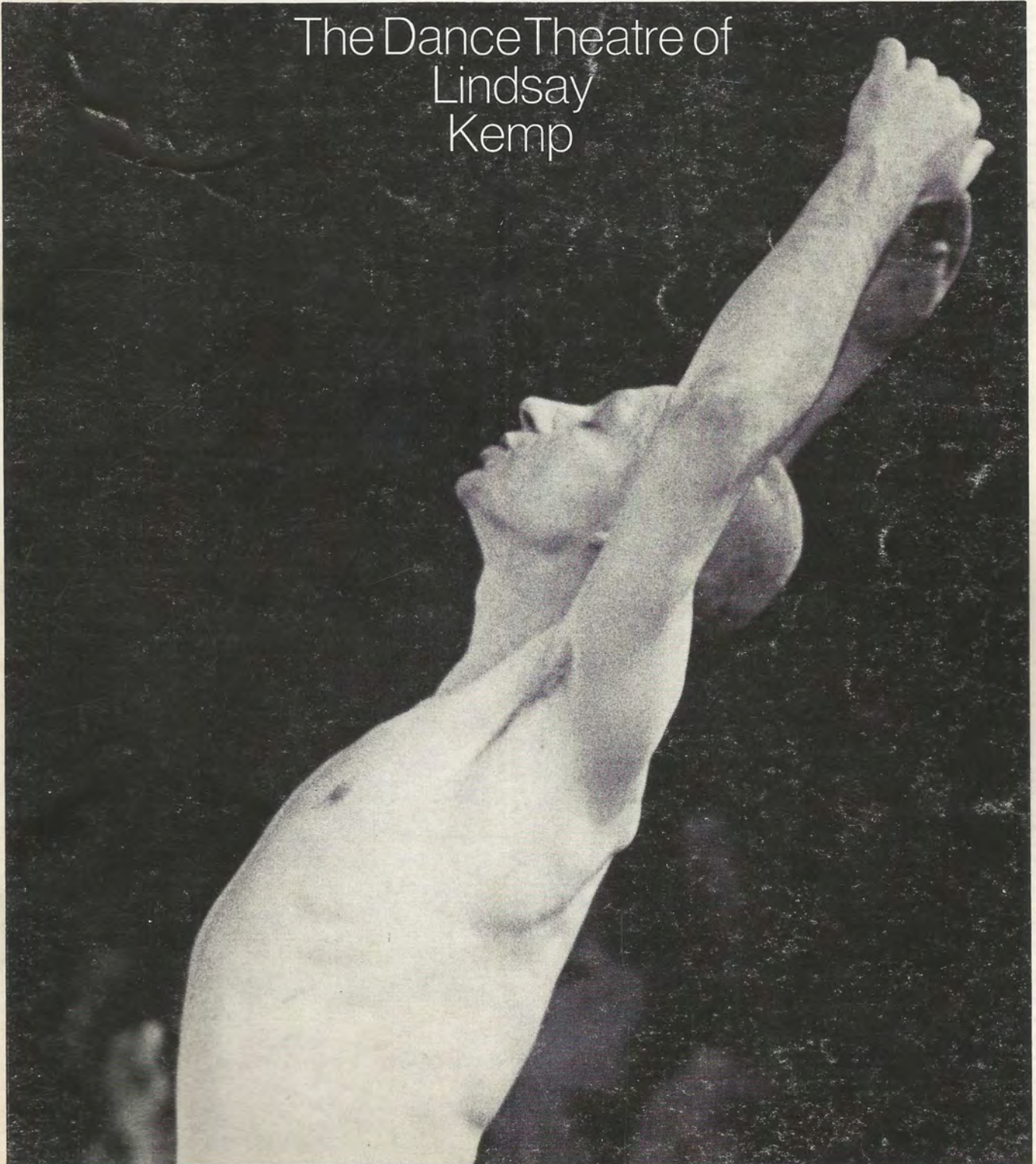


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Fall 1978 Automne 17

Dance in Canada au Danse

The Dance Theatre of
Lindsay
Kemp



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Dance in Canada

ISSUE NUMBER 17
FALL 1978 AUTOMNE

The Dance Theatre of Lindsay Kemp
Graham Jackson

The Month of the Long Days
THE FIRST CANADIAN CHOREOGRAPHIC SEMINAR:
A DIARY
Elizabeth Zimmer

Choreography: A Modest Proposal
Jock Abra

TRAINING THE DANCER: V
Turnout
Rhonda Ryman

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Graham Jackson

The Dance Theatre of Lindsay Kemp



Robert Desrosiers

When you think of Lindsay Kemp – and Toronto theatre-goers thought of little else for over two months – you don't immediately think of dance. You think of spectacle and silence, of homoeroticism and religious ecstasy; you think of Theatre in some broad, all-consuming way. But Kemp's extensive dance training has more than just haphazardly

affected his works. In fact, a life-long fascination with dance and the expressive potential of the human body – without the heady bolstering of words – is at the very root of Kemp's aesthetic. In the two works given by Kemp's company in Toronto, *Flowers* (based on Jean Genet's squalid and beautiful novel, *Our Lady of the Flowers*) and *Salomé* (a free-form adaptation of Oscar Wilde's purple play of the same name), you could easily see how far specific dance vocabularies have provided Kemp with the means of concretizing his vision.

His first dance training was in tap in the north of England where he was born and reared. It was only years later, after a stint at art college in London – one of his classmates there was that *enfant terrible* of modern British painters, David Hockney – that he began studying dance in earnest. This was at the Rambert school in its pre-Tetley, pre-Dutch influenced days when both company and the affiliated school were very much Establishment institutions. By his own admission, Kemp's Isadora-like free spirit proved to be too vigorous and *uncorralable*, his response to classical technique too interpretive, and he was asked by Marie Rambert herself to leave.

His training continued, of course, as he delved into different 'modern' theories of movement, particularly Doris Humphrey's divine arc of fall-and-recovery and Rudolf Laban's waves of movement. For a time, he exposed himself to Martha Graham's passionate theory of contraction-release, he found it too hard; his body simply couldn't assume the shapes Graham required. His interest in Humphrey's technique culminated in a brief appearance with Charles Weidman's company in London in the early 1960s, but it was with Laban that Kemp was most comfortable. Probably one of the reasons for this compatibility was the strong oriental component in Laban's technique; Kemp has always been enchanted by the shapes made in *buyo* and the Kabuki theatre, and these shapes,

flowing, delicate as a Japanese brush stroke, give his characterizations Divine and Salomé some of their exotic lustre.

What evolved from this colourful smattering of training is something Kemp calls his 'technique'. It's a technique only in the broadest sense, however, for it does not train dancers. What it does do is make the 'student' aware of the body's expressive potential, and, for company members, lend them a certain superficial versatility demanded by his works. Whether in open or company class though, Kemp doesn't insist on a perfect technical account of the combinations he gives; rather he insists on an imaginative exploration of them. A plié in second position, for example, is presented as an experience of drowning: the knees' bending is the body's slow sinking under water and the arms moving from fifth *en bas* to fifth *en haut* is the body's final gesture towards a vanishing sky. On its own though, the plié is nothing to Kemp; it's hardly even a strengthening exercise.

Kemp's eclectic dance background is reflected not only in his classes, but in his *Flowers* and *Salomé* as well. Recollecting his first live dance experience – a Christmas panto complete with uniformly bewigged and bejewelled chorines – Kemp can point to Annie Huckle's green chiffon costume and her wind-up toy dance as the mock-Salomé as being in part influenced by it. In the late 1950s when he was taken to ballet for the first time, the Sadler's Wells offered him the talents of the then-fresh Kenneth Macmillan for inspiration. The spikiness of Macmillan's movement motifs for his ballet to Igor Stravinsky's pre-eminently spiky *Dances Concertantes* intrigued Kemp and continues to influence his bodily designs; we can see it particularly in the opening figures of Salomé's dance and in Divine's elbows-out, knees-in wedding-night shyness.

Such influences are numerous in Kemp's works; you could spend hours tracing them back to their origins. More importantly, is the way Kemp has completely absorbed the mystique of the great faded prima ballerina in his creation of Divine and Salomé. Divine is the archetypal wronged heroine, a sister to Giselle and Odette, and Salomé the spoiled rich girl's fantasy of sexual despotism, similar, perhaps, to Ida Rubenstein's *Cléopâtre*. In his heroines' palpable melancholy, in their vulnerability, however, they strike us not as direct references to ballet characters but as vague and frangible memories in the decaying mind of a great star who once danced them. When Divine quotes from the petal-plucking scene in the first act of *Giselle*, or



Flowers

when Salomé's disrobing evokes Rubinstein's legendary unveiling in *Cléopâtre*, it's not funny or parodistic because Kemp's reverence for his heroines' delusions is so intense; Kemp keeps no distance from them and their self-indulgent fantasies as dance parodists like the Trockadero do *their* Giselle, Odette, or Firebird. What's more, we see through the character's eyes the dichotomy between the theatrical picture and the picture of life as it is, and our own recognition of the pain this causes Divine and Salomé steers our response away from laughter.

These are still allusions to dance though. What constitutes the 'choreography' of Kemp's 'Events' is harder to pinpoint. Perhaps his own expression, 'parade of images', comes closest, suggesting, as it does, a gradually building flow of movement. Like a parade (or maybe, more appropriately, a royal procession), this flow moves toward a great climax which is, in turn, followed by a heart-wrenching fading away. Such an expression as 'parade of images' immediately conjures up thoughts of Béjart's spectacles, his *Nijinsky*, *Clown de Dieu*, his *Romeo and Juliet*, and, especially, *Notre Faust* and the Petrarch-inspired *Trionfi*. Kemp is a confessed admirer of Béjart, in fact, but there's reserve in his admiration; and, when you look closely, their similarities are really only on the surface. Where Kemp is economical and focused with his imagery, Béjart is prodigal, sloppy; where Kemp's images weave a seamless tapestry, Béjart's too often become knotted in their own rhetoric. Béjart, too, has a primitive faith in the eloquence of steps themselves, particularly the splashier ones from the ballet lexicon, (arabesques penchées and split jetés, for instance), that Kemp decidedly does not share.

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Lindsay Kemp

Kemp admits to a basic lack of feeling for steps on their own, and in *Cruel Garden*, his last ballet for the Rambert company, a fantasia on the life of Spanish poet Garcia Lorca, he left the actual step-making up to his collaborator, Rambert's current artistic director, Christopher Bruce. Even then, he was dismayed that Bruce used so many steps, feeling that they broke the magical, sensual hold his 'parade of images' worked on the audience.

In *Flowers* where steps were used, they contributed exactly to the overall effect Kemp sought; specifically, in the case of *Divine*, the steps – the wedding waltz with *Darling* or the quote from *Giselle* – made clear the nature of her self-delusions. They do not, however, comprise the 'choreography' of the work; it's that flow of movement from image to image, from tableau to tableau, from frieze to frieze, that gives us a sense of 'choreography'.

The theatricalism of Kemp's works startled Toronto audiences who find themselves starved for it in local dance and theatre performances; certainly his uninhibited revel of light, sound, colour, incense, music, and skin is seen all too rarely on any stage. A few years ago, Toronto experienced the Ballet du Vingtième Siècle and a few years before that the Joffrey and Harkness Ballets doing then-daring ballets like *Olympics* and *Monument for a Dead Boy*, but there's really been only one local dance group to have explored routes similar to Kemp's: Toronto Dance Theatre. (In the theatre of course, there was, in the late sixties and early seventies, the late-lamented Global Village which tried unsuccessfully to sell generously theatrical productions to a dour Toronto public.) No one could overlook David Earle's *A Thread of Sand*, *Atlantis* (recently revived for the company's Royal Alexandra season

in August), *Field of Dreams*, or, lately, *Mythos*, if only because of their rich and, in the last three works at least, decadent theatricalism. This theatricalism was there, too, at the company's second annual Choreographic Workshop: in works like Claudia Moore's *Chrysalis*, which featured a solo female dancer in confrontation with a 12-foot long white veil from which she never quite disengaged herself; or in Nancy Ferguson's manic and brief *Something for Nothing*, where a few thespian relics from the golden age of vaudeville (two bowler-hatted clowns, a daffy butterfly-catcher, a couple of pasty-faced and vicious ballerinas, a he-man in pseudo-Roman garb) were let out of a figurative trunk to romp to the strains of Jerry Colonna, much as Herod's memories, prompted by Wagner's ravishing *Liebstock*, spilled out of a real trunk at the beginning of *Salomé*. Some have pointed to these works (and Ricardo Abreut's *Metamorphosis*) as evidence of the overpowering – and immediate – influence Kemp has had on Toronto's dance and theatre communities. Then, of course, theatricalism is part of the Graham tradition: it is the first thing Kemp mentions when discussing Graham's work. We see it in abundance in the dances *Seraphic Dialogue*, *Deaths and Entrances*, *Clytemnestra*, *Cortege of Eagles*, to name but a few. No, what makes people see Kemp's influence everywhere now is that they want to see it.

Kemp has shown people an alternative to the pallid theatrical formulae of ballet in Toronto and to the uncompromising, skeletal performance rites of the minimalists and avant-garde, and for this he has, deservedly, won a cult. Also, being a foreigner means that he has won this cult far more easily than any outrageous or provocative Canadian could have done. Kemp never betrayed this cult though; he nurtured it to the end. We have to be thankful that he stunned us all into awareness of the great resources – mechanical, imaginative and otherwise – open to directors, choreographers, mimes, performers in any theatrical discipline, resources too often neglected. And, for those who have been working in Kemp's colours for years with only condenscension as response, we hope that Kemp has helped make what they've been doing a lot more acceptable.

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Elizabeth Zimmer

The Month of the Long Days The First Canadian Choreographic Seminar A Diary

Sunday, June 4, 1978. We arrive at York University, and pick up the keys to our tiny cubicles in the highrise Vanier residence. We assemble in a windowless purple room for introductions, orientation and supper. Robert Cohan, Director of the York Choreographic Seminar, sits with arms folded protectively over his chest. He tells us we are going to analyse the process of making dance, and of making sound to go with dance. Formerly a featured soloist with Martha Graham, Cohan is a New Yorker tempered by ten years spent heading the London Contemporary Dance Theatre.

People scan the fifty occupants of the room, acknowledging familiar faces, speculating about strangers. Grant Strate, Seminar Administrator, regrets the absence of Music Director John Herbert McDowell, hospitalized in New York with a lung ailment. In his place will come Carlos Miranda, a Chilean composer formerly with Ballet Rambert, to share the task with Adam Gatehouse, a former Rambert music director about to join the National Ballet of Holland.

Participating choreographers include Mauryne Allan, director of Mountain Dance Theatre in Burnaby, BC; Renald Rabu, ballet teacher and choreographer based in Montreal; York graduates Jennifer Mascall and Paula Ravitz, independent choreographers based in Toronto; Andréa Smith, another York graduate currently studying in New York; Christopher Bannerman, a former National Ballet dancer now with the London Contemporary Dance Theatre, and Karen Rimmer, of Vancouver's Terminal City Dance.

It's the choreographer's responsibility to get what he wants from the dancers.

There are also seven composers: Edward Arteaga, music director for Paula Ross in Vancouver; Malcolm Forsyth, first trombone in the Edmonton Symphony; experienced dance accompanist Gordon Phillips, and Henry Kucharzyk, Larry Polansky, Stuart Shepherd and Shelagh Aitken,

all based in Toronto. This 'instant dance company' includes, as well, a dozen each of 'professional' and 'student' dancers, six musicians, several technical and administrative helpers, and me, professional eavesdropper, the George Plimpton of the Canadian dance community.

Monday, June 5, 1978. Work begins. An hour of ballet with Earl Kraul, nearly two of modern with Norrey Drummond; every other week the time allocations will switch. Accompanist Lubos Czerny adds texture and richness to the exercises.

The first of the daily 'common sessions' is group choreography, like a party game. I observe that the choreographic process is itself performance; not for these artists the secluded luxury of the garret.

After lunch, Cohan assigns each choreographer a composer, a few dancers, a studio and a problem: create a theme and at least three variations. Deadline tonight at 2000 hours. Andréa gets so immersed in the work that she and her cast miss dinner.

At the showing in Atkinson Studio, Cohan carries a tiny tape recorder slung over one shoulder; he's capturing the discussion, later to refine it for a book he's writing. He reminds the choreographers to be considerate of the dancers; to let them take breaks, to design movement which is within their range.

The eye is easily captured, but it does not remember very well.

Tuesday, June 6. It is only the second day, but already people are grumbling; the schedule is too full, the food is too starchy. The dancers, some of them, feel exploited; want more feedback. Many of them have choreographic aspirations as well. Members of the professional contingent include Marilyn Biderman, Peggy Florin, Allan Risdill, David Weller, Susan Macpherson, France Bruyere, Pat Pritchard Fraser, Zella Wolofsky, Stephen Karcher, Linda Moncur and Terrill Maguire. The York students, recently

graduated or in their final year, are Conrad Alexandrowicz, Francisco Alvarez, Janet Aronoff, Joe Bietola, Denise Fujiwara, Monica George, Christopher House, Marion Kerr, Susan McKenzie, Ted Robinson, Robbie Waldman and Karin Wroblewski. Norrey Drummond is dancing, too.

Gathered in Atkinson, we listen to Cohan tell stories, an activity soon to become a favorite pastime. He tells of Hellen Keller's visit to the Martha Graham studio: allowed to touch the jumping dancers, she observed that feeling people jumping is like thinking.

Later we go for a beer, and some more dancing to unwind from dancing. Later still, several of the musicians and composers, less exercised, gather in my room; feeling somehow deprived of the meat of the seminar, they will insist that their weekly ration of dance class be increased from two to four. Players for the seminar are Joan Hurlehey, James Stephens, William Winant, Paul Hodge, Tina Pearson and Kevin Budd.

