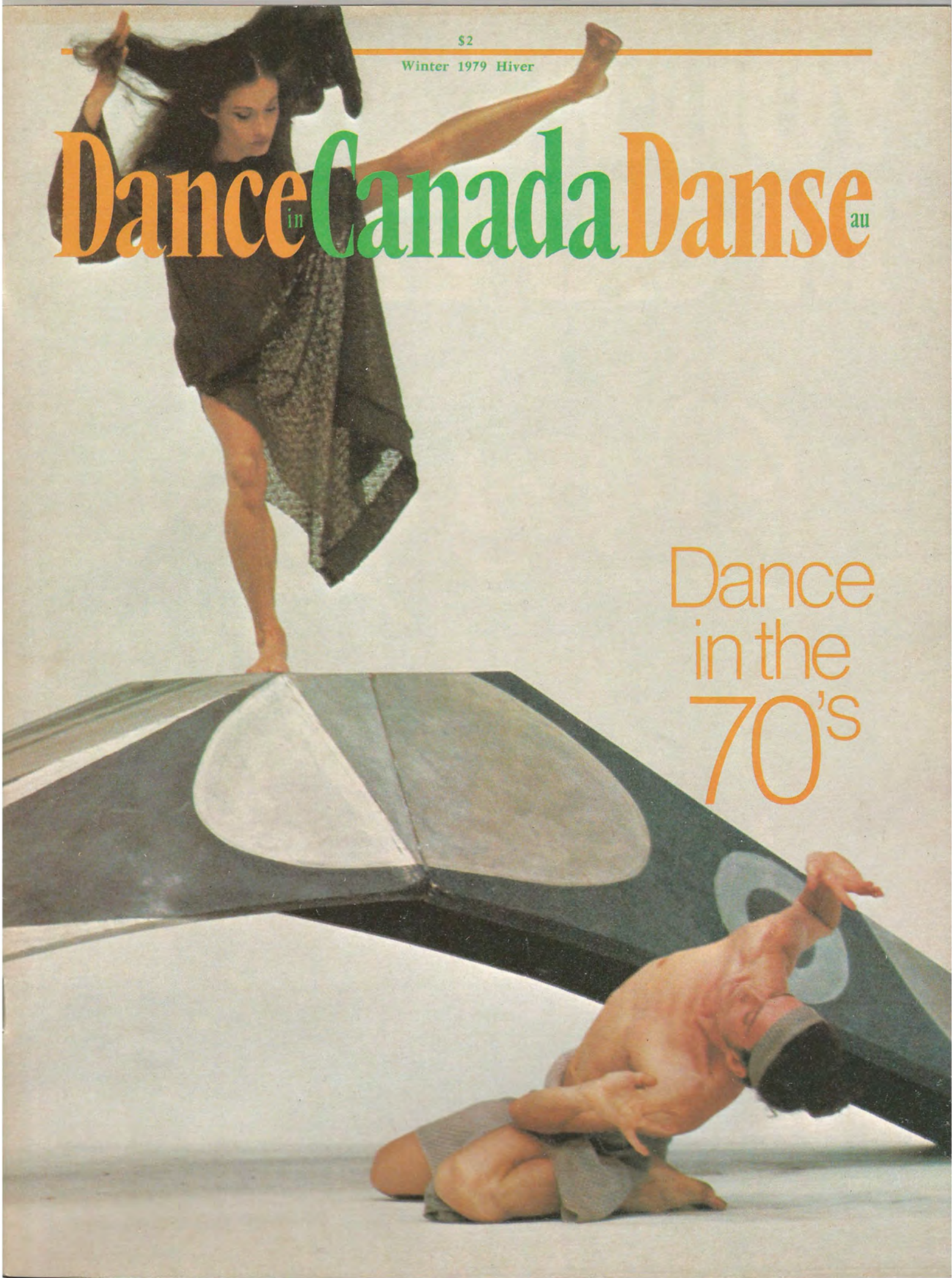


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# Dance in Canada

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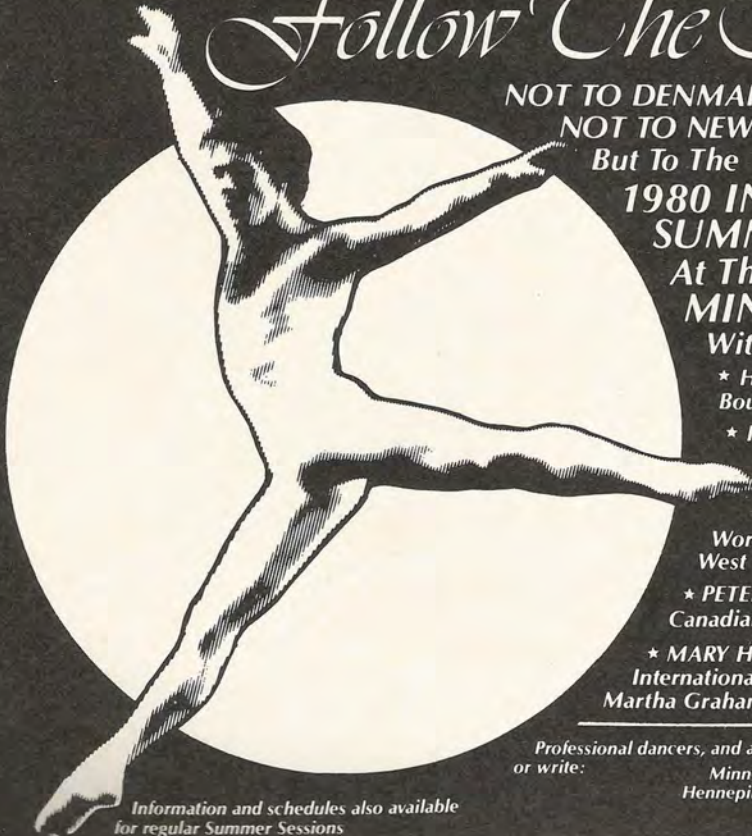
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## Max Wyman



# Dance in the Seventies

Some days (the survivors may eventually tell their grandchildren) it was like battlefields and trenches, like carrying a lonely flag. Other days it was like forging forward blowing bugles, not even waiting for the cavalry to catch up.

History will record it as The Great Canadian Dance Explosion of the 1970s – the decade when a performing art-form finally came to outsell a professional sport. You couldn't call it pioneering exactly; the groundworks had been down for years. But no one had taken that kind of notice before.

Why did so many people suddenly want to dance, or to watch other people dancing?

The 1970s dance boom has its roots on one side in the social change and economic expansion of the 1960s, the mass discovery of personal freedoms, with all its concomitant experiment, and on the other, in a stepped-up programme of cultural spending initiated by Canada's centennial celebrations in 1967.

The swinging sixties affected the lives of all of us. It was the era that completed the break between modern Canada and its Puritanical (if you like, Presbyterian) past. We withdrew the privilege of automatic respect from some of our most hallowed taboos. Sex became part of our acknowledged lives; self was allowed freer expression, and so was the body. It followed that dance, the art-form of the body, would attract new audiences and new practitioners – and not just those from the find-yourself-in-your-body 'centering' movements. It had what Susan Sontag characterized, and applauded, as a 'democratic' appeal to the senses.

And not just the senses. The opening-up process of the

1960s liberalized minds as it liberated bodies; audiences both opened up their receptiveness and increased their anticipations. Art was no longer confined by a corset of prejudice and prior definition; the non-literal and the abstract became acceptable – not only acceptable but understandable and enjoyable. A strange confidence stole over audiences; and in many cases form was able to replace content (Balanchine, Cunningham, Nikolais are easy examples of that) without the kind of outcry that would have been inevitable far less than half a century ago. Audiences were no longer intimidated by abstraction in dance, any more than they were intimidated by abstraction in the visual arts. They came to understand that they were free to bring their own interpretations to what they saw; they came to realize, as never before in this century, that the barriers are down, that artists are pursuers, with the rest of us, of common goals.

There's a corollary to this: dance has been able to become far denser in content. Choreographers, themselves fueled by society's changes, have been able to go further without so great a fear of losing their audiences. And if that has led, inevitably, to some self-indulgent excess, it has also brought about the growth of a vital and exciting network of experimenters.

Dance had a further appeal to the sixties generation – and it's an appeal that adds to dance's attractiveness even more today. It's a live-concert communication form – and that makes it precious not merely to the touch-me-feel-me whole-earthier, but to that wider portion of the public that is groping for some kind of human contact in an increasingly impersonalized world. When you watch a dance



company in the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, you're close enough to see them sweat. You're sharing an experience with people who are quite palpably real.

It's more than that, of course. There are those, in fact, who would argue that now more than ever the dance audience is partaking of the richest of all the arts – not merely because of the limitless freedom it currently offers both creator and interpreter, not merely because the audience is able to share physically in the act of performance, but also, and perhaps most important, through the synthesis of arts that it provides. Theatre, music, narrative, the visual arts and movement are all potential raw material for the creation of metaphor that offers an intensity of thought and feeling otherwise inexpressible in quite the same way. In dance at its purest (Graham, Ashton, early Feld, for example) the imaginative manipulation of symbols is carried to new heights.

There is a theory that the upsurge of interest in dance was a romantic backlash on the part of audiences against the 'difficult' and sometimes painful modernism of new music, theatre and visual art in the 1960s. According to this argument, the softness of dance, and its human qualities, were what most appealed to audiences making an instinctive retreat in the face of an avant-garde assault. It's an attractive idea, and in the case of classical ballet an argument might well be made on its behalf, but it falls down badly in the area of modern dance, which – today as ever – can be both viciously trivial and brutally jarring.

There are those who suggest that television had something to do with stimulating the growth of the dance audience. It may perhaps have played a part in recent years, but it had little or no effect at the earliest years of the current boom, at the time when it might have been of real help as a popularizer. Rather, it played its standard wait-and-see role, prudently commercial and steadfastly unimaginative – and then, five years later, when the trend to dance was well established, began to exploit it. In any case, I am by no means convinced that television is, even now, of much help. At best it is only able to whet appetites, and that often misleadingly. What you see on your television screen, whether it be a rendering of a work by Balanchine or Cranko or Graham, is only as good as the television director's imagination and intelligence will allow it to be (unless, of course, it is dance created specifically for television, which is an entirely separate art-form). And since far too many directors are only concerned with stroking their own creative egos, both choreographers and audiences tend to get short-changed.

Much more significant has been the influence of government – or, anyway, government money. When the Canada Council was launched in 1957 it gave away a total of \$2.7 million to all the arts. Today, dance alone gets about \$1 million more than that – and it's not nearly enough, as you're no doubt tired of hearing (or proclaiming). Committed to fostering excellence in all the arts, the Canada Council has helped to create, in Canadian dance, a monster it now finds itself quite unable to feed in anything like an adequate manner.

Dance activity has mushroomed in a way that would have been quite unpredictable even a decade ago. Along with the inflationary expansion of activity on the part of the three major ballet companies, we have seen the emergence of scores of smaller groups. Financial necessity is part of the reason for this trend. Under similar pressures,

the country's theatres are turning increasingly to small-cast plays. But it's more than money. Today's choreographers – particularly those who have been emerging in recent years from the university dance environment – are finding, as they explore their art, the need for an individuality of expression they don't find in larger companies. (They are also finding they need a greater flexibility of format to respond to the expanding new dance audience.) At the same time, many dancers are coming to reject the formality, and with it the security, of the large company. Some of them simply prefer the intimacy of the smaller unit; others (and this is a further manifestation of the breakdown of audience-artist boundaries that, again, began in the 1960s) have become more interested in working in creative collectives, contributing to the making of the event as well as its performance.

The same combination of reasons (lack of money, desire for creative freedom) has brought about the rise of the solo independents. Choreographers who earlier in the decade might have gathered around them a group of friends or believers on which to make or polish their work are increasingly choosing the loner's course, dancing in the alternative spaces and, in some cases, picking up the rare commission from established companies.

How, in the face of financial cutbacks that many believe are the heralds of a world recession, are the demands of all this new and established activity to be met? At best, it seems, inadequately – and it is ironic that, as we approach the close of one of the most fruitful decades of development in Canada's dance history, we stand liable to lose much of that advance through lack of ready cash. The effects of the tightening of government purse-strings (new limitations, tough new criteria) have forced many of the new arrivals to seek for themselves. Some haven't survived; some have survived on reduced terms. We can all name companies we know that are delivering far short of their potential for want of financial security. Inevitably, the situation has split the country's dance forces into the haves and have-nots, with both sides drawing their wagons into defensive circles. On occasion, the mood has been ugly. The annual conference of the Dance in Canada Association (itself a potent testimony to the new forces at work) has been loud with the indignation of the underfunded. It has been difficult, at times, for those involved to remember that big, in itself, is neither intrinsically virtuous nor intrinsically reprehensible (nor automatically un-Canadian) – or that small, for that matter, is not automatically to be despised or exalted.

The Canada Council is in a bind, all right. The money shortages make it look insensitive to the needs of the dance community; they have also given it a reputation for favouring the obviously successful. Of course, it would be idiotic to cut off funds from companies that have grown out of years of careful nurturing (just as idiotic, in fact, as to say their funding should be maintained without close, continuing re-evaluation). At the same time, the new mouths cry out to be fed. Somehow, the council has to find ways to redress the balance. The established and the unpopular, the traditional and the experimental, all need fair and adequate treatment. If the Canada Council cannot show the way, how is the dance community ever likely to be able to attract the increased public-sector support that governments are now insisting must be found?

You get the feeling that this fighting over funding (such a



messy business, survival) has been a real debilitator. It has sapped much of the energy and attention that should have been devoted to the dance community's primary task – the continuous development of the dance art itself. The boom was convenient. It let us match, in a mere 10 years, growth and ground-breaking that took 40 years in the United States, and the raising of audience sensitivity undeniably helped the rapid development of a number of good, small touring companies.

But Canadian dance is still light-years away from maturity – and I'm not referring to anything as grandiose (or as unlikely) as the creation of an indigenous Canadian dance culture.

In any but the most parochial of terms, dance in this country is still at its earliest beginnings. Our companies are desperate for competent management, the overall level of performance could stand a steady raising, and we still have to come to first grips with the problem of how to bring on and nurture our choreographers.

The period of expansion is over. Now, surely, dancers, choreographers, funding agencies, audiences, all have an obligation to bridge gaps, to make common cause to find common solutions, to celebrate the diversity of what they have, and the potential for growth within that diversity. Otherwise, what were the seventies for?

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# LOOKING AT LEGS

Individual variations in the structure of the legs have long been of concern to dancers and teachers alike. As early as 1760, Noverre commented that the *jarreté* (knock-kneed) dancer displayed flowing lyrical movements in contrast to the *arqué* (bandy-legged) dancer who possessed speed, elevation and a facility for beaten steps. He emphasized that these diametrically opposed characteristics must be trained differently. The loose-limbed knock-kneed dancer must be taught, for example, to keep the knee joints slightly flexed while maintaining an appearance of full extension, whereas the bandy-legged dancer must be encouraged to keep the knees very taut. Blasis' 1820 treatise corroborates Noverre's comments and suggests that dancers whose physiques tend toward knock-knees may pursue both serious and demi-caractère parts by virtue of their greater delicacy of movement and ease of execution, despite their characteristic lack of strength. Dancers who tend toward bandy legs, he suggests, are more suited to demi- or full character roles, since they are usually thick-set and strong but less flexible.

Today we possess a deeper understanding of the boney, muscular and ligamentous structure associated with various leg deviations, but Noverre's early observations still hold true. Students with serious structural problems should be discouraged from pursuing professional careers in dancing for various reasons. Not only will they never achieve the necessary 'line', but their deviations may predispose them to serious injury as they attempt increasingly advanced work, especially if they adopt inappropriate methods of compensating for their weaknesses. Students with moderate structural problems, (indeed no one has the mythical 'perfect body'), must be given very careful consideration and individual guidance to determine appropriate methods of correcting, improving or concealing the defect. Good dance training has, in many cases, been seen to correct certain physical defects, as, for example, in the case of the young Alicia Markova. But how many cases go unrecorded when poor training weakens and worsens the susceptible student?

How does the teacher assess leg deviations? How great a deviation can be allowed? Which problems can be corrected and which merely disguised? And how? Which deviations cause aesthetic problems and which actually impair the dancer physically? To which type of injury are specific leg structures prone? These are only a few of the questions which confront the dance teacher each day. The answers are largely a matter of educated judgement since little research has been undertaken in the area. Understanding the anatomy of the lower limbs will certainly assist the teacher and student in finding some solutions.

## Leg Structure

Each lower limb consists of the thigh, the leg and the foot, (see Diagram 1a). The thigh bone (femur) is the longest, strongest bone in the body and is designed to permit maximum mobility and support during locomotion. In order to accommodate the stresses placed on the femur in weightbearing and during hip and knee actions, its cylindrical shaft is bowed forward and outward. The head of the femur articulates with the pelvis at the femoral joint, a ball and socket joint permitting a wide range of movements, (see 'Turn-out' Issue #17). It is interesting to note that the femoral joints are closer to the centre of the body than is generally appreciated — only about a hand span apart. This is owing to the angle between the axis of the shaft and that of the neck of the femur which directs the femoral head inward, upward and slightly backward. In the adult, the angle between the femoral neck and shaft is 125 degrees and the angle between the neck and frontal plane (the angle of anteversion, literally the angle of turning forward), is 10 to 25 degrees. The smaller the angle of anteversion, the greater the natural 'turnout' of the limb, since the shaft of the femur lies closer to the frontal plane of the body, (see Diagram 1b). The femur is connected to the tibia at the knee joint, a modified hinge joint permitting flexion, extension and a slight amount of rotation during flexion. The tibia is the second longest bone in the body and serves as the principle weightbearing bone of the leg.



