schools of Theatrical Dancing: Part I*. Considering the diversity of choreographic styles presented, these dances proved to be surprisingly compatible. And the company, smaller than in recent years, performed them on the whole, with great panache. Some of the dancers, namely Charles Flanders and Dennis Highway, have never looked so good, while Susan MacPherson who has been doing strong work for years, without sufficient recognition, has reached a new high in her dancing. She has grown to be indispensable to the company's distinctive look. And Claudia Moore — well, I doubt she realizes the kind of power she possesses, the magic she creates in just a turn of the head. The National Ballet, where she danced for two years, obviously didn't realize it either, but judging from the play they're giving her, Randazzo and Earle do; I doubt they'll let her escape as easily as Franca did.

The works given during the too-short (should I say, stingy?) season showed many of the choreographers' old obsessions or preoccupations at large again. In *Curious Schools*, for example, Grossman's fascination with clowns and circuses was given a full-out solo confession. Starting from Mary Kerr's circus-ring, which

confines Grossman's activity to his rags and tatters (also by Mary Kerr), to the queer, almost funny mechanical movements and Three Stooges pratfalls, the circus element dominates the work. There's always something pitiful about Grossman's circus world however — as we saw in *Fratelli*. There's something of the Vladimir and Estragon in Grossman's clowns. The anti-hero of *Curious Schools* might even be a cripple or an almoner forced to perform his hobbled routine for a living, a routine that in the end has become not just a *modus vivendi*, but itself a reason for living.

Grossman is a very clever dance-maker and it's easy to marvel at the peculiarity of the design he's made, at the ingenuity of the physical obstacles he sets himself — including, in *Curious Schools*, a routine built around a bum foot — without really sensing the bleakness of the whole picture he's painting. I've wondered before, and *Curious Schools* made me wonder again, whether Grossman really feels the despair his anti-heroes, his clowns, communicate. Something tells me — his cleverness, I guess, or his over-riding concern for form — that this despair is still an unconscious element in his work.

Peter Randazzo's works in recent years have got lighter, glibber, more allusive. *Recital* strikes me as a self-indulgent prank, with those high-toned, well-heeled boors talking their way through a piano recital of some Lorin Hollander-type music by Michael Baker (amusingly overplayed by the ubiquitous Gary Arbour) but it shows up a new target for Randazzo's choreographic wit: classical ballet. Randazzo uses the movements, the attitudes, and the posturings of Romantic Ballet heroes and heroines as a way of identifying the shallowness, the self-dramatization of the culture-vultures in *Recital*. Juxtaposed

# Professional Programme

of the  
**Royal Winnipeg Ballet**



a unique training programme for  
the dance student intent upon a  
professional career.

## Summer Session

July 31-September 1

in residence at the University of Manitoba

classes in  
ballet·pointe  
pas de deux·repertoire  
national·jazz·modern

The five week course may be undertaken  
in full, or in a two week or three week session.

For application or further information contact:

Registrar, Professional Programme

**Royal Winnipeg Ballet**

289 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg

Manitoba R3B 2B4

with his own favourite movement motifs— the abrupt, jack-in-the-box jumps, the flexed wrists and ankles, the gliding hop-skip combinations — the ballet technique variations on Martha Graham's) looks especially eccentric, even slightly surrealist.

The ballet parody element is very evident in *A Simple Melody* too, most noticeably in the opening sequence where Flanders, Grossman and Randazzo, gowned in floral-printed shower curtains with ruffs that make them look like rejects from some provincial Waltz of the Flowers, do a series of grotesque ballet combinations to the banality of 'Oh, how we danced/On the night we were wed'. These should be as funny as the Tockadero's ballet take-offs, but they're not, nor even as funny as Jerome Robbins' *The Concert*. This kind of parody offers very little to build on, of course, and by drawing it out as long as he does in both *Recital* and *A Simple Melody*, Randazzo makes the audience restless. He is much funnier when setting his sights on targets closer to him, targets like pop culture, le chic, sexual stereotyping, jingling sentimentality. It's in his attack on these that *A Simple Melody* really hangs together.

The theme of *Melody* is not pop tunes exactly, but simple (in musical terms) melodies of all shapes and epochs — from Gregorian chants to Ravel's *Pavane for a Dead Princess* (familiar in the thirties as a pop song called *The Lamp is Low*) to *La Comparsita*. As a suite of dances it bears an eclectic resemblance to the kind of programme Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn used to give on their pioneer tours of the twenties when they were taking theatrical dance to the heathens. Randazzo's 'Pavane' is embroidered with his own modernisms just as the Denishawns used to embroider mazurkas, waltzes, and maxixes with their dance inflections to give them a slightly larger-than-life quality, but it never loses its basic ballroom-dance look; and his 'Tango' (deliciously performed by Judith Hendin and Danny Grossman) has been hardly face-lifted at all except for a comic catch at the end.

The highlight for me was the 'Rumble' in which the eight dancers entered — the women by tippy canoe — to *Paddlin' Madeleine Home*, dressed identically in black nylon jumpsuits, black boots, black baseball caps, and sunglasses. Their Charleston-varsity drag chorus routine erupted — or rather halted — into a chain-reaction display of fisticuffs that eventually felled them all. At the same time, Randazzo was knocking down all his favourite targets in one deft off-centre blow, targets he adores in a cynical way. And the apotheosis when those ultra-chic hoodlums were transformed into cartoon wonderpeople to the strains of *Climb Ev'ry Mountain* — well, they call it a crowd-pleaser, and it was.



Claudia Moore in *Mythos*

David Earle's *Mythos*, the one real premiere of the season, was not what you would call a crowd-pleaser, but it was an affecting work, a gorgeous one too, probably his best to date. Earle has always been interested in the dynamics of sexual relationships, of attraction and repulsion between individuals; *Boat, River, Moon; Field of Dreams*, even the curious *Angelic Visitations* have dwelt on sex, sometimes explicitly, sometimes — most of the time — veiled in ritual and mystery. *Mythos*, a dance based on the Phaedra legend, approaches it in both ways.

Set between two scrimms, the action of *Mythos* unfolds very slowly and deliberately giving us the feeling that what's happening is happening a long way off; when we first see the stage, in fact, it's through a swirling light effect on the front scrim that suggests the dusts of time. This pace acts as a check on the extremely passionate nature of the story without however disembowelling it. There's a great calm at the centre of the work that allows the dance images to amass great power before unleashing it in all its force at the end: the stage, still with corpses (one grieving), is swallowed in blackness; a single light only shines on the headless, armless figure of the Chorus who, as witness to the tragedy, must stand forever like some dark Winged Victory to give evidence. More than anything else, this calm is an indicator of the choreographer's new-found control of his art.

Detachment, pace, repetition give the work its ritualistic impact, its sense of mystery. The performers, Moore (Phaedra), Flanders (Theseus), Highway

(Hippolytus), and Macpherson (as both Chorus and Phaedra's Nurse), give it its sexual potency. Beautiful as they are on stage, they are no accident. I don't think Earle set out to create a work of great psychological depth or to shed new lights on the old legend, but to ritualize the phenomenon of frustrated sexual love and its dire consequences. In so doing, the performers became not just collaborators in the choreographer's vision but his chief inspiration. Thus Moore's remarkable solo with Hippolytus' bow which emphasizes her purity of line and her control of those amazing hands and feet (which on anyone else would seem ungainly) also shows them as inseparable from Earle's own concept of Phaedra. Similarly Earle's Theseus is inspired by Flanders' particular strengths, his powerful legs and back, his weight; and his Hippolytus by Dennis Highway's openness, by that spontaneity bordering on vulnerability that makes him such a refreshing presence on stage. The immediacy of each dancer's physical individuality provides the perfect balance to the work's ritual so that it never once descends to the arcane or hocus-pocus; in that balance lies *Mythos'* theatrical magic.

Contributing visually to the magic are Ron Snippe's lighting, Carol Crawley's variations on Greco-Roman dress, and Wayne Lum's magnificent set with its half-risen moon swathed in mist, its phallic bed, its awesome spider-web of copper piping from which the vengeful Phaedra hangs herself — but it is, just the same, Earle's visual triumph. I don't mean the dance allusions to Greek painting and statuary, or the trance-like hunt sequence, or Phaedra's aching confession of love to her stepson, or any single moment or detail added though they were with the skill of a painter: I mean the whole polished work. Once or twice I thought I wanted the dance to stop so that I could savour a particular moment or attitude, but I realized, too, that much of the dance's power lies in its transitions, in bodies not frozen in pretty postures but comforting, caressing, spurning, evading and colliding with each other. *Mythos* is not coffee-table art: it breathes, it goes on.

It goes on primarily because its sexual force is unmistakable, uncompromising, and perhaps to those accustomed to the vitiated displays of sexual love we get on the ballet stage, embarrassing. Although *Mythos* is a tragedy, it's not a tragedy of sexuality, but of sexuality repressed and rejected. To Earle, I think, sexuality is a creative force, an active one, a spiritual one. For its intensely spiritual sexuality, for its theatrical generosity and visual beauty, *Mythos* strikes me as comparable with Martha Graham's *Seraphic Dialogue*. Hypnotic, *Mythos* has the lure of a forbidden garden. I'm hungry to see it again.

GRAHAM JACKSON

## Looking at Dance— Live, On Film, As Video

Art Gallery of Ontario  
Toronto

19 October—24 November 1977

This past fall the Art Gallery of Ontario presented a series of events collectively entitled *Looking at Dance—Live, on Film, as Video*. The full impact of the *Looking at Dance* series has yet to be measured. But it is fair to say that it was an event of great importance to the dance community in Toronto. The series was conceived and organized by AGO staff members Ian Birnie and Kate McCabe in collaboration with video expert Peggy Gale and dance-film authority Selma Odom of York University. Originally planned just as a film and video series, the concept was expanded to include live performances when it became apparent that the AGO's new multiple-use space, the Activity Centre, would be suitable for performance.

From October 19 to November 24, there were presentations two evenings a week, with film showings at 5:30 and 7:00, video continuous outside the screening room from 12:00 noon to 10:00 p.m., and, on four evenings, live performances from 9:00 to 10:00. One could, then, spend a particular evening from 5:30 to 10:00 doing nothing but watching various kinds of dance presentations, and many people took advantage of this unique opportunity to educate themselves in dance and to enlarge their perception of what dance is. The series was well publicized, well organized and very well attended. Another series will, hopefully, be planned soon.

Over 60 films were shown in the *Looking at Dance* series, and it is of course not possible to discuss all of them, partly because of space limitations and partly because I'm only human and I missed some. Much to my regret, I also missed most of the video showings, which is why they aren't mentioned.

The films of dance from different cultures were, without exception, excellent. Margaret Mead's classic *Trance and Dance in Bali* (1937) was one of the best. As an ancient mythic drama is re-enacted, the participants slowly become more and more absorbed in the roles they have assumed, finally writhing about oblivious to their immediate surroundings, stabbing themselves with their own weapons. When they are in trance, this does not wound them; the villagers say that if someone is wounded, he has not really been in trance. The participants' degree of concentration and the energy which is expended in their frenzied movement is quite astounding to witness, as is the slow return to consciousness and ordinary village life.

Another fascinating film was *Three Dances from Cholla-Do, Korea* (1969). In each case the solo dancer was filmed in a very small performance space against a plain background, by a stationary camera placed directly in front. This treatment suited the dances perfectly; each was a perfect little jewel not requiring an elaborate setting. Movements were mostly confined to the arms and upper torso, with costuming used to great effect as is common in Oriental dance. In fact, the costumes amplified the movement in these subtle, delicate pieces. Freer in style was the surprising 'drum dance', a virtuoso performance by an agile male dancer. He not only manouevered his body dextrously within the cramped space, but managed to strike various drums with spectacular speed and accuracy while performing complex steps and turns with apparent ease.

The films in the 'theatre dance' category, while in general best attended, were not always the best or most interesting in concept or execution. *Paul Taylor and Company, An Artist and His Work* (1968) was more a self-serving promotional piece than a revealing analysis of the choreographer and his work. The odious and unsubtle inclusion of congratulatory comments of famous personalities was

only compounded by Taylor's coy and gratuitous pleas for money. Similarly the film, *Margot Fonteyn* (1974), was also an image piece, but less offensively so. Keith Money's affectionate, flattering treatment of the celebrated English ballerina stays strictly and uncritically on the surface. Even the brief glimpses of Fonteyn's private world are edited to preserve her notoriously well-guarded personal life. Not surprisingly, then, the most interesting film in this category was the least contrived, a short work on American choreographer Anna Sokolow, called *Sokolow Directs 'Odes'* (1972). The film revealed a dynamic middle-aged woman with no pretensions to grandeur, and it let her speak for herself simply by recording her in the process of working with a group of dancers from Ohio State University. It was fascinating to watch the piece develop as Sokolow rehearsed and re-rehearsed the students, drawing the best from them, until the performance reflected as closely as possible her conception of it. It is really this artistic process that the audience wants to see from a film about a famous choreographer, not the encomiums of film stars.