Nothing is as good as working the music and the dance out together.

Wednesday, June 7. The dancers and choreographers have a voice class with Adam; we warm up, then follow him in a snaking queue all over the Fine Arts building, testing acoustics and the skill of moving and vocalizing together.

Denise has hurt her knee, and been told to keep off it. A champion gymnast, she is coping with the situation by walking around on her hands.

On the fogbound campus, the studio smells of sweat, wet wood, wet wool. Today's assignment: choreograph (and compose) a rondo. The results include composer Larry in a dance, choreographer Andréa singing, and an inspired study by Karen of people trying to stand up. She says she simply observed the exhausted performers. Jennifer choreographs fights that look disturbingly real.

Thursday, June 8. Dance films: watching with this crowd is like seeing *Star Wars* with engineers. They kibbitz, whistle, boo, cheer. Nothing escapes them.

Today the choreographers are given 2½ hours to produce a dance 10 minutes long. The musicians are to improvise. Christopher stages his piece in the three-storey-high lobby of the Fine Arts building. Dancers and musicians appear and disappear from doors, stairwells, balconies; they talk, sing, play instruments, attempt to run up the walls. Larry cuts wood with an electric saw; later he runs a slat along the balcony railing. Christopher slides down the bannister, then climbs up the outside of the staircase. We watch all this from the third-floor balcony.

The dance can transform the way you hear the music.

Renald choreographs a dramatic scenario of sacrifice. Karen's cast forms a moving phalanx of music and dance, taking ten minutes to cover the length of the room, an advancing wave finally breaking into the audience.

Friday, June 9. Cohan requests an 'economical, efficient dance,' as structurally sound as a house. He wants 'coherent designs in time.' Most of the choreographers are bewildered by the problem. Andréa makes a dance like the dispersal of dandelion fluff: very short, very neat.

Saturday, June 10. Yes, we work six days a week. Cohan, a master teacher, gives a Graham class. He assigns, for next week, a series of overlapping problems. Independently, composers will write a five-minute piece, and choreographers build, in silence, a dance they feel needs music. The composers will see these dances and write music for them, while the choreographers make dances to go with the initial composition. No consulting is allowed. It's frustrating, but useful; oriented to process, rather than product, Cohan is constantly finding new limitations through which to free creativity.

Sunday, June 11. A chance to sleep in, do the laundry, sunbathe.

Monday, June 12. We see the silent dances, and hear the pieces.

Tuesday, June 13. Composer Harry Freedman, the first of a steady stream of observers, is watching. More group choreography. Rehearsals in the afternoon. Dancers get the evening off; several of us bolt for the bus stop, heading downtown for a restaurant meal.

Wednesday, June 14. The lockstep of daily projects is broken, and the dynamic of the seminar has changed slightly. There's a second accompanist, Graham Upcraft, whose pop-tune musical jokes offend some dancers, amuse others. During the first week, dancers and composers were assigned to the choreographers; now choreographers are choosing, and some dancers feel neglected, rejected, under-used. A couple of composers complain about the 'sandbox situation,' feeling horribly limited by the brief time allotted to get the music made. It takes hours just to copy parts. Everyone has problems; whereas the musicians can read their parts from manuscript, the dancers have to memorize everything.

The accidents are the most important thing; they are what actually happens.

David Weller storms out of a rehearsal, feeling the need to make a stronger social statement with his dancing. He choreographs a solo based on the behaviour of South African miners, who dance during their lunch breaks because they haven't enough to eat.

As we get to know one another, the discussions heat up. Lots of people with lots to say about the work. Today, performances are in the afternoon; in addition to the choreographers' showings, we see David's piece and a work by Denise and Joe, made to be seen through the Studio 3 window, outside which they are suspended from a ledge.

Thursday, June 15. Several dancers are missing from class; fatigue is leading to illness and injuries. During common session, Richard Rose and Paul Axford explain how to build a light plot.

Today's task is straight out of Louis Horst: create 'strange space.' Choreographers are to concentrate on internal, external and interpersonal space. At the evening showing, the subject of much of the work is frustration with the way things are going.

Friday, June 16. In the music session, Adam works with us on singing in parts, and following a simple vocal score.

Jennifer wants to use the space in a strange way; she plans to have the dancers get across the stage hanging by their wrists from the pipes on the ceiling. Most refuse. She

does it alone, successfully. Other solutions to the problem: mirrors to alter the space, chairs tilted sideways, people tilted sideways. Shelagh asks, 'How do you tilt music?'

Several of the pieces turn out funny; comedy makes some of the dancers nervous. The initial question, how do we work, is turning, under mounting pressure, to why do we work? Cohan answers, 'You work to solve a problem that fascinates you, to see more of yourself.' He has laryngitis, but talks on. He is fascinated by the concept of self-sacrifice; people have told him he's given up a great deal to become a dancer, but he knows, we know, it's the other way. Over lunch, we discuss the addiction of dancers to their work, and how difficult it can be to make the transition to private life. 'The only time dancers ever feel good is when they're dancing,' he says.

Larry Polansky gives a lecture on acoustics. We are learning to speak to each other.

Surrealism is an accumulation of good gimmicks.

Monday, June 19. Earl teaches a 'lift' class. Tonight's assignment: choreograph exciting movement, a three-minute 'burst of energy'. Cohan reminds the choreographers to work 'on their feet,' to demonstrate rather than describe what they want. Start with what you feel strongest about, he suggests.

Tuesday, June 20. The composers and choreographers meet together to discuss methods of communicating. Some feel they need a greater understanding of the possibilities of the various instruments. Different attitudes emerge, among the composers, about the value of 'objectivity' toward their own work. Malcolm thinks his pieces should be weaned, sent into the world to stand alone. Larry prefers a personal relationship with his music. He learns from his pieces, from his processes.

Choreographers note the fugitive nature of their work. Christopher reminds us that there's never been a choreographer whose work was discovered after his death. He asks his colleagues, "What is your primary satisfaction? Finding the movement? or 'Wait 'til they see this!'"

The creative process is changing the shape of matter.

Wednesday, June 21. The choreographers ruminates over an assignment to make a personal statement in dance, a solo. Meanwhile, we see choreographies by several of the dancers. Included in the ensemble now is Amanda Forsyth, an 11-year-old cellist, daughter of Malcolm. Cohan, standing barefoot on the edge of the stage, reminds us that he is trying to get everyone to be hyper-conscious of process.

We see the solo studies. Christopher's turns into a duet with Larry, his composer. Cohan recalls a period in New York when 'we all used to do solo concerts because you couldn't afford a partner, and you rehearsed in your living room because there were no studios.'

Andréa does her solo twice, to two different scores. Jennifer has trouble remembering hers. After dark, Terrill presents a summer solstice ceremony dancing in a tree in a field, ringed by candles and accompanied by Gordon and friends on percussion.

Thursday, June 22. A two-day assignment: make a dance in



Robert Cohan, Adam Gatehouse and Carlos Miranda

which choreography and music combine to affect the audience's sense of time.

You must be hyperaware.

Friday, June 23. Lots of guests today, watching classes, rehearsals, the evening session. People are tense. Larry has been up all night writing music. Bill Winant lectures eloquently on percussion.

The time studies are fascinating; some are excruciatingly long, some elaborately intellectual, others very funny. In Christopher and Henry's collaboration, three musicians play to three metronomes set at different speeds. Karen provides an Anatomy of Temporality, complete with snippets of Blake and Milton, the eating of a muffin onstage, and the successful illusion of stopping the march of time. Cohan tells her that if she can figure out how she did it, she should call him in England, collect. Paula, whose choreographic technique often involves directed improvisation and a lot of input from the dancers, comes up with an arresting study in slow motion. Asked how she worked, she replies, 'It was trial and error... and thought.'

Monday, June 26. We see the earliest extant dance films, dating back to the turn of the century. Later we trundle downtown to see the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, featuring Alicia Alonso.

Tuesday, June 27. The assignment: choreograph a ritual, a progression of acts in movement and events in sound which have significance or apparent significance to audience and performers. Results include the cleaning of instruments; the domestic automata of eating, reading, watching television and lovemaking; the delicate ceremony of a child going to sleep, a tempestuous animal confrontation. Few of the choreographers are satisfied.

There's a Critics' Conference at York occurring simultaneously, under Bill Littler's direction. Today the critics are observing our classes, rehearsals, showings.

Wednesday, June 28. A joint meeting of Seminar people and critics covers the same old territory: it's hard to be brilliant when the deadline's an hour away, hard to justify devoting much space to a subject like dance which is of interest to so few people. Much heated discussion. Cohan admits to programming opening night concerts especially for the critics in London; as a company director, he must be



Jennifer Mascall

a businessman as well as an artist, and he knows good reviews fill theatres.

Thursday, June 29. For the final three-day project, eleven of the dancers are in more than one piece, and all concerned are in turmoil. Scheduling rehearsals requires elaborate permutations of clock and calendar. The task is to make a dance and be able to describe the source material. I drop into several rehearsals. Renald is choreographing about fire, in French for one dancer, English for the others. Paula is throwing the *I Ching* to gather imagery. Jennifer is trying to set a separate movement to every note in Ed's music. By the final runthrough, she's added a light change for each note as well, and presides over the light board like a mad scientist.

Mauryne is working with elements of twilight and melancholy. Karen develops a creation myth; her composer and musicians are on ladders, playing what sounds to me like the music of the spheres. Christopher is using North American Indian paintings, with suggestions of peyote rituals. Andréa works from documents about the voyages of Columbus; Larry develops a score for her dance, using marimba and a voice suggesting that Our Finder was Jewish.

The best way to invent is to be limited.

Friday, June 30. A house full of invited guests. Dress rehearsal, but it feels like a performance. Afterwards, the amply-funded critics' group throws a beautiful buffet supper for us.

Saturday, July 1. The last day. Because Earl has departed for Banff, Grant teaches the ballet class. Since it's a holiday, most campus food services are shut down; there's no coffee to be had, and people are growing slightly wild.

After several more rehearsals, the show gets underway at 1830 hours. Dances that sparkled last night seem curiously flat today; others have taken on a new coherence. Dr. Bob has been called in to consult on a few cases. In front of the audience, he totes up the figures: 108 new dances, to 108 new scores, in 27 days. It's been a marathon, and remarkably, just about everyone has finished the course.

There's a festive feed, coordinated by studio assistant Wendy Laakso, in a lounge; some extraordinary boogying by dance artists just released from a month of intense pressure; a round of goodbyes and au revours 'until Vancouver.'

It will probably be a year, Cohan cautions us, before the choreographers feel the effects of the Seminar process on their work. Some leave York encouraged, aware of having made significant breakthroughs. Others are seriously questioning whether they belong in the business at all.

In the Far East, where life is still lived on the floor, a lot of dances start on the floor.

Afterthoughts

The choreographer's task, Robert Cohan observed on the first day of the York Choreographic Seminar, is as much an organizational as a creative one. Alone among artists, he or she must work in front of others from the earliest stages of the process, collaborating with dancers, designers, musicians, business people and arts councils.

The constant pressure to get organized, to produce new work on a relentless schedule, day after 14-hour day, was perhaps the most powerful force acting on the participants. Insulated from most financial and social realities, they could get on with their work, supplied with personnel and facilities one choreographer estimated to be worth \$5,000 a month.

In fact, many of them were not exactly insulated; grants to attend the Seminar were hard to come by. Financial hassles were enormous. Seminar organizers managed, by dint of extremely creative book-keeping and a supportive university, to pull off a '\$50,000 seminar for about \$22,000 in cash.' Nobody got a free ride; even the people on scholarships had to buy their own food.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation funded the visiting directors. Other assistance came from the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, the Ontario Arts Council, the Floyd S. Chalmers Foundation and York's Dance and Music Departments. The Canada Council funded several individuals, but seemed unwilling to support the choreographers chosen by the seminar jury.

More than half the participating artists were present or former York students. It is hoped that next year, when the word gets out, a more diversified group can be assembled, including a higher proportion of choreographers with balletic inclinations.

I sometimes had the feeling that the pedagogy was emphasizing formalism, the kind of 'well-made dance' I thought was going out of style. Discussion with the choreographers, especially the younger ones, reassured me, and reminded me that the study of form is never wasted. 'We all got through a lot of work we needed to get through sometime or other,' said Paula Ravitz. 'We saw each other's work every day. We saw people's growth.'

The realities of the art world are not merely aesthetic ones. Choreographers who forget they're in show business, forget the box office and the need to connect with audiences, will soon themselves be forgotten. Robert Cohan is a practical man, with a healthy respect for solvency, and an attitude of careful attention toward communicating through dance. The Seminar, finally, was his show; he designed it, he stole it, and he won us all.

Jock Abra

Choreography

A Modest Proposal

The training of Canadian dancers has recently provoked some lively discussion, notably in the brouhaha over the notorious 'Brinson Report'. The sound and fury engendered, clearly documented in the pages of this magazine (issue No. 7, Winter 1976), was excessive even by the standards of an art which has never lacked for controversy.

However, I have noticed one glaring omission from these debates. Where are the Canadian *choreographers* going to come from? How will they obtain the training and experience they need to develop and mature? My purpose is to stimulate some discussion about these points, for without indigenous composers of originality and vision, our dance forms will continue largely to imitate those of Europe and our Great Neighbour to the south.

The neophyte faces some grave difficulties in attempting to learn his craft. The requisite techniques, skills and background knowledge for any art usually require years of study and practice (unless you're Mozart, or Orson Welles). Only then is the artist able to express his particular vision. Martha Graham once called it, 'the discipline to achieve freedom.'

This training must emphasize actual creation as well as the counsel of masters in the craft. To improve, one must do it, and do it again. Experiment. Make mistakes – and then make other ones. Such trial and error is a painful but necessary prelude to the emergence of a confident, mature artist. He must have besides talent and persistence, the necessary physical resources to progress through this formative period. The painter must have his paints and easel, the novelist his desk and typewriter.

What are the particular needs of the young choreographer? On the face of it, rather few. He needs a space, preferably large, bright, cheerful, with a wooden sprung floor – but mainly a space. Not usually an insurmountable problem, since choreographers have, over the years, ingeniously ferreted out abandoned churches, warehouses, brothels, and so on. The space provided for experimental choreography by, for example, Lawrence and Mariam Adams in Toronto is most welcome.

Under normal circumstances he needs some kind of sound source too: tape recorder, piano, or whatever. Again, not usually a big obstacle. However, he needs dancers; at once the most important requirement and the biggest impediment. The term 'choreographer' usually implies the arrangement of movement in space and time, and in practice almost invariably means movement of live human bodies. The dancer is the 'working element,' like marble for the sculptor, oil and canvas for the painter and

combination locks for the safecracker. Now, even playwrights and musical composers can learn by experiment with paper and pen alone. But a choreographer can hardly *begin* to work until he has access to some dancers.

Where does he get them? Let's first consider some common practices, each for different reasons, quite unsatisfactory. He can compose on himself. Clearly this is a start; probably even the mature professional gets many ideas by putting on some music and clutzing around the living room. But it isn't enough. He can't *see* what the movement looks like. What feels right may not look right. Eventually, he must stand back, criticize objectively and modify that rough beginning.

As well, it is often forgotten that choreography is a social art. The choreographer must learn to work with other people, the dancers, to motivate and inspire them. Often, the dancer-choreographer union resembles a partnership. Each contributes to the process. Furthermore, if he ever works with mature professionals, winning their respect and cooperation will be important and challenging.

His next option is to conscript some dancers – perhaps the inmates of the local dance school. Probably they'll be inexperienced and immature, but their cooperation and willingness can be very healthy for building the choreographer's self-confidence. Yet again there are problems. The aspiring artist needs knowledgeable, constructive criticism, because thus far he generally lacks the detachment to see the flaws in his own work. Interacting with the too easily impressed can quickly give him dangerous delusions of grandeur.

I also think it important for him to work with dancers who possess a strong dance technique, together with the strength, coordination, and other skills needed to carry out his wishes. It is much more difficult and requires more experience to compose effectively for the untrained. Often one must drastically compromise one's ideas since everything they are given to do looks awful. The inexperienced composer, blaming himself when nothing works, may simply give up in dismay.

The most glaring lack, without question, will be capable men (see Agnes de Mille's discussion, in *Dance to the Piper*, of her first chance to work with good male dancers). The ability to compose movement suitable for men, or for men and women dancing together will be left undeveloped. Is it any wonder, then, that some choreographers often confine our male dancers to movement clearly more suited to women?

If our choreographer is to progress, then his dancers

must be able to interpret his ideas adequately. The average high school orchestra reduces even Beethoven to an excruciating din. Would we have his wonderful, mature works if initially he had had to compose for such aggregations?

A third route. He can ask an existing dance company to 'give him a chance.' The major international companies? Forget it. All are, for very good reasons, concerned with their repertoires' standards. Rehearsal time being fiendishly expensive, they simply cannot gamble on untried talent. A regional, semi-professional company? They also prefer a fair guarantee of success, since they teeter daily on the brink of bankruptcy, and 'if we can just get a good review for our spring show...'

Thus our frustrated neophyte is trapped in the Catch-22 of choreography. He can't compose and learn without access to good dancers, and he won't get it until he has already demonstrated his capability. The difficulty is compounded for those, like myself, who never 'made it' as first-class dancers. It is commonly believed, apparently, that therefore one couldn't possibly choreograph. That's like saying you can't be a sculptor without first having been a statue. Quite a few examples exist. Antony Tudor for one, gives lie to this belief, but try to convince your average artistic director. Usually he won't even answer your letters, let alone take a look at your work.