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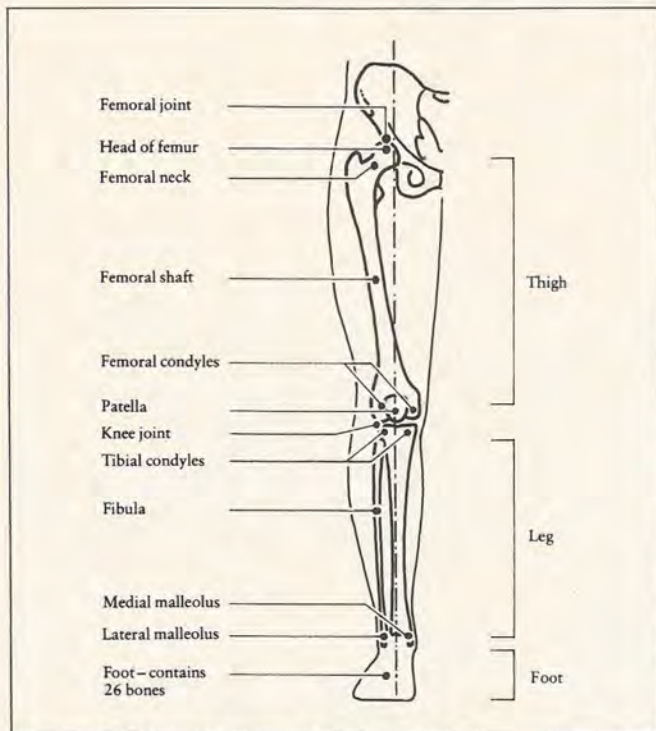


Diagram 1 a) Skeletal structure of the lower limbs

(Note that the term 'leg' here refers to the portion between the knee and the ankle.) The tibia is located on the inner side of the leg and bears wide upper and lower ends which receive the femoral condyles and the talus of the foot, respectively. The long slender fibula lies outward from the tibia and articulates with it at its upper end just below the knee joint and its lower end where it completes the surface which receives the talus to form the ankle joint. Both upper and lower tibiofibular joints are strongly braced by ligaments. The area between is connected by a strong sheet of fibrous tissue called the interosseous (literally, 'between bones') membrane. The oblique downward-and-outward arrangement of these fibres aids in diffusing the forces placed on the leg during weightbearing and locomotion. (The structure of the knee, ankle and foot will be described in subsequent articles in this series.)

The major muscles of the lower limbs form its contours. The leg characterized by a rounded thigh and calf tapering to the knee and ankle, for example, possesses muscles with relatively short muscle bellies (the fleshy part) and long tendons (the connective tissue joining muscle to bone). Although diet and exercise can alter the amount of fatty tissue in the leg and the girth or cross-sectional area of the muscles, the actual leg contours are genetically predetermined. In assessing the student's legs, the teacher must learn to see beyond the soft tissue to the bony structure beneath. Overdeveloped leg musculature often complicates correction of alignment problems by making it difficult not only to locate bony landmarks but also to modify the deeply entrenched habits which caused the muscular imbalance.

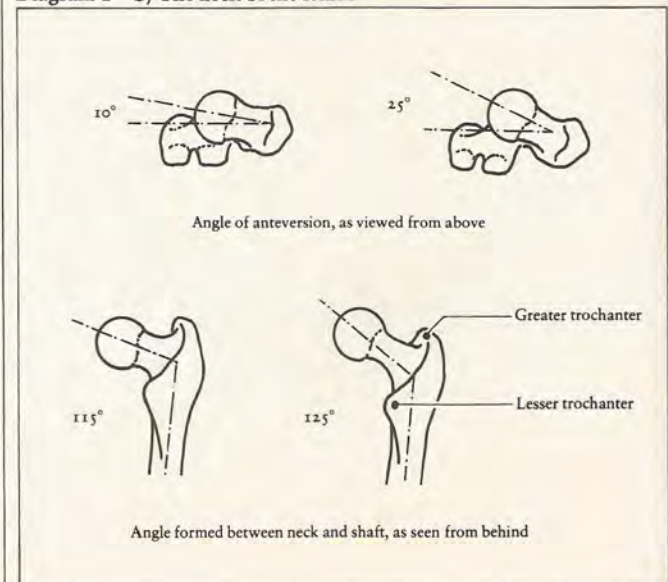
### Alignment and Structural Deviations

In the structurally well-aligned leg, a plumb line seen from the front passes through the centre of the hip, knee and ankle joints, (see Diagram 1a). Seen from the side, a plumb line passes through the centre of the hip joint, just behind

the patella (kneecap) and just in front of the lateral malleolus (outer ankle bone), (see Diagram 2a). When these conditions are not met, the efficient weightbearing capacity of the lower limbs is diminished, and total body alignment is affected accordingly.

The common deviations which occur when the first condition is not met are knock-knees and bowlegs. Knock-knees or *genu-valgum* is an orthopedic disorder which may present a serious hazard to the knee. The plumb line passes lateral to (that is outside) the centre of the knee joint owing to the inward angling of the thigh and leg. The body weight is therefore borne largely by the medial aspects of the joint surfaces. This unequal weight distribution subjects the medial collateral ligament to considerable stress and renders the joint more unstable and prone to injury. The condition can be detected by directing the student to stand with the legs slightly turned out and the insides of the knees together. A gap of more than one inch between the heels indicates a slight knock-knee. Sparger suggests that a gap of more than two inches will greatly handicap advanced work. Knock-knees are more common in females. Their naturally wider pelvis accommodates a smaller femoral angle (i.e. less than the normal 125 degrees) and a consequently greater inward slope of the thigh (see Diagram 1b). Knock-knees are often associated with an outward rotation of the thigh, low longitudinal arches, pronated ankles and everted feet. Dance teachers refer to this foot misalignment as 'rolling in' or 'sickling in'. In young children (aged three to five), the legs may appear knock-kneed owing to unequal development between the inner and outer condyles of the femur, but the condition disappears as the bones mature. For this reason, it is imperative to avoid stressing developing bones with difficult elevation or pointe work which will only worsen existing deviations. If the condition does not disappear by age ten, it must be considered structural and is unlikely to improve. Although strengthening the leg musculature may help, the bony deviation results in an inefficient application of forces throughout the lower limb and a consequently lessened effective thrust in elevation and pointe work. Continued practice may lead to knee and ankle problems.

Diagram 1 b) The neck of the femur





Bowlegs or *genu varum* is the opposite of knock-knees in that the plumb line falls medial (that is, inside) the centre of the knee joint and the weight is borne through the lateral aspects of the joint surfaces, placing increased stress on the fibular collateral ligament. The dancer with bowlegs is unable to bring together the insides of the knees, and sometimes the ankle bones, while standing with the feet together and parallel. While knock-knees are more predominant in females, bowlegs occur more frequently in males. In some cases the bowing occurs in the tibia, but more often the deviation occurs in the femur: the shaft curves outward more than normal and the condyles face slightly inward rather than forward. Associated deviations may include inwardly rotated thighs, hyperextended knees, high longitudinal arches, supinated ankles and inverted feet. The foot misalignment, often referred to as 'rolling out' or 'sickling out', reflects the tendency to transmit the body weight or to apply force against the floor through the outer aspect of the legs and feet, a tendency which may cause particular problems in pointe work owing to the poor lateral stability of the ankle joint. Although the condition cannot be corrected, it can be disguised through proper muscular coordination. The bowlegged dancer should stand with the feet parallel and together, (with the body weight shifted well over the balls of the feet to prevent the knees from pressing backward), and concentrate on rotating the entire limb outward so that the posterior surfaces of the thighs, knees and calves approach each other, while the feet remain firmly placed on the floor. It is remotely possible that with years of practice begun early in life the curve of the long bones may alter slightly. Unlike the weak knock-kneed dancer, the bowlegged dancer often possesses strong legs and consequently good elevation, a truth that has been noted since the time of Blais. Bowlegs are more an aesthetic than a functional imperfection, since the inturned thigh and curved leg visually distort the classical line.

Tibial torsion is a deviation to which dancers are particularly prone, owing to the incorrect execution of 'turn out'. This condition can be detected by examining the position of the kneecap in relation to the hip and ankle. When the kneecaps face forward the feet and ankles may be observed to face outward or, conversely, when the feet and ankles face forward, the kneecaps are seen to face inward. This condition may develop as a result of incorrectly turning the feet outward from the ankle or knee joints to compensate for a lack of natural turnout from the hip joint. When lateral hip rotation is limited by a muscular imbalance (weak lateral rotators and tight medial rotators of the hip), appropriate exercises to strengthen or stretch the hip rotators will be beneficial. The condition will improve only through correct realignment of the three weightbearing joints, and a resultant balancing of the leg musculature. In most cases this can only be achieved at the sacrifice of a 180 degree turnout—a false goal in any case. Not only does tibial torsion lead to ligamentous strain at the knee and ankle and to muscular imbalance throughout the leg, but it also results in the inefficient application of force, greatly reducing the effective thrust of the legs for elevation and pointe work. The following image may be helpful in correcting tibial torsion, (see Diagram 3). In an erect position with natural turnout, visualize a plane of glass vertically bisecting each shin, and another vertically bisecting each thigh. The lower plane extends outward and

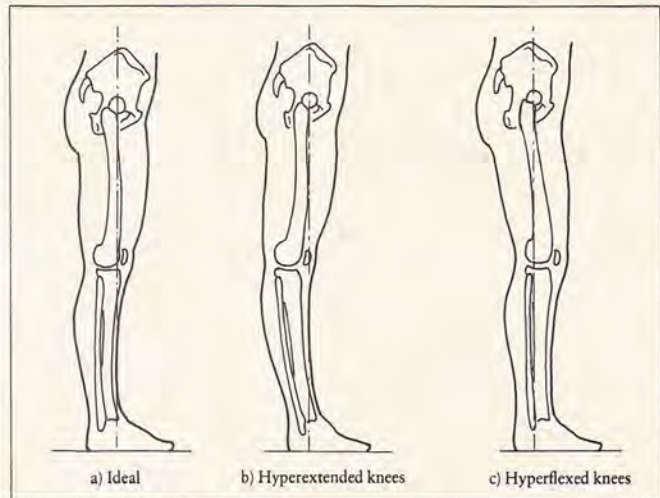


Diagram 2 Leg alignment—sideview

the upper plane extends inward. Watch the planes move until they line up, one directly above the other, in line between the first and second toe of each foot. This image to realign the bones of the lower limb may also be used during weightbearing movements such as *plié* and *fondu*.

When a plumb line seen from the side does not pass through the centre of the hip joint, just behind the kneecap and just in front of the outer ankle bone, (see Diagram 2a), the resultant deviation is either a hyperflexed or hyperextended knee. In the former condition the plumb line falls well behind the patella (see Diagram 2c). The dancer is unable visually to straighten the leg although the knee joint may be fully extended. The knees appear 'knobby' and the legs always look bent. When this inability to extend the knee is associated with tight hamstring muscles, stretching exercises may help. The flat back stance which often accompanies hyperflexed knees may also be improved in this way.

The opposite condition, hyperextended knees or *genu recurvatum*, occurs when the plumb line falls well in front of the patella and the calf appears to bow backward, (see Diagram 2b). The condition is easily identified when a student standing in first position with the legs stretched and the knees together displays a gap of several inches between the heels. Hyperextension is also detectable during the *rond de jambe à terre* when the student cannot pass the working leg through a correct first position. Similarly, the student experiences difficulty in closing from *à la seconde* to fifth position behind without the calves bumping. In leg extensions this structural deviation produces a beautiful long curve and the appearance of a well stretched leg. Most authorities agree that it is not harmful to hyperextend a non-weightbearing leg, but during weightbearing such a practice can lead to severe problems. Although aesthetically pleasing, the leg is characteristically weak and unstable. Sparger and Gelabert suggest that hyperextended knees may be a remnant of infantile bowlegs, and that they may result from incorrect early training in which the child has pressed the kneecaps backward in response to the familiar direction, 'Pull up the thighs'. The constant stress on the ligaments behind the knee has caused them to stretch permanently and thereby lose their stabilizing capacity. Natural selection may also account for a predominance of hyperextended knees in ballet dancers since the aesthetic preferences of classical ballet



favour this long curving leg line. Students who have 'loose' knee joints and are thus most susceptible to the deviation are often encouraged to pursue serious studies, when they should instead be warned of potential problems.

Moderate cases of hyperextended knees will benefit from careful training which emphasizes correct body alignment. Since the condition is very often accompanied by a sway back (lordosis), correction of pelvic alignment is of prime importance. It has been noted in previous articles that in the sway back stance the body weight is thrown back onto the heels. This is particularly deleterious to the student with sway back legs, since it causes the knee to snap backwards passively, that is in response to gravity and without muscle involvement. Gravity accentuates any deviation in alignment. Once the knees extend past 180 degrees, gravity will tend to further extend them until passive body structures (in this case, bones and ligaments) limit further extension. To prevent this, the pelvis must be vertically aligned and shifted forward so that the body's centre of gravity is over the ball of the foot and not the heels. The limbs must not be stretched 'straighter than straight' but should be braced muscularly. Owing to the loose structure of the hyperextended knee, the joint surfaces do not lock and the ligaments are not taut at 180 degrees. Slight muscle tension in the muscles of both the front (quadriceps femoris) and the back (hamstrings) of the thigh is needed to stabilize the joint. This co-contraction causes the muscle belly of the thigh muscles to visibly lift upwards, a phenomenon referred to as 'pulling up the thigh'. It may be helpful to visualize the kneecap moving outward and upward toward the hip crests, never backward. These adjustments will no doubt seem initially strange to the student - the body weight will feel too far forward and the knees will feel bent. As the new muscle coordination is reinforced through repetition, the legs will become more stable and the overall body placement more comfortable.

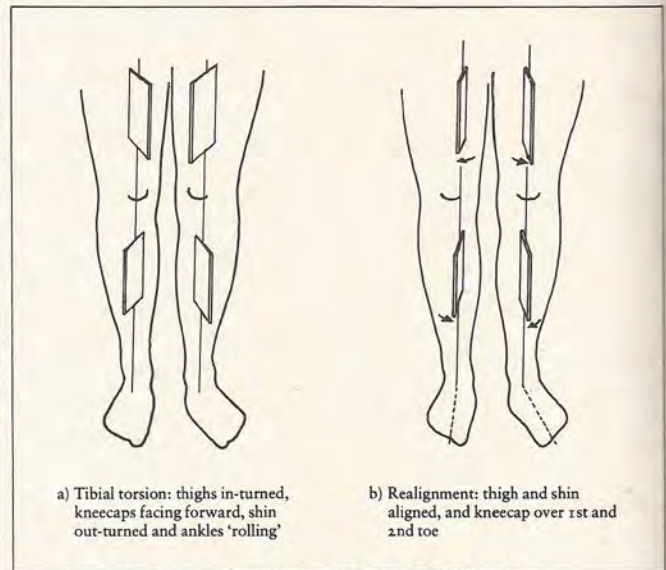
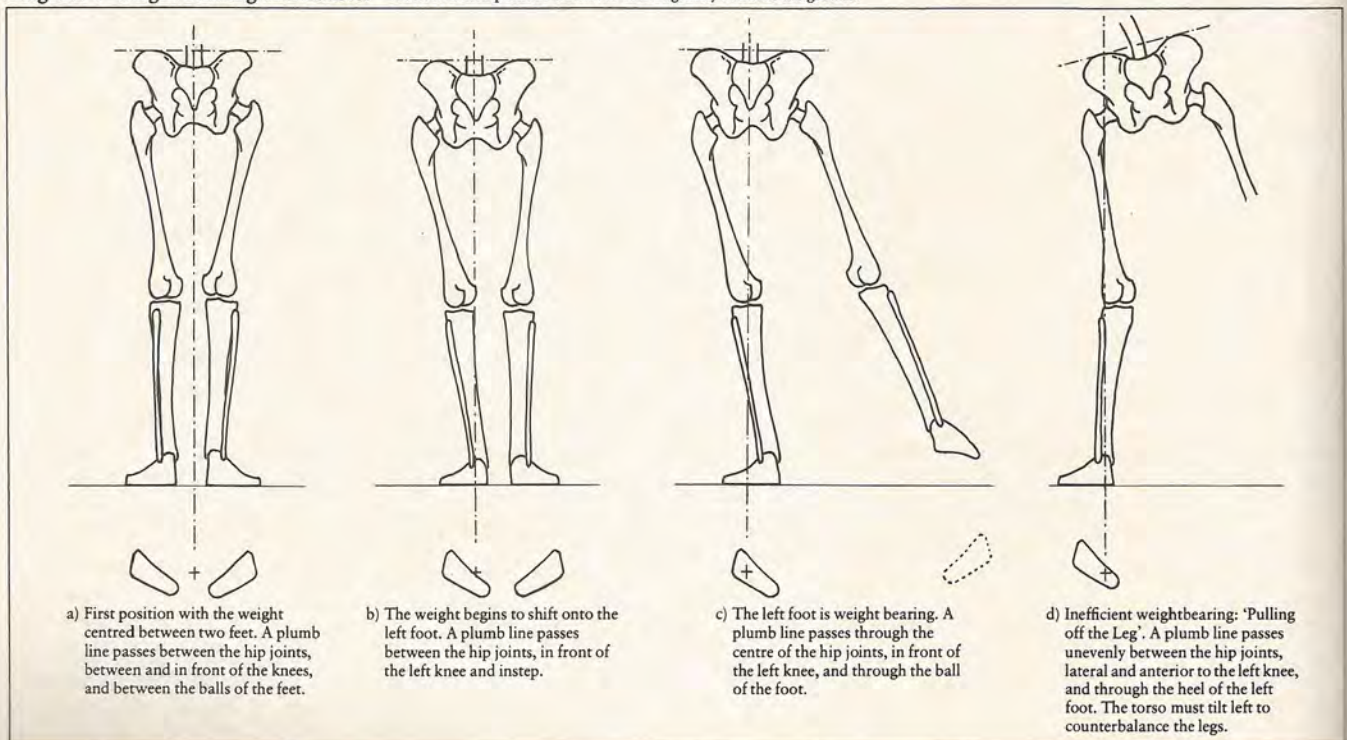