Some of the most engaging films in the AGO series fell within the loose category of 'experimental' dance. Foremost among these were the films of Maya Deren, whose provocative works resound in the memory. Six of her short works were shown in the series, all of them 20 to 35 years old and all of them shot with minimal equipment (the technical equivalent of today's home movies). The results achieved are the impressive product of a brilliant imaginative mind and a unique sensitivity. Deren's films exert an eerie power and carry us into a surrealistic world—a world comparable perhaps with that of the Belgian painter Magritte, in which the mundane suddenly becomes strange, ambiguous and slightly threatening. Her films deal with a constellation of themes that are popular today: the difficulty of knowing others, or of knowing the world in any other than a subjective way; the estrangement of the

### SUMMER DANCE CAMP IN VERMONT



July 3

Aug. 27

BALLET

TAICHI JAZZ

- PUBLIC PERFORMANCES • NATURAL FOODS
- ORGANIC GARDEN • SMALL ENROLLMENT

CONTACT: DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS  
KEVIN ALEN DANCE THEATRE  
P.O. BOX 57 SNEADS FERRY N.C. 28460  
TEL: 919-328-0695

**A NEW AGE APPROACH TO DANCE**

## Judy Jarvis

### Spring Season • New Dances



Toronto Free Theatre • 26 Berkeley Street  
3 May to 7 May 1978 • 8:00 pm



individual from his surroundings and even from himself; and the pressures of society on the individual. *Mesher of the Afternoon* (1943) is not only a good example of Deren's thematic concerns, but also of the way she films movement, using slow motion and repetition to great effect. Within the framework of a woman's solitary afternoon in her apartment, Deren lays bare the disturbing world of psychological reality. Recurring images, such as a black-robed mysterious figure hurrying around a corner, or a mirror whose reflection is not the woman's face but a nun's headgear with a mirror for a face, are graphic representations of states of mind or being. They are inexplicable and yet they make sense somewhere on a deep level of being, and for this reason they leave a haunting impression.

One session in the film series, entitled *Experiments in Dance Ritual*, was described in the programme as: 'Five contemporary film documents by visual artists whose experiments with ritualized movements question traditional choreographic norms'. When these exercises are undertaken with a certain appreciation of the absurd, as in Joan Jonas' *Wind* (1968) and Robert Morris' hilarious and unusual human landscape comedy *Wisconsin* (1970), they are a treat indeed. But when this sense of humour is missing, as in Peter Dudar's interminable *Running in O and R* (1976), one is overwhelmed by the seeming pointlessness of the effort.

For those who attended the November screenings there was a surprise substitute. This was *Baroque Dance 1675-1715*, a new film directed by Allegra Fuller Snyder and never before seen in Canada. It clearly shows how ballet developed by stages from a social dance form, while at the same time it displays an unmistakable appreciation of this earlier form in itself. With its unobtrusive and effective didactic techniques, excellent dancers, and exquisite use of colour, the film was both instructive and enjoyable.

Toronto Dance Theatre gave the first of the live performances which formed a part of *Looking at Dance*. There were two striking things about 'An Evening with David Earle and Danny Grossman', the first being the high quality of production and the second, the programme's fragmentary nature. Consisting of frustratingly abbreviated excerpts from the Earle-Grossman repertoire, it was like a meal of *hors d'oeuvres* rather than a full course dinner, and was on the whole a rather dissatisfying evening which left the impression of great activity to little discernible purpose. The final item on the programme, a tango number taken from Peter Randazzo's new piece, *A Simple Melody*, was danced with evident conviction by Danny Grossman and David Earle. Its thin humour depended on the fact that it was danced by two men, and that these two particular men are such



Trisha Brown

prominent figures on the Canadian dance scene. 'In' jokes, however, make for bad dance. The company's dancers are magnificent, and its resident choreographers are capable of producing excellent work; yet taken out of context neither of these assets were revealed to advantage.

The most striking thing about the New York-based Sara Rudner Performance Ensemble was the choreographer's personal dynamism. Sara Rudner radiates energy, even in repose; and in movement her body and mind are totally, almost terrifyingly, concentrated. There was only one piece on the program, *As Is*, and it went on for an hour with no break. Although an abstract piece, danced in silence, *As Is* reverberated with meaning and emotion, and was full of movement ideas and choreographic explorations. The projection of energy was so intense that at the end the audience felt as drained as one would have expected the dancers to be. In fact, the dance stopped rather than ended, and the dancers looked a lot fresher than their appreciative but subdued audience.

The Trisha Brown Company, another American group, works both cooperatively and improvisationally. Programme notes indicated that a conceptual framework was constructed within which the group would then work together to create a coherent piece. In the first, *Locus*, a set of points on the floor and a number of movements are established as con-

stants, with choices of facing and placing being made in performance by the dancers. This harmony of individual contribution with group co-ordination was also discernible in *Line Up*. In one section of this dance, *Sticks*, each of the five dancers clasps a six-foot pole and tries to keep it touching end-to-end with the other poles, while everyone is moving! It was both intriguing and amusing to watch the antics of the dancers as they set about the difficult and self-imposed task of keeping the poles aligned. It was also reminiscent of children who designate a 'magic circle' from which it is forbidden to step, and then try to see how close they can come without actually stepping out. Like children, the dancers took their fiction seriously and enjoyed themselves thoroughly. So, needless to say, did the audience.

Charlotte Hildebrand's *Dance for a Gallery (with Augmented Audience and Diminished Lighting)* turned out to be a weak piece of work, with very little relation either to its title or to its stated theme. Nothing in the dance illuminated its key statement, which was enunciated several times by various characters: 'When I was a young girl, I was inspired by love. Now that I'm a woman, I'm tired out by love'. Unfortunately the action on stage wasn't original or convincing enough to be enjoyed simply as movement, so that the frail conception of the piece was even more glaringly apparent than it might otherwise have been. Hildebrand shared the evening with Le Groupe de la Place Royale, who could not help but look good by contrast. (Ed.'s note: Nanti Malam, the work performed, is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.)

The last performance of the series was by Missing Associates (Peter Dudar and Lily Eng). It conveyed the same lack of mental discipline displayed by Hildebrand. Works with titles like *Crash Points 2 (at the Berlin Wall)* and *Labour and Management* imply some kind of socio-political statement. Yet the connection between these pieces and any kind of social or political concern could not be found. A certain degree of self-indulgence in the arts can be tolerated, but, when it goes under the guise of social or political awareness, it's objectionable. *Crash Points 2* for instance, consisted of more film footage of Peter Dudar running around a room accompanied by a woman. The two of them ran halfway around the room, knocked over a stick which had been balanced on two sawhorses, ran the rest of the way around the room, jumped up and swung from a bar, then turned around and repeated the whole process. Why didn't Dudar just call his piece something descriptive, instead of trying to invest it with a significance it didn't have?

## Borders, Boundaries and Thresholds

University of Toronto  
19 and 20 November 1977

*Borders, Boundaries and Thresholds*, a dance/theatre piece written and directed by Eileen Thalenberg and choreographed by Linda Rabin, was performed in a gymnasium in the Benson Building of the University of Toronto. With a cast of fifty, it included dance, music, dramatic text, slides and a parade—a large scale theatrical extravaganza.

The piece was built on the narrative action of a Child (Roberta Mohler) making her journey through the events of life, although it was not presented from the point of view of the persona's subjective experiences, as traditional narrative, but rather from a more abstract perspective which employed the role as the thread binding the life scenes. Although we observed a protagonist developing in her passage through the scenes, the role was simply a focus for the theme of borders, boundaries and thresholds which Thalenberg defines as being 'those moments of transformation, moments between moments'.

The audience was equipped with a programme which provided it with a scenario of the action, amounting to a map through the uninterrupted representations and images before us. Its effect seemed similar to watching a play while reading the text; it made doubly sure you knew what was going on. I felt ambivalent about it. I liked the announcement of each section because it enhanced the pageantry of the piece but I resented the pointing finger guiding my way. The piece was a straightforward enactment of a specific and literal theme, so on one hand the programme was appropriate to the identity of the piece and on the other hand was an overstatement.

The first scene, which was present as the audience entered, was a frozen tableau of the Family seated at the dining table, while the Child was in bed at the opposite end of

the space. The piece progressed through child-like images in the pretty 'Dance of the Garden' and the fantasy antics in 'Circles' and was interrupted by the declaration of war with 'The Military', into the 'Seasons', each season represented in a terribly prosaic manner by such methods as puddle-hopping in spring and lingering too long in coquetry over bicycles in summer. The theme related very obviously to the passing of the seasons, but I wished they had not been described quite so literally.

The verbal meanderings of the Intellectual (Abraham Ioelfeld), whose script and actions were amusing as he pondered the 'Mid-Point' between sitting and standing, represented the intellectual rationalizations that lead only around themselves, acknowledge all possibilities and hinder action. The Child went through the 'Rite of Passage' of maturation and had her pig-tails cut off. A procession of 'Old Folks' foot-noted the reference to age. The no-longer Child danced Part I of her 'Dance of the Bundle', carrying her bundle of blankets containing her shorn pig-tails symbolizing the past which one always carries. 'The Parade of Stars' followed; it began with real-live Drum Majorettes (the Scarborough Elainettes) followed by Musicians and the stereotype heroes of our society; the Hockey Player, Beauty Queen, Queen and King, Rock Star, Politician and Prima Donna. In general, the piece hounded cliché past the interest level, but in the context of the parade these stereotypes took on some brilliance. Visual and theatrical richness, pageantry, density of action, these were aspects suggested by the piece but largely unrealized. In the manic parade they burst out.

The Intellectual was unmercifully snuffed out by some Keystone Cops who weren't too comical, and Part II and III of 'Dance of the Bundle' represented evasion and acceptance of one's history and self. The audiotape of the 'Border Stories' played with the meaning of borders by referring to geographical and political borders, and the piece climaxed with the

taped text 'Thresholds' which defined the theme and its philosophy. It caused the piece to end didactically.

Pedantry and clichés presented through obvious, descriptive methods overtook my perception of the piece—something one sees all too often in theatrical situations without the extensive scope and potential of *Borders, Boundaries and Thresholds*. The scope of the piece was monumental, I completely admire the undertaking and Thalenberg presented an event unique to my experience on that level. But I did not draw out an experience 'matching' that scope. That dissatisfaction was a specific result of the simplistic, often symbolic representation of a literal theme which I don't find interesting and the general tendency of the visuals and pageantry to fall far short of the possibilities they seemed to hold. For example, 'The Military' started with a bang when an ultraviolet light struck eight dancers in black with thick metal armbands and ominous goggles. However, the movement that took them forward from the back of the space was so banal and uninspired that it totally put out any spark of electricity which had been generated visually in the first seconds.

I found the choreography generally trite. Even the danciest parts, such as the 'Dance of the Bundle', characterized by soft movement pliantly turning in on itself into lunges from the hip and extensions, never gained much power and focus. Perhaps the difficulty lay in the choreography's capacity as description of the literal theme, a capacity which unnecessarily took the reins.

The music (under Casey Sokol), seemed to be based in descriptive quality also; however, it had more of a life of its own. The lighting, (under Jim Plaxton) effectively transformed the wonderful space into somewhere even more wonderful. The slides added to the multi-media sensory experience of the piece, but (with the admission that I didn't see them all) they didn't seem to extend past a simple description that was uni-directional with what was being theatrically expressed, a

## Dance, mime, composition, pedagogy and rhythm with Til Thiele.

Former master teacher and principal of the Mary Wigman School in Berlin.

Exciting Workshops and Classes with Guest Teachers

Spring Program – April 24 to June 24

Intensive Summer Course – July 4 to July 28

## Centre of Movement

171 Hampton Ave., Toronto. M4K 2Z3 466-9549

BALLET & THEATRICAL SUPPLIES  
ACCESSOIRES DE BALLET ET DE THÉÂTRE

**ROSSETTI**

ROSSETTI INC.  
1481 RUE MANSFIELD ST.  
MONTREAL, QUEBEC H3A 1Y4  
TEL: (514) 288-5978

relationship I found very limited.

Cries of plagiarism of Meredith Monk's *The Quarry* filled my ears after the performance. I've never seen Monk so I can't comment. Thalenberg is surprised because we saw *Quarry* (after her work was conceived and planned) and finds them totally different in theme and focus with only the superficial resemblance of a Child figure. She also comments that *Borders, Boundaries and Thresholds* was a very personal piece, not autobiographical, but very much based in her life. She encouraged the participants to explore their own work in the piece and to retain their individuality.

By the way, and almost needless to say, things being what they are, this large work went by completely unnoticed by Toronto's daily newspapers.