And anyway I question, in retrospect, whether experience is best gained this way. Those 'good vibes', so necessary to creativity, are most easily developed while working steadily with the same dancers. While choreographers like Feld and Robbins may thrive on atmospheres of hatred and confrontation, the student will work better with colleagues with whom he shares friendship, respect and even love. The last thing he needs, at this point, is the responsibility of being a 'guest choreographer' with the implied expectation of providing a highlight for the coming season. Let him first make his mistakes in the safety of the studio, before he is forced to brave the damning reviews. But the security of such an apprenticeship is rarely afforded our student choreographers.

Well, why doesn't he form his own company? Get some money (never mind how), hire some dancers and get to work. Many masters *have* successfully taken this route, (Graham, Balanchine, Cunningham, Taylor, etc.), but it seems a fatal ploy for the student. He isn't ready to handle boards of directors, publicity agents and the other trappings. Administering a company requires considerable time and energy for fund raising, booking performances, coping with emotions — and tempers — and more fund raising! Unless genuinely capable and sympathetic administrative aid is available (and it's pretty rare), forget it. Almost all our successful examples have had irreplaceable administrative help. Where would Balanchine be without Lincoln Kirstein? And even so, how much more could these people have done if they had been free in their formative years to concentrate on composition.

Why are capable choreographers so rare? Given the difficulties that we've just examined, it's hardly surprising. What's amazing is that there are *any*.

But that's enough about the problems. Now let's ask how we can improve this situation. I have for you, 25% off retail price, a humble proposal. It seems to me that the necessary resources already exist. A number of the major dance companies foster some kind of apprentice or scholarship programme. The best dancers in these are of

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Graham's recently published *Dance as Dance* is the first collection of dance criticism ever to appear in Canada. Oleg Kerensky calls it "a fresh, intelligent and often controversial look at dance and dancers by a new young writer with an original voice all his own."

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very high standard indeed, almost ready for professional work. Their days are mainly spent in technique classes, but they also need experience in the art of rehearsal, so they may learn dances quickly and be useful instruments for choreographic expression.

The companies realize this. In the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's programme, with which I am most familiar, the apprentices spend some time learning the company's repertoire. Presumably this practice is common elsewhere. But it may be penny wise and pound not-so-wise. While some precious rehearsal time will be saved by teaching prospective company members the repertoire, wouldn't it be a profitable long-term investment to allow apprentice choreographers to work with the young dancers during this time? Why couldn't apprentice programmes for choreographers parallel those available for dancers?

Admittedly, several promising talents have been allowed to work with the Winnipeg apprentices. Perhaps the same is true elsewhere. As well, the introduction of the Chalmers and, more recently, Lee awards and, most promisingly, choreographic seminars such as that held recently at York University, have improved the situation notably. But we still lack a planned programme of training, buttressed by sufficient fiscal support.

Surely the Canada Council could provide the companies with financial incentives to seek out some promising young talent. Suitable courses in music theory, dance history, theories of choreography, theatrical design and other related areas should be developed for them. And, most important, they should be given a few hours daily to work with some dancers. Mature artists could provide continuous constructive criticism, as well as periodic evaluation. Weaning out the untalented is an unpleasant but necessary part of any productive programme.

The students' works might be presented in workshops before an invited audience, but should not be exposed to critics or paying customers. Eventually, when the directorship judges their readiness to compose more publically, they might be loaned to a regional company looking for choreographic talent that won't cost an arm and a leg.

Again, current practices needn't be changed radically for all this to happen. But financial help must be supplied to support these artists in training, and for the companies to provide the additional space, equipment and instruction required. Perhaps our armed forces could make do with one less airplane to free the necessary dollars.

It might also be advisable, at least in the initial experimental stages, to confine the programme to one centre. Let's get the bugs out before we go hog wild. I vote for Winnipeg, given the RWB's historical commitment to innovative choreography. Actually, one centre might be enough for some time. This country won't need or be able to support huge armies of choreographers in the foreseeable future.

The costs for this programme seem relatively minor for the Canada Council, even in this age of austerity, especially when they are weighed against the potential artistic benefits. Miracle of miracles, it might actually *save* money. The onslaught of new dance companies, mostly initiated by those wanting only the chance to choreograph, and all of them crying for funding, could be slowed. A programme that *saves* money? The Ottawa mandarins might think that the millenium had come.

Rhonda Ryman
 Training the Dancer
 V
 TURNOUT



... to dance elegantly, to walk gracefully and to carry oneself nobly, it is imperative to reverse the order of things and force the limbs, by means of an exercise both long and painful, to take a totally different position from that which is natural to them. Jean-Georges Noverre (1820).

The ability to turn the legs outward from the hip joint has long been a sort of status symbol among ballet dancers. Countless hours are spent in wrenching the limbs outward from the hip and even (incorrectly) from the knee and ankle. But what is the purpose of these contortions? Do they actually help the dancer perform better? And if so, how? Were the legs meant to rotate outwards forming an angle sometimes as great as 180° between the feet, or is this position totally unnatural, as Noverre suggests? Although dance teachers have varying opinions on these matters, one fact is self-evident. Turnout produces a beautifully curved line of the legs and is arguably the most distinctive aesthetic characteristic of classical ballet.

In reality, a slight opening outward of the legs is quite natural. The structure of the hipbones is such that the socket which receives the thighbone faces diagonally forward and outward. This is easy to see, for example, in a baby. The muscles and connective tissues which surround and eventually stabilize its hip joints are undeveloped and the joint itself is loose. As a baby sits or lies supine, its knees flop open, unrestricted by limitations which increase with age. Using a full range of motion at the hip joint throughout one's development can allay this loss of flexibility. This is an important argument in favour of beginning dance training before adolescence. Good training at an early age helps eliminate the necessity of re-mobilizing tightened joints. However, poor training of a young and malleable body may produce irreversible damage.

What is turnout?

In anatomical terms, turnout is the lateral (external or outward) rotation of the femur in the acetabular socket of the pelvis. This causes the kneecaps to face outward and the feet to point sideways. If the joint is overly tight, an appearance of turnout may be incorrectly achieved by planting the feet at a 180° angle to each other with the

knees slack and by then attempting to stretch the legs (see cartoon). This causes a twisting of the knee and ankle joints and is similar in effect to the archaic 'tourne hanche' of Noverre's day! (See issue No. 13, Summer 1977). Today, the overuse of rosin simulates the same effect. By increasing friction, rosin allows turnout to be taken from the feet, with the hip joint only passively involved. This explains why turnout often decreases as a dancer rises onto demi-pointe – and even more so onto full pointe. As contact with the floor diminishes, so does friction, and the feet can no longer be used to condition hip rotation. The structure of the knee joint permits the lower leg to rotate outward *only while the knee is bent*. You can easily demonstrate this by sitting in a chair with both feet on the floor in front of you and by then twisting the feet outwards without opening the knees. As the knee straightens, however, this rotation diminishes until the lower leg actually rotates inward as the joint is locked in a slight hyperextension (overstraightening). So by setting one's turnout on bent knees, it is often the knee, lower leg or ankle, and not the hip joint which is stressed.

Diagram 1 illustrates how turnout changes the relationship between the femur (thighbone) and pelvis. This alters the limiting effect of certain ligaments and bony projections and also modifies the lines of pull of certain muscles (see Diagram 2). Mechanically speaking, turnout gives the body a wider, less deep base of support. This provides less stability but greater mobility forward and back, and conversely less mobility but greater stability sideways. It alters the effective leverage of the legs for locomotor movements, especially assisting those travelling diagonally or sideways (by directing the feet outwards).

There are several methods of assessing an individual's true turnout. Since the turned out position is correctly taken from the hips and not the feet, each leg should be turned out in a non-weightbearing position, with the knee fully stretched, but *not* hyperextended. Only then is the

foot firmly planted on the floor. The pelvis should be positioned vertically. That is, the abdomen and hip bones should not hang forward but should be lifted upwards. This vertical position is very important as it alters the relationship of the bones and ligaments surrounding the hip joint, providing a stable base from which the muscles controlling leg movements can function.

There is a great deal of controversy among anatomists and dance teachers alike regarding which muscles actually accomplish lateral rotation of the femur, (see Diagram 2). Dancers are often urged to fix turnout rigidly by gripping the large buttock muscles, the *gluteus maximus*, ('Clench the buns as if you were holding a coin between them!'). This generalized tightening gives a false feeling of security. In addition to rotating the thighs outward, this muscle extends the hip joint. So, if it contracts, the hip joint is locked into position. As soon as the dancer attempts to move the leg, as in a battement, the muscle *must* let go. If turnout is maintained solely by clenching the buttocks, it is soon lost during movement. The six lateral rotators are small deep muscles positioned closer to the joint itself. Since these muscles lie beneath the larger superficial buttock muscles, their activity is harder to sense and impossible to see. When the dancer gets the feeling of working the legs from deep in the hip joint, their activity is ensured. But how can this feeling be achieved?

As has been stressed in previous articles, imagery is often a valuable means of eliciting appropriate muscle action. The following images are suggested, and should be used, by concentrating on the mental picture while another person reads out the instructions. Do not actively tense the muscles.

1 From a well placed first position, with the torso properly aligned (pelvis vertical, ribcage compact), imagine that the tops of the thighs are bottlecaps positioned parallel to the floor. See the caps twisting outward so that the edge facing forward rotates outward, around and back, and the edge facing backward rotates inward, around and forward, (see Diagram 3).

This image may also be used in second, fourth and fifth position and adapted for a range of positions from arabesque to attitude. It may also be helpful to try initiating pliés and fondus by using a similar mental picture, as follows:

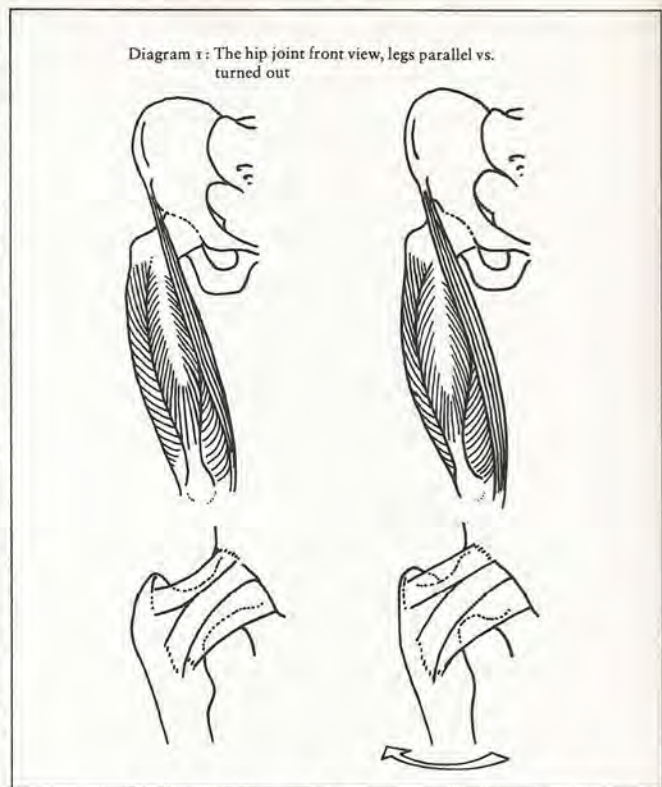
2 From a well-placed second position, with the feet farther apart than usual, visualize a spiral coil within the tops of the thighs. Watch the coil rotate outwards within each thigh to such an extent that the knees begin to flex, (see Diagram 4).

As the plié continues, take care to prevent the pelvis from hinging either forward or backward by keeping the hip crests lifted and the sitting bones directly over the base of support, that is, don't 'poke' the seat backwards.

What affects turnout?

As noticed already, we enter the world with an amount of turnout that would be the envy of any professional dancer! But as the infant develops and learns to stand and walk, the highly mobile hip joint becomes more and more stable, meeting the ever increasing demands of weightbearing and locomotion. With age, the joint naturally becomes tighter, depending on the following factors:

1 **Bone structure** (see Diagram 5). The hip joint, like the shoulder joint, is basically a ball-and-socket structure

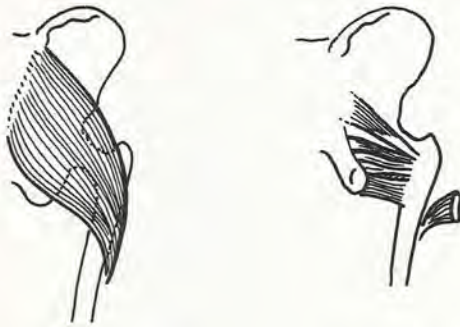


permitting a wide range of movements. But unlike the shallower, looser upper limb articulation, the hip socket is deeper and allows less movement, providing the stability necessary for weight support. The width between these sockets is much less than expected, normally about a handspan apart across the lower abdomen. Although this width varies from person to person, the female pelvis is generally wider than that of the male. The sockets are often shallower facing slightly further outward than those of the male. Both these factors favour greater natural turnout in the female. Wider hips provide better leverage for many of the muscles which accomplish lateral rotation. Laterally disposed, shallow sockets allow a naturally turned out and loose hip joint. These factors are genetically predetermined and no amount of exercise or positive thinking can alter them.

2 **The ligaments.** The connective tissue joining the femur to the pelvis serves to brace the joint strongly and prevent excessive movement. Ligaments can generally be stretched by as much as a third more than normal length without losing their resiliency and, therefore, their ability to protect the joint. In the course of dance training, care must be taken to develop flexibility without the corresponding loss of stability which results from over-stressing taut ligaments. Owing to the presence of the hormone esterone, females have a predisposition to more lax ligaments, and therefore to greater natural looseness in the hip joint. The relative tautness of ligaments varies between individuals and within each according to joint position. It is a factor which can be altered only to a small degree.

3 **Muscle length.** The normal resting length of a muscle is largely determined by heredity, but also depends on the way it is used. A muscle's range of movement depends on the length and disposition of its fibres. Muscles which are habitually held tight because of poor posture or tension may readjust to a shorter resting length. The membrane of connective tissue surrounding the muscle belly may

Diagram 2: Superficial and deep muscles of the buttocks:



Gluteus Maximus and Six

Lateral Rotators



Diagram 3:

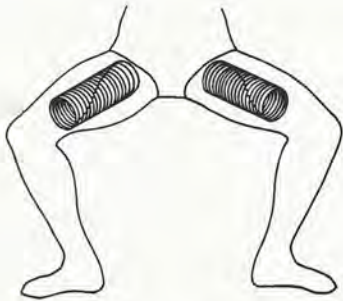


Diagram 4:



Diagram 5: The hip—a ball and socket joint

toughen and further reduce the muscle's ability to lengthen. To avoid diminished flexibility resulting from loss of extensibility in certain muscles, it is advisable to shorten and lengthen alternately all muscles crossing the hip joint. Dance movements make use of a great range of motion, but one type is totally lacking: inward rotation or 'turning in'. The only way to fully stretch those muscles which accomplish turnout is to turn the thighs strongly inward.

Previous articles have shown that habitual tension in a particular muscle group not only causes that group to shorten, but also to hypertrophy or become bulky. This tendency is often seen in dancers who clench and tighten the buttocks without intermittent relaxation and stretching. The area becomes 'chunky' and 'bulgy' and, in addition to muscle tightness, the range of motion from turnout and leg extensions may be decreased owing to soft tissue occlusion.

How to Maintain and Improve Turnout

Since the bones and ligaments of an individual's hip joint are largely determined by heredity, training turnout must focus on stretching and strengthening certain muscle groups surrounding the joint, and on stretching restrictive ligaments only where possible. First, the joint's range of motion must be increased through exercises to promote flexibility. Second, the appropriate muscles must be strengthened to maintain control of the increased range demanded by the extensive ballet vocabulary. The following exercises supplement invaluable suggestions for improving turnout described in *Raoul Gelabert's Anatomy for the Dancer* (1964).

To stretch muscles and ligaments which limit turnout. This involves an elongation of the muscles on the inner front aspect of the hip and thigh. Many teachers prefer slow, passive stretches, over ballistic, jerky ones. The latter activates a neural response known as the 'stretch reflex' and often causes the overstretched muscle to go into spasm like a snapped elastic band. Long gradual stretches may be done alone, by using the weight of the body and gravity to increase the range of motion. Or, they may be assisted by another person who gradually and carefully applies pressure to manipulate a limb just past the point of comfort. Throughout the following suggested exercises, be sure to breathe normally to prevent excess muscular tightness. Remember *pain is a warning device against injury* and should always be heeded.

Lie prone, with the hands beside the head, knees slightly apart and soles of the feet together. Be sure to keep the pubic bone touching the floor. Relax, and sense the weight of the lower legs rotating the thighs open from deep in the hip joints. Do not tighten the buttocks. Maintain this position for several minutes at a time. (Prop your head up and read a book!) Repeat, with knees more flexed so that the feet are closer to you. Each position stretches slightly different parts of the hip joint.

Variations of the exercise are often done with another person actively pushing the dancer's feet towards the floor. This causes the lower leg to twist (by rotation at the flexed knee joint) and may aggravate existing knee problems. If manual assistance is used, the dancer should try to brace the knee joint and rotate the entire leg as a unit, not merely from the knee.

Good stretches can also be achieved by sitting in second position straddle, fourth position and the splits. The key to success is relaxation. Stretching a tensely held muscle can only worsen the situation.

To strengthen muscles which increase turnout. How many teachers have looked hopefully at a loose-hipped youngster with a 180° first position, only to see that turnout vanish with her first plié or tendu! Laxity at the hip joint is of little benefit if the dancer does not possess sufficient muscular control during movement. The traditional ballet barre has been masterfully developed to build leg strength. From pliés, both demi and grand, through fondus, rises and relevés, to battements and ronds de jambe in all directions and at all heights, the ballet vocabulary covers an infinite number of possibilities. And it is obvious that very different combinations of muscle action are required to maintain turnout depending on the exact configuration of the legs. There are, however, certain principles which can be applied when selecting exercises to train turnout.