Diagram 3 An image to realign the leg with tibial torsion

**Weight Shifts and Leg Extensions**

In the standing position the line of gravity passes exactly between the two feet or, in case of first position, between the balls of the feet, (see Diagram 4a). For the sake of mobility, the weight is shifted forward in the dancer's stance, so that locomotion can readily occur in any direction. According to mechanical laws of balance, a shift of weight from two legs to one necessitates an accompanying shift of the body parts so that they remain balanced over the new base of support. This can naturally be accomplished by tilting the body away from the released leg, a practice which violates balletic conventions calling for a vertical torso. The technically correct adjustment must involve a horizontal shift of the pelvis as a unit, carrying along the erect well-balanced torso. For this reason, it is

Diagram 4 Weight centring and transfer Note: X marks point at which the line of gravity contacts the ground.



a) First position with the weight centred between two feet. A plumb line passes between the hip joints, between and in front of the knees, and between the balls of the feet.

b) The weight begins to shift onto the left foot. A plumb line passes between the hip joints, in front of the left knee and instep.

c) The left foot is weight bearing. A plumb line passes through the centre of the hip joints, in front of the left knee, and through the ball of the foot.

d) Inefficient weightbearing: 'Pulling off the Leg'. A plumb line passes unevenly between the hip joints, lateral and anterior to the left knee, and through the heel of the left foot. The torso must tilt left to counterbalance the legs.



self-defeating to try to hold the pelvis immobile during *tendus* or *glisses*. Although it is possible to use the barre to support the off-balance position which results when the hips are not shifted, it becomes impossible in centre work. Through dance training the student acquires the fine control necessary to maintain the pelvis as level and squared as his physical structure will permit. To sense this control, use the image of the plane of glass as described in the previous article in this series, (Fall, 1979). Regardless of the weight shift, the horizontal plane of glass passing through the pelvis just below the hip crests remains parallel to the ground. An inability to keep the hips level may be a problem of fine control, but it also may result from tightness in the ligaments and muscles of the front of the thigh which prevent the necessary hip adduction with lateral rotation. The dancer may alleviate the uncomfortable stretching sensation by 'pulling back' in the hip joint, that is, flexing or turning in. It is this tilting and twisting of the pelvis that is to be minimized. Adjustments are necessary when the free leg is extended *derrière* (requiring a slight transverse pelvic rotation to direct the leg straight back), or raised past a certain height (requiring a tilting of the hip crests). It must be emphasized that, while 'squaring the hips' is the theoretical ideal, it is often a physical impossibility. Each individual's physical structure will determine the extent to which he can approach this ideal.

The normal range of motion for the hip joint varies according to the individual's innate muscular, ligamentous and skeletal structure and also to his degree of training which can alter the strength, flexibility and coordination

of the leg muscles. Sparger states that in the average person with the knee extended and with legs naturally turned out, the thigh can be flexed forward about 60 degrees, adducted outward about 40 degrees and hyperextended backward about 15 degrees purely at the hip joint. To my knowledge no published studies have investigated these values in dancers. It is likely that they would be higher owing either to the process of selection or to the training methods involved in ballet and modern dance. Further increases in leg height reflect rotations of the pelvis on the supporting hip joint. It is therefore easy to understand that high extensions necessitate strength and flexibility not only in the leg muscles but also in the muscles of the lower back and abdomen. Regardless of the pelvic adjustments, the alignment of the leg should not be lost. The plumb line falling through the centre of the appropriately positioned pelvis should also fall through the knee and the ball of the foot. When this condition is not observed, the dancer is said to be 'pulling off her legs', (see Diagram 4d). Here the plumb line passes unevenly through the pelvis and outside the knee joint causing the susceptible knee to snap backward into hyperextension and the weight to be transmitted through the heels. The torso must tilt away from the raised leg to counterbalance this position. Correction of the fault involves careful placement of the hips and muscular control of the knee joint.

*(Concluding articles in this series will focus on the structure of the knee, ankle and foot and on the mechanics of leg action.)*

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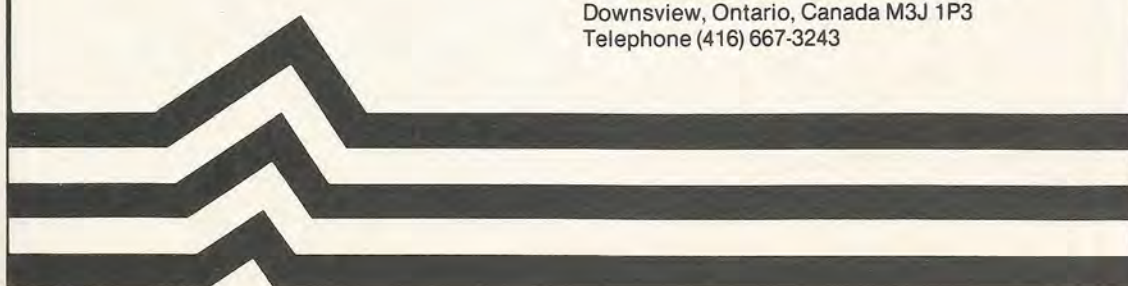
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Graham Jackson

# FACADES

## The Work and Times of Miss Anna Blewchamp

The Fiesta Restaurant has always been the Fiesta Restaurant. As long as it has lived at Bloor and Yonge, it's been a booth-and-counter affair – the sort of place American realist painters immortalized in the forties and fifties. Today, when fashions are recycled as fast as paper and glass, these diners ('greasy spoons', as they were once known) have been adopted by the nouveau chic as the last word in stylish rendezvous. Whether its the stark efficiency of the decor or its concessions to the industrial kitsch of plastic, chrome and arborite that make the Fiesta so popular with the avant-garde of fashion is finally an unimportant question: popular it is.

Many of the Fiesta's habitués belong to the species identified as punk, which in Toronto is not the nitty-gritty working class fraternity it is in London, but yet another manifestation of the 1970s craving for a 'style' to call its own. Although the Fiesta's punkers make pointed references in their dress and attitude to fifties bikers or English Rockers (who in the early 1960s were Montagues to the Mods' Capulets), these they render impotent with streaks of Rocky Horror hues in their hair – mauves, pinks and grasshopper-pie greens, with feathered earrings and red plastic sandals, with painstakingly cultivated emaciation.

Sitting in a booth at the Fiesta one fall Friday afternoon, Anna Blewchamp considered the surreal images around her and questions whether they aren't specifically designed to fend off real communication, real connection.

Anna Blewchamp is an habituée of the Fiesta, too. Plainly pale and thin, with brittle wrists, a smile that seems to be forever retreating into some Brontëan resignation and a tempest of garnet-coloured hair, she could well belong to that assemblage of lost souls Edward Gorey portrays in his *Leaves from a Mislaid Album*. Like a Gorey heroine too, Blewchamp is very much The Outsider; she frequents restaurants like the Fiesta and its relative downtown, Peter Pan Lunch, to imbibe the atmosphere rather than participate gregariously in a social ritual. She drinks her wine, eats her soup and smokes numerous cigarettes, all the while watching out of the corner of her eye the steady comings and goings, prepared to flee if she has to.

Actually, Blewchamp's connections to these places are somewhat more intricate as the founder of Peter Pan and current owner of the Fiesta, the blonde, vaguely tragic looking Sandy (Toulouse-Lautrec might have painted her) used to share a house with Blewchamp; more than that, Blewchamp was her confidante. Nowadays, Blewchamp lives just along the street from the Peter Pan, in the heart of the Queen Street village. A tenacious observance of connections past, though, is at least one of the elements in her nature that draws her regularly uptown to Sandy's new emporium.

Anna Blewchamp





There's another connection too. The theme of both the Fiesta and many of Blewchamp's dances is fashion. The thematic affinity is of course another reason Blewchamp can often be seen at the Fiesta. Where the Fiesta reveals its obsession with fashion is primarily in the physical appearance of the people it caters to, Blewchamp directs hers towards, appropriately enough, genres of dance. In *Terminal*, *Baggage* or her more recent *a.k.a.*, Blewchamp regales us with affectionate anecdotes from the repertoire of 20th century social dancing: charleston, jitterbug, 1940s ballroom, disco. Styles of concert dance as opposed to social dance are the predominant target in *Homage*: jazz and tap, Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey brands of modern, and Petipa, Balanchine and Agnes de Mille brands of classical ballet – among others. These works reflect Blewchamp's own eclectic training – she studied ballet at the Rambert school and Luigi jazz with Matt Mattox in her native London and Graham technique at both the Graham school in New York and at Toronto Dance Theatre; and also demonstrate how extensive – one might say consuming – is her interest in dance as fashion. Into her nostalgia for specific dance styles, however, Blewchamp drops several hints that she thinks these too often become inhibiting and stultifying, that they lose their original purity of intention and exist as regulators of a status quo; in other words, fashion or style becomes mere facade.

Blewchamp is fascinated by facade, too. She remembers being taken as a child to Shepperton Studios, where she was to be an extra in a Joan Crawford tearjerker called *The Story of Esther Costello*, and finding herself overwhelmed by the movie sets, streets of houses and shops, Greek columns – facades all. Her dance *Baggage*, takes the theme of fashion-as-facade and elaborates on it; a Humphrey Bogart-Lauren Bacall turn around the dance floor, prefaced by a disembodied discussion of feminine hygiene, becomes a metaphor for fossilized social attitudes about womanhood and romance. In the succeeding section of the dance, two couples engage in a blunt mating dance in which the women, knees unbending, are cantilevered by their partners into a horizontal position parallel to the floor. There is no real connection in these lifts, no tenderness certainly, no feeling; grim determination is the chief component. Dance as a medium for social interaction isn't even pretending to hide its decadence behind a veneer of acceptable shapes; it is confessing its own perverted emptiness and the emptiness of the sexual roles it has so faithfully served. Many of Blewchamp's dances shock us with similarly harsh and unfeeling connections of bodies to bodies.

In *Fata Morgana* (made for Ballet Ys) and *Marathon*, the dancers are not caught up in the whirl of social dancing with its accompanying socio-sexual roles; using an epigrammatic language that falls between the allusiveness of the dance vocabulary in *Baggage* and the emotional intensity of *Arrival of All Time*, they search for a new way of connecting. Like the skin of an onion, layer after layer of facade must be peeled off before real connection can be formed, however. If the duo in *Fata Morgana* look like students of Braille as they try to decipher the obscure signals in one another's eyes and lips; if the 'athletes' in *Marathon* appear destined to advance (or is it to retreat?) forever alone, oblivious of all except their own isolation, it is only Blewchamp's caution, melancholy and resignation precluding resolution.

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Hommage

With the central figure of the writer in *Arrival* or the personae Blewchamp invented for Susan MacPherson and Janice Hladki's solos performed last February at the Art Gallery of Ontario as part of its Independent Choreographers series, the crumbling of facades has happened just before the dance begins or else happens as we watch. These works ask us to endure an explosion of identities that is jagged, piercing and merciless.

In spite of its rock'n'roll soundtrack, Hladki's solo turns into a genuine Victorian mad scene where a barretted, ruby-lipped heroine, one moment simpering and posing like a coy figurine, begins the next to flail through a litter of books and shoes and, as suddenly forsaking them, devotes her straying faculties to preparing a vile concoction of bananas and raw eggs, grinning like the ghastly Bertha Mason as she slices and cracks. Although it, too, seems to be a study in the deterioration of a personality, MacPherson's solo is not frenetic or exuberant as Hladki's is; as her facade crumbles – and we see her pulling at her face as though it were a rubber mask – what emerges is a deeply repressed woman straining for release. A kind of chaos ensues – frightened turns, a lunge to the ground, unresponsive limbs – but it's a mild chaos; MacPherson never really loses her grip. Like a Katherine Mansfield character – Miss Brill with her fox furs, perhaps – she clings, without really wanting to, to the porcelain handles of so-called civilized society.

Unquestionably a masterpiece, *Arrival of All Time* graphically delineates the ceaseless struggle in a novelist's mind as characters squirm and wriggle into life and she tries, quite physically, to control them so they don't bleed her dry. But, as the writer smokes her cigarette or vacantly brushes her hair, the turmoil she has unleashed with her pencil grows too great to rein in; the inner world takes over. She grows thinner, tenser, more brittle and, finally, like a schoolmistress faced with a class of impossibly unruly students, she abandons her minor Frankensteins to

support certain 'administrative decisions' made without her concurrence. Her association with the company as choreographer will of course continue. At present she is planning to revive material from an old duet she was particularly fond of and has begun work on two major projects, a choreographic re-telling of *Alice in Wonderland* and a dance-drama about the Brontë sisters both for Dancemakers. The \$3,000 that accompanied the honour of winning the 1979 Chalmers Choreography Award will allow her some measure of security as she works.

Then she has numerous other passions to fill the hours she no longer has to spend playing artistic director. I first met Anna Blewchamp when she and her puckish companion Bill Kimber came to the City Hall Library one Friday afternoon in May, 1973 searching for books on jewellery-making. Today she makes sad-faced, enigmatic puppets – one of these in fur cap and rich blue blouse sat with its back to Susan MacPherson throughout her solo at the AGO, radiating for all its assumed indifference a complementary aura of desperation – and she makes boxes. Sometimes she considers performing again – who that saw her can erase the furious impact of her *Lady in Red* in the premiere engagement of Peter Randazzo's volatile *Nighthawks*. But it's an idea she usually shakes off with a morbid shudder. With all these activities to draw on her time and energy, she will still find several hours a week when she can check out her favourite haunts.

At the Fiesta, Dionne Warwick is singing *Anyone Who Had A Heart* ('could take me in his arms and say that he loved me'). Anna Blewchamp raises her eyes from her soup and glances towards the counter. There, a boy with canary yellow hair and sunken cheeks smokes a joyless cigarette, restless under the weight of his leather jacket. For a second, her glance sharpens and she seems to penetrate his facade. Under such a glance, you're surprised he doesn't do a backfall off his stool. But no, he only twitches slightly not knowing why and Blewchamp's attention returns to the carrot soup in front of her.

Since this article was written, Anna Blewchamp has announced that she will not be working with Dancemakers this season.





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their wilful devices. Blewchamp's meaning is as succinct as nettles: the facade of the artist is pre-eminently vulnerable.

It's hardly surprising after the AGO solos that Blewchamp should seek relief in creating a tribute to popular dancing like *a.k.a.* which made its debut during Dancemakers' 1979 spring season. Even *a.k.a.* though has its serious aspects. In it Blewchamp raises the issue of snobbery, the snobbery of the concert dance crowd vis à vis pop dance (including jazz and tap) and wonders whether pop dance isn't more direct, more real. She doesn't seem to find any answers to her musings, presumably because she recognizes the opportunities for 'faking it' in pop dance as well as on the concert stage. After all, she doesn't monitor activities at the Fiesta with her eyes shut.

Unhappy with *a.k.a.*'s premiere, Blewchamp now plans to present a reworked version during Dancemakers' 1980 season complete with sets and new costumes. Blewchamp's association with Dancemakers spans four years and for the last couple of seasons, she has worn the cap of artistic director. Finding it an ill-fitting cap, she finally removed it in September, declaring that she was unable to support certain 'administrative decisions' made without her concurrence. Her association with the company as choreographer will of course continue. At present she is planning to revive material from an old duet she was particularly fond of and has begun work on two major projects, a choreographic re-telling of *Alice in Wonderland* and a dance-drama about the Brontë sisters both for Dancemakers. The \$3,000 that accompanied the honour of winning the 1979 Chalmers Choreography Award will allow her some measure of security as she works.

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rapatra, who accompanied the performer 1978 cross-Canada tour and with almost as an adopted daughter – while . Her understanding of that style derives ning to his stories of his own dancing life l lessons in technique. Now as more ne into existence to meet the demands of

learn the indigenous dance of another culture, there is not only a new vocabulary of movement to learn but also changes in approach to understand and digest. The actual sensation of dancing can be somewhat similar and yet the whole context in which the dance takes its shape generates a different mode of thinking about dance. It is through the training of a dancer that one can penetrate to some of the aesthetic and philosophical principles on which the dance is based and unlock some of the secrets contained within the refined performance.

As in other areas of Indian life, the heart of Indian dance training is rooted in the relationship between teacher-guru and student-disciple. For the greater part of its history dance in India was a tradition handed down through a family or caste of dancers and musicians. A child automatically followed in the footsteps of his ancestors. He was exposed to dance and music at a very young age and his artistic talents were nurtured within the family setting. The one-to-one relationship of student to master took the parent-child relationship as its model, and included instruction in matters pertaining not only to the art but also to all other aspects of life. About 50 years ago when the dance was in danger of falling into obscurity, certain individuals from outside the caste of dancers and musicians took a vital interest and sought out the old and traditional teachers. Once accepted as students they went to live with the guru in order to learn in the time-honoured way.

It is still possible to study in this manner: Menaka Thakkar speaks with great warmth of her Odissi guru,

a growing interest in dance as an art, the intimate master-student relationship becomes increasingly rare. Nevertheless it is still central to the transmission of the traditional art and life.

Classical Indian dance demands long and rigorous study; 10 years is the normal time required to master the fundamentals of the technique and to learn a basic repertoire. As in ballet, flexibility and strength are carefully developed through learning basic steps, though the attention is quickly turned to perfecting the execution of complex rhythms and subsequently to mime, through which expressive abilities emerge.