ELIZABETH CHITTY

## The National Tap Dance Company of Canada

Minkler Auditorium  
Seneca College Toronto  
2-3 December 1977

Tap dance has traditionally shuffled about the periphery of the more accepted theatrical dance genres, classical ballet and modern dance. Relegated to musical comedies and television variety shows, it has been an accessory rather than a focus of attention.

Elitists snub it and secretly tap their toes when hoofers start doing their thing. However, hypocrisy flew to the wind on December 1 when Canada's first National Tap Dance Company made its debut at Minkler Auditorium, Seneca College, just outside Toronto.

Tap triumphed there, emerging as a versatile and legitimate art form. The National Tap Dance Company of Canada, to give it its full title, is a spin-off from Toronto's popular Hooper's Club. It gave an ambitious, sometimes satirical and self-parodying performance, which demonstrated the eclectic quality of tap and presented some intriguing choreography by artistic directors Bill Orlovski and Steve Diamond.

*Tapestry*, the program opener, was an historical panorama of tap, sketched through a series of vignettes, beginning with a clog dance followed by a sampling of sand dance, step dance, buck dance and soft shoe. Though technical consistency among the six-member company was not always achieved — Vicky Harrison looked painfully stiff and nervous — the piece went smoothly along in key with the clear choreography. The mosaic created by *Tapestry* gave tap a context and frame of reference one rarely sees explored.

A comic and rousing number titled *Grandpa's Spells* illustrated tap's potential as a story-telling medium, coloured with



*Grandpa's Spells*

pathos, black humour and burlesque. Six old fogies, costumed farcically — the women with exaggerated and grotesque foam rubber bosoms and behinds, the men in ill-fitting suits — captured in well-characterized movement, the idiosyncrasies of old age. It was charming without being condescending.

Heaving breasts, swinging arms and feet that moved with speed and dexterity, made *Grandpa's Spells* the highlight of the evening.

Orlovski and Bonnie Monaghan strutted and jerked with the kind of show-business zeal and polish that emblemizes the best in hoofing tradition.

The other notable item in the show was *A Concert* in which the dancers became musical instruments. With screwdrivers they deftly tuned the taps on their shoes. Then, sitting in a straight row fronting the audience, they played their knees, heels and toes to the strains of Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No 3.

It was not lilting tap, or visual tap, but geometric, avant-garde sound-hoofing. Images collided as each of the six became individual instruments, playing in both harmony and disharmony, as the conductor/pianist directed this affectionate, symphonic spoof with stern eye and hand.

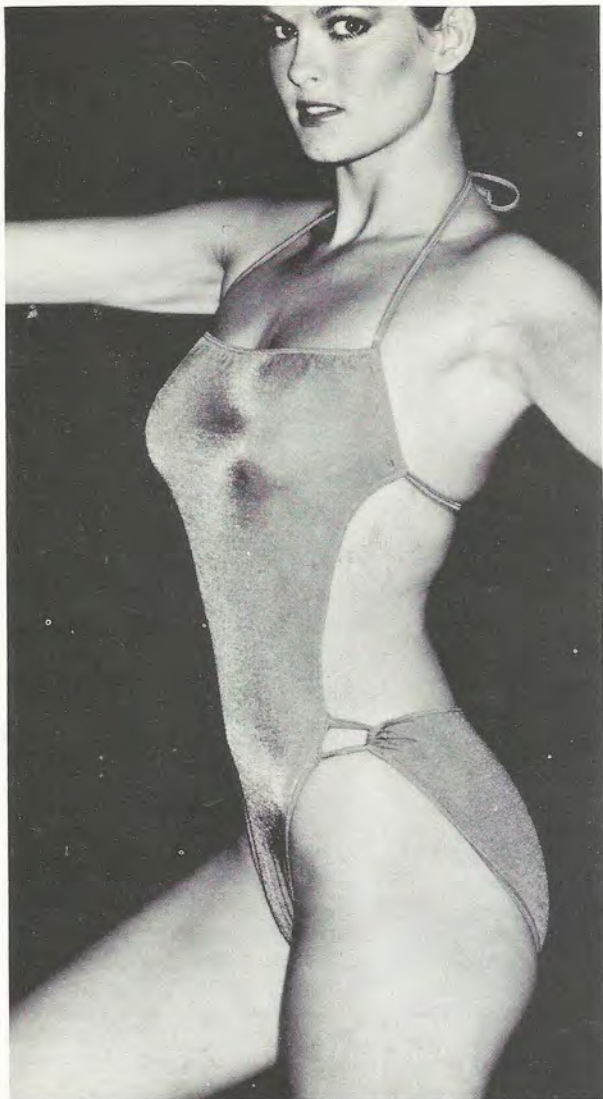
Orlovski and Diamond believe that tap is as vital as any other dance form and their company's appearance was a bid to prove the point. There were problems however. Avis Romm's accompaniment was not big or jazzy enough to match the intricate choreography, or sophisticated enough to complement the varying moods of the different pieces.

Yet, the dancing was strong. Despite

Vicky Harrison's initial discomfort, the other company members, Scott Smith, Glen Kotyk and Julie Fell, slipped from style to style with incredible ease and confidence. Smith was particularly smooth in his soft shoe and Fell's tango in *Grandpa's Spells* was unforgettable. Both these dancers have mastered the technique of tap and they can play it with both their bodies and faces.

In its debut performance, the National Tap Dance Company made news in this country and intends to keep on making it. New shows are now in the planning stages and although the first audience was small (I understand the following two nights were better), Orlovski and Diamond are enthusiastic, encouraged by the reception. They have brought tap to centre stage and are not about to let it be upstaged.

SANDRA NAIMAN



# cruise

Are you following the sun this year? If so do it in Danskin Swimwear from Malabar Theatre and Dance Shops. The new Freestyle fashions will dazzle any beach or resort area. These swimsuits are made of Milliskin for easy care and great looks. Come in and see our new lines of Danskin.

Alluringly styled swimsuit / leotard with built in versatility. The spaghetti straps can either be worn pulled back for the strapless look or around neck for halter look. This suit's super looks are accentuated by two spaghetti straps at the hips.

Colors: Azure, wine, red.  
Sizes: Small, medium, large.

31209  
\$23.00

Freestyle leotard / swimsuit with double criss cross spaghetti straps features high cut leg, V neckline, and low back. Elegant enough to wear with casuals or even evening skirt, yet versatile enough to swim in.

Colors: Marine, navy, bronze.  
Sizes: Small, medium, large.

31213  
\$23.00



## DANSKINS

# MALABAR

**theatre  
and  
dance  
shops**

Located at:  
375 Hargrave Ave. Wpg.  
993 McPhillips Ave. Wpg.  
3050 Portage Ave. Wpg.  
10520 Jasper Ave., Edm.  
7374 - 104th St. Edm.  
899A Fort William Rd. Thunder Bay  
505 Centre St. South West,  
Calgary

## Ballet Ys Choreographic Workshop

Rimmon Tav  
Elizabeth Chitty  
Toronto  
December 1977

The Toronto dance scene has one big problem: rhythm. Nothing happens at all; then everything happens at once. Last fall's Looking at Dance' series at the Art Gallery of Ontario provided six weeks rich in films and video, but of the handful of live performances, most featured companies from out of town, and one was a collection of cameos from Toronto Dance Theatre's familiar repertoire. The National Ballet's late November mini-season is becoming a tradition, but this one consisted mostly of classics—old and modern—and the biggest news was not a ballet but a dancer, bounding Peter Schaufuss. After several months of dance-drought, there always comes a week or ten days packed with performances of all conceivable descriptions in every possible place. To find out what's new in Toronto, one must wait patiently, then be ready to look fast and go out almost every night. Such was the case in the first week of December, when more than half a dozen groups showed new works around the city. Among them were Elizabeth Chitty, Rimmon, Tav and the Ballet Ys Choreographic Workshop.

If something had to be omitted from a busy schedule, hindsight strongly recommends the unfortunately-titled 'Nice N' Ysy' Choreographic Workshop presented at the Ballet Ys studio December 1 through 4. Of the 'Seven Ysy Pieces,' as they were also called, two were little more than amateur musical comedies. Jennifer van Papendorp's *Everybody Wants a Guru* had several clever movement sequences, and Diane Buxton managed a few cute touches in *The Grand Comedy of a Spirit and its Bodies*—for example a mystically revived ballerina running out of ethereal steam and bouréeing backwards on flat feet. As sustained narratives, however, neither was successful. In *Trillium*, Clare Whistler's unnecessary and insulting remake of Robbins' *Afternoon of a Faun* (set to Moe Kauffman rather than Claude Debussy), the two women appeared to be interested in practising only when the *danseur* was ignoring them. Also on the program were Eve Lenzner's Spanish epic *Solea, Reveille* by Jeanette Zing, and Nomi Cohen's *Pipe Dreaming*. The most pleasing of the seven was *The Trilogy Suite*, performed by Waterloo's Dance Plus Four, and choreographed by one of their number, Gaby Miceli. So what if it was obviously Ailey-inspired, from the generously sweeping limbs to the straw bonnets and Odetta's blues? It, at least, was nice and easy to watch.

At the Unlimited Space from December

1 through 4, Kyra Lober and Bob Becker, who work together under the name Tav, provided a more rewarding evening, a call to the ear, eye and mind. Becker performed two solos, including *Cymbal*, a continuous crescendo roll on a pair of Turkish cymbals. The overtones grew in density and filled the space as surely as the burning incense, until at last the swell dissolved into silence, leaving the perfumed air to vibrate for moments after. *Astral Light*, an unstructured improvisation involving both dancer and musician, is often included in Tav's programs, but a new quality emerged this time. The interplay of music and dance was subtle as always: sometimes Lober seemed actually to engender the sounds in her movement, and at other times appeared to soar on the music, supported by it. In addition, there was a new openness to the audience, a willingness to smile at them, a touch of warmth. When the time seemed right she stopped still, and sitting on the floor, waited a long moment for lights and music to subside, all the while acknowledging the audience with her wide brown eyes, and at last smiling playfully. Her openness reflected the evening's first work, *Now*, in which Lober had explored the possibilities in the Gestalt exercise 'Now I am aware....' The performance ended with *Chimaera*, a ritual in which five dancers spun through the space, occasionally pausing to form brief centres of stillness. It was created for and performed by Dancemakers.

A third contributor to that busy weekend of dance was Elizabeth Chitty, whose *Extreme Skin* and *True Bond Stories* were presented at A Space. In *Extreme Skin* about twenty people carried a number of activities to their logical or necessary conclusions. Here were all the supposed elements of literal dance, such as real time (dancers jumped up and down and held back-bends till they dropped from sheer exhaustion) and real force (they hurled themselves against walls, dragged each other across the floor and climbed onto one another's backs). The result was not the boring pretence that literalism often is, but real entertainment, exciting precisely because everything was real. Chitty's solo *True Bond Stories* seemed contrived in comparison. While engaged in various self-destructive pursuits, such as leaning on a pillar and sliding down until she cracked her chin or pelvis on the floor, doing stretching exercises in tight satin toreador pants and stiletto heels, or slipping around on a frictionless surface of baby oil, Chitty talked about her past, and reading from her journal, gave accounts of failed bonds—broken friendships, her own dissolved marriage and those of friends. *Extreme Skin* was pure kinesthetic delight. *True Bond Stories* was masochistic self-revelation and an imposition on the audience.

Rimmon, a company of three choreographers and one composer, appeared at 15

## The Royal Academy of Dancing/Canada

offers an  
intensive course  
for teachers on the

## children's examinations syllabus

by  
hazel durant

member of the RAD  
Professional Committee  
children's examiner UK

Toronto  
June 26–30 1978

Vancouver  
July 3–7 1978

Edmonton  
July 10–14 1978

the course is also intended  
for teachers who are not  
familiar with this syllabus

for further information and  
registration form write early  
to The Secretary  
The Royal Academy of Dancing  
209/3050 Yonge Street  
Toronto, Ontario M4N 2K4  
416-489-2813

registration will be limited

Dance Laboratorium the following weekend, December 8, 9 and 10. Two of the four works were choreographed by Margaret Atkinson. In her solo *Horse*, Atkinson trotted around the stage, breathing loudly in rhythm with her gait, golden hair flying. In *Evening Dance* she and fellow company members Melodie Bengier and Sallie Lyons were joined by Lidia Kotarski and Randy Glynn, and together they filled Fifteen's small space with the joy of moving to Keith Jarrett's music. The performing area at Fifteen is small and intimate, and dancers tend to react by pulling in toward the centre. Rinmon, however, expanded to fill the space, resulting in a sense of compressed energy and intensified motion. This was also true in the Sallie Lyons/Murray Geddes collaboration *Real Suite*, a trilogy composed of *Waiting*, *Pardon*, and *Killing Time*. Four dancers, sitting around the stage and obviously waiting, began to twitch restlessly, eventually scraping and overturning their chairs. Finally, in *Pardon*, the dancers mounted them to recite personal information as Lyons and Geddes tried vainly to communicate across the bedlam. When Lyons was at last alone on stage, she began killing time, manoeuvring on her overturned chair as if it—and she—were upright, and propelling herself across the floor in pursuit of her cigarette. The fourth work was *Dialogue*, a collage of past choreography, accompanied by a spoken treatise on the company's most essential 'commodity', space. The evening left the audience eager and curious to see more of this refreshing company. It also signalled the end of one of Toronto's dance deluges and gave everyone a few days to rest before—God bless it—another *Nutcracker*.