1 The ability to sustain strong muscle contractions can only be improved by overloading the particular muscle. To do this the teacher may choose to alter the speed of an exercise or progressively increase the number of times it is performed. Each exercise has an inherently comfortable speed. Performing it at either a faster or a slower tempo requires additional muscle work and will therefore place a greater load on the groups involved. Altering rhythm and tempo also adds interest to a class and may motivate students to work harder.

2 Overloading the muscles should be gradual and pro-

gressive. Demi pliés are done before fondus, since considerably greater muscle work is required when one leg alone controls the entire body weight as it is lowered and raised. Rises precede relevés which lead into sautés. And these are all performed on two feet before they are attempted on one. The gradual introduction of these progressive exercises is left largely to the discretion of the teacher, although the major syllabi provide an excellent general framework.

3 In order to maintain a full range of muscle strength, the limbs must be worked throughout the full range of motion. Advanced students often fail to appreciate this, in their earnest effort to get the legs as high as possible, as often as possible! Working occasionally with the legs at 45° or 90° trains a necessary combination of muscles, as well as allowing the student to concentrate on perfecting other elements.

4 It is advisable to maintain a balance between strength and flexibility by alternately stretching and strengthening muscles. Strongly turning in the thigh will stretch those muscles involved in turning it out. In addition, the action of turning in evokes a sensory contrast to the constant feeling of tension behind the hip joint that results from habitual turnout. This may help some students to 'get the feeling' of turning out more easily than constant repetition of the same exercise. For example, tendus in any direction may be modified by strongly turning in and out the extended leg alternately, for as many repetitions as necessary, for example 'Extend, turn in, turn out, and close.' This same variation can be done in many positions: retiré or passé, attitudes of leg extensions in any direction, at any height. Use the images of bottlecaps or coils to feel the rotation deep in the hip socket.

5 The principle of reciprocal innervation can also be used to construct turnout exercises. By forceful contraction or shortening of the muscles which increase turnout (and incidentally strengthen muscles), there is a reciprocal relaxation or lengthening of those muscles which limit it. This will stretch muscles. The following is an example which can be used for dancers whose placement is well established:

The student stands facing the barre with the right foot placed *cou de pied devant*. The teacher stands behind him, placing the palm of the hand firmly on the outer aspect of the student's right thigh, just above the knee. The teacher applies gradually increasing pressure to displace the knee forward; the student resists any change in position solely by rotating the thigh outward to oppose this pressure, taking care not to twist the hips or supporting leg.

This exercise may be modified by positioning the lifted foot higher along the supporting leg. The same principle may be used for pliés or fondus. The teacher stands behind the student and again tries to displace the knee forward as it bends remembering to graduate the pressure. The student actively resists turning in throughout the plié, both lowering and returning. The training of turnout is a long and arduous process and one in which effort does not necessarily ensure success. Each dancer must learn to make the most of his particular degree of turnout, soundly, without damaging the body's joints in pursuit of an aesthetic ideal – or accept the consequences!



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In Review

Frederick Ashton and His Ballets

David Vaughan
Toronto: Thomas Nelson
1977

The recent announcement that the National Ballet is going to acquire two more Ashton ballets next season (making it, like the Joffrey company, more and more an Ashton company) gives added importance to David Vaughan's book, *Frederick Ashton and His Ballets*.

The new acquisitions are to be *The Two Pigeons* (in which Canadian Lynn Seymour excels) and *Les Patineurs*, a ballet which both extols and spoofs skating.

Parenthetically, I saw *Les Patineurs* done by the Royal Ballet of Flanders recently, at Arizona State University, and for days afterwards something kept nagging at me: something had been missing from the production. Finally it came to me — there was no falling snow. Please, Alexander Grant, make sure we have the snow.

Speaking of Grant, one of the characteristics of this book (which the author, in a disclaimer, says is an 'extended catalogue raisonné', rather than a biography), is that it is short on the anecdotes which vivify, and sometimes exasperating in that it refers to them but does not get them right.

For instance, when *Ondine* was being created, the composer Hans Werner Henze was staying at the house of Alexander Grant.

Vaughan writes, in colourless fashion: "Grant recalls that Ashton would often ask him anxiously, 'Have you heard a tune today?'"

The way Grant told it to me was that Ashton would ring up Grant's housekeeper nearly every day and ask if she'd heard any good tunes from Henze. Day after day she'd have to say no. Then one day she said jubilantly, 'Yes, he played marvellous tunes all morning'. When Grant got home, he reported this to Henze, who laughed, and said, 'I couldn't get started composing, so I warmed up by playing Bach'.

The good things about the book are the excellent research, with dates and names, not only about all the Ashton ballets, successful and unsuccessful, but about the commercial theatrical ventures which paid Ashton's grocery bills in his early days.

Vaughan reports, without implying criticism, that Ashton is to some extent a blotting-paper sort of choreographer, absorbing various influences, from Roman Catholic ritual, Jooss, Bourdonville, and Roland Petit's love of having dancers roll



Frederick Ashton

on the floor, and putting them to (usually marvellous) use in his own works.

It's useful to be reminded that Ashton is old enough to have seen both Pavlova and Isadora Duncan, and fun to read that he can do a hilarious imitation of Pavlova taking a bow (cf., Alicia Alonso and Margot Fonteyn).

If you are old enough to remember *Symphonic Variations* ('a turning point in the history of British ballet'), created in 1946, and still done occasionally, you will appreciate Vaughan's perceptive comparisons of the early ballet with *Monotones*, created 19 years later. Alexander Grant and I were talking about this similarity in Winnipeg last summer.

Another thing I like about Vaughan is that though he notes that Ashton often just makes variations on Cecchetti enchainements (but with what subtle alterations!), one of his greatest successes was *Enigma Variations*, which depends on character. Furthermore, whereas psychologically oriented Antony Tudor would give his dancers six books to read, Ashton would work everything out in rehearsal, sometimes within a very few hours.

Essentially, this is a reference book which will provide a fine basis for future biographers who can give us more of Ashton the man. But there's excellent analysis of the technical aspects of the ballets, and it deserves space on your shelves.

LAURETTA THISTLE

Prime Movers: The Makers of Modern Dance in America

Joseph H. Mazo
Toronto: Gage
1977

Prime Movers, a chronicle of the makers of modern dance in America, begins with an account of Loie Fuller, that artist who, at the turn of the century, worked magic transformations with fabric and colour and light. From there it skims along the full range of American modern dance setting on only the highest peaks: Duncan, Denishawn, Humphrey, Graham, Cunningham and arriving finally at what the author must view as the pinnacle of achievement — Twyla Tharp. Along the way he is, above all, concerned with roots, with tracing styles, techniques and concepts to their beginnings.

Most of these roots are attributed to either the classical perceptions of Doris Humphrey or the romantic vision of Martha Graham. Graham is presented as the greater artist. But it is pointed out that although few choreographers have not learned something from her, much of what they learned caused them to seek a new direction. Says Mazo, 'Graham was an impossible act to follow.' Well, it is true that since the end of World War II the classicists have been dominant, but surely not by default! Post-Graham choreographers have concerned themselves with formal and societal matters rather than personal ones. Merce Cunningham and Paul Taylor deal in pure movement, shapes in space, rhythmic phrasing, groupings of bodies. Alwin Nikolais and Meredith Monk, each in their own way deal with environment. All have more in common with Humphrey than with Graham. In particular, Mazo attributes to Humphrey the liberation of dance from the other arts, particularly music, and describes dances she performed in silence, accompanied by the dancers' own voices or other sounds which were then considered unconventional.

Mazo takes his search for relationships a step further and establishes connections between modern dance and the other arts. Of course, one cannot discuss Cunningham without mentioning John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. Mazo also describes the link between modern dance and the art of Piet Mondrian, Frank Stella, the novels of John Barth and Thomas Pynchon. He writes, 'The canvas-filling labyrinths of Jackson Pollock's drip paintings have more than a little

in common with the stage-filling calligraphy of Cunningham's dances.' He summarizes Cunningham's innovations, 'The ego and the id were of less consequence than the arm and the leg. The subject of dance became dancing.' Certainly his heart is in the right place, for perhaps the essence of the avant-garde movement is an understanding that 'everything is everything', that one must break down the barriers between art and life—and not for art's sake either. Unfortunately the author lacks sufficient respect for this subject to treat it with the heart, humour and intelligence necessary. Hence the rather disdainful treatment of Cage, the facile assumption that the work of Yvonne Rainer is uninteresting to watch and that the '60s in general were 'one of the most rampant epidemics of self-delusion in American history.'

In the persistent quest for parallels and connections between dance and the other arts, Mazo does come up with a novel notion. At least I think it's new, but since the book does not include references, one can't be sure. He proposes that Humphrey and Graham are the Ben Jonson and Shakespeare of North America. Humphrey with her cool, intellectual classicism reflects the clear and carefully constructed Elizabethan plays of Jonson, while Graham's highly emotional dramatic work remains true to the passion and humanity of Shakespeare. Well — 'tis food for thought.

Aside from a misguided dismissal of the experimental choreographers, the tone of the book is fair and easy-going, revealing the author's personal bias only subtly in descriptive passages and in choice of anecdotes. The exception arises when Mazo plunges headfirst into a condescending, negative and unduly long discussion of Alvin Ailey, labelling him 'kinesthetically unimaginative', 'simple and old-fashioned.'

Prime Movers is Joseph Mazo's second dance book, (the first bears the somewhat objectionable title *Dance is a Contact Sport*). If its purpose is to inform and entertain the growing numbers of laymen in the dance audiences of North America—and perhaps this is its purpose—then it is adequate. But those who know something of modern dance, and who care about it, will do better to invest in dance writing of a more scholarly and specific nature.

HOLLY SMALL

Beryl Grey

David Gillard
Toronto: Saunders
1978

Beryl Grey, Artistic Director of the London Festival Ballet, has had a long and distinguished career both on stage and off. Until



Beryl Grey

1966, she was known primarily as a ballerina, first with the Royal Ballet and later as a peripatetic star who travelled the world and made pioneering guest appearances in Russia and China. She was also known as a writer since her visits to the communist worlds produced two excellent volumes of reminiscence.

For a short while she directed the notable Arts Educational School in England until, in 1968, she was invited by Festival Ballet's board, of which incidentally she was already a member, to take over the company.

Since its foundation in 1950, the London Festival Ballet had suffered mixed fortunes. Too often, and unjustly, thought of as the poor man's Royal Ballet, the company had been plagued with catastrophic financial woes. Also, it was accused, this time more justly, of artistic laxness. Within the company, artistic freedom sometimes bordered on anarchy.

Beryl Grey determined to set all this to rights and, despite some difficult moments in the early years, when she met opposition, she succeeded. The conclusion of her first decade as director was marked by the company's appearance at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York this past July.

Unfortunately, David Gillard's biography, while it sketches the main contours of Beryl Grey's remarkable career, does not really do justice to its subject. To be fair, Gillard inherited the task of writing Grey's biography (from the late Eric Johns) and, reading between the lines, one senses he was not allowed complete freedom to say what he wanted. But that does not excuse the dull writing even if it explains the polite, overly reverential tone of the book. Indeed, Gillard's effort reads most like an official campaign biography for an aspirant to political office.

Gillard is frank, forceful and honest about the Panovs and their sad association

with Festival Ballet. One wishes he had been more so in dealing with the questions that have always intrigued followers of Grey's career. Is it true, for example, that her apparently successful marriage and the stable home life which resulted, had the effect of removing her from the cosy, intimate, mildly incestuous inner circles of English ballet? Was that warmth and sweetness on stage contrived or is it real? Just what kind of a living, breathing, human being is Beryl Grey? In its own way, this biography is as frustratingly coy as Margot Fonteyn's autobiography. In both cases we have to wait for the richer details of their lives and characters to be revealed.

MICHAEL CRABB

Afterimages

Arlene Croce
Mississauga: Random House (Knopf)
1977

'Criticism', says Arlene Croce, 'is a personal act, intimately personal, just as dancing is.' Her new book *Afterimages*, takes her personal response to much of the ballet and new dance of the past dozen years, melds it with an encyclopedic knowledge of the cultural history of the world and show business generally, and marries it to an appreciation of rhetoric as acute as her appreciation of dance. My personal response to the book was extraordinary: I noticed my breathing changing as I read, until I was taking the slower, deeper, more profoundly attentive breaths that come from complete trust in and involvement with a partner.

Afterimages is the best collection of dance writing I have ever read. Coming to the end of its 445 pages, I began to feel the same sense of dismay that sometimes hits me at the end of a great novel, fear that the special universe she's created is going to vanish and leave me bereft. Fortunately, with Croce there are two consolations: I can start reading the book again from the beginning, which I did, and I can read her column in the *New Yorker*, which I've been doing for some time.

A book to learn to look at ballet from, the bulk of its collected material is devoted to ballet reviews, and the bulk of these to Balanchine's New York City Ballet. Croce watches dancers with a meticulous eye for their special characteristics. She seems to burrow into the minds and hearts of choreographers, where she figures out what they're trying to do and assesses how well they've done it.

'True genius', she observes, 'doesn't fulfill expectations, it shatters them.' Her favourite geniuses are Balanchine, Twyla Tharp and Merce Cunningham; her perennial whipping-boys, the schlock choreographers, such as Gerald Arpino, who try to anticipate trends and manufac-

ture crowd-pleasers. She scolds, she complains, she compliments, she suggests, she experiences choreography.

A lot of people go to the ballet to see what they already know, or think they understand. Croce goes to be surprised, to find the changes in the familiar, to assess variations in the attack of one performer or another. Her victims are dispatched with a critical rapier so sharp that she has slain and gutted them before they know they've been found out. Her enthusiasms are equally finely rendered; the depth and complexity of her intelligence are linked to an incredible clarity of style – a style as demanding and fascinating as the dance it discusses, if not occasionally more so.

She has little patience with most new dance, with what she calls 'etiolated' modern dance tradition. Her essay titled 'Going in Circles', nominally a review of the choreography of Laura Dean, is in fact an indictment of just about everything (save Twyla Tharp) since Merce Cunningham's 'rejection of literary and psychological content in dance.' She calls the contemporary situation 'a scene of chaos and devastation,' claiming that the new choreographers have gone so far as to reject dance altogether. This piece ought to be required reading for Canada's avant-garde, and for all student choreographers.

Afterimages doesn't have any photographs and I didn't miss them; it does have an extensive and useful index.

ELIZABETH ZIMMER

American Ballet Theatre

Charles Payne
Mississauga: Random House (Knopf)
1978

Karen Conrad had extraordinary elevation, and when Michel Fokine set the mazurka from *Les Sylphides* on her, he suggested that she curb her zeal and consider the romantic character of the piece. 'But Mr Fokine,' Conrad insisted, 'in Philadelphia the sylphs fly higher.' For Ballet Theatre's opening on January 11, 1940, Conrad crossed the stage in three mighty leaps, thereby establishing the style of American athleticism that has become the trademark of American Ballet Theatre.

Charles Payne, who has put together this gorgeous compendium, was there at the start. So was Lucia Chase, who opened her purse to Richard Pleasant to underwrite his dream for an American museum of the dance. Fokine, Tudor, de Mille, Loring and Dolin were among the ten choreographers assembled to mount 22 ballets which comprised that first repertory. Balanchine had declined and cast his lot with Broadway musicals, while a typographical error on the envelope to Frederick Ashton fatefully directed his offer back to the sender.

No established superstars were tempted

to risk so novel an endeavour, and with Fonteyn, Danilova and Baronova declining, the company opened with home-grown talent. Survival in a land characteristically uncharitable to native efforts in the dance arts would have been impossible had Sol Hurok not taken over the management in 1941. The price to be paid for putting Ballet Theatre before a national audience was its original catholic objective and its American identity. Dozens of Ballet Russe luminaries and all its choreographers swarmed in for a wartime mealticket. But despite the silly banner – 'The Greatest in Russian Ballet' – under which the company performed, the period which Mr Payne calls 'the Russian invasion' saw the delivery of four Tudor masterpieces and the enduring ballets of Jerome Robbins and Agnes de Mille. And three American-trained girls – Nora Kaye, Alicia Alonso, and Rosella Hightower – would emerge from the corps to become internationally acclaimed ballerinas.

Lucia Chase split with Hurok in 1946 and formed the partnership with Oliver Smith which exists today. To many critics ABT's artistic achievements ceased at the close of the Hurok era, and except for de Mille's *Fall River Legend* (1948) and Robbins' *Les Noces* (1965), few later works approach the stature of the wartime ballets. Mr Payne tends to avoid confronting

the issue and describes the fifties and sixties as times in which the company made a name for itself abroad, overlooking the fact that it remained artistically in flux, relying on imported talent while barely surviving financially.

Nor does he discuss ABT's failure to nurture a true American danseur noble. Fernando Bujones may be the welcome exception for the future if he can survive the competition that Ballet Russe alumni and refugees from the European state academies have always presented to the aspiring male dancer since the company's salad days.

ABT's failure to keep a resident choreographer on its payroll for longer than a few years is also skirted. Mr Payne attributes the problem to the megalomania he considers a common trait of ballet artists in general and of choreographers in particular, rather than to any flaws in Miss Chase's management.