To highlight the variety that exists within India itself, it is worth looking at some of the special features in the training of two principal styles: Kathakali, the dance-drama from Kerala, which is almost exclusively performed by men, and Bharata Natyam which is generally presented by a solo female dancer. The Odissi style, although very distinctive in its quality of movement, involves a learning process similar to that of Bharata Natyam.

### Kathakali

The main school of Kathakali dance-drama was founded in the first quarter of this century by the great Malayali poet, Vallothol. He was never a dancer himself but devoted his life to the revival of the dramatic art. His school, situated near the town of Trichur on the west coast of India, is also the home of the best known Kathakali performing company.





Rosemary Jeanes

## The World of Indian Dance: 2

## Obedience and Dedication

## THE MAKING OF A DANCER

One of the advantages of being a ballet dancer is the fact that you can take a class almost anywhere in the world and feel at home. Whether the spoken language is understandable or not, the idiom of the dance creates a common ground transcending linguistic barriers. I have experienced this in Japan and Kenya, also on the more familiar territory of New York and Europe. But when you decide to learn the indigenous dance of another culture, there is not only a new vocabulary of movement to learn but also changes in approach to understand and digest. The actual sensation of dancing can be somewhat similar and yet the whole context in which the dance takes its shape generates a different mode of thinking about dance. It is through the training of a dancer that one can penetrate to some of the aesthetic and philosophical principles on which the dance is based and unlock some of the secrets contained within the refined performance.

As in other areas of Indian life, the heart of Indian dance training is rooted in the relationship between teacher-guru and student-disciple. For the greater part of its history dance in India was a tradition handed down through a family or caste of dancers and musicians. A child automatically followed in the footsteps of his ancestors. He was exposed to dance and music at a very young age and his artistic talents were nurtured within the family setting. The one-to-one relationship of student to master took the parent-child relationship as its model, and included instruction in matters pertaining not only to the art but also to all other aspects of life. About 50 years ago when the dance was in danger of falling into obscurity, certain individuals from outside the caste of dancers and musicians took a vital interest and sought out the old and traditional teachers. Once accepted as students they went to live with the guru in order to learn in the time-honoured way.

It is still possible to study in this manner: Menaka Thakkar speaks with great warmth of her Odissi guru,

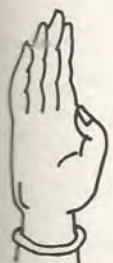
Kelu Charan Mohapatra, who accompanied the performances during her 1978 cross-Canada tour and with whom she lived – almost as an adopted daughter – while studying in Orissa. Her understanding of that style derives as much from listening to his stories of his own dancing life as from the actual lessons in technique. Now as more formal schools come into existence to meet the demands of a growing interest in dance as an art, the intimate master-student relationship becomes increasingly rare. Nevertheless it is still central to the transmission of the traditional art and life.

Classical Indian dance demands long and rigorous study; 10 years is the normal time required to master the fundamentals of the technique and to learn a basic repertoire. As in ballet, flexibility and strength are carefully developed through learning basic steps, though the attention is quickly turned to perfecting the execution of complex rhythms and subsequently to mime, through which expressive abilities emerge.

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**Kathakali**

The main school of Kathakali dance-drama was founded in the first quarter of this century by the great Malayali poet, Vallothol. He was never a dancer himself but devoted his life to the revival of the dramatic art. His school, situated near the town of Trichur on the west coast of India, is also the home of the best known Kathakali performing company.



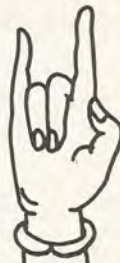
PATAKA



TRIPATAKA



ARDHAPATAKA



KARTARIMUKHA



MAYURA



ARDHAGANDRA



ARALA





Student actors are generally drawn from the higher Nayar caste where a literary background in Sanskrit and the local language, Malayalam, can be assumed. This would include a familiarity with the poetry and myths on which the dramas are based. A boy 10 to 12 years old begins his training on a suitably auspicious astrological day with ritual ceremonies designed to obtain the blessings of the gods, the elders and the teacher. From that point onward his life is ruled by the strict discipline of the dance.

The daily regime is demanding. In the early hours of the morning, about three o'clock, the students gather round an oil lamp to begin their eye exercises. Under the watchful guidance of the master they place a little *ghee* (clarified butter) in the eyes to make them more agile and mobile. Then, with thumb and forefinger, they stretch the eyelids open and begin to work. The eyes are moved in straight, horizontal and vertical lines, on the diagonal, and then in circles and figures of eight. At first another student will trace the patterns in front of the one exercising so he can firmly concentrate on an outside object until he develops the strength to move the eyes independently. The exercises are sustained even when the eyes begin to water from the strain of being kept open. This is considered healthy and likened to perspiration which cleanses the eyes. (I did these exercises for a month with a Kathakali teacher visiting New York and found a remarkable improvement in the steadiness and clarity of my own vision.) Later these eye movements are coordinated with hand gestures for the expressive purposes of the drama.

Next, each student is given a special type of massage. Oil is applied to the body and various exercises are taught as a warm up. Then the teacher suspends himself from a rope above the student and begins to knead every muscle in the boy's body with his feet—a process that takes about half an hour. This practice of massage was adopted from the older system of military training, which, incidently, has also exerted influence on the fighting scenes in Kathakali drama. During the rainy season actors undergo a full course of massage with medicated oils according to a system that has been developed to renew energy and rejuvenate the body.

A period of intensive rhythmic practice precedes an eight o'clock breakfast. Then the morning and afternoon are devoted to learning the gestures and movements that comprise the dance-dramas.

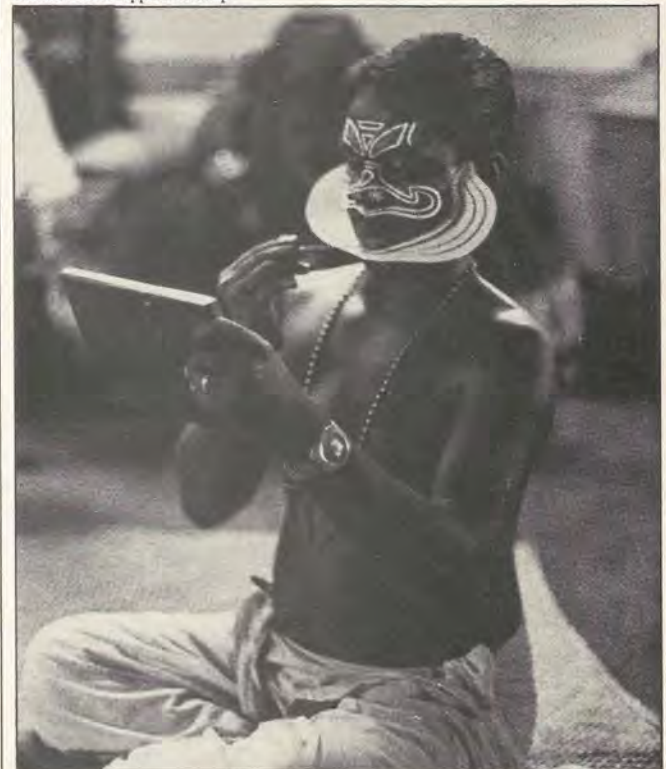
In the evening careful attention is given to the *mudras*, or hand gestures, which form a complex language, not merely representational but with a full grammatic structure. The day draws to a close as the students listen to stories from the two great epics, the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, which they will grow to understand and to interpret in performance.

The intensiveness of training well illustrates the complexity and richness of the art. And yet the student's life is only a beginning. One dancer has written that, 'even after 10 years of learning and intense practice, one's knowledge of the dance art is like a drop in the ocean'.

Fantastic and elaborate makeup is a striking and distinctive element in Kathakali performance. A makeup artist might work all day transforming an actor's face into one of the different character types—perhaps a forest demon, an epic hero, a god, mythical monkey or princess. Bright colours, careful lines, a mixture of rice paste and lime which is built into ridges, and sometimes fringes of paper are all carefully applied to the face in keeping with the character type. Costumes and headdresses are equally spectacular and, lit by oil lamps, they create a tremendous effect in the night-long performance, especially when performed in a temple setting.

The nature of the dance is such that its finest exponents are generally well advanced in age. Through the years subtleties are understood and further developed so that the older artist is the rule rather than the exception—quite unlike western dance in which only exceptional dancers, Martha Graham, Margot Fonteyn or Alicia Alonso, perform much beyond 40.

Kathakali actor applies makeup.







### Bharata Natyam and Odissi

Bharata Natyam is very different from Kathakali and yet equally rigorous in its discipline. A student does begin with basic steps but the emphasis is placed on learning repertoire rather than on practising isolated movements.

As the dancer grows she learns *abhinaya*, expressive pieces that require increasing maturity, until she reaches the stage where she can improvise within the framework of the song and story. Her knowledge of episodes related to the myth of a particular god might suggest spontaneous additions to a performance in order to shed light on the meaning of the sung text. Freedom of expression is achieved through a wealth of experience and consummate skill.

A lesson generally includes work on all aspects of the dance. Before the class even begins, the student must have mastered the not inconsiderable art of wrapping a sari. This is a shorter version of the traditional dress coming to mid-calf, with the upper part tucked in securely at the waist. The first sequence learnt is always the bow to touch the ground, a homage to the gods, which opens and closes every dance session. Then the basic foot positions, postures and rhythmic patterns are taught. At first one works slowly on a basic rhythmic sequence trying to produce a

clear slapping sound as the bare feet strike the floor. Then as one becomes slightly more adept with the pattern, the speed is increased, not gradually as in ballet, but drastically by two and four times the original. All three speeds, slow, medium and fast, are executed to a steady tempo and agility and a sense of beat developed through this progression.

Rhythm is so important to the dance and can become so complex that a mnemonic device is needed to remember and to execute the patterns. Together with the steps one learns the sound pattern that the drummer plays and that the teacher beats out with a stick on a wood block. A simple sequence for Odissi dance sounds approximately like this:

ta	tin	da	ka
1	2	3	4
ta	- tin	naka	tini
5	6	7	8

A more complex example is:

tintariketake	nakitakitake
1	2
tathumta	the coretake
3	4

As the tongue learns to work its way around these sounds so do the feet work themselves into the rhythm. Moreover each sound pattern is generally related to a particular sequence of steps; by linking a number of different sounds together one can learn and remember a whole dance. Our system of counting seems simplistic by comparison; on the other hand, the relation of voice to movement brings to mind the National Ballet pianist urging its swans to sing the melody to themselves in order to be right with the music.

One part of the lesson is devoted to learning eye, neck and head movements, also the very important hand gestures. There are 24 single and 28 double hand positions (commonly called *mudra*) that one learns by imitating the teacher and by reciting or chanting the appropriate name in Sanskrit. Once this basic repertoire is learned, each individual gesture is given meaning in combination with head and eye movements. For instance, the first *mudra*, *pataka*, meaning 'flag', which is simply an outstretched hand with fingers closed, has 40 different uses in Odissi dance. The range of significance is vast, including clouds, waves, talking, the self, depending on the design made in space. When two of these hands are joined with the palms touching, it becomes the traditional Indian greeting (corresponding to a hand shake in the West).

It takes the dancer several years to become well versed in all aspects of the dance, both in *nrtta* (pure dance) which is

Kathakali dance-drama







composed primarily of rhythmic patterns and sculptural poses and *abhinaya*, acting or expressive gesture in which the dancer portrays and interprets myths of the gods. A basic repertoire must be learned, composed of various items that will add up to two or three hours of almost continuous dancing. Then a student may be considered ready for a first performance.

The *arangetrum*, the occasion when the dancer makes her debut, is a ceremony regarded with great respect and is celebrated in a manner reminiscent of a western marriage. The preparations are elaborate: the beautiful costumes must be custom-tailored, jewelry bought, garlands of flowers ordered for dancer and teacher, musicians hired and invitations sent out. At some point on the day of the performance a special religious ceremony called *puja* is offered on behalf of the dancer—that she may dedicate her dance to the gods and grow within the art. As guests arrive for the performance they are given sweets and flowers that were blessed in the *puja*, and each person has his forehead marked with some holy powder. The evening is opened by the teacher who introduces the young dancer to the audience and who then speaks of her responsibilities to the art, giving encouragement and advice for the path ahead. Next comes the dance itself, often with the teacher taking a place amongst the musicians at the side of the stage, keeping the beat and singing the rhythmic syllables. When the performance is finished the dancer is garlanded with flowers after which she may offer presents to her teacher and the musicians to show gratitude to those who have helped in her training. The *arangetrum* is a fascinating and moving ceremony that marks the transition from the role of student to that of dancer, even though she will continue to study and learn all her dancing life.

There are Bharata Natyam and Odissi teachers who still teach students individually. I was fortunate enough to find an excellent teacher who had time to instruct me privately because he had recently left Orissa and was just beginning to establish himself in the city of Madras. However dance schools are becoming more prevalent. One of the best known is Kalakshetra. You can catch glimpses of it in Louis Malle's series of films on India. It is situated just south of Madras, on the ocean, and is an institution rather like the National Ballet School. Children live there and work simultaneously on academic and dance studies.

The founder of Kalakshetra is an extraordinary woman, Rukmini Devi, now in her mid-seventies. She was a great dancer, one of the pioneers who, though of a high caste brahmin family, went to study with the traditional teachers of the renowned Pillai family. She had a long and distinguished career and established the school where dance technique of a high standard can be passed on. She also

initiated a new style of Bharata Natyam performance by arranging dance-dramas involving several dancers rather than concentrating exclusively on the solo performer.

By a curious twist of cultural influence, Rukmini's inspiration came from Pavlova. In her early thirties she saw performances of the Pavlova company in India and met the ballerina. Shortly afterwards, Rukmini and her husband embarked on a trip to Australia and by coincidence found that their boat journeys and route were shared with the Pavlova company. Rukmini Devi watched classes and began to study with Pavlova, who offered to teach her if she would come to London. Pavlova reckoned on the flexibility of the Indian body to make it possible for Rukmini to begin dancing at a late age. Instead, on her return to India, Rukmini chose to pursue the dance of her own culture. And so she began her remarkable career.

A look behind the scenes into the process of becoming a dancer can prove interesting and enlightening, especially when one can imagine the years of training and practice that lie behind each moment on the stage. Indian dance is comparable to ballet in this respect. In another vein, it is intriguing to note the experience of Rukmini Devi. Her contact with a foreign dance form coupled with the inspiration derived from a great dancer, Pavlova, gave her the impetus to gain a new appreciation of the potential in her own dance culture. So may we also deepen our perceptions of western dance and recognize more fully the values of our western society by exploring the rich and complex world of Indian dance.

#### Recommended for further reading:

- Classical Indian Dance in Literature and the Arts* by Kapila Vatsyayan, (New Delhi, 1968) is a comprehensive and well written work by the foremost Indian dance scholar.
- The Dance of Shiva* by A.K. Coomaraswamy, (New York, 1957) is an excellent series of essays, written by an eminent art historian, which introduce Indian art and culture.
- Indian Dances: Their History and Growth* by Rina Singha and Reginald Massey, (London, 1967) provides a good discussion of the different styles of Indian dance with a useful appendix of gurus and dancers.
- Kathakali: The Sacred Dance-Drama of Malabar* by K. Bharatha Iyer, (London, 1955) is the most detailed account available on Kathakali, with some interesting drawings and photographs.
- The Mirror of Gesture*, translated by A.K. Coomaraswamy, (New Delhi, 1970) is an important dance text and manual, the *Abhinaya Darpana*.
- The Other Mind: A Study of Dance and Life in South India* by Berly de Zoete, (London, 1953) offers a delightfully personal yet very informative account by an English dance critic who spent much time in the East during the 1930s and 40s. Her other books cover the dance in Bali and Sri Lanka.

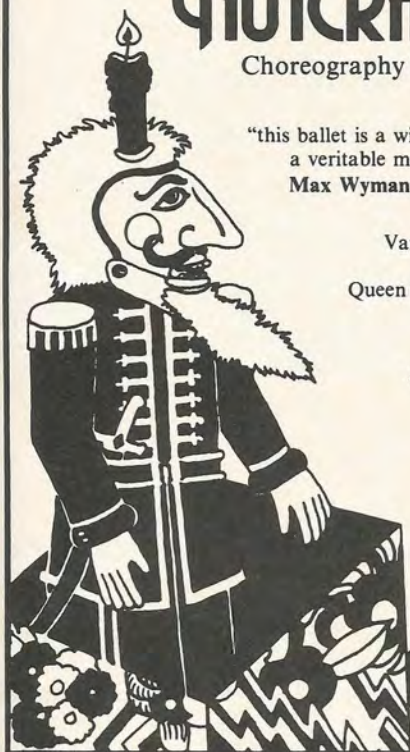


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Margie Gillis

# Parting the Bamboo Curtain

## Margie Gillis in China

In July of 1979, Canadian dancer and choreographer Margie Gillis became the first modern dancer to perform in the People's Republic of China. She gave lectures on the history of modern dance, modern master classes to the Peking Ballet and to the Shanghai Ballet's principals, instructors and choreographers. She performed impromptu and announced in a series of parks throughout China and gave performances in some of the major theatres and opera houses. After her tour of China, Margie Gillis went on to dance in Japan with the assistance of Linda Rabin and the Canadian Embassy, and in Honolulu, at the studios of Fritz Ludin and Betty Jones, a former soloist with the José Limon company.

Here, in her own words, Margie Gillis sums up her experiences.

I wanted to go to China. I wanted to perform for people untouched by western modes of perception; unaccustomed to the form of modern dance.

With little more than the hope of impromptu performances in parks, Jack Udashkin and I borrowed a lot of money and joined a tour group under the auspices of the Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific. If all went well, I would become the first modern dancer to perform in the People's Republic of China. I was nervous and hopeful that they would understand my work.

We arrived in China, in Canton, by train from Hong Kong in the hottest weather in 60 years. It was regularly over 100 degrees and stayed that way until we left the Orient.