MARY FRAKER

## Dance Works

Labour Temple

Regina

27-31 December 1977

With *Goose*, an hour-long production blending dance, song and mime, Regina Modern Dance Works has moved firmly into the realm of dance theatre. A mischievous blend of straightforward tradition and contemporary satire, *Goose* was created co-operatively. All the dancers contributed to the choreography while both script and score were the work of Susan Jane Arnold, Marg Elwood and Dumprucks, the Saskatoon bluegrass group who wrote the music for *Cruel Tears*. Anne Hardcastle was the show's dramatic director.

*Goose* is a well-shaped entertainment, a solidly packed mixture of music and movement. From the first appearance of the Dumprucks, dressed in bright motley of medieval troubadours, the show moves

quickly and surely through its many changes of pace and costume. Like the Dumprucks, the dancers enter in the guise of travelling entertainers. Tumbling, leaping, singing and shouting, they convey a full-bodied gusto that permeates the production.

*Goose's* theme is less complex than its construction. It begins with a simple rendering of Mother Goose nursery rhymes, set to music and described with dance. Then, with a reminder that these seemingly innocuous children's rhymes often originated as political commentary, it is followed by a sampling of rhymes based on current social political issues.

Along the way there's some sprightly and well-constructed dancing, a bit of verbal audience participation and a charming, genuinely funny performance by Maria Formolo encased in an incredible silvery Twinkle Twinkle Little Star costume.

The costumes for *Goose* really deserve a review of their own. Designed by Susan Jane Arnold, they are both attractive and cunningly devised. Costume changes go on throughout the show, right before your eyes. But it all happens so neatly and swiftly that one can only regard the costume changes as part of the choreography. There is, of course, a Mother Goose costume, a complicated affair of full skirts, petticoats and ruffles. But it, too, is designed for split-second changing and part of the fun of this show is that everybody gets a crack at being Mother Goose. I particularly liked Allan Risdill in this role; he's an excellent actor as well as a nimble dancer.

I do have a couple of minor criticisms. The first dance number, following the entrance of the company as troubadours, was just a bit too long; it took the edge off that opening burst of activity. And the contemporary rhymes didn't come off as clearly as the old ones. I find I can't remember what was actually said about mounties, pipelines, etc.

*Goose* was designed to entertain people of all ages—and it works. Children enjoy the familiar rhymes, adults get an added kick from the contemporary material and everybody is pleased by the costumes and dance. Dance Works previewed the show at schools in Moose Jaw and Regina during two weeks of workshops early in December. From December 27 to 31, matinée and evening performances were presented in the company's Regina studio.

A word must be said for the way Dance Works has transformed its premises. The group is housed in Regina's old Labor Temple, a venerable building on the seedy edge of downtown. The main studio was the former auditorium, a great, bare barracks of a room. At performances audiences were seated on a random collection of hard chairs, the light from the ceiling fixtures tended to lose itself on the way down and music seemed to ricochet off the

walls, which made for some pretty strange distortions of sound.

Ingenuity, hard work and that all-important commodity—money—have transformed the place. The company has purchased upholstered chairs which, placed on rising platforms, offer not only a better view but a more comfortable one.

Between public performances, seats and platforms can be removed, leaving the studio clear for work. The whole place has been panelled and painted and, for *Goose*, a 'stage' was created with a design painted on the floor. There was also good theatrical lighting and the sound system has been improved immensely. In all, Dance Works has acquired a fittingly professional setting for its activities.

LORA BURKE

## Les Grands Ballets Canadiens

Place des Arts

Montreal

November 1977

In mid-November Les Grands Ballets Canadiens appeared in Montreal for the first time since their frenetically successful South American tour the previous spring. It was hard to believe that this was the company that had had scalpers charging a hundred dollars a ticket in Rio. And in effect it was not; fully one fifth of the dancers were new. This made for a corps whose ultimate aim was merely to get the steps right but as for dance per se, it eluded them.

That in itself only partially accounts for one of the worst showings in the company's history. Sandwiched between Balanchine's stately *Themes and Variations* and Lichine's frothy *Graduation Ball*, Montrealers were given their first glimpse of Fernand Nault's brand new *La Scouine*. It was the culprit.

You will not find 'scouine' in the dictionary but it translates roughly as 'a weird crone', 'a nasty piece of business'. *La Scouine* the book, is an underground classic by Albert Laberge, who had been sports editor of the Montreal newspaper, *La Presse*, in the 30's. He wrote thirteen books, all of which had had to be published privately and all of which sank without a trace until, in 1963, with the coming of the new Québécois consciousness, Albert Laberge suddenly surfaced as 'a great naturaliste writer', Quebec's answer to Zola and Maupassant. Finally, in 1972, a decade after the author's death, the book was published commercially and, in time, came to Fernand Nault's attention.

Like the heroine of Ann Ditchburn's *Mad Shadows*, *La Scouine's* central character is also a bizarre female misfit. This one is a malicious rural gossip whose

Doré in *La Scouine*

community eventually casts her out.

Mr Nault's work has kept to the main episodes of the book but even frequent reference to the programme notes fails to clarify the story line if one has rashly gone to the ballet without first having done one's literary homework. Of course births, deaths and weddings are recognizable but a stage bathed in red light does not necessarily imply the onset of sunstroke nor explain what it has to do with the development of the plot (sic).

To be charitable, part of the problem is that calling *La Scouine* a ballet calls forth the wrong set of expectations. It is a misnomer. It might pass as a musical, a cross between *Rodeo* and *Fall River Legend*, but for its wholly unsympathetic heroine, its uneasy graft of folksy Québécois dance steps onto a pseudo-pop electronic score; its highly stylized but unattractive haute couture costumes which owe as much to the English Middle Ages as they do to 19th century Quebec and, worst of all, its complete lack of artistic raison d'être.

It was Rainer Maria Rilke who observed that nobody should presume to create when he is not stoked by inner fires. *La Scouine* reflects no turmoil of the soul, merely a workmanlike deployment of tropes and an anxiety to keep the provincial grants flowing.

Mr. Nault is fully aware of his respon-

sibilities as a resident choreographer: in *La Scouine* he keeps everyone constantly on the go. I recall with pleasure one sprightly square dance sequence but I found the solos unattractive, I was irritated by the heavy-handed symbolism and I searched in vain for a unifying, identifiable personal style. What is a choreographer after all without his own unique dance vocabulary? Some of *La Scouine* is recognizably Nault, most notably in a brief allusion to his Roast Swan scene from *Carmina Burana*. If he is so short on invention that he has to borrow, it is too bad he could not have picked someone more inventive to borrow from.

There are wider ramifications to this than simply another non-event. Les Grands Ballets is Canada's third most important dance company, Montreal's own. As such, it sets the standard of expectations for this community. On opening night there were cheers and a standing ovation. But then, how is this audience, weaned on Nault's Tommy, expected to know better? Les Grands Ballets' policy of creeping parochialism may help to sell tickets but it will never build a discerning public.

KATI VITA  
(Originally heard on CBC-FM, The Dance last November.)

## Danny Williams Grossman and Dance Company

Dance Umbrella  
Entermedia Theatre  
New York  
16-20 November 1977

Danny Williams Grossman came home in November. Actually, he'd performed in New York on two previous occasions, but his company's three November performances were part of the prestigious Dance Umbrella series, and it meant that the New York dance establishment was treating him with considerable deference. His was the first non-New York (and non-American) company to appear on the series.

Grossman was a dancer in Paul Taylor's company for a decade before moving to Toronto in 1973, and the New Yorkers, who remember, turned out in large numbers to see what he had accomplished as a choreographer. The audience was warm, eager to applaud. The critical establishment was there, but, except for *Dance Magazine*, which covers everyone, only two reviews appeared. Don McDonagh's short, noncommittal notice ran in only one edition of the *New York Times*. Jean Nuchtern, for the *Soho Weekly News* wrote: 'Grossman's mind is thick with poetic images even if at times his choreographic intentions are blurred.... As a dancer, Grossman hasn't lost either his pyrotechnical or dramatic abilities....' She went on to note that no one in his company can match his performance abilities.

I agree. The company is young — it was founded in 1974 — and it looks it. Grossman's dancers aren't good enough by New York standards to be considered a first-rate company. Neither does his choreography yet seem more than mediocre. He strikes me as a choreographer who has talent and who is still developing.

The company brought six dances to New York, three which might be considered dramatic and three abstract. *Curious Schools of Theatrical Dancing: Part I* is a solo for Grossman, set to Couperin's Rococo music. It looks as if it might have been inspired by Lambranzi's 1716 dance manual, which bears a similar title. The piece is an assemblage of images from the early 18th century. Beggars, clowns, court jesters, Pierrot characters, and dancers seem to populate the work, refracted through Grossman's intriguingly introspective mood. *Tryptych* seemed a mood piece concerned with angst, but the details of who the three performers represented escaped me. I think I saw images of a middle European ghetto, but am not at all sure. It's a very spare, rather minimal, but intense piece. *Ecce Homo* is a meditation on religious paintings and sculptures with often arresting imagery.

The three abstract dances interested me



Higher

more. *Couples* is a group work for twelve dancers (that's a lot of dancers for a modern dance company in New York). It's set to Terry Riley's pulse music and sets small steps, gestures and level changes to the steady beat. Everything is very held back, and held in, as if any largesse would mean missing a beat, and consequently the dancers looked like little wind-up toys chugging steadily along. *Higher* is a duet about everyday movement organized around balancing on or finding ways of fitting bodies into chairs and a step ladder. Grossman is daring and Judith Hendin plays at being daft rather nicely. The work begins and ends with the song, 'Let's Go Get Stoned', as if the peculiarities of the dance had everything to do with being high and nothing with unusual movement exploration. The frivolities in the dance seem to me more excessive than necessary, but I realize that's because I'm used to the New York avant-garde, which tends to be much more sober and 'serious.' Twyla Tharp once said the ambience of up-tightness surrounding the New York avant-garde is a bore. I'd bet Grossman would agree.

*National Spirit* is a group work which is built around variations on marching and has the kinds of energy one associates with parades, cheerleaders and football half-time shows. It's accompanied by a variety of patriotic marches and the American national anthem. The piece is more than irreverent: it mocks patriotism and its symbols. I found it an affront, not because it puts down patriotism, but because it provides no rationale for the put-down. The last decade of social injustice and immoral warfare caused many Americans

to examine the mindless patriotism of middle America. Grossman has taken a point of view arrived at agonizingly by many Americans and made it fashionable and superficial. I believe there are some things one simply can't make fun of just for the sake of making fun.

Grossman's movement style is, thus far, rather limited. But there's a good deal about his work which makes me think he's still developing, still exploring. One of the elements I find disconcerting is his tendency to use turn-in, with one knee bent over the other, as if the dancer were either ashamedly trying to hide his (or her) genitals, or else, like a young child, were responding to a strong need to urinate. It's a position Grossman has inherited from Paul Taylor, but Taylor uses it very sparingly, and often for specific dramatic reasons. Similarly, splayed legs, a more-than-usual tendency to face upstage, away from the audience, and a general dead-pan quality affects much of Grossman's work. The effect is off-beat, unusual, sometimes humorous. But Grossman's movement concerns often strike me as too idiosyncratic to provide the basis for a developed movement style.

ROBERT J. PIERCE

(Robert Pierce is a dance critic for the Soho Weekly News.)

## Le Groupe de la Place Royale

Roundabout Theatre  
New York

14-17 December 1977

The first intriguing thing about Le Groupe de la Place Royale was that they didn't look like any American dance company, and the second thing was their virtuosic handling of vocal and instrumental sound. The group has neither the sensuous, compulsive physicality of post-Graham/Limon-neo-balletic modern dance, nor the plotless, characterless rigor of the minimalists. Their work is clearly serious, but it's neither dramatic nor didactic. After seeing both programs I decided they were doing some latter-day dance equivalent of theater of the absurd.

The work is built in nonlinear fashion, each dance consisting of a series of unrelated episodes that flow into one another easily. Nothing makes any particular sense, so anything can follow anything. These episodes vary in intensity within a moderate range — nothing ever gets really rough or excited or fast — and they make no cumulative shape over the length of the piece. The seven dancers always treat each other in the same friendly, noncommittal manner and all of them appear, with equal importance, in all the dances. None of the compositional

devices that ordinarily distinguish one event in a dance from another are employed with any conviction or intricacy.