Payne feels that Miss Chase made the ultimate artistic compromise – the one which provided ABT with its first true assurance of survival – in 1967 when she defied her advisory board and commissioned David Blair to stage the four-act *Swan Lake*. By then Americans, familiar with the Royal Ballet and Bolshoi versions, were happy to welcome a local production. Today ABT has nine evening-length traditional ballets, all delivered with the extroverted Yankee attack. These, four pre-1912 Fokine ballets, and the Tudor, Robbins and de Mille pieces from the 1940s keep the company thriving. Contemporary trends are skimpily represented by one stylish ballet by Twyla Tharp and two by Glen Tetley, one of these featuring sweaty young men in little more than jockstraps.

Today ABT has a home at the Kennedy Center in Washington and an ongoing spot at the Met in New York between opera seasons. The public adores the classics and the glamorous superstars brought in for frequent guest appearances. Makarova and Baryshnikov (now departed for City Ballet) have brought the excitement of their glorious Kirov techniques and their sprightly reproductions of the Russian classics. Gelsey Kirkland of New York, Cynthia Gregory of San Francisco, and Martine van Hamel from the National Ballet of Canada have developed into formidable ballerinas and can stand comparison with the world's best.

But ABT's business crises persist. As recently as 1977 management sold the handpainted decors that Marc Chagall created in 1942 for *Aleko* at the hugely inflated prices commanded today for his work to meet an unspecified financial emergency. Running ABT has required a faultless juggler; Lucia Chase has been just that, but she's 71 this year and seems to have made no effort to find a useful successor.

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here, it moves with a fascinating history that Charles Payne tells with insight, affection, and a nose for intrigue. Appended are fine essays by Alicia Alonso, Erik Bruhn, and Nora Kaye, and in a special chapter Miss Chase herself tells what it's like to run one of the world's top ballet companies. The 500 photographs of ABT productions and of the scores of ballet artists who graced its ranks during 38 years are the priceless gifts that this elegant volume has to offer.

LELAND WINDREICH

The Russian Ballet Past and Present

Alexander Demidov
Toronto: Doubleday
1977

Danseur The Male in Ballet

Richard Philp and Mary Whitney
Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson
1977

Soviet theatre critic Demidov gives a party-line history and survey of ballet in Russia, writing cautiously — as if walking on eggs — and in that often unintentionally funny style that results from translations of Russian prose. (Re Plisetskaya: 'on stage she asserts her ideal of the willful, independent woman who worships the laws of passion.'). His integrity forces him to admit that ballet was indeed not a Russian invention, but he testifies that the rich and varied ethnic dance traditions in his motley, far-flung land has given a distinctive colouring to the imported Franco-Italian medium. Who could deny this, and what other country can boast such a vast and glorious dance heritage?

But, when having to deal with the West, Demidov becomes coy or indifferent. He suggests that Diaghilev and his entourage left Russia owing to artistic and temperamental problems with the Tsarist management at the Maryinsky and overlooks the fact that part and parcel of the ballet intelligentsia left with him. With this and each later defection, Demidov soothes us into believing that the losses were slight.

But who was left? Fyodor Lopukhov, of course. And he 'invented' the symphonic ballet in 1922. The 'American choreographer Balanchine' (sic) took part in this experiment, Demidov asserts, implying a debt to a choreographer whose works failed to survive even in Russia's static world of ballet.

When Demidov speaks of the great range of expression in the Russian repertory he is referring to the A to B gamut of *Giselle* and its 20th century equivalent, *The Stone Flower*. The word 'modern' takes on special overtones when used to describe such recent ballets as *Carmen Suite* and *Anna Karenina*. 'Experimental is applied to a ballet by Kasatkina and Vasiliov called *The Geologists*, which 'deals with the difficult, heroic labor of those who discover new riches in the earth; it lays bare the feelings of our contemporaries.'

The book's main value lies in the presentation to Western readers of the numerous companies and dancers active in the Soviet republics. A basic core repertory seems to prevail throughout the Union, but each nationality is allowed a touch of local distinction. Photographs of the current Bolshoi and Kirov greats — Plisetskaya, Maximova, Bessmertnova, Vasiliev, Lavrovsky and the young Nadezhda Pavlova — are copious and exciting, while many of the dancers in the lesser companies have the strained, constipated expression associated with Soviet ballet histrionics. Costuming, in most cases, reflects the Soviet designer's basic indifference to the natural lines of the body and appears to have been selected from remainders at GUM. As for the recent defectors — Nureyev, Makarova, Baryshnikov, the Panovs — they are neither pictured nor accounted for, and as long as Demidov writes Russian ballet history, it would appear that they never really existed. But his book offers a bonus challenge in giving us a chance to guess who might be next to cross the line.

Danseur is an elegant picture book with fine historical photographs and some striking new ones by Herbert Migdoll and others. Clearly, Mr Philp and Ms Whitney love ballet, offering a breezy retelling of its history in terms of the male dancer's contribution to it. The savant will find nothing new or illuminating, and in terms of the shelves of materials available on Nijinsky and Nureyev, the chapters on these

superstars can be passed over. In any event, all the male defectors from Russia are given their place in the sun. Fokine is credited with having reinstated the male after a century of ballerina chauvinism, and since Nijinsky first drew gasps of admiration, a lively array of dudes has continued to hold audiences captive.

Two trends in the current dance scene are noted and explored: dancing is becoming a more respectable profession for men, and ballet is drawing an expanding audience. The popularity of the evening-length warhorses, however is presenting an ironic twist. It is the Soviet defectors who are producing in the West those staples of the classical repertoire which they left Russia to escape — and embellishing them to increase the importance of the male protagonist!

The authors offer a most generous discussion of 20th century dancers from Britain, Denmark, Russia, the United States and Belgium, giving due credit. The National Ballet's present artistic director, Alexander Grant, fares particularly well. Otherwise, Canada and its danseurs appear to have been short-changed in this chronicle (Frank Augustyn gets the briefest mention), but, like the Soviet defectors, perhaps they really don't exist. A few other omissions must be noted. One is Ballet Russe superstar David Lichine, who had female audiences in various sweats throughout the 1930s. As exciting a virtuoso dancer as Nureyev is today, Lichine also had a broad range and flexible style, dancing *Faune* and *Bluebird* sumptuously, and bringing passion to the Massine symphonic ballets and to his own distinctive creations. Conspicuously absent are Royce Fernandez, Bruce Marks and Scott Douglas, who represented American Ballet Theatre at home and abroad in the 1950s and 1960s, and Leon Danielian, who helped keep the Monte Carlo company alive for two decades. John Gilpin, for years the star of the London Festival Ballet is also inexcusably omitted. The book betrays more recent history and tends to place stronger emphasis on the glorious beginnings and the brilliant present.

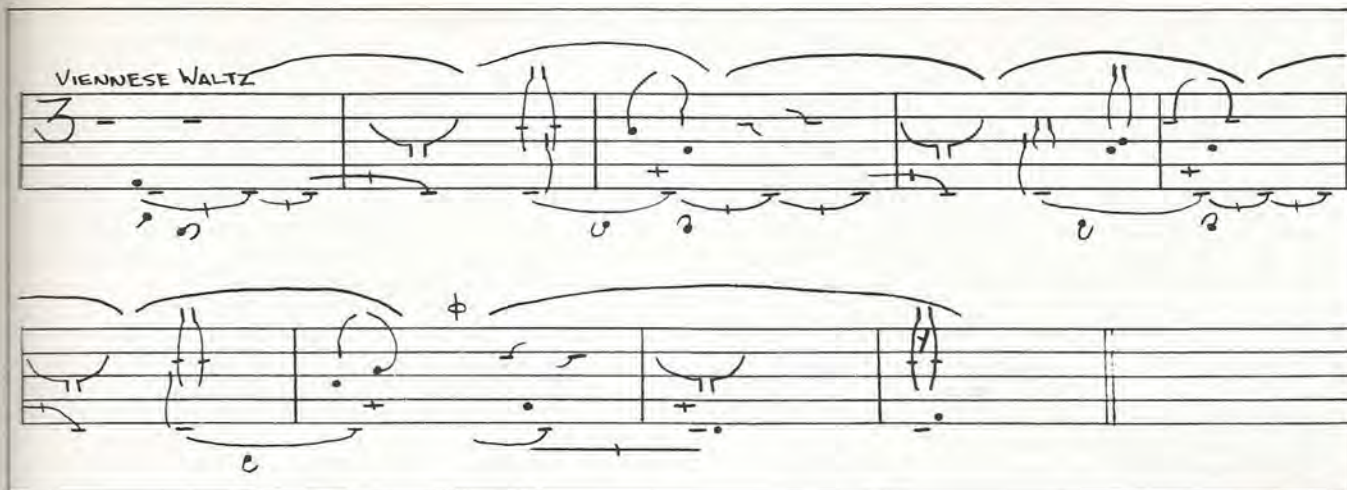
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SUN-ERGOS



Reading Dance: The Birth of Choreology

Rudolf and Joan Benesh
Agincourt: Methuen
1977

Reading Dance is the most recently published book on a movement notation devised by the late Rudolf Benesh and his wife Joan. It briefly documents the system's development from its conception in 1947 through almost thirty years of growth and expansion. The book presents a limited introduction to the notation system itself, but its main focus is to provide a philosophical rationale which emphasises the importance of an alphabet and language for human movement.

'Notation', the authors stress, refers to an alphabet of signs, whereas 'choreology' is the movement language which gives structure and form to these signs. Using linguistics as a model, they describe how each movement or dance style functions much like any spoken language, providing grammatical rules by which movements, like words, are manipulated into meaningful phrases. Before the symbols can become a language they must be used practically. For this reason, it seemed logical to apply the notation to one particular movement form during its early development. And since Joan Benesh was a professional ballet dancer, classical ballet was the obvious choice. More recently, the notation has been adapted for other dance forms from modern dance to East Indian classical dance. Its effectiveness in recording non-dance movements has been demonstrated by researchers in fields such as neurology and ergonomics.

Regardless of the application, the fundamentals of the notation are the same, based on two simple axioms. First, since movement is by nature something perceived through the eyes, the notation must be visual, based on the principles governing visual perception. Second, the eye perceives three dimensional objects and translates these into two dimensions according

to the principles of linear perspective. These axioms provide the basis for adopting the five-lined music staff, since the eye can easily identify five lines, and the three basic symbols, representing positions in front of, level with, and behind the body. These three basic symbols are manipulated through a range of concepts giving rise to a vast number of signs, each bearing specific information.

This ingenious simplicity is certainly the hallmark of Benesh Movement Notation. It is unquestionably visual: one can almost see an invisible stickman passing from frame to frame along the music-like staff. Yet, despite this simplicity, it is possible to achieve considerable accuracy with a minimum of detail. This is done by presupposing a certain set of conventions for the particular 'language' to be notated. In classical ballet, for example, a long curved line is assumed in all arm positions and only the location of the hands need be notated.

Several chapters are devoted to introducing various applications of the notation to ballet, modern dance, partner work, group work, folk dance, composition and Indian dance. It is noted, however, that *Reading Dance* is not a text book and provides only a brief glimpse at practical aspects.

The most thought provoking chapters deal with more philosophical issues. The authors tell us that, 'Reading is the gateway to knowledge: writing is the tool of thought.' By providing a means of acquiring and storing knowledge, notation is putting dance on the same footing as music, its 'twin sister'. Notation has provided music with its techniques and geniuses, literature, libraries, copyright protection, publishing houses, academics and, ultimately, hundreds of years of tradition. The Beneshes suggest that libraries of notated dance scores may likewise create a more solid dance heritage, by consolidating the knowledge and skills that have traditionally died with the dance master or choreographer.

The issue of copyright is also addressed. If works can be notated and registered, the

choreographer may secure legal rights over them, protecting his creations from exploitation or mutilation. Notated scores may ensure accurate reconstruction of works and save the choreographer valuable rehearsal time. A body of professional choreologists are now available to notate scores and re-teach these to dancers, providing assistance and relief to choreographers and saving considerable rehearsal time – and therefore money. Notation has been found even more effective than film or video tape in recording dance. Whereas the notated score records the work of the composer, the film or video tape version is merely a historical record of one interpretation; one performance of one production with one cast. Film records the particular performers' idiosyncrasies and even errors, and is inadequate for large groups or rapid, intricate movements. A final argument for notation can be made by using another musical analogy: the orchestra does not learn and rehearse from a record but from a score. It is materially a more practical record, manageable, portable, available and less liable to deterioration.

One serious flaw pervades the book, however, and casts doubt on many of the excellent arguments put forth by the authors. The history of dance is not devoid of attempts to formulate an accurate means of notating movement, as the authors imply. Numerous systems have been devised to meet the demands of particular dance styles. The Catalonian manuscripts of 14th century Spain, the basse dance notation of 16th century France and Austria, and Feuillet notation of 18th century France are only a few examples of systems which did not outlive their era. Although 20th century systems such as Benesh, Eshkol/Wachmann and Labanotation would appear to deserve a longer life, we have no way of foreseeing what new challenges dance technique might have in store for the future.

RHONDA RYMAN

The Art of The Dance

Isadora Duncan
Ed. Sheldon Cheney
Don Mills: Burns and MacEachern
1977

First published in 1928 and now handsomely reissued, *The Art of the Dance* is very much a dancer's book, and I think more the book Isadora Duncan wanted to write than her better known *My Life*. Shortly before her death she had discussed making such a collection with Sheldon Cheney; he carried through by editing some 23 of her statements on dance from published sources, programme notes, and manuscripts. These are preceded by tributes which express the sense of loss other artists felt when Duncan was, as Robert Edmond Jones put it, 'no longer in our world.' Throughout, the book is enhanced by a beautiful array of Genthe and Steichen photographs of Duncan at various stages of her career, not to mention many drawings by artists such as Walkowitz, Bourdelle, and Rodin. Taken as a whole, *The Art of the Dance* has immense dignity and elegance; few dance books are comparable treasures.

We are introduced to the inspiration Duncan found in music, philosophy, classical art, and above all nature; along the way her dislikes appear: ballet (nothing but 'a curious and wonderful gymnastic'), theories and systems generally, and jazz dancing, which she found quite immodest. Several times Duncan denies the notion that she wanted to revive the antique Greek dances by copying their attitudes: 'On the contrary, I studied them so long in order to steep myself in the spirit underlying them, in order to discover the secret of the ecstasy in them, putting myself in touch with the feelings that their gestures symbolized.'

Duncan's focus on the kind of dance movement she sought is perhaps most rewarding. For her, nature and sensitivity to her own body were the great sources. She describes her experiments with the solar plexus, her use of the curve or undulating line as a point of departure, her

love of expressive gestures such as the head turned backward, and her search for continuities or series of movements which would come from true first movements 'without my volition.' Duncan associates gravity with breathing, rhythm and flow; the wave is the characteristic line which reveals these essential connections. Nature is perceived as positive and harmonious: '...The dancer should above all else choose movements that express the strength, health, nobility, ease and serenity of all things.' Not surprisingly, Duncan affirms a centuries-old philosophical view of the dance, that it is 'a human translation of the gravitation of the universe.'

On this reading, I was particularly struck by the impassioned way Duncan visualizes the ideal dancer and 'the dance of the future' as the domain of woman: 'She will dance not in the form of nymph, nor fairy, nor coquette, but in the form of woman in her greatest and purest expression. She will realize the mission of a woman's body and the holiness of all its parts. She will dance the changing life of nature, showing how each part is transformed into the other. From all parts of her body shall shine radiant intelligence, bringing to the world the message of the thoughts and aspirations of thousands of women. She shall dance the freedom of woman.'

The Art of the Dance offers a hearty dose of Duncan's spirit, to which everyone dancing today is in some way or other beholden.

SELMA LANDEN ODOM

The Colourful World of Ballet

Clement Crisp and Edward Thorpe
Toronto: Doubleday, 1978

Although not as extensive in scale or as ambitious in scope as an earlier related volume from the same publisher (*Ballet and Modern Dance*, 1974), *The Colourful World of Ballet* by British critics Clement Crisp and Edward Thorpe is a brief, useful

introduction to the art and an ideal companion for the general ballet-goer.

The book's most striking feature is the lavishness of its illustration. There are more than 130 photographs or reproductions in its 96 pages of which almost 100 are in brilliant colour. The picture captions are enormously informative and do much to amplify an otherwise rather sketchy text, most of which is devoted to history and to the British ballet.

There are useful 'side bars' giving synopses of the major works of the classical repertoire and a particularly well prepared appendix outlines basic ballet technique with comments on correct training.

It is unfortunate that the photographs of existing companies are not always as recent as one might be led to suppose. 15 of the colour photographs appeared in *Ballet and Modern Dance* and give a misleading impression of both current repertoire and company membership. In addition, it is a pity the writers had to invent (and the editors fail to correct) a non-existent 'Canadian National Ballet', with all the misleading connotations the title suggests, when the publisher's earlier dance book got the nomenclature right.

Allowing for these slight deficiencies and a rather condescending and not always adequate treatment of the non-British ballet world, this attractively priced volume will be a helpful addition to the balletomane's library.

MICHAEL CRABB

Dance Today in Canada

Andrew Oxenham with
Michael Crabb
Toronto: Simon and Pierre
1977

I had already seen the many splendid photographs by Andrew Oxenham in *Dance Today in Canada* while working with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in Montreal, last March. Later, during my sojourn in Toronto to play Herod in Lindsay Kemp's *Salomé* I had time to digest



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The Art of The Dance

Isadora Duncan
Ed. Sheldon Cheney
Don Mills: Burns and MacEachern
1977

First published in 1928 and now handsomely reissued, *The Art of the Dance* is very much a dancer's book, and I think more the book Isadora Duncan wanted to write than her better known *My Life*. Shortly before her death she had discussed making such a collection with Sheldon Cheney; he carried through by editing some 23 of her statements on dance from published sources, programme notes, and manuscripts. These are preceded by tributes which express the sense of loss other artists felt when Duncan was, as Robert Edmond Jones put it, 'no longer in our world.' Throughout, the book is enhanced by a beautiful array of Genthe and Steichen photographs of Duncan at various stages of her career, not to mention many drawings by artists such as Walkowitz, Bourdelle, and Rodin. Taken as a whole, *The Art of the Dance* has immense dignity and elegance; few dance books are comparable treasures.