With the group we went to visit our first park where I found an ancient isolated pagoda in the woods. I began to dance, trying to understand what is it that goes unsaid in a place, trying to understand what was 'China', what I wanted to say, what I wanted to touch.

I danced in four parks where often one would find people busily engaged in some form of exercise, perhaps a martial art such as Tai Chi. In Canton, a huge crowd

Margie Gillis teaching principals of the Peking Ballet







After a performance in Shenyang

gathered as I worked without music or costume. In Hangchow, by the side of the West Lake, the crowd applauded loudly. Again by West Lake at a spot called Three Pools Mirroring the Moon I danced in the first wind, with little girls watching, awkwardly assimilating the movements.

In Shenyang, one evening a singer and a man with a stringed instrument were playing. As I danced the crowd gathered. When I had finished they followed me out of the park in a huge parade. In China I was told that if you are not liked people simply leave. No one left.

The head of our tour, Richard Liu, had told the Chinese government that I was coming and was eager to show and share my dancing. Shen Shu-yu, one of our Chinese tour guides, continuously asked me questions and watched me dance. He must have sent this information and his observations on ahead because when I arrived in Shanghai I was greeted by the provincial heads of the Culture and Travel Bureaus, the head of the Shanghai Ballet and Song and Dance Academy as well as other officials. I was asked to give a demonstration for the school and company. They in turn would dance for us.

At the Shanghai Dance Academy I performed—and they understood. There were open mouths, tears and smiles, faces I will never forget. I was asked to lecture, to give a class and to perform in Shanghai's Peking Theatre.

This seats 1,600 people. Tickets were sold at the regular price—the equivalent of 10 cents! The Shanghai Centre Dance Company was to perform the first six pieces and I the second six. I was badly scraped by the canvas floor they use and had to dodge the backstage doctor. But again my work was understood.

It is difficult for me to describe how it felt to stand alone on stage in sold-out houses of up to 2,000 seats; to feel the audience move in my arms, lurch and fall, to feel the air thick with a common struggle; so thin we were made of dreams, so close we were but one dance.

I was asked to give classes, lectures, demonstrations and performances in Shenyang and Peking. I was asked to show any other pieces I could. It amused me that in one case the men in the company did not take the class but as soon as it was over, bombarded me with questions: so eventually I ended up giving them their own class.

In Shanghai I found myself recognized on the streets. In Shenyang, as I entered the theatre to see the first half of the programme, I was greeted with a standing ovation. In the face of such warmth I could only cry with joy. I was told I was Chinese in my heart, that our hearts were linked. In Shenyang, A Tibetan dance-master, who had not performed in 30 years because of a heart condition and who had become a cultural administrator, was so touched by my performance that he danced for me. I was honoured.

Of the six pieces I performed in the theatres, *Mercy*, *Waltzing Matilda* and *Premonition* were the favourites. Backstage, people would sing Tom Waits and Leonard Cohen songs. *Premonition*, choreographed by Linda Rabin with music by Phillip Werren of York University, was premiered in China. People broke into applause in the middle of the piece; a rare occurrence for a Chinese audience.

People were actually flown in from other parts of China to attend classes and lecture-demonstrations. I attempted to show more than just my own style of movement, giving an outline lecture on the history of modern dance. The Chinese were especially interested in the 'New Dance' and in Contact Improvisation. In class they were eager to learn and we would laugh and talk to each other in our own languages. Shen would quit trying to interpret for us as we poured out the words, somehow understanding though we didn't know each other's language. Among those taking my class were members of the Shanghai and Peking Ballet, choreographers and teachers.

I am only one small person. I was often scared, but I was lucky. I happened to slip into the unsealed corner of the envelope and was generously received.

I am very excited about the possibilities that now exist for communication between our countries. There is so much we can learn from another. I feel the Chinese are much to be admired for taking the risk of opening up their country to the West. To be with them is a humbling experience. They are hard working, self-sacrificing and sincere. The arts are very much a part of Chinese life and are taught extensively in the school system. They have a greatness of spirit. They are ready, willing and eager to learn.

The Chinese government and the China Dance Association sent back with me their 'Warmest greetings to Canadian Dance Community'. They spoke often of their hope for greater contact between us.

But if you go, take a Marley!



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## Obituary

### Jacqueline Lemieux 1939 - 1979

L'aînée des cinq enfants d'un importateur aisé, Jacqueline Lemieux naquit le 9 juillet 1939 à Montréal. La mort prématurée de sa mère lui imposa la responsabilité d'élever les autres enfants, ce qui lui donna une maturité au-dessus de son âge. La conformité exigée par leur vie de famille stricte se révélait, dès le début, une contrainte de laquelle elle essaya toute sa vie de se libérer.

Son seul exutoire était la danse. Elle avait commencé à l'étudier — comme d'ailleurs le piano — parce que c'était un des talents de toute jeune fille bien élevée. Depuis l'âge de 4 ans jusqu'à 14 ans elle fut l'élève de Gérard Crevier et ensuite de Marc Beaudet. Elle gagna son diplôme de la R.A.D. sous l'égide de Suzanne Cantin. Elle s'engagea enfin dans la compagnie d'Elizabeth Leese pour laquelle elle joua pendant trois ans au théâtre et à la télévision.

C'est par hasard qu'elle arriva dans l'enseignement. On lui demanda de replacer temporairement Françoise Blier et, à sa grande surprise, elle se trouva aussitôt dans son élément.

Perfectionniste infatigable, elle poursuivit sa carrière en obtenant le Diplôme Avancé d'Enseignement de l'Académie Royal de Danse à Londres. Par la suite elle reçut des bourses pour continuer ses études — à Paris, Cannes, Londres, New York, Lisbonne et Stuttgart.

Elle enseigna à Montréal et à Toronto et, à partir de 1966, à l'École Supérieure des Grands Ballets Canadiens. C'est là qu'elle fit la connaissance du danseur Lawrence Gradus, venu du Bronx à Montréal à l'occasion d'Expo '67 et qui s'y établit après.

C'est grâce à l'influence dynamique de Gradus que Jacqueline se métamorphosa; personnage grave et guindé auparavant ('... elle portait toujours des vêtements



Jacqueline Lemieux

sombres; on aurait dit une religieuse', a dit Gradus) elle se révéla comme une femme animée et pleine s'assurance. Dans le potentiel chorégraphique de Gradus elle découvrit le véhicule que exigerait et qui absorberait toute son énergie. C'était à prévoir du moment de leur rencontre qu'ils créeraient leur propre compagnie.

Entre-Six fit son début à Longueuil, Québec, le 9 février 1975. Lemieux et Gradus se marièrent une année d'après. Puisque la nécessité rend toujours ingénieux, Jacqueline s'occupait de plus en plus de l'administration journalière de cette compagnie naissante. Elle assumait d'abord la responsabilité de réunir des fonds pour se lancer ensuite dans l'organisation des tours. Bref, elle s'occupait de tout, et tout lui réussissait.

Fermant les yeux sur le cancer, cet épée de Damocles qui la menaçait depuis 12 ans, elle s'obstinait à travailler d'arrache-pied. Grâce à son énergie inlassable, elle

pilota Entre-Six depuis ses débuts américain et européen jusqu'à son cinquième anniversaire; à Lennoxville elle dirigea Québec Été Danse, programme intensif de cinq semaines; membre du Comité Consultatif de la Danse au sein du Conseil des Arts du Canada, elle fut élue à la vice-présidence de la Danse au Canada; il y a un an elle organisa Octobre en Danse, premier grand festival de danse à Montréal; elle avait également fait un voyage en Europe pour dresser les plans préliminaires d'un festival international de trois villes qui devait avoir lieu au Canada en 1981.

Son projet favori était l'Académie de Ballet du Saguenay, qu'elle voulait transformer en une école multidisciplinaire style Bauhaus. Elle s'était engagée ardemment à encourager le développement de la danse dans sa province natale mais, à l'encontre de l'esprit de clocher courant, elle croyait que le meilleur moyen de parvenir à cette fin était de présenter aux Québécois ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans le monde de la danse.

Phénomène unique sur la scène canadienne de la danse, Jacqueline Lemieux avait non seulement gagné la confiance et l'affection des danseurs mais elle commandait le respect et avait aussi l'oreille des fonctionnaires des fonds publics. Cette fusion d'enthousiasme communicatif et de ressource pragmatique, l'insistance qu'elle mettait sur les critères les plus exigeants, son instinct du détail, sa facilité innée pour la diplomatie, son honnêteté, sa volonté de fer, la loyauté singulière qu'elle suscitait dans ceux qui travaillaient avec elle; tout cela fit de Jacqueline Lemieux une figure nationale de grande importance.

Dans son testament — et c'est bien de sa manière — elle nous prie de ne pas envoyer de fleurs mais de faire plutôt une contribution aux fonds de la Compagnie de Danse Entre-Six, 1460 Mt-Royal Est, Montréal.

KATI VITA



## Jacqueline Lemieux 1939 - 1979

Jacqueline Lemieux was born in Montreal on July 9, 1939, the oldest of five children of a well-to-do importer. Her mother's early death left her with the responsibility of bringing up the other children and made her mature beyond her years. From the start, the conformity imposed on her by the strict family milieu, was a straight-jacket she tried to shed all her life.

Her single outlet was dancing, originally taken up – like the piano – as part of the social skills of a *jeune fille bien élevés*. From the age of four to fourteen, she studied with Gérald Crevier; continued with Marc Beudet and took her RAD exams with Suzanne Cantin. She eventually joined Elizabeth Leese's company and for three seasons performed with them on stage and television.

She drifted into teaching almost accidentally when asked to fill in for Françoise Blier and, to her surprise, found herself in her element.

Always a perfectionist, she went on to obtain her Advanced Teaching Certificate from the Royal Academy of Dancing in London and received grants to study in Paris, Cannes, London, New York, Lisbon and Stuttgart.

She taught in Montreal and Toronto and, from 1966 on, at l'Ecole Supé-

rieure des Grands Ballets Canadiens. It was there that she met Lawrence Gradus, a dancer from the Bronx, who had come to Montreal for Expo 67, and stayed.

Under Gradus' dynamic influence, Jacqueline metamorphosed from the straight-laced, matronly person she had been ('she always wore dark clothes; she looked like a nun', says Gradus) – into a bright, self-assured young woman. In Gradus' choreographic potential, she found the vehicle toward which to channel all her energies. A company of their own was a foregone conclusion from the moment they met.

Entre-Six bowed in at Longueuil, Quebec, on February 9, 1975 and a year later Lemieux and Gradus were married. Necessity being the mother of invention, Jacqueline became increasingly involved in the day to day administration of the fledgling company, first taking over fund raising, then branching out into booking tours, inevitably doing everything – and doing it well.

Ignoring the Damocles' sword of cancer which had hung over her for the past 12 years, she forged full speed ahead. With unflagging energy, she piloted Entre-Six through its American and European débuts to its fifth anniversary; she ran Québec Eté Danse, an intensive five-week summer dance programme in Lennoxville; she worked on the Dance Advisory Panel of the Canada Council; she was elected

Vice President of Dance in Canada; a year ago she organized Octobre en Danse, Montreal's first major dance festival, and had made a preliminary scouting trip to Europe for a three-city international festival to be held in Canada in 1981.

Her pet project was the Académie de Ballet du Saguenay in Chicoutimi which she was hoping to transform into a Bauhaus-style interdisciplinary school. She was deeply committed to encouraging the growth of dance in her native province but, contrary to the prevailing parochialism, she believed that this could best be accomplished by exposing Quebec to the best the world had to offer.

Jacqueline Lemieux was a unique phenomenon on the Canadian dance scene in that she had the confidence and affection of the dancers and also the respect and the ear of the civil servants in the funding bodies. Her rare blend of contagious enthusiasm and pragmatic resourcefulness, her insistence on the highest standards, her eye for detail, her natural diplomacy, her integrity and iron will, the extraordinary loyalty she elicited from those who worked with her – all made her a national figure of great significance.

Characteristically, in her will she asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be sent to the Entre-Six Dance Company, 1460 Mt-Royal East, Montreal.

KATI VITA

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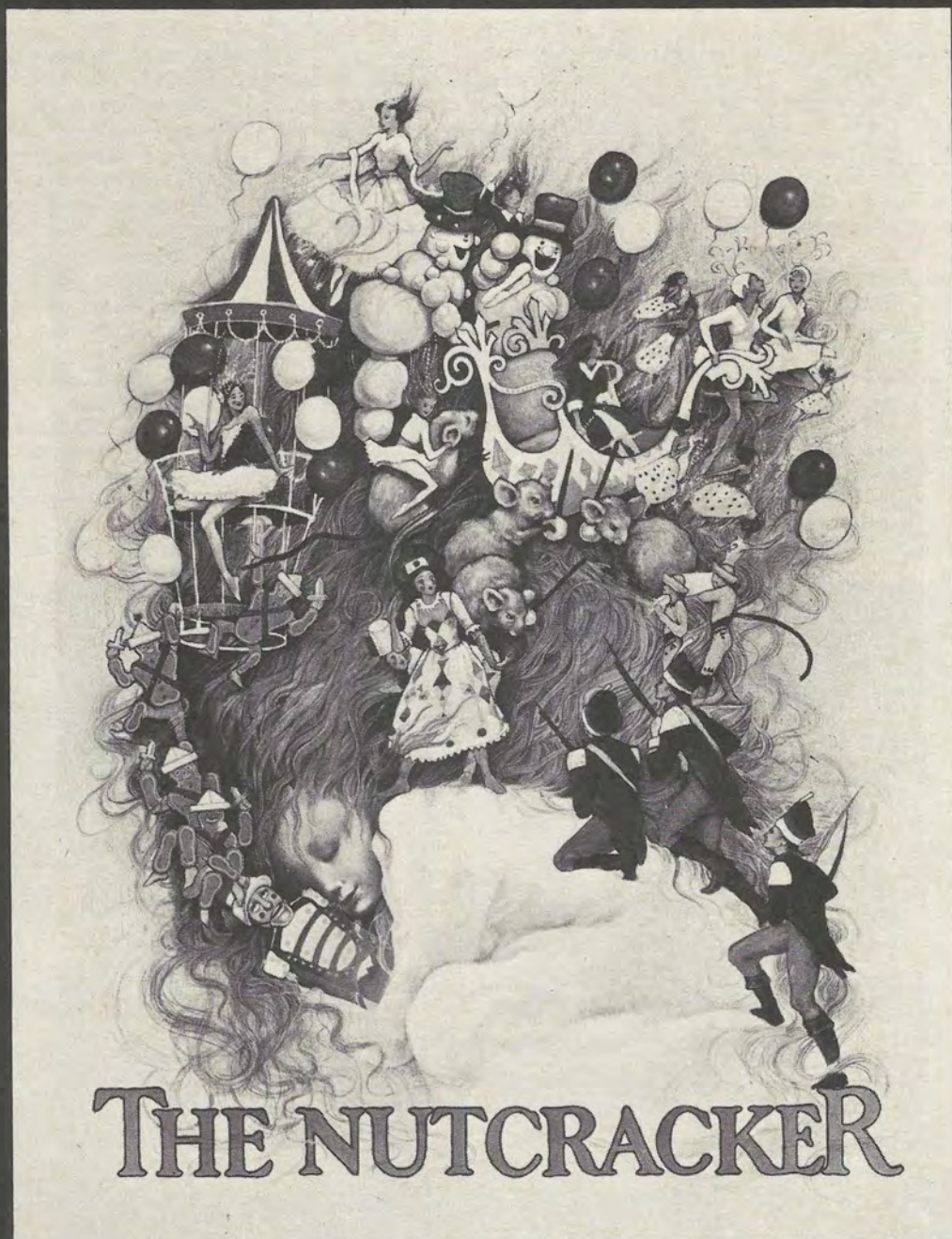
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## In Review

### Banff Festival of the Arts Dance

Eric Harvie Theatre

Banff Centre

16 - 18 August 1979

The timing was perfect. Just when its independence within the Performing Arts Division of the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts was being threatened by a controversial plan that called for its absorption into a new all-devouring department of 'musical theatre', the Dance Department asserted its right to a separate existence in the best way possible - by a demonstration of artistic merit. There were disadvantages to being placed last on the roster of summer festival performances. Drama, opera and musical productions had all suffered from at best lukewarm reviews. If the dance programme bombed too that would be the last straw. On the other hand, if it did well how much more brilliantly would it shine alongside its bruised colleagues. To the relief of almost everyone, it was unanimously pronounced a success - last-minute redemption for a festival that most people would otherwise rather have forgotten.

Of course, the Banff Festival has to be understood on its own terms. It is the culmination of a summer programme that focuses on training in technique rather than on performance. It would be unrealistic to expect from young professionals and gifted amateurs what one would have the right to demand from full-time artists. As it is, preparations for the festival encroach farther and farther into regular classes, exhausting the students and seriously threatening the effectiveness of the excellent training provided in Banff. Yet the young have seemingly boundless energy and somehow manage to accommodate both classes and rehearsals in a day that often runs from nine in the morning to 11 at night.

The success of the dance festival can be attributed to imaginative programming, artistic freshness (not quite the same thing as originality), the ideal conditions Eric Harvie Theatre provides for dancers (if not for lighting crews) and the buoyant determined performances of a company that included dancers of widely varying experience and ability.

Considering the questionable emphasis placed by the Banff programme on classical ballet training it was pleasantly surprising to find only one strictly classical item on the programme. Two Russian teachers

from the Bolshoi school staged a version of *Paquita* which while testing the mettle of their students only confirmed the wisdom of most Western ballet company directors who keep this Russian lemon out of the repertoire. The classes of Boris Rachmanin and Natalia Zolotova were an inspiration: their *Paquita* was a dreary succession of variations that made the hapless dancers look like robots or puppets. Only the strongest dancers such as John Kaminski of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet or Giaconda Barbuto, Toronto-trained but now with the Minnesota Dance Theatre, managed to transcend the mechanics of the movement to achieve any semblance of artistry. Kaminski has a plushness and amplitude to his movements and Barbuto a crisp, clean attack which make them both attractive and exciting to watch.