While all this visual monotone is going on, thick, colorful sounds fill up the space. In *Nanti Malam*, a one-hour piece choreographed by company co-director Jean-Pierre Perreault and composed by Claude Vivier, the dancers provide their own accompaniment by producing avalanches of vocal and sub-vocal tones. The dancers are expert vocalizers. They can enunciate, focus and project sounds as clearly as trained singers. The score calls for all kinds of effects — controlled and manipulated breathing, laughing, tonguing, shouting, and chanting in made-up or foreign languages.

The sounds are brilliantly orchestrated by means of unconventional harmonics such as having two people sighing on different pitches, and counterpoint created by mixing various types of sound — piercing yips and throat gurgles may spatter across a low drone, or everyone, all together, may sing their own version of the same phrase. The sound is further enriched by the positions of the dancers as they move around; often you can't see where a sound is coming from and often its texture changes as people pass by and retreat. Sometimes the ensemble breaks into a more conventional arrangement, and some of the dancers go upstage to sing and play on three small gamelan-like xylophones while the others dance.

The music is similar compositionally to the dance, in that it doesn't seem to have any dramatic continuity, and it doesn't develop any complex rhythmic or thematic ideas. But soon a terrific discrepancy became apparent to me, between what the performers were doing aurally and what they were doing in movement. Though the sound was full of dynamic contrast, and demanded great skill both in production and in choral sensitivity, the movement represented a rather small range of complexity and dynamics. It almost seemed as though two different groups of people were present, those who got themselves all worked up and made the busy, excitable geysers of sound, and those who glided inexorably, impassively from one pose to another, or walked from place to place ignoring the sound's provocations.

The group's movement language depended heavily on large or frenetic gestures of the arms and heads, long balances on one foot while the other limbs made wavy patterns in the air, and on many variations of athletic and everyday movement patterns. I wondered if this was merely a result of the dancers having to concentrate on their music-making, or if they'd made a conscious stylistic decision to keep the dances so kinetically limited. For some reason — either because the contrast was so great or the intention was so abstract — the dance never made that



generous crossover from the long, slow world of its own vocabulary into the swirling world of metaphor.

*Nesti Malam* was given alone on one program. On the second, *Love Songs*, choreographed by the company's other director, Peter Boneham, also had a score by Vivier, this one made largely of verbal sounds, phrases from nursery rhymes and other non-sequiturs. In *Les Nouveaux Espaces*, by Boneham and Perreault, composer Vincent Dionne played an onstage orchestra of drums, gongs and xylophones, with only a few verbal and percussion contributions from the dancers. The music was of the repetitive, additive type associated with Steve Reich, but again the primary purpose seemed to be to build up a structure detailed and richly-hued enough to sustain a certain amount of dancing before it drained away.

Both the other dances were much like the first I saw. *Love Songs* featured various slow, controlled embracings and partnerships – but not much else to remind us of what the program termed 'facets of love', except the occasional word Tristan or words rising up out of the sonic depths. *Les Nouveaux Espaces* was kind of circusy. The dancers did a little more overt stunt-making, and some of them strained and clamped at unaccountable times from three harnesses fastened by elastics to pieces in the wings.

MARCIA B. SIEGEL

*Marcia Siegel is the author of At the Vanishing Point and Watching the Dance Go By. She writes for the Hudson Review and the Soho Weekly News, from which this article is reprinted, with permission. Her appointment as Dance Critic of New York magazine was announced in January.*

## The Marchowsky Company

Leah Posluns Theatre  
Toronto

9-19 November 1977

It was a long wait between the debut of the Marchowsky Company at Seneca College, in the fall of 1976, and the company's second appearance, in its first full-scale season, at Toronto's new Leah Posluns Theatre last November.

The reputation of this young company rests mainly on the teaching ability of Marie Marchowsky, and indeed her dancers are outstandingly well trained. They are clearly capable of a great deal. If anything, their technical excellence is too great for the material they are given; in particular, performers such as Kim Puil are capable of interpreting major roles. Yet this young dancer, who has a commanding stage presence, was never used as more than a member of the general group. The



Marie Marchowsky

responsibility for this must lie with Miss Marchowsky.

Marchowsky, the founder and guiding spirit as well as teacher of the company, relies exclusively on Marchowsky the choreographer, and as a choreographer her talent is too limited for such a burden. Her dramatic pieces are overdone and too literal. This is the main problem with *Mirror of Obsession*, a dance on the theme of mother-daughter conflict. One of the new pieces on the programme, *Essay on Pigs*, set to a fascinating German expressionist score by Hans Werner Henze, worked as well as it did because Marchowsky's heavy literalism was tempered by a good sense of pattern and placing, enforced by the effective use of props, costumes, and lighting. Marchowsky's lighter pieces are contrived and exaggerated. It takes more than giving a woman dancer pigtailed, getting her to smile coyly, stick out her rear end and mince little-girl steps, to convince the audience that it is seeing a child at play.

There is no reason why the company should be afraid to include works by other choreographers. Indeed, the company might be strengthened by the experience of a more varied repertoire. Certainly the thought repeatedly crossed one's mind as Marchowsky's belaboured images numbed the senses. The company's dancing has improved tremendously. They should be performing much more. Their collective power as an ensemble, and as individual dancers, is formidable. Given the vehicles to exploit these talents, the Marchowsky Company could become a major Graham-modern Canadian company of international calibre. But if the repertoire continues to consist only of Marchowsky's own work, and if the company also continues to spend long periods in rehearsal instead of touring and performing, the strength it now holds in reserve may slowly atrophy. That would be sad.

MARY JOHNSTON

# The Dance Shop

VANCOUVER, B.C.  
926 West Broadway  
Tel: 604-733-6116

CALGARY, Alberta  
2800 Haddon Road S.W.  
Tel: 403-255-4767

Dance wear and theatrical supplies



CAPEZIO

Dancing Since 1887

## Rina Singha— A Recital of Kathak Dances

15 Dance Laboratorium  
24-26 November 1977

To our good fortune Canada is the recipient of many multi-cultural talents now living here. The fabric of our own indigenous growth can only be enriched by the intelligent preservation and appreciation of folk and classical arts from the distant lands of our heritage. The cause of social harmony is better served by a cultural mosaic than by assimilation. Indian dancers Rina Singha and Menaka Thakkar, now resident in Toronto, contribute significantly to this mosaic. Menaka Thakkar has had much success as a brilliant exponent of Bharatnatyam and Odissi dance styles from the eastern and southern districts of India. Rina Singha brings a knowledge of Kathak dance from India's northern regions. The two artists are complementary and in their own styles equally excellent.

Rina Singha is dancer, scholar, teacher and therapist. She graduated from the principal Academy for Classical Dance and Music in India. She went on to gain a degree in geography and later became associated with the famous company of Ram Gopal in London. Since coming to Canada she has lectured, taught and worked with handicapped children but she has danced all too seldom. On the rare occasions that she gives a concert we glimpse the subtlety, grace, knowledge and power required of all fine dancers.

The entire concert was dedicated to the memory of her teacher Guru Shambhu Maharajji. The first part remained within the ritual and storytelling conventions of this classical form. A prayer to the Goddess of Learning, an offering of flowers, the telling of a short story of classical mythology and an exposition of Talas, movement phrases executed within strictly defined rhythms, convinced us of Rina Singha's high competence. The second half of the programme introduced us to original choreography. Without departing from the integrity of her training she indicated how the vocabulary can be used outside ritual and storytelling. This potential was particularly demonstrated in *Moghul Miniature*, the final solo depicting the symmetry, balance and poetic symbolism of Moghul art. It becomes evident that classical Indian dance has the same potential for abstract and expressive communication as classical ballet.

The dances were intelligently introduced by the voice-over of Jon Higgins, professor of Indian Music at York University. Technical demands were more complex than time and the space could quite handle. However despite some flaws one had to be impressed by the over-all professionalism of the concert and the loveliness of the dancing.

In the intimacy of 15 Dance Lab Rina Singha had only to twist a finger, lower her eyes or raise a toe to captivate her audience. And when she raised her eyes that became more important than anything in the room. She well understands the power of a glance and uses her eyes warmly, candidly and unshamedly. One remembers clearly the sensuality of her movements, yet there was no apparent attempt to be other than modestly virginal. By concentration she was transformed within the dance to a state of beauty and sure grace. Only at the end of each dance were we liked her all the more for it.

GRANT STRATE

## The Royal Ballet

Royal Opera House  
Covent Garden  
October 1977

The Royal Ballet's new *Sleeping Beauty*, given its premiere 14 October 1977 at the Royal Opera House in London, is not really new at all—except in David Walker's high baroque designs—nor very interesting, except perhaps as an historical footnote. It claims to go back to the 'grass-roots production' of 1946 which marked the Royal Ballet's installations as a permanent fixture at the Opera House. This production was, in fact, based on *The Sleeping Beauty* which Nicholas Sergueyev, once principal régisseur for the Maryinsky Theatre, had set on the Royal in 1939. If anyone's version can be said to be authentic or 'grass-roots', it must be Sergueyev's as his was mounted using the Stepanov notation of the original Petipa choreography; and yet, in 1946, Ninette de Valois (with Frederick Ashton's collaboration) saw fit to make a few changes in the Sergueyev production, notably a new garland dance by Ashton and de Valois' 'Three Ivans' sequence added to the wedding *divertissement*.

The current 'grass-roots' *Beauty* also contains several post-1946 additions, however, gleaned mostly from the 1968 and 1973 productions which shone briefly in the Royal's repertoire. These include Ashton's variation for Florimund in Act II, the so-called 'Awakening' pas de deux—also by Ashton—and Kenneth Macmillan's choreography for 'Hop o' my Thumb' (Act III). There are also two variations which date from a much earlier production, Diaghilev's *The Sleeping Princess* of 1921—specifically, the 'Finger' Fairy's variation, choreography by Nijinska, and Feodor Lopokov's prologue variation for the Lilac Fairy.

Academically interesting as this patchwork-quilt effect is, it doesn't always work visually. Ashton's 'Awakening' pas de deux, for example, seems slightly incongruous in this 'new' version, coming as it does immediately on the heels of the

spell-chasing kiss without even a pause to give the Princess a chance to acknowledge her parents; the stage simply empties and the duet begins. Its restraint and what I can only describe as a French elegance, qualities Ashton stamps like sealing-wax on many of his pas de deux (notably in *Les Deux Pigeons*, *Marguerite and Armand*, and even *The Dream*), seem at odds with the Tsarist opulence of the rest of the production.

Also at odds with the ballet's concern for authenticity is the very modern interpretation of Carabosse who is not played as an ugly harridan by a man *en travesti*, but as a glamorous, if bitchy, young woman by a ballerina. Although the Diaghilev version of 1921 featured a woman in the role, I don't think anyone was quite prepared for Lynn Seymour's beautiful, neurotic, and vengeful Carabosse who, dismounting from her chariot in a spoiled rage, looked more like an *art nouveau* caricature of the Goddess of Discord than a figment of the Imperial Russian balletic imagination. In fact, Seymour gave the production much of its life. Her sudden entrances and departures were like flashes of electricity.

Of course, one can't discount the different strengths of Anthony Dowell or David Wall as Florimund or the transcendent musicality of a ballerina like Merle Park in the role of Aurora: they, too, offered moments of genuine pleasure. All their efforts, however, are best appreciated individually, apart from their surroundings. As is so often the case with revivals of the classics and revivals of revivals, which aim to be more authentic than their predecessors, the *raison d'être* for a ballet like *Sleeping Beauty* gets lost amid the drapery. Its powers to enchant are stifled; its opportunities to show off a particular dancer's line or another's ease in *allegro* are minimized—all because the encrustations of history are deemed worthier of attention.

Also, with each idiosyncratic 'grass-roots' staging of a classic, producers—in this *Beauty's* case, Ninette de Valois—neglect to keep strict enough watch on their designers. Although David Walker's designs are not nearly as oppressive or murderously heavy as Nicholas Georgiadis' for Nureyev's *Sleeping Beauty*, they are too rich and cumbersome for dancing. In attempting to mirror the glories of the Tsarist court ballet, Walker's sets and costumes end up numbing the eye so that it cannot look at anything without squinting. They also fatefully proclaim what *The Sleeping Beauty* seems destined to be in our time: a sequined dumb show or pageant play more suitable for a Queen's wake than the ballet stage. I think it's called regression.

GRAHAM JACKSON

## The City Center Joffrey Ballet

New York

October and November 1977

Just why New York City has such an exhilarating effect on all the multitude of dance companies which perform there is probably beyond exact definition. Of course, it's a city of dance addicts — which makes for large, generally sympathetic audiences — and the whole environment is fast-paced, brash and highly energized. Whatever it is, dance companies look their best in the Big Apple.

So, not surprisingly, the Joffrey Ballet's fall season, following on a lacklustre spell in August, at Artpark, upstate New York, was charged with excitement and fine dancing. It was a transformed company.