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and wallow in Michael Crabb's most informative text.

I set my ballet *Pas de Quatre* for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and its director Arnold Spohr. I have known and admired the work of the National Ballet, its past and present artistic directors, Celia Franca and now Alexander Grant, over a long period. I have been closely associated with the dancers of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and their founder-director Ludmilla Chiriaeff. Not unnaturally then, I have a strong personal interest in this valuable and instructive book. I first danced in the major cities of Canada in 1942. My partners in Ballet Theatre, now American Ballet Theatre, were Alicia Markova and Irina Baronova. From that time until now I have been able to witness the wonderful, healthy and exciting growth of the dance in Canada – and the dancers who have made it possible, guided by their directors.

I am pleased to see that Michael Crabb has chosen in his text to uncover the important history of Canadian dance. I can elaborate, from personal knowledge, upon one of the 'heroes' Crabb correctly identifies.

In 1942 the young Canadian dancer Ian Gibson was the supreme Bluebird in that famous pas de deux. His partner was Karen Conrad. Ian was magnificent. Elsa Maxwell, long-time friend and devotee of Diaghilev, witnessed Gibson's first performance at the old Metropolitan Opera House. It was in my production of *Princess Aurora*, a one-act version of *The Sleeping Beauty*. Elsa was ecstatic. 'Tony', (the name she always called me by), 'I saw Nijinsky dance the Bluebird. Never since then, not even by you and others, have I ever seen it danced as I saw it tonight. This boy is really superb.' Elsa knew. How right she was. Ian Gibson is Canadian, Vancouver-born. Be proud of him.

The contemporary photographic account and the heritage described in words make *Dance Today in Canada* a splendid record – one which I personally am very proud to have had a little to do with.

ANTON DOLIN

Dance World

Volume 11 (1976)

Volume 12 (1977)

John Willis

Don Mills: General Publishing

Dance World has now been in publication for 12 years with John Willis, the man who created it, still its compiler. Though highly priced, it is an absorbing and indispensable reference work covering each dance season in the United States.

Apart from providing exact details of performances (dates, venues, company rosters, programmes, etc.) – quite an achievement when one considers the hectic New York dance season alone – *Dance World* also covers festivals and regional companies, gives biographical information on dancers and choreographers, and includes obituaries. Most usefully, all this is indexed.

Naturally, the survey recognizes visiting companies such as the Royal Ballet, the Australian Ballet, the Dutch National Ballet and even more exotic ensembles: the Indra-Nila and Mazowze troupes. An increasing number of Canadian companies is included.

The number and quality of photographs has grown year by year. The combination of visual and written material constitutes a rich historical record. One can trace the development of companies and of individual dancer's careers, for example, the emergence of Danny (Williams) Grossman from Paul Taylor dancer to choreographer and now company director. Or, one can discover the whereabouts of old friends. Dancers tend to move around far more nowadays. It's hard to keep track. I discovered Fleming Halby, formerly of the Royal Danish Ballet, in the First Chamber Dance Company of Seattle, and Dagmar Kessler, whom I had admired so much when she was a ballerina in the London Festival Ballet, reemerges in the Pittsburg Ballet!

It is interesting to observe the National Ballet of Canada, in its regular New York seasons, weaning itself from Nureyev.

And, please note, in Volume 12, page 29, a picture of Alexander Grant in commanding pose as Carabosse!

In a work of this nature, there are bound to be some mistakes. Carla Fracci is left out of American Ballet Theatre (Vol. 11, page 24) and *Jardin aux Lilas* is omitted from the repertoire, although Fracci is pictured in that very ballet on the opposing page.

Nevertheless, *Dance World* remains an invaluable resource for dance lovers the world over.

LYN ROEWADE

Compagnie de danse Eddy Toussaint

Places des Arts

Montreal

18-21 May 1978

Eddy Toussaint came here from Haiti 18 years ago. With Geneviève Salbaing and Eva von Gency he co-founded Les Ballets Jazz. In late 1973, he set out with a small splinter-group of students to create a company of his own.

In the four years since then, Toussaint has produced a young, attractive, dynamic well-drilled, 15-member troupe, strong on team spirit, which has criss-crossed the province and toured South America and the Caribbean. He operates three dance studios in Montreal and has maintained a highly visible profile in French Canada through a series of television appearances. What he has yet to achieve is an original style.

What passed for style during the company's four-day stay at the Théâtre Maisonneuve in mid-May was glorified calisthenics grafted onto old June Taylor routines from the Jackie Gleason Show of the fifties, most of it set to raucous seventies pop-rock, badly dressed and bathed in garish lighting: a teenager's delight. The classically based dance-drama, of which Mr Toussaint wistfully speaks as his aim, was not in evidence.

Toussaint's choreography surpasses the

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Lise Bernier and Louis Robitaille

gym label only when he is working with his young star, Louis Robitaille, who made such a strong impact as Icarus in Les Grands Ballets' March season. Robitaille is a curious child-man: he has great strength but also an ambiguous softness, an aura which sets him apart. Incredibly, he has been dancing for only three years. Robitaille carries the show. He comes across best in *Triangle*, a slow architectural trio to Mahler. It is more pose than dance, deliberately earthbound, with fluid lifts and enigmatic relationships.

Four of the five works on the programme are Toussaint's. The long opening number, *Reflexions*, in thirties-style unisex costumes to music by Pink Floyd, seems typical: much kneeling and running, arms held up in supplication, no jumps, poker-faced dancers giving the audience long quizzical looks over the shoulder; no development. It also has a highly theatrical solo for Kathryn Greenway, a sultry temptress with masses of bronze, wiry, pre-Raphaelite hair, as an updated Lady That's Known As Lou, who ends up perched on massed male backs looking like the White Rock Girl.

The tenor of the Bach *Cantate* should have been making a joyful noise unto the Lord but the six bare-chested boys were dancing recitative rather than arias.

The piece was busy rather than joyful and Jean-Hugues Rochette's Doubting Thomas solo was merely athletic.

The closing work was *Alexis*, a Québécois folk-tale to a new score by Dominique Tremblay, about a young man given to sporadic bouts of insanity. It brought to mind a line from Blanche Dubois: 'They called me the dancing fool'—but lacked her pathos. *Alexis* was really two ballets: a humorous, slightly overdone rustic romp: Toussaint's answer to *Tam-ti-Delam*, a transitional mad scene and an engrossing but not always sustained duet for Robitaille and Manon Hotte.

Hotte, on loan from Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, also shone in the most interesting work of the evening, Oscar Araiz's setting of 17 of Chopin's Opus 28 *Préludes*. This was a North American première, *Préludes* having been created for Sao Paolo last January.

It was interesting for several reasons. First and foremost, and finally—two hours into the evening—there was a lot of dancing in it. Then, it was peopled by innately dramatic Araiz types: several Hamlets, a Miss Julie, perhaps a Juliet as well, silent onlookers, wispy hints of dark and doomed relationships, tangled webs, ambivalences, reverberating nuances. It engaged the imagination before a step was

taken. Then, so many choreographers have used the Chopin *Préludes*, most notably Jerome Robbins, that one watched it with double vision which added depth. For example, the *Prélude* No. 4, for which Robbins, in *Concert*, brings on the umbrellas and does a soft, melancholy piece in the rain, became in the Araiz version a contortionist solo for Robitaille. It was a clear, elliptical dance cycle which brought individual dancers into focus, particularly Lise Bernier and Mario Thibodeau. Coming as it did after an evening of densely packed nothing, it may have seemed more substantial than it actually was.

Certainly, it was a step in the right direction. Visionaries can be extraordinarily myopic when it comes to looking at themselves. Mr Toussaint has created a spirited young company, ready to sink their teeth into good material. It is a bitter pill to swallow, but what they need now, rather than the Swan Lake *Pas de Deux* in the works for next December, is an infusion of topnotch choreographies to give them form and content. A steady diet of Toussaint will starve them, and us, to death.

KATI VITA

Meridith Monk and The House

York University
Toronto

26-27 January 1978

Meridith Monk moves through a landscape of archetypal figures and precise, meticulously shaped events. She brought a glimpse of this world to snowbound York University in performance with her company, The House. The first programme included *Paris*, a collaborative work with Ping Chong, and *Raw Recital*, a solo for voice and piano.

Paris is a series of short vignettes and blackouts resembling a collection of still photos. Motions, awkward and angular, stay imprinted on space long after the man and woman in the piece have moved on. Monk plays a deliberately ambiguous character, a half man/half woman in a garish pink skirt and mustache. She moves with an insecurity, expressed as a very slick and funny bravado, as if she is trying to compensate for the disturbances inside her. Ping Chong plays the straight man to Monk's clown and often fades grey-suited into the background. The two of them gesture endlessly to each other over seemingly vast expanses of space. When they finally meet, they pass each other unseeing

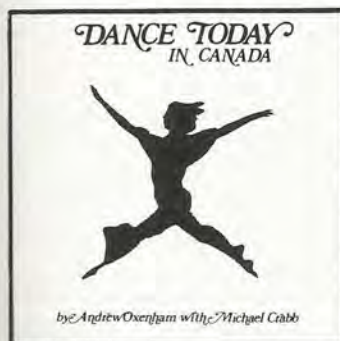
or Monk is propelled, skittering, off to the side. She returns to become a lame bird trying to fly or a panting steam engine, her arm consuming the attention of her whole body. The action grows disturbing as they circle the stage walking hand in hand. They sing in large church voices and wave to the crowds. Activities become more ambiguous as the couple goose-step upstage, lean against a door and begin to howl, as if begging to be let in. In the process Monk loses her mustache and gains a coat. They return downstage and retrace their circle walk. Their motions have become mellow, calmer and united in intention. Monk goes over to the pianist and taps him on the shoulder. Music and movement stop with startling concord. Meredith Monk and Ping Chong turn arm in arm to the audience and stretch out their upturned palms as if expecting rain. An answer? A question? Where before they looked to themselves and each other, they now turn to confront the audience with sparkling, mocking eyes.

Raw Recital gives us a totally different image of Meredith Monk. She sits at the grand piano, an elegant waif in black with long rippling red hair. Rocking from the base of her spine, she becomes entranced in the pulsating rhythms she is making on the piano. Her wordless words tell a story of sorrow and delight. Patterns repeat themselves as she sings higher than high, chuck-

les like a witch or bellows at the audience. These incredible sounds end in sudden silence.

In the second programme Meredith Monk premiered her new work *Plateau*. *Plateau* is about a woman performing the tasks of her daily life in the time and space of the barren plateau on which she finds herself. The props on this sparse landscape, a waterjug, a log, a cup, Monk's leather sandals and even her turquoise earrings, all have a function, if not a precisely discernable meaning. The piece begins as the woman, made large and round by her billowing white skirt, enters with a lantern in her hand. She moves towards us so slowly that her entrance is like a series of static images. Monk's movements are so deliberate and restrained that everything she does is charged with ritualistic meaning. She begins to move through the motions of her life, mapping out the limits of the flat plain before her. This woman, Mexican by her dress, begins to gallop on a horse and then becomes the bucking animal itself. She rocks a child, sings a breathy lullaby, tells a story and listens for an answer. Water images abound as the woman splashes and scrubs or preens her suddenly acquired rabbit whiskers. The quality becomes less playful as the woman squats to the ground and, looking skyward, appears to strike up a conversation with God. She sputters and fumes menacingly, invoking a spell or

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incantation. Then her tone changes, she sways from side to side, gentle and somnambulist. In a very long and poignant sequence she floats and floats around the periphery of the space. Finally, curling up like a cat, she goes to sleep. We hear a train off in the distance coming closer and closer. The Mexican woman sleeps on oblivious and it is hard to keep from running on stage and pulling her out of its path. But it goes by and the woman wakes up unscathed, to the still echoing silence. She looks about her and attempts some of the old movements in her no longer internal and private world, through which this incredible noise came crashing. She takes her lantern and leaves the way she came.

Tablet, the last piece of the evening, is a music work for three voices, recorder and piano. Three women in white lace blouses and coiled hair place themselves around the grand piano. They cup their hands in front of them like three proper ladies preparing to give a drawing-room recital. They take turns playing and singing, rocking back and forth like great pecking birds. It is hard to keep from joining in the mesmerizing rhythms, the clucking and cooing and falsetto conversations of these crazy ladies.

In Meredith Monk's work no two things happen at once; all the ideas are developed linearly and are remembered as a series of deliberate, restrained images. These images are like gems that can be carried with one for weeks. They are to be hoarded and taken out to gloat over.

KATHRYN BROWNELL

The San Francisco Ballet

Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver
16-18 March 1978

War Memorial Opera House
San Francisco
26 March and 4 April 1978

The appearances of the San Francisco Ballet in Vancouver were rather close to the heels of the National, which had brought the Cranko version of *Romeo and Juliet* to the city last November. Comparisons are inevitable, and I suspect that local audiences found Michael Smuin's version unladylike. Obviously he's seen the Zeffirelli film, for his Montagues and Capulets are young, sassy and full of beans. Even Juliet's folks are still youthful enough for some hanky-panky - Dad flirts with Rosaline, and Lady Capulet has a big thing going with her nephew Tybalt.

I find Cranko a gimmicky choreographer, and the Verona he creates for the National is populated with strutting Wasps. Smuin has put Shakespeare's characters back into Italy. It's the difference between bread-pudding and lasagne.

The lovely Diana Weber has the role of



Gary Wahl in *Shinju*

Juliet completely in hand. It has long been the property of ballet dowagers who present adolescence as a charade. Paula Tracy's Lady Capulet may seem a fishwife compared to Karen Kain's noblewoman, but at times it seemed that Miss Tracy had more vitality in her left pinky than the entire National Ballet of Canada at a mass blood-letting.

The San Francisco Ballet is blessed with a strong contingent of male dancers. Tomm Ruud is a boyish Romeo who can make prodigious lifts seem effortless. Weber becomes the proverbial feather with him. They're in love when they dance, too engrossed in the flow of movement for a preparation to announce each choreographic challenge their bodies must meet. Attila Ficzere is a pint-sized Mercutio. The Soviet influence in his Budapest training shows, especially when he's pitted against the leggy Anton Ness, who plays Benvolio like the boy next door. Ness is fun to watch (he must be the tallest male dancer on the boards) but Ficzere's continental embellishments makes him and most of the San Francisco dancers look like American tourists when he's there to create the contrast.

Smuin resorts to devices - a mirror scene for Juliet and a frozen tableau to bridge a lapse of time - which lend little to the whole. But his version has an effective,

driving pace, and his dance patterns are consistently imaginative. Vancouver received the production with a polite yawn, and the world passed judgment in June when the ballet was shown on national television.

I headed down to San Francisco to see the company in repertory. Smuin has done an engaging work called *Songs of Mahler*, using pieces from the 'Wayfarer' and 'Knaben Wunderhorn' cycles, with the alto on stage and the dancers creating exquisite effects in solos and small ensemble dances. Smuin recognizes Mahler's sweep and spirituality as well as his digressions into vulgarity. The delightful song on St Anthony preaching to the fishes finds Ficzere and John McFall bouncing in a grotesque lander, tossing the slippery Victoria Gyorfi between them like a frisky salmon. This ballet, and *Shinju*, will be mounted shortly for the Paris Opera Ballet - both are winners.

Shinju defies comparison with other ballets; the use of elements common to Noh drama makes the situations of the protagonists unclear without some written clues. Smuin has used a more expansive grafting of the genre to the ballet medium than Balanchine chose to use in *Bugaku*, and the results, in a climax of total theatricality are shattering. The ballet establishes Smuin as a major choreographer and one

determined never to be labelled as complacent.

Lew Christensen's works have a sunny quality which softens their intellectuality. He's the company's link to the past (the San Francisco Ballet is the oldest company in North America and began performing in 1933). Christensen was the first American to dance Balanchine's *Apollo*, and his assimilation of the neo-classical style has resulted in some lovely pieces for the company over the years. In mid-season he was represented by *Il Distratto*, a witty lesson in anatomy to Haydn's *Symphony No. 60*.

John Butler's *Three* was composed on blonde Lynda Meyer, who is usually associated with ingenue roles. The local press says it deals with sacred and profane love, but Butler is the last choreographer to be that simplistic. Miss Meyer emerges from a lonely bundle at centre stage to explore relationships with two men: a brisk, electric and potentially dangerous one with crimson-clad Vane Vest, and a languid, mutually caressing one with the nearly nude Dennis Marshall. Coupled again with her first partner, she finds her reflexes anticipating the responses of the second – and vice versa. Jerome Robbins dealt with a similar triangle some years ago in *Facsimile* which he suffocated with issues. Butler's exploration of the entanglement is rudimentary, and when Miss Meyer retreats into her safe bundle again, it's our nerve ends that have been tampered with, not our intellects. The music is Ginastera's *String Quartet, No. 2*; appropriately up-setting.

In *Trilogy* Tomm Ruud features his earlier ballet, *Mobile*, sandwiched by two excursions in human engineering set to extracts from Bartok scores. Khachaturian is incompatible with these, so the ballet does not hold together musically. Each segment is, however, a fascinating theatrical experience. Not unlike the Pilobolus Dancers, Ruud uses bodies to illustrate the principles of physics and architecture. In the opening segment twelve men explore pivotal relationships with the ground and one another's spinal columns. *Mobile* offers a man and two women in balance and counterbalance. The finale has Gardner Carlson hoisted into the air on ropes by four male dancers functioning as a single force as they guide him in a terrifying, kite-like journey.