Relief from heavy-handed classicism, however, was swift to follow. Peter George has spent many summers at Banff as student, assistant, instructor and most recently as choreographer. *Which Way Now* was his second piece for a Banff Festival and showed significant progress in his approach to jazz dancing. For one thing it recognized the virtue of economy both in the composition of steps and in the total time required to dance them. Set to music by John Lewis, *Which Way Now* was only 12 minutes long: it stopped just when you felt you could take a bit more - infinitely preferable to the feeling that you've had more than enough. Although the music rarely surpassed the mindlessness of Hollywood schmaltz, Peter George exploited the variety it did have to string together several amusing dances for various combinations of the four men and four women who composed the cast. George,

perhaps because of his own experience as a jazz dancer, seemed far more confident and personal in the way he used the men than in the steps he had devised for the women. Overall, there was more dynamic interest and greater sensitivity to the rhythmic structure of the music than we saw in Peter George's work for the '78 festival.

Laszlo Funtek also helped matters by providing an interesting mirrored ramp and jagged canopy which in its suitability and inventiveness provided a striking contrast to his set for *Paquita* - a fussy scenic backdrop with ornamental flats that seriously obscured corners of the stage from significant portions of the audience.

*Which Way Now* was a clever programming bridge from the sterile classicism of *Paquita* to the modernism of the next item, Judith Marcuse's new work, *Sadhana Dhoti*. It received a mixed reception from local critics who perhaps expected too much obviousness of purpose from a choreographer who prefers to point you in the right direction rather than to lead you by the hand. It will be interesting to see what changes Marcuse has made in her restaging of this piece for Contemporary Dancers. In Banff it sometimes looked as if everything had been trimmed in detail to allow the students to concentrate on achieving the right feeling.

*Sadhana Dhoti* roughly translates to 'purifying ritual' and it was the ritual mood created by the movement rather than any particular appeal in the movements themselves which gave *Sadhana Dhoti* its theatrical magic.

Magic is indeed the essence of the work. The curtain reveals an ominous set consisting of jutting slabs that rise from a shallow stepped platform. Thin smoke snakes its

Michael Fritze in *Sadhana Dhoti*





way upward from behind these cubist ruins as the opening of David Jagg's tape collage bombards us painfully with distressing sounds of war. One hunched-up figure is already crouched on the platform as others, shrouded in coarse outer garments amble on from either side, dip their hands in unspecified bowls and then strip down to minimal loin-cloths and ill-fitting ragged tunics. A bell strikes and as a discernible rhythm emerges from the opening cacophony, the dance proper begins.

Transitions in the sound collage generally dictate the pattern of group dances, runs, circles and lots of ground-rooted stomping, and solos or duets, which fill the time before the crowd breaks up, dresses and leaves in different directions. There is an undercurrent of nervous tension and mutual hostility which occasionally breaks out into real violence as in a brief struggle between two men. The strength and weight of the primal movement seems to fit the men better than the women until the rather odd introduction of a Bach cantata to the sound-score provides the musical basis for a lyrical female solo.

*Sadhana Dhoti* may have been provided with a primitive setting but both the sound collage and even the set allowed one to give its imagery a very contemporary interpretation and spared the work from looking like Broadway-sanitized tribalism. Its rawness was its greatest strength.

In a mixed bill, the spot you get on the programme can seriously affect the way an audience responds. Agreeably drained by *Dhoti* the audience was finally required to muster the energy and concentration for the longest and most choreographically complex offering, Loyce Houlton's *Fantasies*.

Loyce Houlton is the artistic director of the Minnesota Dance Theatre for which she has, both of necessity and by choice, choreographed a repertoire of some 90 items, great and small, during the past 20 years. Several of her students have discovered in Banff a pleasant, beneficial and well-funded source of summer training. Her own arrival in Banff this year to create a major new work establishes a geographically curious but artistically fruitful con-



Gioconda Barbuto and Jean-Hugues Rochette in *Fantasies*

nection between the dynamic American mid-west and Canada's Shangri-La.

*Fantasies* has already been restaged by Loyce Houlton for her own company. It received its American premiere in Minneapolis on October 5 where, one may presume, the choreographer's fullest intentions were realised. The differences between the Banff and Minneapolis productions are instructive. *Fantasies*, set to the Austrian composer Franz Schmidt's *Piano Quintet in G Major*, is essentially a plotless neo-classical ballet with occasional and not always well suited injections of 'modern' movement. It is brilliantly crafted in its details and its overall proportions. It uses its pleasant but emotionally superficial score in a way that makes the music seem greater than it is when unaccompanied by movement. Actually the music scored one victory in that it was composed first and thus dictated the length of the ballet — which is just a smidgen too long.

In Banff, the cast of 15 were dressed in beautiful pale blue Milliskin unitards, the sheen of which emphasised the lines taken by the dancers' bodies. Line is valued highly by Loyce Houlton although its exact shape may dissolve so swiftly that the complete effect is of continuously moving sculptures. *Fantasies* is packed (not overburdened) with steps, some combinations

of which form repeated motifs shared among several dancers. There are solos, duets, trios and various ensemble dances: lots of lifts, floor work (some of which looked very dangerous) and a dazzling complexity of entrances and exits. Several figures lurk almost menacingly in the shaded gloom of a low platform extending across the full width of the rear stage and in front of which hang several scrim panels. Both the platform and the scrims have special significance for Loyce Houlton although this was not nearly as apparent in Banff as in Minneapolis.

Houlton revealed herself in interview as a choreographer with wide ranging interests and intellectual curiosity whose inspiration is as often cerebral as it is either musical or kinetic.

In the case of *Fantasies*, the inspiration was the work of contemporary French surrealist painter Leonor Fini from whose images Houlton realised several curious characters in the Minneapolis production. A great winged creature hovers over the opening dancer. There is a Dove, A Lady and her Lord (both in medieval garb) and the men acquire loose, unbuttoned silky shirts. The swings and masks, evident but obscure in Banff, are made conspicuous. The comings and goings on and off the platform seem to represent a transition from the immobile imagery of Fini to the choreographed fantasies of Houlton. Yet, in the end, what really matters is the movement. Whatever the choreographer's inspiration, its outward display in terms of costuming and more elaborate settings somehow detracts from rather than enhances her purpose. The dancing in Minneapolis, where Loyce Houlton directs a strong and versatile company of 25, was certainly more fluent and precise than anything seen in Banff but much of the intrinsic quality of the choreography was dispelled in unnecessary homage to a painter of whom most of the audience probably knew no more at the end of *Fantasies* than they did on first reading her name in the programme.

MICHAEL CRABB

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## Rudolf von Laban Centenary Summer School and Symposium

Laban Centre for Movement and  
Dance  
London, England  
July 1979

'To be able to perceive the pathway of a gesture and in its flow the gift of vital tension at first unnoticed, one has to learn how to look, or perhaps be a dancer oneself. But there are some blessed beings who can open everybody's heart to this gift.' Those are the words of Rudolf von Laban. To mark the 100th anniversary of his birth, some of these 'blessed beings' came from all over the world to the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in London.

Rudolf von Laban was a great pioneer. His work prepared the way for modern dance in Europe and North America and influenced strongly the work of such artists as Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss and, more recently, Murray Louis. Laban created a system of movement notation which is of use in the work of psychologists, anthropologists, dance educators, movement analysts and dance therapists.

His theories are based on a comprehensive system of symbols. Symbols are a universal language and take their origin from within the soul of man, eternalizing themselves in the archetypal bodies of man - manifested in movement.

Laban developed his system through direct observation and work with people from many walks of life. He created great symphonic dances for hundreds of people that were performed in great halls in war-torn Germany. Dance to Laban was for all people. Today, we see his theories and system of notation reaching new horizons.

During 1979 several commemorative events have been held to celebrate Rudolf von Laban's centenary: a three-day programme at the Laban Institute of Movement Studies in New York, a special session at the Dance in Canada Conference, but most importantly the International Laban

Centenary Symposium at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance at Goldsmith's College in the University of London, July 23 - 27. Before that the Centre held a related summer school, July 10 - 20 including a professional dance course with Murray Louis and his company and supplemented by courses in dance notation, therapy and education featuring Besse Schonberg, an advisor to the United States government on dance programmes, Valerie Preston-Dunlop, researcher and author of several books on Laban, and Walli Meier, head of special education courses at the Centre.

Three Canadian dancers attended the course with Murray Louis. Terrill Maguire, Dana Luebke and myself. Louis and his company created a very real dance environment which carried us to new and unexplored territories within ourselves. They provided insights about the nature of dance far beyond mere technique.

Murray Louis laid down no laws of technique but instead provided a philosophy of dance language which allows one to find a point of departure within the body during the act of creating movement independent of any particular technique.

Louis, through his deepening interest in the theories of Laban uses a language based on Laban's notation system. He spoke much of 'graining'. This involves directing the consciousness of one's body parts to move in specific ways in order to create a movement that comes from within. For example, one might 'grain' the molecules in the back when travelling backwards so that it became a microcosm within the macrocosm of the body. As one turned or circled a re-graining of the molecules ensured a complementary shift in one's centre of consciousness. With the help of these images and ideas I found myself creating beautiful patterns across the floor. Watching the rest of the class brought to mind the movement symphonies I have read about in Laban's *A Life For Dance*.

As the days passed, one's mind and body developed a wonderful new relationship with dancing. As limitations or inhibitions

dropped away the breath of the spirit of dance took prime place. As Laban himself said, 'The dancer saturates his living self, his human body, with forces otherwise perceptible only separately from it and thus when he places his body before us it appears in transcended form. Through this form, we can see the source, we can see the very reality of another higher world which we otherwise sense only in our conscience.' (*A Life For Dance*, translated and annotated by Lisa Ullman).

Through his teaching, Murray Louis brought reality to Laban's theories.

JUDITH POPIEL

### The Symposium

As movement is a universal tool of communication, Rudolf von Laban's influence has been felt far beyond the strict realms of dance itself. The papers presented at the International Laban Centenary Symposium provided an excellent indication of this wide influence.

Of 22 countries represented, 11 offered presentations. There were more than 150 participants and some 60 speakers. Canada was represented by 17 participants of whom seven presented papers. The programme kept everyone very busy. Often five presentations ran concurrently. There were six keynote addresses, two historical panels, three panel discussions, 12 reports on associations and study centres, eight movement classes, three lecture demonstrations, 27 presentations of papers and five films followed by discussions. The only performance was a reconstruction of Sigurd Leeder's *Dance Macabre* by students of the Laban Centre and the choreographer himself. However, despite the exhausting roster of daytime events, delegates found time to see the Martha Graham Company at Covent Garden and to enjoy a banquet on the first evening when most people had a chance to get to know each other. For some this meant re-establishing contacts made at the Dance and the Child conference held in Edmonton in the summer of 1978.

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The richness of the symposium, which tackled a wide-ranging variety of areas connected with Laban's work, resulted from the presence of many internationally recognized authorities, some of them close associates of Laban for many years. For example, the panel discussion on the history of Laban included famous students and collaborators, Irmgard Bartenieff, Sylvia Bodmer, Sigurd Leeder and Lisa Ullman. One evening's highlight honored Kurt Jooss, a colleague of Laban and creator of the renowned and revolutionary dance *The Green Table*. Sadly, Jooss's untimely death on May 22, the result of injuries suffered in a car accident, robbed the occasion of the presence of a truly great individual.

Naturally, a good deal of time was devoted to Laban's system of movement notation and Dr. Ann Hutchinson-Guest, a former Jooss dancer who was later to introduce Laban's system to the United States, gave a very interesting presentation entitled 'The Labanotation Legacy' which emphasised, above all, the system's great educational value.

There was a very lively presentation by Valerie Preston-Dunlop called, 'The Parameters of Choreutics: An Exploration of the Possibilities'. It focused on how to make Laban's theory useful for dancers today in the appreciation of dance and in the creation of new works.

David Sealy, a computer applications analyst from the University of Iowa, flew to London with some unusual luggage: a small but complete computer with which he tried to convince his audience how he and his colleagues had developed a programme of computer notation. One wonders what Laban might have thought of that.

In the area of therapy, Julianna Lau of York University, assisted by Terrill Maguire, gave participants a unique philosophy of preventive therapy in a session called 'Dance Alive'. Lau was only one of a number of Canadians contributing to the symposium. Selma Odom, another York faculty member, pointed out parallels between the work of Emile Jacques-Dalcroze and Laban. Rose Hill of McMaster University presented 'An Enquiry into the Inter-relationships Between Dance Experiences, Symbolic Representation and Aesthetic Appreciation'.

This only gives a hint of the richness of the Laban centenary celebrations in London. The fertility of ideas offered, the range of subject matter and intensity of involvement all bore witness to the importance of Rudolf von Laban.

All those involved in this successful international symposium left deeply inspired to carry on the work of the visionary pioneer.

PAULETTE LAURENCE

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## Choreographer-Critic Workshop

### Québec Été Danse

Lennoxville

11 August 1979

'We're natural enemies', a choreographer once told me. 'We'll never get on. We just have to go on doing our jobs, that's all. The best we can hope to do is respect one another.'

She was talking about the relationship between creative artist and working critic, and her point was heartfelt. It was also well made. Artists don't really need the professional critics, and often they feel (sometimes with justification) that they have been ill-treated or misunderstood by the man or woman behind the typewriter.

What should our relationship be? The question formed the basis of a one-day workshop held in August during *Québec Été Danse 1979* at Lennoxville, with financial help from Quebec's Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

The workshop was frankly experimental – to explore what was possible in terms of exchange of opinion between choreographers and critics, and to try to break down some of the barriers, real and imaginary. 'Myths need exploding', said moderator Wayne Grigsby, of CBC Montreal, in a pre-workshop briefing. 'Philosophies need expounding...'

The organizers of the workshop, brain-child of the late Jacqueline Lemieux, tried to make a firm break in format from the tired old Dance in Canada Conference critics' panel system. According to the original plans, the morning session was to consist of presentations of work by eight young Quebec choreographers before a panel of eight critics, and the afternoon session was to be given over to responses by the critics and a general discussion between performers and performed at.

In the event, only four choreographers turned up to show their work – Daniel Leveille (*Voyeurisme*), Luana Santini (*Baou-Baou*), Paul-André Fortier (*Rêve I*, an extract from a longer work), and Simone Lavoie (*Trio*). One of the other announced participants was apparently ill; and no one ever seemed to know what happened to the rest.

The critics, however, arrived in force – four from the home province (Marc Samson from *Le Soleil*, Quebec, Linda Howe-

Beck from the *Montreal Gazette*, Jean-Paul Brousseau from *La Presse* and Angèle Dagenais from *Le Devoir*), two from Ottawa (Lauretta Thistle from the *Citizen* and Burf Kay from *The Enterprizer*), one from New York (Doris Hering, critic at large for *Dance Magazine*), and one from the West (this writer, at that time with the *Vancouver Sun*).

What we saw was modest – honest, exploratory work by budding artists keen to improve their craft, to explore the form. The critics varied in their receptiveness and openness to the youthful experiment. Most of them, however, were guarded in their responses, making their criticisms generally positive or zeroing in on a specific element of a work, plainly conscious of the fact that they were dealing with artists in embryo.

Later, some of the choreographers said they appreciated that; others said they wished we had been harder. As far as the exchange session was concerned, much of the time went to nuts-and-bolts discussions between the choreographers and the Quebec and Montreal critics, some of it as basic (and plainly as necessary) as an explanation of how a daily-newspaper critic goes about his business (again, that old conference-panel problem).

The potential of the gathering is obvious; indeed, Jacqueline Lemieux had planned a gradual expansion of the workshop within the next three years, possibly involving choreographers from outside Quebec and critics from Europe.

Whoever takes over the task of running the workshop is going to have to make decisions about who is to benefit from the encounter; ideally, both sides of the fence should stand to win. In a difficult field, we all need to learn more about each other. The myths have been in existence long enough; whatever my embattled friend may believe, we all surely have a common aim, a common love.

Jacqueline Lemieux made a brave beginning at this. If you would like information on the workshop's future plans, write to Québec Été Danse, Box 368, station Delorimer, Montréal, Québec H2H 2N7.

MAX WYMAN

## The Paul Taylor Dance Company

## Merce Cunningham and Dance Company

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Paul Taylor and Merce Cunningham shared the opening week. It was historically appropriate that they do so for both were protégés of Martha Graham. Cunningham broke away from Graham in the mid-1940s, rejecting her brand of theatre, specifically its narrative leanings, for a stripped-down approach to dance as steps. Taylor's break from Graham, some 20 years later, was less controversial and less radical, although, like Cunningham, he

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has mostly eschewed narrative dance. In searching for 'purer' forms of expression, free from literary taints both have found themselves drawn towards the classical ballet idiom.

Taylor's concert used Graham's technique for comic purposes in an unwhimsical bit of whimsy called *The Book of Beasts*. Otherwise, there were no references to her. *Big Bertha* was American Gothic; the brand new *Profiles* sculptural in the John Butler tradition of ballet moderne; and *Airs* an unnecessary attempt to improve on *Aureole*. Taken together, these works left us with only the vaguest impression of what their author thinks, feels and believes; in fact, they were so painstakingly different from one another, I felt the programme might have been intended as a portfolio for the audience to whisk through. The lightweight quality of the dances, even in the genuinely disturbing *Big Bertha*, contributed to that impression.