Following custom, popular mixed programmes drawn from the Joffrey's wide-ranging repertoire were offered to please an audience weaned on the problematic blend of Broadway pizzazz and sophisticated dance art that is the company's hallmark.

The season had two major highlights. One was the unexpected and marvellous appearance of Anthony Dowell to dance in the performances of Ashton's *The Dream*. The other was the advent of a full-evening

ballet in the Joffrey's repertoire, Oscar Araiz' miserable and outrageous *Romeo and Juliet*.

Dowell was replacing the company's leading male classicist, Kevin McKenzie. Since McKenzie is apparently the only Joffrey dancer capable of performing the technically rigorous role of Oberon, his last-minute injury threw the company into a mad scramble to find a replacement. Unexpectedly, Anthony Dowell, of the Royal Ballet, himself only just back to performing after a year-long injury, agreed to come. Then New York began its mad scramble — for tickets.

As an artist, Dowell combines in a strange but perceptible way the soft lyricism of a ballerina with all the bravura, strength and virtuosity of the finest male dancer. These elements suit perfectly both the technical and dramatic demands of Oberon in *The Dream*. Not surprisingly, it is Dowell's best role. He has grown as an artist and as a personality. There is a warmth and generosity in his dancing, the absence of which was, at one time, the favourite reservation of every critic confronted with the need to write about an otherwise high perfect dancer. The line, the musicality, the partnering (with Denise Jackson), the subtle, intelligent points of acting, made Dowell's appearance with the Joffrey one of those rare moments in ballet

when one can surrender totally and unabashedly to its expressive power. No wonder Clive Barnes, Nancy Goldner and Marcia Siegel, hard-nosed, business-like critics, who usually dash out on the last bar of music, stayed to watch the succession of calls which brought Dowell back to accept the ovation of an almost hysterically enthusiastic audience.

And what of Araiz' *Romeo and Juliet*? Though new to the Joffrey, it was originally made in 1970 for the Argentinian choreographer's own company in Buenos Aires. One can admire Robert Joffrey's decision to take a new direction into full-length work — and feel only sadness that he got a lemon.

Three Juliets, virtually no sets, bizarre, incomprehensible costumes, heavy symbolism, steps which looked interesting but said little — all this on top of the mangled murdering of the Prokofiev score by an undisciplined orchestra — made Araiz' *Romeo and Juliet* a sad contradiction of the choreographic inspiration evident in a number of Araiz' other works.

Perhaps fortunately, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, with a large stock of Araiz ballets, had to postpone its scheduled late-fall visit to New York, or else it might have encountered audiences and critics dangerously wary of any more South American lemons.

## THE BEST IN DANCE GIFTS

DANCE TODAY  
IN CANADA



by Andrew Oxenham with Michael Crabb

DANCE TODAY  
IN CANADA  
by Andrew Oxenham  
with Michael Crabb

228 pp., illustrated  
12 X 12

\$34.95 cloth

- \* large format photographic book by dancer/photographer Andrew Oxenham with text by international dance critic Michael Crabb
- \* 168 magnificent full-size dance photographs
- \* 19 dance companies show the diversity of 'dance today in Canada'
- \* historical and reference material on Canadian dance companies

SAVE SHIPPING CHARGES ON MAIL ORDER  
BY USING THIS ADVERTISEMENT . . .

available from



**Simon & Pierre**

P.O. Box 280 Adelaide St. Pstl. Str., Toronto M5C 2J4

## INTENSIVE SUMMER DANCE SCHOOL IN OTTAWA

daytime and evening classes  
modern dance  
ballet for modern dancers  
composition  
improvisation

all fulltime students will  
participate in public  
performances and  
choreographic events

JULY 17-AUGUST 11, 1978

**Le Groupe de  
la Place Royale**

130 Sparks Street,  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1P 5B6  
(613) 235-1492



Yet, Araiz' odd and muddled conception of *Romeo and Juliet* — one assumes he had one — had its moments. The idea of distilling the drama to draw out and amplify its emotional significance was a worthy one. Occasionally, the images had an arresting power. When the dancers finally take off the top layers of costume and hold them up to the audience, it's as if all the shallowness of our everyday lives, and the viciousness it engenders, have come back to haunt us. Yet the spiritual implications here and elsewhere, are lost in what too frequently seems to be an exercise in sensation and in being different for its own sake. And who takes the responsibility for poor Romeo's wrecked back when he has finished dragging his three Juliets to their final rest?

MICHAEL CRABB

## Footpath Dance Company

15 Dance Laboratorium  
5 November 1977

Footpath Dance Company is a modern dance troupe, from Cleveland, Ohio, consisting of six women. The company maintains a warm, open, accessible atmosphere in presenting works of vigour and humour. Three of the four works on the program were choreographed by Alice Rubinstein, Footpath's artistic director. The other was by Tamar Kotoske, another member of the company. Both dance too.

Rubinstein's choreography has a good 'look' to it and conveys emotional excitement. She has a well-developed ability to create movement, for individuals and groups, that flows harmoniously and uses all the working space. She's an exponent of what might well be termed the synchronization-shock style common in Cunningham dances and developed by Sharp and others. The independent movement of any number of dancers in her works will suddenly unify and then fragment again. Rubinstein uses synchronization-shock often, usually in a cyclic manner, and always to express something.

Sometimes Rubinstein strives too hard to be funny, particularly in *Darwin's Dance*, an overly long work that explores the similarities between homo sapiens and the other primates. Six repetitions of a section, in which the dancers display ape-like mannerisms, gradually dissolves the impact of the flashes of brilliant wit. Again, in what is either the opening section of Tamar Kotoske's solo, *Bug*, or the closing section of Rubinstein's *Again Please, With Meaning* (it's impossible to tell), Kotoske strips naked behind the token screen of a towel and takes five times longer than necessary to don a slinky green leotard. She is fussed over by the other dancers preparing her for her evocation of insect movement. Rubinstein wanders on and off stage, and when Kotoske is ready,

rushes along the front row of the audience, uncrossing the men's legs.

*Bug* doesn't need the contrived and, in my opinion, offensive introduction it's presented with. The work is self-sufficient, combining sometimes starkly beautiful movement, which demands outstanding physical co-ordination from the performer, with an accurately observed imitation of insect movement.

However, sometimes Footpath's humorous approach works well, and when it does, it packs a punch. In *Again Please, With Meaning*, the basic motif is repeated three times in series, with variations, to an electronic heartbeat, loud and deep. The five dancers enter sweeping across the floor in long, confident strides. They bring chairs into the performing area and sit, shifting through droll and exaggerated poses, while one dancer after another presents a short solo. All stand and they line up to shuffle crab-like around the stage and then go back to the chairs.

Rubinstein stops the section by announcing that it's bad, shallow, and must be done again. The dancers don white, frilly slips and bloomers. They then proceed to do almost exactly the same things again, while telling each other a steady stream of old, corny jokes. A company apprentice planted in the audience finally shouts that this is worse than before. 'Give me a little depth', she cries. The troupe changes into black clothing and, to a James Brown song about addiction, performs what Rubinstein calls the 'original concept'. The opening sequence is repeated but now Rubinstein and Gina Gillombardo dance an anguished duet behind the others' twist-foot shuffling. The piece ends with all five lying half over each other along the floor, pulsing their hips to the reemergent heartbeat sound.

The other work by Rubinstein, *Drive*, is described by a programme quotation from Carlos Castaneda on the theme of the human need to banish timidity in the face of approaching death. *Drive* is an intensely emotional work expressed simply in spins, hops, slides and falls to body-arches, and rolls on the ground and on extended arms, and sculptured poses slowly developed and then dissolved. Rubinstein's *Drive* is her interpretation of human will-power, a slow, steady, sustained, cumulative process.

J. GROO BANNERMAN

## The Dancers and Musicians of Bali

The Opera National Arts Centre  
Ottawa  
5 December 1977

When Jean-Pierre Perreault, co-director of Le Groupe de la Place Royale, recently visited Asia to study Balinese dance and culture, two particular realities must have impressed him. One would be the advanced integration of the performing arts: musicians and dancers must be actors, all interrelating during programmes; the other, that Balinese performers are not a separate professional entity: every person in every village performs. It explains the extraordinarily precocious skills of the Balinese dancers currently touring North America, the youngest of whom, I Wayan Pasek Yusabawa, is only eleven. Already the *New York Times* has dubbed him 'the Baryshnikov of Bali'!

Seeing these dancers and musicians of Bali was a chance both to witness an ancient art in immaculate preservation, and to glimpse a theatrical phenomenon which just may be taking root in the West. Perreault's most recent work, *Nanti Malam* — the title is Balinese — requires dancers to sing complex scores, as well as dance to them.

The Balinese performers seem related, if distantly, to Japan's famed Kabuki theatre which also recently toured this continent. Both share sumptuous costumes and decor, a blending of visual and performing arts and extreme stylization of movement and gesture, though this is notably less pronounced with the Balinese. Yet there is affection and self-mocking humour in most of the Balinese tableaux, whereas Kabuki actors seem permanently on the verge of bursting blood vessels.

Like Kabuki, Balinese dance-drama is obsessed with its own culture, its history and religion — with magic and mysticism. It pits good against evil, whether in the warrior's dance, *Baris Syat*, in which four men furiously posture with swords, shields and headdresses topped with incense-candles; or in the lengthy *Calon Arang*, a classic tale of witchcraft and exorcism.

There is pure showmanship: I Wayan Pasek Yusabawa performing *Baris Ksatriya*, an early 20th century virtuoso solo, or the quartet of exquisite girls dancing the *Redjang*, an offering to the gods, and the *Sisyan*, a servants' rite reserved for rare, mysterious occasions.

The Balinese music, if not especially varied, is tonal and accessible to the western ear. It is almost entirely percussive, using one recorder-like instrument and gongs, drums and metallophones, which resemble candy-coated glockenspiels.

Most memorable are the flowing, tassled costumes, their intense gold,



John Travolta

emerald, ruby and turquoise hues fighting for one's attention. These are comparable, less with Kabuki garb, than with Nicholas Georgiadis' gilt-edge costumes for Nureyev's *Sleeping Beauty*. Just as that production risked dance being upstaged by decor, perhaps the Balinese, at least in the wake of a one-night stand, are remembered more for their looks than their performance.

CHARLES POPE

## Films

*The Turning Point*, Valentino, *Saturday Night Fever*

A funny thing happened the other day in *Giselle*. It was Ballet Theatre, at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, Gelsey Kirkland and Ivan Nagy – a magical performance which almost had you believing in all that wilie nonsense. But then, in Act II, marvellously danced, a sizeable portion of the audience started sniggering for no accountable reason, just when Leslie Browne, as one of the Queen's henchpersons, was making an entry. Then it clicked. *The Turning Point!* These ill-mannered, sniggering morons had seen *The Turning Point* – and then I began to laugh, after almost everyone else had stopped.

The scene from the film has Leslie Browne, as the emerging prima Emilia, tottering on stage in *Giselle* sauced to the gills – her ill-advised reaction to being jilted by Yuri (Mikhail Barishnikov), Russian exile and leading man in the American Ballet Company. It's a thinly veiled disguise, of course, for American Ballet Theatre, the activities of which, both on stage and off, are one important ingredient in Herbert Ross's loving tribute to his former company. Before going into movie direction, Ross was one of Ballet Theatre's more notable home-bred choreographers. His wife, and the executive producer of *Turning Point*, is Nora Kaye, formerly one of Ballet Theatre's greatest dance-actresses.

*The Turning Point* has provoked a lot of bitter criticism, much of it prompted by misunderstanding, and yet it's likely to be the kind of film you will want to see again.

The plot gives us the moment of crisis and confrontation between two women, once colleagues in the same ballet company, and, in the film, retracing the last twenty years of their lives with potentially self-destructive pessimism. Anne Bancroft, queenly and too stiff, plays Emma, who willingly double-dealt her friend Deedee into getting married so that the prize part in a new ballet would fall to her. Shirley MacLaine is Deedee, and not at all sure

that she did the right thing by marrying, breeding kids, and setting up a school in the boon-docks.

Trouble starts when the company visits town. Old memories flood back. Deedee gets restless. Emilia, the eldest girl, auditions for the company and takes off for New York – with mother as chaperone. But to little avail as Emilia soon falls in the ever-ready arms of 'that horny little Russian bastard', Yuri. Meanwhile, Emma is facing the end of her own career as the company's prima ballerina. She loses *Giselle*. It's the beginning of the end. To compensate, she makes Emilia her new interest, as a kind of surrogate mother. Deedee is not happy.

The soap-opera silliness of the plot emphasized in Arthur Laurents' superficially corny screenplay, is not really so awful as it seems. In a clever way, the tackiness of the lines stand as an apt metaphor. While on the one hand the film seems concerned to present a clean image of the ballet world, a good deal of its phoney, shallow emptiness is captured in the dialogue. It's the real thing. As Woody Allen demonstrates in *Annie Hall*, our talking lives are usually constructed from banalities and few more so than the lives of ballet dancers. It's part of the deal in a decadent art.