The ballets of Smuin, Butler and Ruud demand involvement, and their imagery is so vivid that the fresh, gentle patterns created by the dancers in John McFall's *Beethoven Quartets* were cancelled out. The only jarring note in two exciting programs was Béjart's *Firebird*, and it was disconcerting to watch one of the most intelligent groups of young dancers take this idiotic conception seriously.

LELAND WINDREICH

Miriam Adams, Ace Buddies, Mimi Beck, Linda Rabin, Toronto Dance Theatre Workshop

Toronto
April 1978

Toronto experienced another deluge of dance during the last week of April. In the six days from April 25 to 30, there were nine different performances either overlapping or simultaneous. Almost every aspect of Toronto dance was represented, from modern ballet classics to animation and video, and it was impossible to take in everything – I tried! Reluctantly I had to omit the National Ballet School's performance, Joan Phillips' 'Pelican Punches and Just Joan Dances', and the second of two choreographic workshops by members of the Toronto Dance Theatre.

The workshops had been planned as a single programme to run four nights, April 25-28, but in a burst of creative energy, the company members produced enough material for two complete evenings. Some of it will endure: some may not. An example of the latter, though compelling nevertheless, was Ricardo Abreut's *Metamorphosis*, in which Charles Flanders, in brazen drag, sleazed around the stage to a raunchy Bette Midler record. Slowly stripping away lingerie, lashes and jewels, he reclothed himself in street attire and strode from the room, pausing to draw back a curtain and throw his silk dressing gown over the lifeless figure of a woman, slung unclothed across a chair – an eerie tableau echoing Dr Coppélius. Judith Miller's *Once and Once Again to the Right* was composed of a solo and a duet, both watched over by a mysterious, masked figure in black. Miller's solo combined subtle, idiosyncratic hip swivels with powerful lunges and thrusting limbs, all performed with arresting concentration. In the duet, two women mirrored and supported each other, the skirts of their summer dresses swirling about their legs as they carved wide arcs through the air. The programme ended with Dennis Highway's *Round Dance*, inspired by native Canadian ritual dances. The five dancers in buckskin leggings moved in an inevitable circle, at times slow and subdued, then growing in speed and frenzy, to the compelling rhythms of Highway's drum and the continuous sounds of the bells strapped to their ankles.

Linda Rabin presented *Women of the Tent*, a desert ritual, at Holy Trinity Church April 27-29. A sequel to *The White Goddess*, (1977) *Women of the Tent* is a further development of Rabin's interest in dance-plays, in which singing and chanting are as important as the movement. In the shelter of a vast macramé structure, which

creates at once tent and tapestry, four black-clad desert women work in the night, carding wool. Then the ritual begins. The women put their work aside and cleanse their hands with water from a brass vessel. They ignite a fire in a low brass dish and intone: 'This fire was born here. This fire lives here....' One woman carries the fire in a wide circle away from the tent, dancing with it, chanting to it. In turn, each woman worships another of the elements – earth, air and water. Michael Baker's accompaniment, sparse at first with hollow wood blocks and faint, brittle chimes, intensifies to a frenzy of cymbals as the four women spin hypnotically and fall to the floor. The ritual ended, they return to their work.

Much of the current flurry of activity in Toronto is the work of a growing, changing 'family' of dancers, who collaborate intermittently and support each other's work. Much of this activity occurs at 15 Dance Lab, operated by Miriam and Lawrence Adams. Miriam's *Watch Me Dance You Bastards*, presented at A Space on April 28 and 29, was constructed of elements well-known and love/hated by anyone who's ever danced. The Graham aesthetic was there in *Renderings*, with Elizabeth Chitty almost contracting herself out of angst-ridden existence to the congas of cool, macho Richardo Abreut and Lawrence Adams. The peculiar dynamics of partnering got its share of attention in *Icarus*, as Lawrence and Miriam made various assaults on the fish dive. In *Apocalypse*, Miriam performed intricate batterie in Wallabees and Lawrence executed credible triple pirouettes in Bermuda shorts. There was also tap dancing and a modern ballet with Terrill Maguire perfectly vapid as a poet's haunting lost love in a diaphanous shower curtain. The evening ended with *Spirits of the Soul*, described in programme notes as an adaptation of a play about daily life in the Pyrenees. In the Pyrenees, it seems, everybody dances.

The crowd gathered in The Music Gallery on April 29 to see *Dansk* was sparse, owing – I'm embarrassed to say – to the hockey playoffs! *Dansk* was subtitled 'An Evening with Mimi Beck,' and she treated the intimate gathering like guests in her home. The performance was postponed half an hour so that the guests could watch part of the hockey game on the video screens. Then Beck converted the screens to their intended use, showing, among others, *Sprang*, a video of people cavorting in fields of flowers and mud. As Beck explained, she comes from the 'foreign country of West Virginia,' where there is a fifth season of the year – *Sprang*. After showing an animation short, Barb Salsberg's *Opus 059*, in which a concert pianist demolishes his instrument with one overzealous *sforzando*, Beck asked the audience, 'Would you like to see it again, backwards?' We would, and we did. The genial evening ended with *Gems*, a circus

complete with ringmaster (Beck), unicyclist and acrobat. *Gems* evolved into a prom, and when the emcee announced that the next dance would be a 'snowball', the evening turned into an extended dancing party for the audience.

Ace Buddies proved themselves true friends of the dance community by scheduling one performance of *Avatar* on April 30, a date not in conflict with any other performance. Not only was their scheduling unique; the programme was as well. The three permanent Ace Buddies – Maxine Heppner, Robyn Simpson and Holly Small – choreograph with a mixture of sensitivity, love of play, and a sense of the absurd. Simpson's *I Remember What's-His-Face*, a pas de deux to 'Angel of the Morning' featuring Eric Bobrow and Holly Small, was spared any wistful sentimentality by the entrance of three showgirls in tuxedos. The characters in Heppner's *Absinthe* were set in place at the beginning of the piece by a 'bartender' and removed by him at the end. When they weren't dancing, they constituted the bizarre furniture of the Paris café, not unlike the permanent fixtures that habitués usually become. The most touching and sensitive work was Heppner's *Cradling*, performed with Holly Small. In soft-knit body suits, the two women lay on the floor like one spoon resting inside another.

Throughout the piece, the women held and carried each other tenderly, not so much as mother and child, but simply as two warm, caring beings. Coming at the end of a long week of dance, Ace Buddies' combination of tender calm and playful absurdity was rejuvenating. Ace Buddies...

But then one shouldn't have to be rejuvenated. Somebody has to find a way to schedule dance in Toronto so audiences can see everything and not have to exhaust themselves running frenziedly from dance to dance, night after night. Please, somebody. Help!

MARY FRAKER

City Ballet of Toronto Dansepartout

Centaur II
Montreal

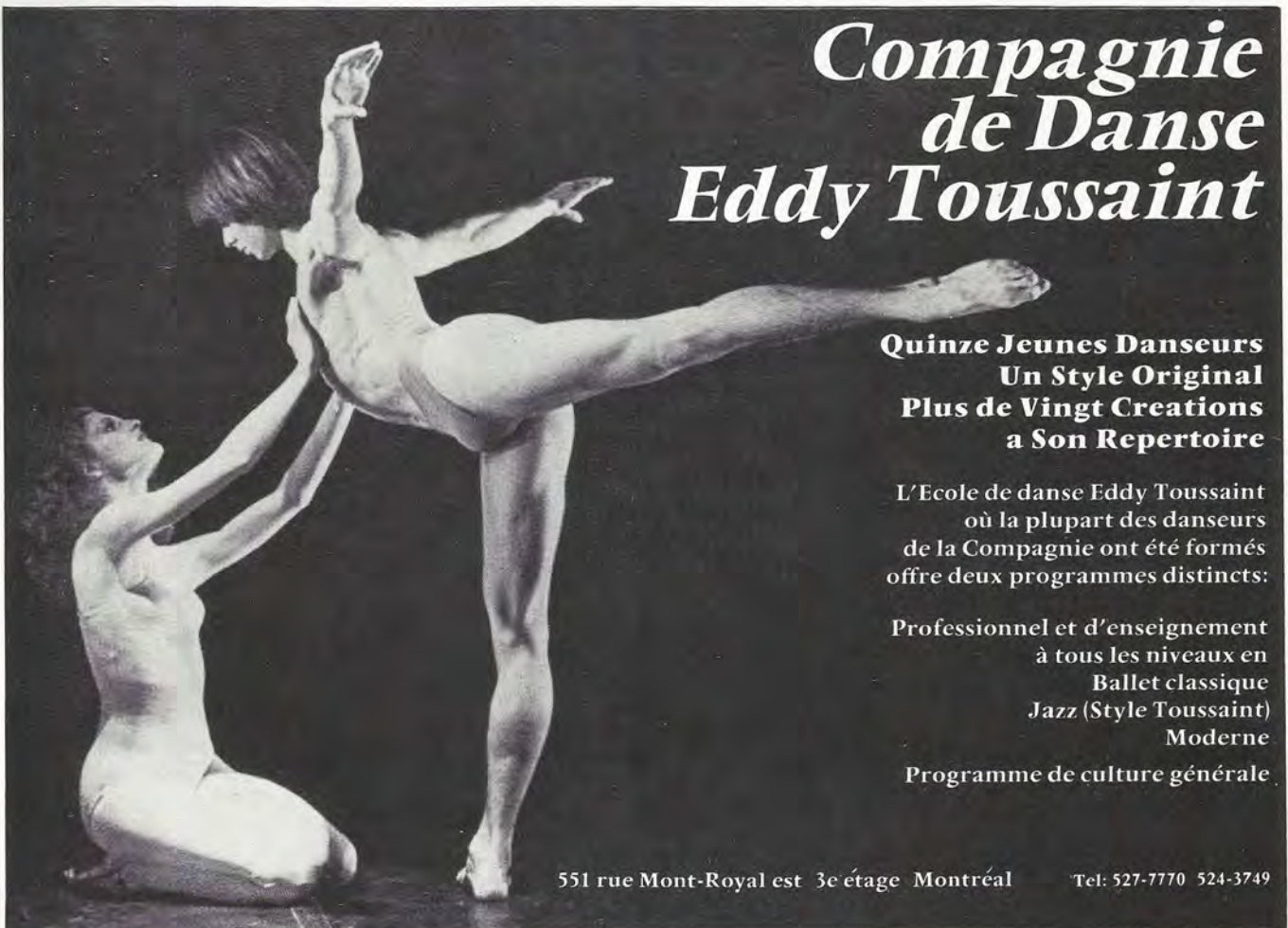
12 May 1978

With so many candidates to choose from I had long wondered why Marijan Bayer has apparently become the Toronto critics' favourite whipping boy. The answer came on May 12 when City Ballet of Toronto and Dansepartout from Quebec City made their joint Montreal début at Centaur 2.

Bayer is an alumnus of the National Ballet and a Vaganova disciple. Neither influence is overt. His four pastiches stranded the dozen dancers on a constricting stage without choreography or technique, nakedly exposed as a third rate troupe with absolutely nothing to say.

Concerto, to Vivaldi, was a series of transparently classical variations which quickly deteriorated into unintentional farce. Dancers had to check themselves in mid-flight so as not to overshoot the stage; insecure partnering almost let one dancer slip away during a pirouette; young men smiled ardently at backs of ladies' necks. Instead of fluidly linked motions, each movement was preceded by a pause and a grunt: de rieur in weightlifting but not the fragile stuff of balletic illusion. The final attitude was marred by an exaggerated stagger as two dancers inadvertently trod on each other's toes. The spirits may have been willing but the bodies were simply not up to it.

Pavane, to souped-up Ravel, was a featureless pas de deux in blue body-stockings. *Betrothal*, a decorous romance in apricot chiffon, evolved into troubled consummation, at odds with Bruch's highly charged cello score. *Echoes*, to indecipherable lyrics by Pink Floyd, was the longest of the lot: one of those dime-a-dozen 'modern' ballets with no raison



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d'être, in which joy, threat, alienation and resolution are wrought by strobe lights and decibels increased past the threshold of pain.

On this showing Bayer and his dancers are either the saddest collection of inepts ever to rent a theatre or hamfooted parodists along the lines of the Trockadéro boys. I hope it's the latter. Surely, they cannot be on the level. All in all, an embarrassing evening which ended on a note of swift sympathy as a harsh voice yelled '*c'est très mauvais*' in the dark. It was true. It was very bad. One ached for the dancers but the gratuitous cruelty of the moment highlighted the fact that the company was not only victim but perpetrator of its own total lack of self-criticism.

Chantal Belhumeur's two-year-old Dansepartout did itself no favour by sharing the double bill. After the Bayer fiasco it would have taken at least a Nureyev to infuse excitement into the night. Although the seven French dancers used healthy body English and there was a nice, whimsical touch to some of Belhumeur's choreography, her four works were aimless, non-descript trifles that bore no distinct signature. Drably costumed, haphazardly lit, the company harked back to its origins as a Grands Ballets Canadiens workshop but gave nary a hint of Belhumeur's Graham training or French formation except in its use of spoken poetry as 'music', an arid notion and insufficient to label the style 'French'.

Vainly searching for style, one followed a dozen red herrings up garden paths of inconsistency. Looking for structure, one found neither tension nor thrust. Waiting for development, one watched *Sans Titre* (elsewhere known as *Emergence*), *Iniji* and *Impulsions*, one much like the other, each of which meandered on and then simply petered out. *Surprise* was a tongue-in-cheek snippet about a clothesline come alive, but while the Hallowe'en-sheeted ghosts looked engaging, the choreography never got off the ground.

The gist of dance is movement. The gist of choreography is a uniquely personal

combination of movements. Dansepartout was peripatetic but never personal. Nor does its youth bode well for the future. As any parent will tell you, the personality is there, unmistakably, from the very instant of birth. Dansepartout, in its infancy, leaves no imprint on the mind. So what does the future hold: a bigger and better void?

KATI VITA

Ballet Nacional de Cuba

O'Keefe Centre

Toronto

26 June - 1 July 1978

When I plunked down seventy dollars for tickets to the National Ballet of Cuba, it was an act of moral support to a multiracial company that dances authentic classics in a communist country while taking ballet to fields and factories and building such huge dance audiences that even corps de ballet members are heralded in the streets. Ideals aside, though, I wasn't sure I'd enjoy the performances; I expected a few international prize-winning whiz kids, pedestrian versions of the classics, didactic modern works, and the great Alonso dancing roles she couldn't handle. But I found that: the company consists chiefly of astonishing dancers culled from 4,000 government-funded dance students; Alonso's productions of the classics are unsurpassed; even the junkier modern choreography is so well danced I don't much mind; and Alonso at (officially) 56 can outdance and out-act dancers 30 years younger. The Cubans are right up there with the New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, our own National Ballet; they're superb, although much in need of contemporary choreographers.

Space and time permit, alas, only a few sketchy impressions of the company. First, there's Alonso. Comparison with Fonteyn is inevitable: both matchless in their prime, they also age well. Fonteyn was, and is, the incarnation of English restraint, while

Alonso is Latin, flamboyant, sizzling in roles such as Carmen and Jocasta, sweetly flirtatious and then mesmerizingly ethereal as Giselle, archly seductive as La Péri. If Fonteyn is the archetypal English ballerina, so Alonso created the Cuban style in her image: the dancers are full-bodied, sensuous, exuberant, powerful technically and dramatically. Their line is both clean and lush, their attack is sharp, their extensions are so high you think they'll never come down. Everyone is a natural turner, it seems, and unsupported triple and quadruple pirouettes are common for the girls. Phrasing is intriguing if idiosyncratic. Linking steps are glossed over so that the double cabriole, the arabesque penchée, carry full weight - and indeed Alonso and her troupe sometimes go too far, holding a balance just a second beyond audacity or finishing an extravagant turn raggedly because they've gone for extra revolutions.

My taste was formed by the Royal Ballet, yet I don't find the Cubans garish, as I often do the Russians, from whom the Cubans have taken so much of the best. Instead, I'm overwhelmed by the Cubans' generosity, their humour, the expansiveness of their movement, the amplitude of their gesture, the way they surge across stage as if injuries never happen. I'm bowled over by the way the corps girls are freshly individual yet perfectly, even passionately, in line in the company's exciting (!) *Les Sylphides*. And the boys in *Giselle* hurtle into double turns and land in a good fifth position most of the time. Yet uniformity - or should we say harmony - is achieved without breaking the spirit: everyone cares visibly and intently about the performance, and where individuality is possible, it's rich and vibrant. The company, incidentally, seems to have complete artistic freedom.

These dancers put technique in its proper place: it's something you have to spend freely, even throw away, not something to worship. Hence there's sometimes a delectable tongue-in-cheek quality about the dancing, especially with great artists like Marta Garcia, Loipa Araujo, Jorge

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Jorge Esquivel and Alicia Alonso

Esquivel, and of course Alonso. They'll do a step to perfection while ensuring that you see how amusing they find it that they can do the step so well. This witty detachment is never misplaced, and it is devastating in Alonso's polished staging of the Coralli *Pas de Quatre* (with dancers like Araujo, Garcia, Mirta Plà, and Maria Elena Llorente, of course, you can't go far wrong). And when Esquivel does a parody of the *danseur noble* in the gem-like *La Péri*, when he carries satire of machismo to its ultimate as the fleshy Escamillo in *Carmen*, never raising his eyes above Alonso's breasts and seldom without at least one arrogant hand in time-honoured Latin greaser poised-for-pinching pose, when Alonso as Carmen flicks a foot or flourishes her fingers to tell us that Carmen is really acting a part too, the result is irresistible. The narcissistic pas de deux when Carmen and Escamillo teasingly delay their love-making is one of the raunchiest and most delicious in all ballet, though it's far from super choreography.