The lightness of touch was probably the only clear indication we were given that the programme was the work of one man. In *Aureole*, that lightness is integral to a deeply felt expression of joy; it is never wary or defensive. *Airs* doesn't revel in that kind of lightness, although with its Handel soundtrack and its soft blue (in place of *Aureole's* white) costumes, it was certainly pretending to do so. Its lightness partakes of the physical buoyancy of classical ballet alone, which by itself is just light, not joyous. Perhaps because *Aureole* proved such a hit with the dance-going public at large, Taylor felt *Airs* would score, too. If he felt so, then he has misunderstood the true success of his earlier work. Even with its balleticisms – and it might well be considered the supreme ballet blanc of our time – there is nothing remotely formalistic about *Aureole*.

As members of the dance-going public at Artpark will attest, Merce Cunningham makes very few concessions to his audiences. The major reason so many of them found Cunningham's offerings inaccessible is the fact that the component parts of his dances – the music, decor and steps – do not always complement one another in expected ways. Examined separately, of course, only the fiercely independent scores Cunningham commissions from his resident composers really tax the audience's understanding. The decor when it makes an aggressive statement – as it does in *Travelogue* and *Inlets* – challenges by its boldness alone. As for the steps, they are almost all familiar to anyone who has seen a reasonable amount of ballet. What's different about them is that Cunningham presents his steps in a deliberately fragmented, episodic manner. In ballet terms, they are the equivalent of classroom enchainments rather than the 'finished' dance where fluidity is highly valued. For Cunningham, the process of dancing – the actual starting,



Christine Wright in *Exsultate, Jubilare* by Lar Lubovitch

carrying through and finishing of a step or series of steps – is paramount; everything else is either superfluous or accidental. In view of this, it's not surprising that Cunningham should choose ballet steps as his medium because they contain no inherent emotional or extra-dance qualities as the Graham vocabulary does.

Unfortunately, Cunningham's exploration of process as practised by his dancers possesses little humanity, depth, shadow. Watching them insisting, wooden-faced, on the integrity of what they're doing comes to feel after awhile like attending a marathon surgical operation in a white-tiled room lit by fluorescent lamps. The minute Cunningham steps on stage, however, the dances start to breathe, but then he doesn't usually execute the same steps as his dancers. On account of his age, no doubt, they are less rigorous; they are also embellished with eccentric manual curlicews and goblinish twitchings of head, shoulders, knees and ankles.

*Exchanges* is one of the very few Cunningham works that could flourish without its creator's physical presence. To describe it in structural terms would not reveal its distinctiveness, and yet it is dis-

tinctive. The sombre grey backdrop, the bellicose score, the sense of opposition among constantly altering factions of dancers as well as specific movements like the men's vehement jumps in second at the beginning of the dance all suggest a more traditional unity of achievement than was evident in any of the other dances shown at Artpark this summer. *Exchanges* recalls, too, a style of dance theatre Cunningham was supposed to have long since left behind him. Although in his usual Buddha-like fashion he does not elucidate on it, a passionate, mysterious ritual lurks just below the surface of the dance.

Descended from one of Martha Graham's pioneering contemporaries, the charismatic Lester Horton, Bella Lewitzky offered Artpark audiences a striking contrast to the concerts of Taylor and Cunningham. The foundation of Lewitzky's work is Horton's technique which Lewitzky herself helped to codify in the late 1930s and '40s; its primitivism, its emotional impetus, its percussive aspect indicate a similarity to the Graham technique, but the shapes it deals in are less vivid than Graham's.

Like her teacher and mentor, Lewitz-



has also chosen to work out of Los Angeles, 3,000 miles from the mainstream of modern dance, and it's important to recognize the influence of that urban phenomenon on her work. In her turquoise-hued *Spaces Between*, Lewitzky suggests the omnipresence of water and light that oppresses both visitor and inhabitant about Los Angeles; the dance sparkles like a swimming pool. The plexi-glass second level not only evokes the ultra modern apartment dwellings that now crowd the Los Angeles skyline and the prevalence of glass in so much West Coast architecture, it also does for a boat, a dock, a diving board or merely the surface of the ocean under which Lewitzky's dancers group and regroup like exotic underwater flora. In *Five*, a quartet of dancers metaphorically trapped behind strips of scrim (painted, I thought, to look like the hideous wallpaper you find in too many apartment complexes), express their anguish and alienation in angry solos and abortive encounters with one another. Through these, Lewitzky draws a pointed reference to other factors of life in her hometown: the physical isolation of the individual and the near impossibility of meaningful existence inside the personal-impersonal nest.

It's a shame that these images, hewn out of the mesmerizing landscape of Los Angeles, finally possess so little vitality. Lewitzky tends to approach dancemaking the way a teacher or spokesman for the dance might: it's the *idea* that counts. One of the programmes she presented demonstrated this quite dramatically. It opened with an energetic display of technique cloaked in the casual atmosphere of the classroom, continued with a restless triptych showing three of her dances at work, and closed with 'A Dance'. By the time we got to 'A Dance', however, the innocence, excitement and immediacy of movement in the first piece and the individually determined nuances of movement in the second had evaporated, and Lewitzky was erecting movement as if it were buildings or mileposts or industrial sculpture, manoeuvring bodies into a startling array of what used to be called tableaux vivants. Some of these tableaux were interesting, more so certainly than the grey stretches of dance material leading up to and away from them like a Los Angeles freeway. But by contenting herself with planting monuments on top of an indifferent movement landscape, Lewitzky sacrificed coherence. All of her dance-dances suffered from this 'monumentalist' approach. *Pas de Bach* and *Inscapes* bore the additional weight of tricky, sensationalistic decor by haute couturier and former Horton dancer Rudi Gernreich; they couldn't do anything but fold up — or escape, as the dancers tunneling upwards to freedom and air at the close of *Inscapes* seemed to be doing.

A markedly different approach to

choreography again was taken by New York choreographer Lar Lubovitch who shared the third week of the dance series with Lewitzky. If anything, Lubovitch's dances seemed as relentlessly active as Lewitzky's seemed stillborn.

Lubovitch's background lies primarily in ballet although none of his dances are as obviously balletic as Cunningham's. Nor are they modern in the pioneering way of Graham or Horton. They are hybrids, but not rough hybrids as Paul Taylor's are; they are delicately reared. Nowhere can you detect the imprint of a demonstrative personality. They don't lack personality, however; there is evidence of an exquisite sensibility in the filigree work of *Exsultate Jubilate*, especially the Renaissance freize-like processional for a quartet of crimson-clad dancers in the 'Aria' or the heaven-reaching solo of the concluding 'Vivace'. There is also in the opening and closing sections of *Up-Jump*, a dirty sense of humour that evokes, appropriately enough, the rampant libido of New York City. And yet, I often felt something was missing.

Take the 'Salome' section of *Up-Jump* or the duet, *The Time Before the Time After (the Time Before)*: the one creates images of sexual sorcery, the other of sexual warfare. But these images don't reverberate. They seem to be part of a moving still life; like the dances that contain them, they're just there. We are aware of craft, of refinement. We're aware, too, of integrity — the images are expressed in a language that is both autonomous and direct. We're not aware, however, of the need behind specific images, specific dances, the need that makes their creation inevitable; they lack urgency. As a result, we feel physically isolated from them; we feel indifferent to their development.

With *North Star* and *Marimba*, Lubovitch has a built-in excuse for lack of urgency. *Marimba* is a significant addition to a genre presently very popular in New York: the trance dance, elements of which (notably the prominence of community over individual) can be found in *North Star*, too. The communal bliss of *North Star*, however, is broken by two solos — one of them a writhing yet rooted cry of passionate solitude — that make the group dances look aimless and trite rather than Utopian.

*Marimba* doesn't suffer by similar comparisons for there are no solos to intrude on its perpetuum mobile. But, as an ensemble work, it's also more interesting than any of the group sections in *North Star*; its seamless craftsmanship and its springtime play of light and cloud, so beautifully captured in the ebbing-flowing/falling-recovering motifs, resist any accusation of triteness. It doesn't pander to us, and, at the same time, it doesn't demand anything of us. The easy-going nature of the dance also allows Lubovitch

to take refuge in it; he doesn't have to bare himself. In fact, the sheer force of *Marimba*'s warm and faceless flood makes us doubt the truth of those few glimpses of himself he does grant us in other works; it is a great leveller.

This season's two visitors from the fantasy world of classical ballet completed the picture of contemporary dance as much by their differences from one another as by their shared differences to the modern participants.

Now about 10 years old, the Feld Ballet began life as an offshoot of American Ballet Theatre. Eliot Feld, its guiding light and still the only choreographer, became quickly known as ballet's wonder-boy, a reputation he managed to keep up with New York critics until very recently. On the basis of the works presented at Artpark, one would have to say that this reputation is mostly based on his cleverness.

The only early work of Feld's I was able to see this time out was *Harbinger* (1967), and while its cleverness was balanced by a genuine gift for spacial design and structural coherence, it seemed, like Balanchine's black and white ballets of the late 1950s, a victim of its period; those qualities that proclaim it a product of the 1960s — its emphasis on youth, even youthful rebellion, its communal spirit, its brighter-dawn religiosity and its variegated, batik-like costumes — are, more than any timelessness it may possess, what give it value. Since the success of *Harbinger* and his other early works (*At Midnight*, *Intermezzo* and *Meadow Lark*), Feld's work has become increasingly clever at the expense of everything else — so much so that in recent dances like *La Vida* and *Half Time*, you can almost track Feld desperately smelling out the gimmicks in his own material; once or twice, I even thought I heard him boasting with relief, 'Hey, that'll get 'em!'. He offers us no break from relentlessly flashy, logistically difficult movement or from weary sight gags usually involving a veritable battery of props (the business with the serape in *La Vida* or with the pom-poms in *Half Time*). Not surprisingly, none of these dances ever gets off the ground. Feld's cleverness, moreover, not only kills momentum, it also puts his attempts at making jokes on the level of a favourite Chaucer professor's bad puns.

Feld's week at Artpark was distinguished by a world premiere. *Papillon*, as the new ballet is known, proved to be somewhat of a surprise — first of all because it recalls an era of classical dancing with which Feld has never (as far as I know) been associated — the Second Empire; and secondly because it actually consists of some extended movement passages which the choreographer allowed to develop without gimmickry — well, without too much anyway. Two intertwining plotlets show a melancholy *chasseur de papillons*



named Leopold searching for his ideal butterfly among a bevy of 13 (if snakes and birds and praying mantises can go on point, why not butterflies?); and a junior bevy (consisting of students from Feld's newish school) trying to escape the vaguely pedophilic threats of a magnificent spider. For sheer silliness, the action is well served by Jacques Offenbach's tipsy score, arranged by Sol Berkowitz from the only ballet score Offenbach ever composed. The ballet for which he deigned to exercise his melodic gifts was Marie Taglioni's choreographic tribute to the Paris Opera Ballet's *étoile montante* of 1860, Emma Livry. It, too, was called *Le Papillon* and the little we know of it (chiefly from Beaumont, Guest and lithographs of the period) tell us it was elaborate and ludicrous, theatrically unweildy and tending towards the interminable; happily, Feld's little confection resembles it in a few external points only.

The most important way the National Ballet of Canada differs from the Feld Ballet is that it lacks the focus a single ruling genius can give a company. It is also notoriously unadventurous – even on its own conservative terms. The closest it comes to 'modern' is Kenneth MacMillan's *Elite Syncopations*, a ballet that belongs in the thrift shops of Carnaby Street, circa 1966, out of which designer Ian Spurling obviously dressed the whole despicable mess. But then, as we know, the National Ballet has never professed to like the 20th century. Indeed, it has consistently sought recognition as a purveyor of 'traditional' ballet. For no other reason than financial, its decision to embrace unreservedly the dance aesthetics of the previous century has proven a smart one.

Of all the companies that participated in this summer's dance series at Artpark, the National Ballet was the biggest hit at the box office. The Feld Ballet came second. While Artpark's brave programme directors might try to attribute rumours of a gas shortage – founded or otherwise – to the poor turnout at the modern dance concerts, nobody's going to take them too seriously when the National and Feld did so well. Next season, we'll probably see the return of the big-gun companies like the Joffrey Ballet and the Ailey Company and while it's always good to see them, it's a loss if we can't also see the smaller modern groups. For us Torontonians who see next to nothing of what goes on in the world of dance outside our own culturally tiny metropolis, this loss means another opportunity denied us to expand our knowledge and appreciation of dance, (you can't really say you appreciate dance when all you see is the National Ballet), and another victory for our seemingly untouchable provincialism.

GRAHAM JACKSON

## The Bolshoi Ballet

Hamilton Place

19 - 22 July 1979

Days before the company actually arrived, the Bolshoi Ballet got off to a bad start in Hamilton. Conductor Algis Zhuraitis, sent ahead to rehearse a pick-up orchestra, declared in an interview that he was disappointed in the quality of the musicians. Publication of this remark, coupled with a rumour that the Hamilton Place stage was too shallow to accommodate the Bolshoi sets, brought droves of patrons back to the box office to return their tickets. Final sales were poor. Perhaps potential buyers felt that at a top price of \$25 even the Bolshoi was not worth the risk.

The company of 150 brought three full-length ballets for a total of six performances in Hamilton: *Swan Lake*, *Giselle* and *Spartacus* – two shows of each, in that order. Audiences saw three productions of widely varying quality, some excellent soloists (and some not so good), a rather un-giving corps de ballet, and choreography lacking much excitement except for brief moments. Toronto got the worst of the deal – just two performances of the weakest of the three, *Swan Lake*. No doubt there are convincing logistical reasons why

Nadia Pavlova as Giselle



Canada was not shown the more interesting repertoire toured in the United States: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Legend of Love* and *The Stone Flower*.

Yuri Nikolaevich Grigorovich, 52, artistic director and principal choreographer of the Bolshoi Ballet is, according to Clive Barnes, '... the most important Russian-born choreographer since Fokine and Balanchine'. Bolshoi publicists add to that by telling us that Grigorovich '... believes in big performances which give full play to the physically and emotionally expressive potential of dance above all else'. Grigorovich makes a speciality of reworking the classics, removing the mime, juggling the music and increasing the number of actual steps. He has now restaged all the Tchaikovsky ballets as well as *Romeo and Juliet* to the most complete Prokofiev score available.

Grigorovich is given the sole choreographic credit for the production of *Swan Lake* seen first in Hamilton, then Montreal and Toronto. Mercifully however there are conspicuous chunks of Petipa and Ivanov remaining. Grigorovich's professed concern with the expressive potential of dance pretty well falls flat on its face in this glued-together, dramatically empty and difficult to follow work. The first and third



acts suffer from an incredible insensitivity to the music, a tedious deployment of the corps, in garish costumes by Simon Virsaladze, Grigorovich's collaborator, and a laughable lack of variety in sequences of steps.

This *Swan Lake* makes little or no narrative sense and might easily confuse anyone familiar with the versions danced by Western ballet companies. The Prince bounds on stage with the opening processional music to do a solo of leaps, beats and turns before a single courtier has arrived. For some reason he joins in the pas de trois of Act I yet in Act III misses the divertissements, performed in his honour, arriving only an instant before Odile. The costumes of the courtiers and princesses who perform the divertissements are so alike that both acts seem to blend into a nebulous flurry of undistinguished dancing. Grigorovich perhaps recognizes this problem since he has interpolated a jester who bounds and bounces around the stage making faces at the princesses as if to apologise for the boredom of it all.

The first night in Hamilton and at both Toronto performances, the role of Odette/Odile was danced by Natalia Bessmertnova, the company's prima ballerina on this tour and Grigorovich's wife. In spite of her reputation as a fluid lyrical dancer, she turned out to be a brittle Odette with the slowest bourées in the business and an equally unattractive and uninspiring Odile.

Bessmertnova is an extremely mannered dancer. The constant crackling of her arms (not to mention her broken wrists) made it difficult to watch the rest of her body at work. Grigorovich has removed most of the traditional mime passages. Therefore, angst-ridden meaningful glances are all that is left to the ballerina as she attempts to convey the character.

Alexander Godunov (Prince Siegfried) was, like Bessmertnova, technically strong and possessed of great authority on stage. His jumps are high with remarkably soft landings but the long blond mane of hair, so effectively free and rebellious in *Spartacus*, becomes a clumsy, distracting lump when sprayed down, especially during his determined pirouettes.

In trying to develop his role, Godunov had problems similar to Bessmertnova's. This *Swan Lake* has no hunting scene. For his birthday, Siegfried is given a necklace rather than a crossbow. So, at the end of Act I, alone on stage, the prince must dash around looking royally distraught until finally summoned to the lakeside, via a grand jeté of course, by some unseen force.

Thus both principals, try as they would, were at a decided dramatic disadvantage in this production as it is clearly impossible to create dramatic roles in the absence of dramatic structure or logic. During the Act II pas de deux, somebody nearby in the audience said, 'Aren't they supposed to be

falling in love?' Right on! If the emotional connection is not made then the rest of the ballet cannot gel. The only thematic continuity in this *Swan Lake*, if you can call it that, is technical virtuosity. Grigorovich, with all his avowed concern for expressive potential, has failed horribly.

Even the flow of technical virtuosity is disrupted by the Russians' irritating custom of taking calls between acts, as in opera. Indeed, any time the audience gave even a hint of applauding, say after an oft repeated diagonal of chaîné and piqué turns, the dancers stopped in acknowledgement. The disjointed effect was amplified by the cavalier approach adopted by the conductor towards the rhythmic structure of the music. Tempi were changed even in mid phrase. Tchaikovsky would have wepy bitterly.

The corps de ballet in *Swan Lake* were dull in Acts I and II but, while not exactly imbued with the joy of dance, did at least show a glimmer of interest and concern in the white acts.

There are interesting stylistic differences between these women and their Western counterparts. For example, there is much less emphasis placed on stretching the arch of the foot although, for the most part, the Russian women are fantastic jumpers. The use of the arms is fussy by Western standards. A combination of remarkable flexibility through the entire back and an apparent unconcern for stretching the legs give Bolshoi *arabesques* more the look of an attitude — especially when the foot of the extended leg is severely sickled outward.