Fortunately, that's only part of *The Turning Point*; not the part you're likely to

want to see again. The rest is the dancing, for the most part brilliantly photographed by Robert Surtees and cleverly integrated with the dramatic action. In the company gala, you may grow restless with the speed at which such luminaries as Lucette Aldous, Richard Cragun, Suzanne Farrell, Fernando Bujones and many more, flash through their numbers; but Ross has saved up the minutes to give us generous gobbits of Barishnikov, in *Corsaire*, *Giselle*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Don Quixote*. Though for my money effective enough in her big-eyed acting, Leslie Browne cannot match her illustrious partner in the dancing — but she manages to scrape through. Delightfully enough, there's a marvellous bit where aged Dahkarova (Alexandra Danilova) is coaching Browne in the use of her fan for *Don Quixote*. Then the next moment we see her out there, forgetting everything she was told in the studio. How many directors and ballet masters must have released a sigh of recognition. But whatever you say, and of course tastes rightly vary, *The Turning Point* has provided a vivid record of one of the greatest technicians in the history of ballet.

If Barishnikov had been foolish enough to wander into a film studio with Ken Russell in the director's seat, he'd not have come out of it so well. *Valentino* succeeds at hardly any level, though it is probably

worth seeing for the memorable opening sequence when the legendary lover, hounded by innuendoes concerning his probable homosexuality, teaches Nijinski (Anthony Dowell) the tango. Certainly it's one of the few moments of dancing in this frenzied, frenetic monster of a film. For years people have been crying out to see Rudi in the nudi. Now they've got it. It's horrid and degrading, for both Nureyev the star and the audience.

Although one might not think it, *Saturday Night Fever* starring John Travolta (*Welcome Back, Kotter*) and directed by John Badham, is more a film about dance than either *The Turning Point* or *Valentino*. Its success has taken Paramount a little by surprise. It may well become a minor cult film. People are going back again and again.

Why? Well there is first of all John Travolta, a young star with the same kind of animal magnetism that, in a totally different way of course, makes Liza Minelli great. He dominates *Saturday Night Fever* and is hardly ever off the screen. Though apparently not a trained dancer, he moves with a fluidity and musical sense which would do most professional dancers much credit. I think 'knockout' is the conventional description.

But the film is much more. Travolta plays Tony Manero, living in Bay Ridge,

Brooklyn, and head of a local gang who live entirely for pleasure, know no guilt and feel no pain. They're crude, violent, amoral and racist; part of the restless youth of the seventies we hear so much of these days. At one level *Saturday Night Fever* is a social document, well-observed. Then a love story of sorts is carefully woven into the plot, (Travolta takes Karen Lynn Gorney as his partner for the disco-dance competition and finds her more than expected). And arching the whole complicated business is a moral allegory. In the end Travolta breaks out of his rut and looks cautiously but hopefully towards a better future.

And then the dancing! You may not think of what goes on in discos as dance but see this film and you will. Choreographer Lester Wilson lets Travolta move out from the tightly confined space of usual disco dancing, and the way he moves provides an object lesson in carefully controlled, expressive motion. The music blares out, but Travolta starts softly, very small movements of the hand, foot and leg which only hint at the energy waiting to break loose the moment he launches across the dance-floor. See it and be surprised.

KEVIN SINGEN

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA  
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA



présente  
presents

**dance centre**

CLASSIQUE  
MODERNE  
JAZZ



JAZZ  
MODERN  
CLASSICAL

Stage d'été en

**danse**

3 - 28 JUILLET

Inscription en personne ou par la poste  
(Pré-inscription 1er juin)  
SERVICE D'ÉDUCATION PERMANENTE  
Université d'Ottawa  
5, rue Osgoode, Ottawa K1N 6N5  
(613) 231-4263 or  
DANCE CENTRE (613) 233-2028

Summer Session in

**dance**

JULY 3 - 28


Registration in person or by mail  
(Pre-registration June 1st)  
SERVICE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION  
University of Ottawa  
5 Osgoode Street, Ottawa K1N 6N5  
(613) 231-4263 or  
DANCE CENTRE (613) 233-2028

## YM & YWHA

### Summer School of Dance




JULY 4th - AUGUST 4th  
1978

- Classical Ballet
- Modern (Contemporary)
- Jazz Dancing (Modern)
- Tap Dancing
- Character (Russian)



Student Performing Groups

4588 Bathurst Street  
Willowdale, Ontario  
M2R 1W6  
636-1880

## Noticeboard

last fall the role of the federal government in the Arts has been undergoing assessment by the Department of the Secretary of State. Two prominent figures in the cultural and artistic life of Canada have been appointed to seek out and interpret the reactions of Canadians to the new role proposed by the Secretary of State. They are David Silcox, Director of Cultural Affairs for Metro Toronto and Associate Dean of Fine Arts, York University; and Yvon Desrocher, Vice Chairman of the Grands Ballets Canadiens. Dancers, dance educators and dance administrators have an opportunity to improve the role of government in the art and culture of Canada by making their views known.

Over the years, a number of Canadian dancers and critics have made the trek to Connecticut College in New London for the annual summer American Dance Festival. Now, after 30 years, the organizers have announced that the American Dance Festival will move to Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, starting this summer. The familiar variety of programming will be retained.

André Eglevsky, the great Russian-born dancer, teacher and director, died suddenly on 4 December, just two weeks before his 60th birthday. The most notable years of Eglevsky's performing career were spent in the New York City Ballet. He was noted for his technical virtuosity and noble dancing and created roles in ballets by Balanchine, Lichine and Balanchine.

In 1955, with his wife, Leda Anchutina, Eglevsky founded a school in Massapequa, Long Island, from which the Eglevsky Ballet Company emerged five years later. The company visited Canada in 1975.

Eglevsky was a guest teacher at Boris de Milleff's Toronto studio in 1943 where he met Herman, later to become the celebrated ballerina Melissa Hayden, was among the students. They danced together in Chaplin's film *Limelight* (1953).

André Eglevsky's daughter Marina, is a principal dancer of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

Vancouver Dance Theatre spent a week in February at the Surrey Arts Centre as dance company in residence. Their programme included school performances, workshops and a full-length evening performance.

February 23-25 the company performed a programme of six new works at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. Dances by co-directors Jami Zagoudakis and Gisa Cole, as well as by guest choreographer Albert Reid were premiered. From May 15 to 27 Judy Jarvis will be a guest at the Prism Dance Centre teaching classes in technique and composition. She will also choreograph a work for the company and perform some of her solos at an informal studio event.

Dancers, New York's newest contemporary ballet company, co-founded by Dennis Wayne and Joanne Woodward, gave its first Canadian performance February 2 at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver. While in Vancouver Igal Perry, Dancers' Ballet Master, taught a master class at the Vancouver Opera Association Hall. The company also made appearances in Calgary, Edmonton and Prince George.

### ALBERTA

The first ever International Dance and the Child Conference will be held in Edmonton July 25-27. This conference will focus on three areas: the child as creator, performer and spectator. Already a distinguished group of international dance experts have confirmed their participation including: Peter Brinson of the Gulbenkian Foundation, Roderyk Lange, noted dance anthropologist, Betty Redfern, dance educator, Felix Cobbson, promoter of African Dance studies in England, Betty Oliphant with students of the National Ballet School, Ruth Priddle, expert on children's motor development and creative movement, Joan Russell, a fellow of the Laban Art of Movement Guild, and Virginia Tanner with students from her Children's Creative Dance Theatre.

Among the companies invited to perform at the conference are two from Canada: Entre-Six and Dance Works. Joyce Boorman, Conference Chairman, is confident that the Edmonton conference will lead to the formation of an International Dance and the Child Association. For information and applications contact: Department of Movement Education, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, University of Alberta, Edmonton.

The Alberta Contemporary Dance Theatre celebrated its seventh anniversary

this January with a concert titled, appropriately enough, '7th Celebration'. The concert signified not only a celebration of survival but of change. Founding Directors Charlene Tarver and Jacqueline Ogg have joined the Board of Directors and a new full-time Artistic Director has been appointed, Marian Sarach. She directed a company of her own in New York. Miss Sarach has taught and performed in Canada with Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers and has choreographed four new works for the Alberta Contemporary Dance Theatre. A fifth work was choreographed by Brian Hayes, a new member of the company. After five years with the company, Ron Holgerson has resigned his position as Managing Director to pursue a career in advertising. Mr Holgerson leaves the company solvent and with its 1977-78 season almost totally booked.

Continuing with its series of seminars on Arts Administration, The Banff Centre in co-operation with the Touring Office of the Canada Council presents a seminar on 'Performing Arts Tours Management' March 12-17. The seminar will be of interest to those wishing to learn the fundamentals of tour management at the 'grass roots' level, and of particular benefit to our smaller dance companies across the country. Scholarships may be available to needy, Canadian applicants. The next seminar in the series is 'Theatre Production Management', April 9-14. For information contact: Banff Centre, Cultural Resources Management, Box 1020, Banff Alberta, T0L 0C0.

### SASKATCHEWAN

On February 17 and 18 Dance Works presented the Paula Ross Company of Vancouver performing new work by Ross, recipient of the 1977 Chalmers Award in choreography. Also in February, Dance Works welcomed Peter Boneham of Le Groupe de la Place Royale as guest artist for two weeks.

### MANITOBA

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet will make its Manhattan debut March 28 when they open a one-week engagement at City Center 55th Street Theatre. The company will be presenting four works by Oscar Araiz; *Mahler 4: Eternity is Now*, *Le Sacre du Printemps*, *Adagietto*, *Family Scenes*;



National Ballet Gala—Peter Martins

Norbert Vesak's *What to do Till the Messiah Comes*, and Brian Macdonald's *Pas d'action*.

## ONTARIO

The Dance Committee of CAPHER is currently compiling a bibliography of Canadian dance research past and current. Those involved or interested in the field should contact Rhonda Ryman, Research Chairman, Dance Committee of CAPHER, c/o University of Waterloo, Administrative Services Building, Waterloo.

The National Ballet of Canada is well into its long Toronto season which has included the company premiere of Sir Frederick Ashton's *The Dream*. It was first seen at a gilt-edged gala on February 15 when guest artists, Suzanne Farrell, Peter Martins and Elisabetta Terabust also appeared. The regular season has had its own guest artists. Lois Smith, for many years the company's prima ballerina, danced Carabosse in *The Sleeping Beauty* and Celia Franca appeared as Lady Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet* and as the Black Queen in *Swan Lake*. After more than a year's absence, which began with a knee injury and ended with the birth of a daughter, Jessica, Veronica Tennant returned to the stage in *The Dream*, *A Party* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Vanessa Harwood had great success in Australia where she danced the twin roles of Odette/Odile in seven performances of *Swan Lake* for the Australian Ballet. In January she made another guest appearance with the Chicago Ballet, partnered by Kevin Coe from the Australians.

Students of the School of The Toronto Dance Theatre are getting plenty of opportunity to perform this term. *Babar the Little Elephant*, a veritable institution at the School, had two performances early this year with the Hamilton Philharmonic, at Hamilton Place on February 4, and at the Shaw Festival Theatre, February 5. As well, Donald Himes' production of *Little Red Riding Hood* began a tour of Ontario schools on February 20. Commissioned by Prologue to the Performing Arts, with sound score by Ann Southam, this appealing production is cast entirely from the School of The Toronto Dance Theatre.

Throughout the month of January and on into February Toronto's A Space hosted a series of dance works affirming that 'Dance Lives'. The series, featuring the work of nine independent choreographers, presented a diversity of innovative approaches to the art of dance. Works, new and old, were shown by Jennifer Mascall, Jean Moncrieff, Paula Ravitz, Mimi Beck, Brenda Nielson, Janice Hladki and Johanna Householder.

Also in January, A Space and 15 Dance Lab sponsored Barbara Dille, co-ordinator of the Dance Program, Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, to offer a three-day dance/art improvisation workshop: *Disciplines for Improvisation*.

Campana-Dragu Products has reunited and joins with Fly By Night to form Triad Corporation. This association plans a performance in mid-March called 'The Beauty and the Beast Thing'.

Avatar Dancers (formerly Ace Buddies) will be performing new work April 26, 29 and 30 at the Studio Theatre Lab of the Koffler Cultural Centre in Toronto. This new company, comprised of Maxine Heppner, Robyn Simpson and Holly Small is under the sponsorship of the YMHA Programme in Dance. Workshops and performances for Metro schools and students of the Programme in Dance are planned for the late spring.

Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers will conduct workshops at the Programme in Dance, YMHA on March 7 and 8. March 9-11 the company will be performing at the Leah Posluns Theatre. Ballet Ys performs there March 18 and 19 and Entre-Six will be in residence April 1-6 to give performances, workshops and master classes.

Renovations at 15 Dance Lab in January have given it a new face. The performing space has been opened up and the floor extended making this popular theatre space somewhat more congenial. As well, a new policy of alternating video and live performances every other month began in February.