Choreography seems to be the company's only problem — yet I'd rather watch the Cubans dance trash than many other companies perform good pieces. Their classics (*Giselle*, *Coppélia*, *La Péri*, *Pas de Quatre*) are almost faultlessly realized — stylistically sound, logically structured, richly peopled and designed, utterly credible. But the modern works range from the abysmal (Ivan Tenorio's overly symbolic *House of Bernarda Alba*, with a few striking images but no steps) to the cutesy (Alberto Méndez' *Dolls*, a waste of the soft, supple, extraordinary Caridad Mar-

tinéz). Only two works were interesting: Méndez' *Tarde en la Siesta* characterizes four turn-of-the-century Cuban sisters, ravishingly danced by Josefina Méndez, Marta Garcia, Ofelia Gonzalez, and Maria Elena Llorente, and flamenco genius Antonio Gades' *Blood Wedding* is tautly constructed, tensely enacted, and proof that a limited vocabulary of steps (chainés, chassés, attitude turns) can, with suitable arm, head, and torso movements, be finely expressive and highly theatrical.

If only the Cubans had a first-rate choreographer to augment their already impressively broad repertoire! But they do have Alonso, they have dancers like Araujo, Méndez, Marta Garcia, Esquivel, André Williams, Martinez, and soloist Rosario Suarez, who is probably the most exquisite dancer imaginable, with enough ballon, speed, attack, radiance, and lyricism to stock a small company. No wonder so many Toronto dancers are asking about Cuban work permits; if anyone asks you, Joy is alive and well and dancing in Havana.

PENELOPE B. R. DOOB

Groupe Nouvelle Aire

Centaur II
Montréal
May 1978

Avec ses dix ans d'existence, le Groupe Nouvelle Aire est l'une des plus anciennes compagnies de danse moderne du pays.

Nouvelle Aire a donc acquis la maturité,

la sûreté, l'aisance, la confiance en ses rélaxations que cet âge confère à toute compagnie qui a réussi à surmonter les embûches, la pauvreté et autres tracasseries imputables à des débuts difficiles. Le GNA n'a pas échappé à cet état de choses et a mis bien longtemps avant de prendre l'élan et le dynamisme qui le caractérisent maintenant comme groupe hautement créateur et imaginatif au Québec.

Le secteur de la danse moderne lui est laissé d'ailleurs complètement libre à Montréal depuis le départ du Groupe de la Place Royale en juin 1977. Le GNA se singularise en outre par son caractère nettement québécois. En effet, sa directrice et fondatrice Michèle Epoque, n'hésite jamais à travailler avec des chorégraphes et des musiciens d'ici, de sorte que le groupe est fortement identifié au contexte francophone du Québec. Il recrute ses adeptes principalement chez les québécois d'expression française de Montréal, ce qui n'est pas le cas de toutes les compagnies de danse du Québec.

Le GNA ne faisant à peu près jamais de tournées, ni au Québec ni ailleurs, (et c'est un grand tort à mon avis), ses spectacles bi-annuels au théâtre Centaur du Vieux-Montréal prennent dès lors une importance singulière. En décembre et en mai, la compagnie présente donc ses créations, comme un grand couturier ses collections. Autant sa présentation de décembre 1977 m'a paru importante et riche, autant celle de mai se singularisait par sa frivolité, son audace, sa témérité, et son manque d'appoint. En effet, au programme des 5 et 6 mai derniers au Centaur 2 figuraient trois créations: *Derrière la porte un mur* de Paul-André Fortier, *Tubes* de Martine Epoque et *Le Nageur* d'Edouard Lock, dont les contours ont manqué de précision jusqu'au soir de la première. Les titres des chorégraphies, les thèmes musicaux ont changé à la dernière minute, révélant la hâte et le manque de coordination évidents d'une équipe qui présente habituellement des spectacles bien rodés et soignés jusque dans les moindres détails.

L'oeuvre la plus spectaculaire fut sans doute *Le Nageur* d'Edouard Lock, chorégraphe attiré de Nouvelle Aire depuis deux ans. Dernière oeuvre présentée au cours de cette soirée — et pour cause, sa réalisation demandant l'installation d'une piscine — *Le Nageur* propose des ébats aquatiques fort réalistes, où tous les danseurs habillés de jeans et de robes longues finissent par plonger dans la baignoire avec beaucoup de plaisir, semblait-il. Cette oeuvre explore le mouvement 'mouillé' et ses prolongements en gouttelettes qui s'échappent des corps en mouvement. Bien que la démarche semblait intéressante au départ, son intérêt fut quelque peu mitigé par l'insécurité que provoque la présence de l'eau sur une scène. Le fait que les danseurs puissent se briser des membres, ou les réflecteurs brûlants éclater au con-

tact de l'eau m'a gâté complètement le plaisir. Sachant que Lock ne fait que très peu de répétitions générales et change une foule d'éléments à la dernière minute afin de provoquer l'inédit tant chez les danseurs que chez les spectateurs, tout cela ne faisait qu'ajouter à mes craintes.

Le programme comportait également deux autres créations dont une première oeuvre de Paul-André Fortier, *Derrière la porte un mur*. Danseur au GNA depuis plusieurs années, Fortier est assurément un des piliers de la compagnie et cette création ajoutera certainement à son prestige. Très sensuel et intimiste, ce pas-de-deux s'élabore dans une dominante de blanc-blancher du mur sculpté par Françoise Sullivan, des collants à larges mailles, des éclairages très 'méditerranéens' par la clarté translucide qu'ils dégagent. Dansé par Fortier et Ginette Lorrain, sur la musique d'une sonate pour violoncelle solo de Kodaly, cette oeuvre possède tous les éléments d'un petit chef-d'oeuvre de lyrisme se jouant entre deux pôles d'attraction: une grande porte murée blanche et éclatante, et un plateau de cuivre rempli d'eau posé par terre, à l'autre extrémité de la scène et dans le quel la danseuse se mire et s'ablutionne à la conclusion de l'oeuvre, dans des mouvements de douceur et de grâce extrêmes. Cette oeuvre s'inscrit

donc, par sa thématique et son rythme, dans la plus pure tradition de Nouvelle Aire.

Enfin *Tubes* de Martine Epoque est une oeuvre mi-humoristique mi-sérieuse, faite de contrastes entre un couple qui s'ébat amoureuxment et une série de 'tubes animés'. Sur une musique électronique absolument démente de Bernard Pargémioni, cette oeuvre déplace constamment le centre d'intérêt du spectateur des tubes au couple et vice-versa, sans que le regard puisse jamais se fixer avec aise sur l'un ou sur l'autre. Alors que le changement brusque de style est très fréquent dans le théâtre oriental (du lyrique au comique et inversement), il l'est beaucoup moins en Occident, et l'essai de Martine Epoque ressemblait à cet égard d'avantage à un manque d'unité.

Bref, le spectacle du Groupe Nouvelle Aire provoqua des réactions très diverses chez l'auditoire et il suffisait de lire les critiques des différents journeaux de Montréal, le lendemain, pour s'apercevoir à quels niveaux, fort variés, l'émotion se dégageant de ces trois chorégraphies avait pu jouer sur chacun.

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Noticeboard

June 25 to July 1 the Canada Council convened a meeting of the Dance Sub-Committee with the artistic directors (or their representatives) of those companies who receive operating grants. The week-long conference was held at Stanley House, in the Gaspé. The session proved to be a 'free-for-all' enabling those present to air their views on the future of dance and to offer guidance concerning funding priorities for the next five years. Many of Council's programmes were examined and evaluations, suggestions and new ideas were advanced.

Eurythmeum Stuttgart will tour North America for the first time this fall. This dance form – not to be confused with Dalcroze Eurythmics – was originated by Rudolf Steiner in 1911 in Switzerland. Performances are under the artistic directorship of Else Klink and will be accompanied by the Romanian State Orchestra conducted by Ion Baciu, with poetry recitals given by Sarah Burton. The company will visit Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal during October and November.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Pacific Ballet Theatre – the only classical ballet company operating in British Columbia – gave its final concert of the season June 2 and 3 at the Queen Elizabeth Playhouse, thus concluding a very well-received spring tour of BC.

ALBERTA

Festival 78, the arts and culture programme of the XI Commonwealth Games in Edmonton, presented a Commonwealth Dance Gala on July 29 starring Lynn Seymour, Alberta-born prima ballerina of the Royal Ballet, in the premiere of a new work choreographed expressly for the Commonwealth Games by Kenneth MacMillan. Also performing were the Hong Kong Schools Chinese Dance Team, the State Dance Ensemble of Sri Lanka in their Canadian debut, the Dancers and Musicians of Bangladesh, Montreal's Entre-Six and the Alberta Ballet Company. The concert series closed August 11 with a special performance by Veronica Tennant and a varied representation of Commonwealth talent.



Marguerite Lundgren, Director, London School of Eurythmy

After spending the winter months in Turkey studying the dance and music of the Mevlevi Whirling Dervishes, Tournesol returned to Edmonton with new energy and inspiration. As well as presenting their own new work in July, Carole and Ernst Eder sponsored a number of Canadian dance artists, on their way to and from the Vancouver Conference, to perform at Espace Tournesol. The summer season coincided with the 1978 Commonwealth Games and Folk Arts Festival.

Last April the **Alberta Ballet Company** appointed Grahame S. Blundell as General Manager. Mr Blundell has a background in public relations, advertising and promotion and, before joining the company, was assistant director in the Hong Kong Government Information Services responsible for events such as the Hong Kong International Arts Festival and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra.

SASKATCHEWAN

Regina Modern Dance Works held an active summer session with many guest

teachers and performers. The series began with Peter Boneham and company members of Le Groupe de la Place Royale who gave modern dance classes as well as performances the first two weekends in July. Following the Ottawa-based company's visit were guest performances and classes given by Judy Jarvis, Roberta Mohler and Maestro Petri Bodeut. Of course, Dance Works also taught and performed throughout the session.

MANITOBA

This fall the **Royal Winnipeg Ballet** celebrates its Fortieth Anniversary with the best of its past and current repertoire and a new addition – *Les Sylphides*. The company traces its origins to the Winnipeg Ballet Club established by Gweneth Lloyd and Betty Farrally in 1938.

ONTARIO

Canada's 'first' **National Dance Festival** will be a five-week event to take place at Toronto Workshop Productions Theatre beginning September 19. Three different companies will appear each week while individual performances of a lighter more entertaining nature are scheduled for 11:30 pm. The festival, intended as an annual event, will present Halifax Dance Co-Op and Regina Modern Dance Works in their Toronto debut as well as Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers, Entre-Six, Paula Ross Dance Company, Anna Wyman Company, Le Groupe Nouvelle Aire, Le Groupe de la Place Royale, Toronto Dance Theatre, Danny Grossman Dance Company, Judy Jarvis, Dancemakers' Ballet Ys and Les Ballets Jazz. It is worth noting that annual Canadian dance festivals were held (1948-54) in various cities from Winnipeg to Montreal. In addition, there were several modern dance festivals in Toronto during the early sixties.

The first **Ontario Dance Conference** will be held December 1-3 in Toronto. Workshop/performance, master classes and seminars are planned as well as the regular Annual General Meeting of the Ontario region. One issue to be discussed is the 1979 Dance in Canada Conference to be held in Waterloo. Regional Officer Brian Robinson welcomes any ideas for format or content of the Conference sessions.

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Butterfly Dream, a festival celebrating the union of East and West, was held August 26-29 at the University of Toronto. This festival of the arts was presented by Al Huang, dancer and author, with flautist Paul Horn, author John Blofeld, and experimental filmmaker and poet James Broughton.

Since moving to Toronto in 1977 Canadian choreographer/dancer Zella Wolofsky has performed in numerous works by other Toronto artists. In May she presented a full evening of her own work at St Paul's Centre. *Back to Basics* consists of rhythmic and spatial variations on walking, falling, prancing, jumping, skipping, turning and spinning. In performing these seemingly simple tasks the dancers are freed from technique but not virtuosity. Dancing in unison and through long repetitions created both conceptual and physical challenges. Performing with Zella were Clare Whistler, Lisa Greenspan, Paulette Bibeau and Edith Looker. Henry Kucharzyk composed a piano, cello and percussion score for the final section of the work, and other parts were accompanied by Bently Jarvis' electronic music.

Early last May Roberta Mohler gave her first presentation as solo artist at 15 Dance Lab. Entitled *Cows, Coats, and Chakras*, the programme ranged in style from lyrical and sculptural to dramatic and consisted of two dances by Mohler and two choreographed by Peter Boneham and Jean Pierre Perreault, co-directors of Le Groupe de la Place Royale. Ms. Mohler was a member of Le Groupe for four years before branching out on her own.

Several other Toronto Artists presented their work at 15 Dance Lab over the summer. Among them was Paula Ravitz who, with dancers Karen Duplisea, Denise Fujiwara, Grace Miyagawa and Roberta Mohler, and musicians Michael Baker and Stuart Shepherd, gave us *Can't Stop Dancing: A Retrospective*. Included in the programme were group dances—*Immelmann's Turn* and *Cheeta*, as well as solo work by Paula. *Synaesthesia*, an interdisciplinary revue by Mimi Beck and Don Mac featured pieces for 'video and other senses' including *Beyond Post-Modern Dance*, *Gems* and *The Avant-Garde Saxophone in Concert*. Choreographer Elizabeth Chitty described her July concert at 15 as a 'non-narrative in a current events inclination'. Entitled *Demo Model*, it utilized performer, videotape, live video, polaroid and photocopier.

A-Space summer dance performances included works by Elizabeth Chitty, Janice Hladki, Johanna Householder and Paula Ravitz and Dancers.

This summer the National Ballet again gave performances at the Ontario Place Forum, presenting *Bayaderka* and *Sleeping*



Roberta Mohler

Beauty Act III. They also made appearances at Art Park and in New York at the State Theatre, Lincoln Centre.

This year's performance schedule will be highlighted by a tour of the Atlantic Provinces, Quebec and Ontario, and followed by the regular fall, Christmas and spring seasons at the O'Keefe Centre.

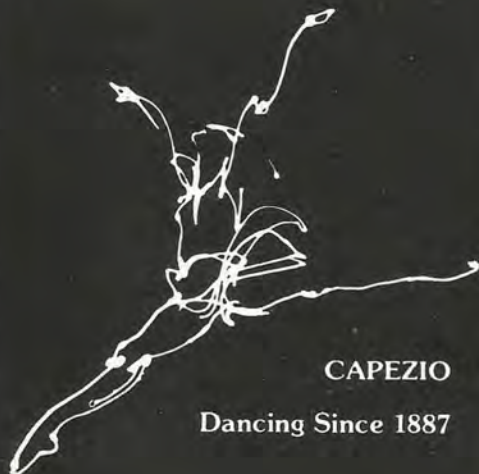
Soloists Clinton Rothwell and Luc Amyôt have been promoted to principal status.

After two years of financial insecurity tempered by a strong ensemble feeling and much vigorous dancing, *The Marie Marchowsky Dance Theatre* is no longer in operation. Ms. Marchowsky left in late June, apparently for New York.

At least six tribes of Native People from across the continent participated in an *Intertribal Music and Dance Festival* held in London, Ontario, August 12-20. Among the performers were the Plains Cree Hoop-Dancers from Saskatchewan, Inuit Throat Singers from Northern Quebec and Ojibway from Northwestern Ontario.

The Masters programme of York University's *Dance Department*, initiated in the fall of 1976, will produce its first graduating class this November. Graduating from the *Dance History and Criticism* programme, directed by Selma Odom, are Wendy Laakso, Sondra Lomax, Diana Theodores-Taplin and Mary Fraker. Joan Mallet will receive an MFA in Dance Notation.

The George Brown College summer school directed by Lois Smith featured guest teacher Terry Westmoreland and artist-



CAPEZIO

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Luc Amyôt at Ontario Place

in-residence **Monica Mason** who performed in *Swan Lake Act II*, partnered by David Adams and with Lois' students, August 9 and 10. Monica Mason is a celebrated artist of the Royal Ballet, the Swan Queen being one of her most popular roles.

QUEBEC

Les Ballets Jazz have been offered a six-week tour of South America this fall. For the occasion Brian Macdonald will create a new ballet, *Suite Française* to music by J.S. Bach. This work was to have been

presented last season, but had to be cancelled owing to the financial problems the company experienced earlier in the year.

Octobre en Danse, a fall festival to be held in Montreal, October 11-21, at Centaur II Theatre and at Place des Arts, will give Quebec audiences an opportunity to see companies and artists ranging from classical ballet and modern dance to experimental or 'new dance' - some appearing in Montreal for the first time. Apart from Murray Louis, all the performers are Canadian.

Le Groupe Nouvelle Aire closed this year's **Choréchange** with performances by le Groupe Axis, June 2, 3. In September Nouvelle Aire will participate in the Toronto Dance Festival. They will present two new works by Martine Epoque, *Pour conjurer la Montagne* and *Tubes*, and two works by Edward Lock, *Tempsvolé* and *Remous*. The company is also invited to perform at the Montreal festival, 'Octobre en Danse'. Planned for their February season at Centaur II are new works by Edward Lock and Paul-André Fortier. Next May, Montreal choreographer Linda Rabin will produce her first work for the company. Martine Epoque, in collaboration with Montreal composer Michel Longtin, will complete the second part of her trilogy of dance works.

NOVA SCOTIA

In July the **Halifax Dance Co-Op** hosted 'Chance to Dance' an intensive summer dance session. Guest artists were Jamie Zagoudakis of Prism Dance Theatre in Vancouver and Claire Bader of the Roland Petits Company.

Biographical text by David Mason, with captions
by Karen Kain.

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