Dance in Canada's Ontario Regional Office held a 'Fund Raising Event' on February 12 at 15 Dance Lab. A \$5 admission fee included performances, refreshments and a look at the new facilities. Brian Robinson is the newly elected Regional Representative, and the Support Committee now consists of Ken Peirson who stays on as Treasurer, and Peter Hoff. The next Ontario Region General Meetings will be March 8 and April 12 at St Paul's Centre, 121 Avenue Road.

Timbrel is well into its second year of presenting liturgical dance to the congregations of Toronto area Anglican Churches. Last fall the group performed dances based on The Harvest and Thanksgiving themes and choreographed by co-directors Stephanie Avon and Martha Bell. The Epiphany inspired new work by Stephanie Avon for performances throughout January. In March Timbrel will perform dances on the Easter theme by Martha Bell and guest choreographers Terrill Maguire and Kyra Lober.

Following a one-week tour scheduled for March, Le Groupe de la Place Royale (Ottawa) will settle down to work on a four-week series of dance events to be held in their new studios, April 7-30. The events will include choreographic workshops, dance films and performances created by company members and artistic directors, Peter Boneham and Jean-Pierre Perreault. Students of Les Ateliers, the company school, will also have a chance to perform.

Ottawa Dance Theatre, formerly Dance Centre Workshop, begins its 1978 season in March with a series of performances in elementary and secondary schools in the Ottawa Valley. In April the company will embark on a tour of south-eastern Ontario including cities such as Kingston, Belleville as well as Ottawa. Ottawa Dance Theatre is a young company composed of six dancers trained in both classical and contemporary techniques, and is co-directed by Judith Davies and Joyce Shietze.

## QUEBEC

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens will celebrate its 20th Anniversary with three special programmes on three successive weekends: March 3-5, 9-12, and 16-19. Highlight of the opening Gala Performance will be the appearance of Alicia Alonso and her partner Jorge Esquivel in the *Swan Lake* pas de deux. Brydon Paige's new ballet, *Today Tomorrow*, and Brian Macdonald's new ballet set to Murray Schafer's Quartet No 1, will be presented. In addition Fernand Nault will restage his comic ballet *Try, Ready, Go* as well as *La Fille mal gardée* (quite unlike the Ashton version). The second programme will include a revival of Lucas Hoving's *Icare*





Kathryn Greenaway and Louis Robitaille

with young guest artist Louis Robitaille and the Anton Dolin and Madame Chiriaeff will appear in the production. The final programme will include Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco*, John Butler's *After Eden* (with a guest appearance by American dancer Lawrence Rhodes), Béjart's *Firebird*, another new ballet by Brian Macdonald and Dolin's *Pas de Quatre* with guests Marina Eglevsky of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Veronica Tennant of the National Ballet.

Of the 15 semi-finalists in the first Du Maurier Search for Talent, the only dancers selected were **Entre-Six** of Montreal. They will receive a \$2,000 cash bursary from the Du Maurier Council, and will be featured on one of three CBC specials entitled Final Audition.

**Entre-Six** spent the latter part of February

and all of March on tour in Western Canada. In April they will be in residence at the Leah Posluns Theatre, Toronto. April 27-30 the company returns to Montreal's Centaur Theatre. **Jacques Drapeau**, a member of Montreal's **Entre-Six** since its inception almost four years ago, has left the company. He intends to study for a year in New York with David Howard, Maggie Black and Finis Jung with the objective of joining a larger company. Peter George and David Smith have joined the company. **Entre-Six** has added Murray Louis' *Proximities* (1969) to its repertory, giving the first company performance as part of the official dedication of the Young People's Theatre Centre in Toronto, February 29.

#### NEWFOUNDLAND

*Abandoned Ancestors*, an original production by the Newfoundland Dance Theatre,

was premiered January 28 in St John's and subsequently performed in several other Newfoundland centres. The work, jointly choreographed by company members Cathy Ferris, Gail Innes and Lisa Swartz, was inspired by the work of Newfoundland artist, David Blackwood. It consists of three parts: *Abandoned Ancestors*, *Tween the Jigs and Reels* and *Ice* and was presented in conjunction with the National Film Board's award winning film *Blackwood*.

This winter Sara Shelton, of the Halifax Dance Co-op, spent three weeks conducting classes in improvisation and composition at the Newfoundland Dance Theatre. She also set her piece, *Phrase*, on the company.

## Dance at a Glance

**Dance-at-a-Glance** is a new advertising feature in *Dance in Canada Magazine*. Its aim is to provide our national and international readership with a quick guide to resources in dance which are available throughout Canada. To arrange your listing in the *Dance-at-a-Glance* section, just write or phone:

Nikki Abraham,  
Business Manager, *Dance in Canada Magazine*,  
3 Church Street, Suite 401  
Toronto, Ontario,  
M5E 1M2 (416) 368-4793

**The Marijan Bayer Studios**  
1875 Leslie St., Don Mills and  
163A Manning Ave., Toronto  
Tel. 449-4361

**Bayview School of Ballet**  
Ballet Pointe Character Cecchetti Syllabus  
5330 Yonge St., Willowdale, Ont. M2N 5R2  
M. Sorrell, Director, 222-5111

**Buday Dance Studio**  
Jazz Yoga Dancercises (Dancers' Therapy)  
Director: Aletta 100 Richmond St. E. #409  
Toronto M5C 2M2, 863-9735

**Classical Jazz Dance Company**  
Hal Mischka, Director  
Blending Ballet with Contemporary Jazz Movements  
9 Phoebe Street, Toronto (416) 364-9876

**Creative Movement Center**  
Ballet Jazz & Tap Stage Fencing  
71 King St. East, 3rd floor, Toronto  
Tel. 868-0064

**Dancenergy Studio**  
Offers Ballet Jazz Belly Dance Ballroom and  
Dancenergy (energy-centred modern dance).  
Classes are kept small. David Dressler, Director  
1322-A Government Street, Victoria (604) 384-3841

**Dance Orientale School**  
Director, Diane Calenti  
Classical Egyptian Dance & Music  
100 Richmond St. East, Suite 309  
Toronto, Ont. M5C 2P9 (416) 368-8412

**Christopher Darling Photography**  
Photographic Illustration/Slide Presentations  
Studio: 144 Front Street West,  
Toronto, Ontario M5J 1G2 (416) 862-9060

**Paul Gaulin Mime Company**  
Classes in Mime Puppetry Clowning  
Contact: Ron Arnold, 89 Pleasant Blvd.,  
Toronto, Ont. M4T 1K2 Tel. (416) 924-1373

**Humber College School of Ballet & Related Arts**  
1669 Eglinton Ave. (at Oakwood) Toronto  
Director: Sarah Lockett ARAD  
Beginners - Advanced; Adults & Children  
Ballet & Jazz Tel. 675-3111 ext. 506

**Marchowsky Dance Theatre School**  
The Marchowsky Dance Theatre School offers  
Graham Technique at all levels including children's  
and teen's classes.  
95 Trinity Street, Toronto M5A 3C7  
(416) 862-7008

**Andrew Oxenham, Photographer**  
Specialist in Dance, Theatre and Portrait  
54 East Lynn Avenue, Toronto, Ont. M4C 3X2  
Tel. (416) 698-0092

**Russian Academy of Classical Ballet**  
Mary Aslamazova, Director  
935A Bloor Street West (at Ossington)  
Toronto, Ontario M6H 1L5 (416) 532-2993

**John Stammers - Lighting for Dance**  
Lighting Designer for Ballet & Modern Dance  
Twelve years professional experience  
476 Willard Ave. Toronto M6S 3R6 (416) 766-8853

**York University: Dance Department**  
Grant Strate, Acting Chairman; offering B.A. (Hnrs),  
B.F.A. (Hnrs), M.F.A.; studies in ballet, modern  
dance, composition, dance therapy, history and  
criticism, notation, repertory, teaching. Faculty:  
Sandra Caverly, Yves Cousineau, Julianna Lau,  
Terrill Maguire, Mary-Elizabeth Manley, Sandra  
Neels, Selma Odom, Richard Silver, Dianne  
Woodruff; also Karen Bowes, Michael Byron, Norrey  
Drummond, Earl Kraul Fall/Winter and Summer  
Sessions.  
4700 Keele Street, Toronto M3J 1P3.

# Are you interested in knowing what's going on in the dance world?

If you want to know who's who and who's doing what in the world of Canadian dance, become a member of Canada's national organization devoted to the dance.

Join the more than 42 dance companies and institutions, and over 500 individual members, including dancers, educators, administrators, technicians and members of the dance audience... become a member of Dance in Canada Association!

As a member of Dance in Canada Association, you receive:  
**A subscription to Dance in Canada Magazine.**  
**National newsletter.**  
**Monthly Dance Calendar.**

Access to our **mailing lists, dance films and reference materials.**

Advance notice and reduced registration fee for the annual **Dance In Canada Conference.** (The 1978 Dance in Canada Conference will be held in Vancouver this August).

As a voting member you are eligible to elect Regional Officers and the Board of Directors of Dance in Canada.

**How to join?** Simply fill in the form and return to Dance in Canada Assoc. 3 Church Street, Suite 401, Toronto M5E 1M2. (Please add \$2 for postage if mailing from outside Canada).

### Schedule of fees (yearly):

Individual member (voting)	\$25
Individual member (non-voting)	\$15
Student (non-voting)	\$10
Group member (non-voting)	\$50
Voting groups: under 6 members	\$25
6-10 members	\$50
11-20 members	\$75
21 and over	\$100

Name.....

Address.....

Group Name.....

No. in Group.....

Payment enclosed  Bill me

Dance in Canada is registered as a non-profit organization. Membership fees are tax deductible.

# NOW YOU CAN SAVE MONEY WITH OLD WINTARIO TICKETS.



From January 20, you can use your Wintario tickets for discounts on Canadian books and magazines.

## INTRODUCING HALF BACK.

### Why is it called HALFBACK?

It's called HALF BACK because if you participate in the program, you get half back. You paid a dollar for each Wintario ticket. You get fifty cents back.

### How does HALFBACK work?

It's simple. If your Wintario tickets don't win in the draw, don't throw them away. Just endorse them on the back with your name and address. Now they're worth 50¢ each on the purchase of any book by a Canadian author or on the purchase of a subscription to any participating Canadian magazine.

You can use up to 4 tickets for a total discount of \$2.00 on any qualifying book or subscription. There's no limit to the number of books or subscriptions you can purchase as long as each one costs at least \$3.00.

### Here's how you get your HALFBACK rebate on books.

First, endorse your Wintario tickets on the back with your name and address. Then, take them to any participating Ontario bookstore. Participating bookstores are easy to recognize by the distinctive HALF BACK signs they display. Book rebates are also available through participating book clubs. Check your monthly mailings for details. For every 4 Wintario tickets you bring in, you will get \$2.00 off on a

Canadian-authored book that costs \$3.00 or more. The bookseller has a wide selection of books eligible for HALF BACK rebates and will be glad to help you make a choice and turn your Wintario tickets into savings.

### Here's how to get your HALFBACK rebate on magazines.

A descriptive HALF BACK leaflet is available at participating bookstores, many Wintario ticket outlets and at your regional office of the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation. It has an order form attached.

In the leaflet, you'll find a list and description of the Canadian magazines that are eligible for the rebate. Simply make your choice, fill out the form and send it off with your endorsed

Wintario tickets and a cheque for the balance.

### When does HALFBACK start? When does it end? And what tickets are eligible?

HALF BACK is a three-month program sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation. It starts on January 20 and ends on April 12, 1978.

Tickets for 6 Wintario draws will be eligible:  
JANUARY 19 MARCH 2  
FEBRUARY 2 MARCH 16  
FEBRUARY 16 MARCH 30  
Tickets for the January 19 draw go on sale January 6. The last day tickets can be turned in for rebate under the program is April 12, 1978.

**HALF  
BACK**  
THE ONTARIO  
REBATE PROGRAM  
THAT TURNS  
OLD WINTARIO  
TICKETS INTO DISCOUNTS



Ontario

Ministry of  
Culture and  
Recreation

Hon. Robert Welch  
Minister

**HALF BACK RUNS UNTIL  
APRIL 12, 1978. ALL WINTARIO  
TICKETS FROM DRAWS ON JAN. 19,  
FEB. 2 AND 16, MAR. 2, 16 AND 30 ARE ELIGIBLE!**

# DANSKINS ARE FOR DANCING



They're for all the great dancers who must wear tights and leotards that perform perfectly. It takes a professional dancer to appreciate the expertise that make Danskins so indispensable to the dance world. This scoop-neck leotard is knit full-fashioned of 100% stretch nylon and moves and holds its shape like a dancer's dream. Complete Danskin repertoire at fine stores and dance supply houses. Write for brochure DC. Danskin, Inc., 1114 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036.

 **DANSKIN®**