The men we saw were not particularly polished classical technicians either, and by our standards would be considered muscle-bound. On the other hand they project enormous strength and virility.

*Giselle* proved to be an unquestionably more successful production than Grigorovich's travesty of a *Swan Lake*. Although Grigorovich's name was listed alongside those of Coralli and Perrot in the choreographic credits his fell hand was nowhere as obvious or as damaging as in *Swan Lake*. The costumes in *Giselle* were less offensive, the dancing considerably more inspired and the production blessed with the ravishing partnership of Nadezhda Pavlova, 23, and her husband, Vyaschislav Gordeyev, 30.

Pavlova was a sweet young *Giselle* in Act I with wonderfully light clear footwork; a peasant girl who just couldn't stop dancing. A somewhat muted Mad Scene accorded with her vulnerable, innocent characterization. In Act II, when the performance really took off, she danced with passionate commitment, showing off her fine jump, impossibly high extension, breathtaking balances, and a wonderfully trusting rapport with her partner.

Gordeyev was an equal and complementary delight. Handsome, with a classical purity sorely missed in his colleagues,

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possessing beautiful feet and legs and a wonderful soaring jump, Gordeyev is in addition a fine actor. His Albrecht was truly convincing and evoked so much sympathy in Act II that the stage was galvanized by the dramatic tension he created. Even the cold-hearted Wilis, though unyielding, could not remain indifferent to his plea.

The corps in Act I was a surly, casual lot, chatting quite loudly through the dances and not betraying a trace of a smile when they had to get up and do a few steps themselves. The Wilis however, were more than satisfactory as they responded to the brilliant performances of Pavlova and Gordeyev.

The Act II set was equipped with an ingenious device, disguised as a tree trunk, which could lower an airborne Wilis to a point just above Albrecht's head. The bushes twinkled with Christmas tree lights (as they do in Cuba), but Giselle's tombstone looked at least 100 years old. Do Russian Albrechts have powers of rejuvenation we in the West know nothing of?

The welcome relief from undiluted Grigorovich provided by *Giselle* was soon shattered by the onslaught of his monumental *Spartacus* — all three acts and 12 scenes of it! In the Soviet Union, Grigorovich's *Spartacus* is an object of veneration, yet any greatness it possess must be ascribed to its entertainment value rather than to any intrinsic choreographic merit. Surprisingly, as a political lesson it is pretty mild and not unambiguous stuff. Perhaps the Soviets are too self-confident or just plain naive to see that they themselves could be read into the part of the Roman villain.

The dancing hits you like a Mack truck. Khatchaturian's score, reminiscent of a Hollywood extravaganza soundtrack, begins the show with a high voltage energy quickly matched by punchy choreography. Alas, this pace continues unabated for three hours and more, eventually numbing the audience through sensory overload.

In terms of sheer stamina, the role of Spartacus must be one of the most demanding in the ballet repertoire. Every time the hero appears he is doing grand jetés, scissor leaps, multitudinous turns and spectacular lifts with his beloved, Phrygia. There are four principal characters: Spartacus and Phrygia, both captive slaves from Thrace; Crassus, the cruel Roman leader, and his concubine, Aegina. In between each scene there is a 'monologue' danced by one of these four. They are the focus of all the action, with no intermediate characters, just mobs of slaves, patricians and soldiers.

The ensemble choreography is unimaginative and repetitive. One beat usually equals one step. The slaves have yearning gestures and lots of knee-work while the Romans goose-step around and brandish

their swords. An orgy scene is hilariously chaste although the lights do go red. The dances for the patricians are uniformly boring.

Spartacus leads an almost successful revolt of the slaves and gladiators against Crassus. The ballet's best moment occurs on the Appian Way where Spartacus and the escaped gladiators convince the common people to join the uprising. Mobs of people gradually pour onstage creating a stunning dynamic crescendo with some bravura dancing for several shepherds. Crassus is captured and defeated in combat with Spartacus yet for some inexplicable reason is released. Naturally, being a resourceful Roman, Crassus rebuilds his forces and through the wiles of Aegina ultimately defeats the rebels. The closing curtain descends on a terrific tableau with the dead Spartacus lifted high on the shields of his comrades with an elevated Phrygia gazing down on his body. This finale, like the continuity of the whole ballet, is very cinematic.

Godunov as Spartacus was like one possessed, physically perfect for the role. His performance was charged with an incredible energy, so unlike his Siegfried. Gordeyev's Spartacus was more vulnerable, less superhuman and more clearly focused. Technically he was dazzling, jumping and performing multiple turns with a stop-on-a-dime ease seen elsewhere only in the work of Barishnikov.

The Phrygia to Godunov's wild Spartacus was Ludmilla Semeniaka, a beautiful long-legged, Ulanova-trained dancer with a refreshingly clean, simple style. Her dancing has a wonderful suspension so that her turns sail rather than spin. The other Phrygia was Pavlova, dancing again with Gordeyev. Her perfect split leaps sat in the air as if on a magic carpet.

Crassus was well danced by Mikhail Gabovich, a real movie-star performance. Leonid Koslov opted for the mean but sexy approach. The role of Aegina was danced first by Svetlana Adyrkhaeva and then by Nina Timofeyeva, for whom the role was created. Now 44, she brought a grotesque passion to her dancing that was exciting to watch.

*Spartacus* undoubtedly has its moments. Like Grigorovich's *Swan Lake* it puts more emphasis on the virtuosic aspect of dancing, but the characters are able to maintain an emotional intensity in spite of the incredible physical demands placed on them. The most attractive feature of *Spartacus*, however, was the way that a previously somnolent corps de ballet suddenly began to enjoy their dancing. Their sense of commitment and pleasure at last gave us something to believe in.

JOHN IVEY

## The Anna Wyman Dance Theatre

Centennial Theatre  
North Vancouver  
5-6 October 1979

Before embarking on an ambitious Canadian tour and a series of appearances in Austria, the Anna Wyman Dance Theatre opened Centennial Theatre's Canadian series with three new works choreographed by Wyman last summer.

There is a cerebral quality in Wyman's work which sets up a distance between artist and audience, particularly in pieces with a serious intent, and the transactions among the dancers tend often to be impersonal, even when the kinetic interactions are most intimate. In the comic pieces the humour is gutsy, with the dancers employing the broad tactics of circus clowns. Wyman rarely takes a softer line but invariably achieves a sensual by-product through the use of theatrical trappings for which she is now well known — effective lighting and the use of textures in fabrics and decorative props.

*Scribouillage* is the least accomplished of the premieres, with a minimum of craft in the dance designs. It is never quite clear why she has chosen to mix the pontifical personages in great black capes with frisky buffoons in striped leotards and red derbies, nor why she chose to interpolate

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Ramsey Lewis' jazzy fragments with the austere declaration of Janacek's *Sinfonietta*. The latter score itself reveals Wyman's innocence in the area of philharmonic choreography. The grunts and sputters of Penderecki serve her better in *Hamartia*, an anguished dialogue of two hobbled personages inspired by a Picasso painting.

An image of this work is projected on a crimson pair of swinging doors. These serve as a portal to an enigmatic neon-green world beyond the cloisters where the two basket-cases manipulate their bodies on tiny stools with casters. Christopher Neil Wortley, who would be the 'heavy' were Wyman interested in devising dance-dramas, makes a striking figure of despair, while Vickye Wood, with hair newly dyed an unflattering platinum blonde, conveys a more oafish misfit. The climax of the dance finds them using the door-frame as a gymnastic bar in a series of convulsed postures reminiscent of Picasso's *Guernica*.

*Surya Savitar* is an exhausting pas de quatre for look-alikes in gold lamé. Denise O'Brien and Dianne Grant are in shimmering jump-suits, Trevor Schalk and Pierre Des Marais in form-fitting pants. Wyman's dance technique combines elements from the Petipa-Balanchine forms and from the school of Martha Graham in a happy and congruous relationship. The Keith Jarrett music is innocuous, relating to but rarely propelling the brilliant dance passages which require intricate timing and great endurance in a continual flow of solo and ensemble combinations. This new piece is particularly demonstrative of the Wyman credo and it shows her dancers in reverence of it. What we end up liking in Anna Wyman's work is what thoroughly satisfies the specific needs we acknowledge in our own emotions and intellects. And in a good Anna Wyman dance there is always a great deal to choose from.

LELAND WINDREICH

## Dance Film Directory

John Mueller

Princeton: Princeton Book Company

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## Guide to Dance in Film

David L. Parker and Esther Siegel

Detroit: Gale Research

1978

Finding out about dance films has been a pretty tricky business until lately. The field is a morass of inadequately documented activity; listings have been scarce, incomplete, and arbitrary. Two important new reference works, each serving a distinct function, now greatly diminish these problems. David Parker and Esther Siegel's *Guide to Dance in Film* (220 pages, hardcover, \$22 US) is a good book to consult in the library, and John Mueller's *Dance Film Directory* (97 pages, paperback, \$9.95 US) is a book many dance teachers will use often and want to buy.

I relied heavily on both books in their earlier incarnations while preparing a dance film retrospective for the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1977. *Guide to Dance in Film* was an immense card file which David Parker presided over at the Library of Congress, where he is a Technical Officer in the Motion Picture Section. A genial storehouse of film facts, Parker offered lots of ideas and enthusiasm for my project and generously put his work-in-progress at my disposal. The finished *Guide* includes 1750 titles, a listing more than three times larger than any previous effort.

John Mueller, a political scientist who also teaches dance history at the University of Rochester, has worked tirelessly over the past decade to organize and improve his chosen area, films on ballet and modern dance. Readers are probably familiar with his regular columns on film and video in *Dance Magazine*. *Dance Film Directory* is an impressive development of his *Films on*

*Ballet and Modern Dance* (1974), available through the American Dance Guild, which in turn grew from a humble mimeographed first listing. Mueller has always been eager to exchange information, and he faithfully posts addenda to his directories and offers suggestions to anyone who takes the trouble to write him. It's heartwarming to see that his willingness to answer inquiries is reiterated in the new *Directory*; it's also pleasing to find that the original flavour of his highly factual, yet occasionally eccentric notes still survives. His is a guidebook with opinion and personality. I liked the first versions, and I like the new one even better.

Briefly, I'll try to describe both books as reference tools — what they contain and how one might use them. *Guide to Dance in Film* is essentially an alphabetical listing by title of 1750 films involving dance which were made or shown in the United States from the 1890s through the mid-1970s. The emphasis is on professional films containing a substantial amount of dance performance. The list excludes record films not intended for public viewing, films of ethnic and social dance not arranged for theatrical presentation, films and videotapes not available for distribution, and teaching films.

A typical entry begins as follows: title, date, country, production company, running time, silent or sound, colour or black and white, then usually follows information on director, choreographer, music, dancers, genre, 'for those films in which one would not expect to find dance sequences', such as drama with ballet sequence. Some entries also give terse non-evaluative notes on contents. Although works which were originally videotape recordings are identified, film size, (16mm, 35mm, or other form), is not provided.

Each item is assigned a number, and thus one can readily locate films by using three extensive indexes which occupy the book's last 40 pages. A name index includes companies, theatres, schools, etc., as well as names of people. Here, for example, one finds Norman Campbell followed by two

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items and Margaret Dale by one, lamentably, because almost all of their work made for broadcast is under severe restriction for viewing and thus falls out of the scope of this guide. There are also indexes of production companies and country of origin (if not the United States). Canada has 15 entries, three by Norman McLaren.

*Guide to Dance in Film* documents the existence of a great number but by no means all dance films. It makes no attempt to name prices and sources for rental and purchase (these would be obsolete long before the list is), but it does refer users to guides such as Mueller's that do. The work of Parker and Siegel can be usefully compared to Cyril Beaumont's *A Bibliography of Dancing* (1929), that venerable tome which first drew together so many titles relating to dance in the holdings of the British Museum. Neither list is exhaustive, but, considering the odds, one is extremely grateful they were made at all. Such books chart out a large territory and will serve many users for years to come.

While Parker and Siegel offer only a short and not a terribly clear introduction, Mueller's *Dance Film Directory* is in fact about one-fifth introduction — a very detailed and useful one — and the book presents a listing of approximately 325 films which are carefully annotated and evaluated. Here readers can learn where currently to order each film and what comparative rental prices are. Of course few of these distributors will send films out of the US because of customs regulations. However, Mueller devotes a small discussion to Canadian sources, and a substantial number of the films he lists are available somewhere in this country.

Mueller's book is a veritable 'How-To' on using dance films successfully for teaching and for presenting film series. He is quite convinced that film offers a unique access to the literature of dance, and that it provides opportunities for study that live performance lacks, for example, repeated viewing, still framing and comparisons. Using film can thus greatly enhance live dance viewing, he argues, by helping to train the eye. His exploration of these possibilities will give teachers many new ideas on how to work with film. Mueller presents valuable, encouraging nuts-and-bolts advice on scheduling and renting, purchasing, locating sources, showing films to classes, organizing film series, and so forth. An excellent section gives an overview of available films arranged historically and stylistically. Categories range from Ballet before Bournonville to Post-Cunningham.

The directory entries go like this: title, running time, date, black and white or colour (he also notes any film which is not 16mm sound). Then he sums up quality with a star system: two stars means exceptional, one star is quite good, and no star suggests the film is ordinary or not previewed. Next are rental prices and sources, sale price and source, and, on most entries,

names of filmmaker, director, choreographer, music, and dancers. Mueller's notes are longer than usual in film directories. His focus is always on exact documentation of the film's content, and, since many films have several dance sequences or sections, Mueller's detailed listing of what is danced, in order, is very convenient. Unless one makes notes while viewing, it is all too easy to forget what is on, say, *Ballet For All — 6: Ballet Comes To Britain*, which one might have seen two dozen times. Mueller's note reminds one that this film includes excerpts from *Afternoon of a Faun*, *Boutique Fantasque*, *Les Biches*, and *The Rake's Progress*. Throughout his notes, Mueller comments freely on quality of performance, choreography, filmmaking, colour, print, etc. He is an accurate and trustworthy guide although one may disagree with his specific views from time to time.

In many notes Mueller gives suggestions on how to use a particular film as well as references to related articles and books. Some notes are actually fascinating essays in miniature, such as his treatments of *Martha Graham Dance Company* and Paul Taylor's *Junction*.

Following his directory of ballet and modern dance films, Mueller offers handy short sections on mime, ethnic dance, and Fred Astaire, Busby Berkeley, and George Balanchine musicals. Mueller's indexes are beautifully organized for efficient use. There are four: film distributors (with addresses and phone numbers), choreographers, dance works, and dancers.

After several weeks with these two books, I can hardly remember what it was like before we had them. There's not much point in quibbling about omissions and mistakes. Books based, as these are, on quantities of data will inevitably have them, and, since many of the 'facts' about dance films change or become dated, one simply has to make allowances. On the whole, both of these books are remarkably reliable. I do wish both works had given a list of notable earlier dance film guides and directories, many of which are still crucial, as well as references to key books and articles on dance and film.

Physically, *Guide to Dance in Film* is plain, unillustrated, and expensive, as are the other books in Gale's Performing Arts Information Guide Series (of which this is Volume 3). *Dance Film Directory* has a handsome two-column format, lovely paper and type, and 22 still images from important dance films. It's a pleasure to own.

SELMA LANDEN ODOM

## The Dance Horizons Travel Guide To Six of the World's Dance Capitals

Edited by Sally and Eric Jacobson

Brooklyn: Dance Horizons

1978

It's good once in a while to come across a book which actually lives up to its title and does what the publisher's blurb says. This handy paperback will prove invaluable to professional dancers on tour, to students, researchers and the general dance lover.

Six dance capitals are examined: New York, Washington, London, Paris, Leningrad, and Moscow. Each has its own section which is subdivided to provide clear information about where to see dance, how to get tickets, where to take class, where to shop for dance items, which museums of dance interest to visit, where to go for research material, what publications to buy and what dance organizations you will find. Seating plans are provided for some of the theatres listed.

The editors are honest enough to acknowledge that a book of this kind, however carefully it has been prepared, will almost certainly contain errors and omissions and so they have anticipated criticism by including a questionnaire so the reader can, indirectly, become a contributor to the second edition. It would be good, for example, to give information about the various rituals whereby the innocent visitor to New York can get cheap standing room tickets for the Met. Also, if the publishers really feel it is worth the space to print seating plans let them make sure the numbering is decipherable. At present it is not in several instances. The shopping guide could also be improved by the addition of personal comments about such things as prices and range of stock. Some dance stores are a rip-off: others offer bargain prices on a range of goods.

These, however, are small points. More substantial is the question of balance. The present book devotes 176 pages to New York and Washington but only 136 to the remaining four cities combined. Even then, the information on New York is far from comprehensive. Rather than revise the existing edition, Dance Horizons would be far better advised to publish a separate dance guide to New York. It certainly warrants one and even more certainly there is a big international market for such a book. Then they could combine many more than six cities in a companion volume. Why, there might even be room for a Canadian city or two!

KEVIN SINGEN



## Entre-Six Dance Company

Places des Arts  
Théâtre Maisonneuve  
Montreal  
13-15 September 1979

Entre-Six, the dance company founded by Lawrence Gradus and Jacqueline Lemieux, is celebrating its fifth anniversary this year. For a company still in its infancy, Entre-Six has made amazing progress. They work 52 weeks a year, pay competitive salaries, have 'done' Paris and New York and toured as far afield as the western Arctic; they even bring guest artists: for all the world they behave as if they were an established company.

They opened their fifth season with a three-day engagement in Montreal, including a benefit gala, and the following week took off for a western tour.



Lawrence Gradus' *Jardins sous la Pluie*

The evening began with *Proximities*, a neat, playful work by Murray Louis, dating from 1969, which may not have had enough rehearsal time because much of the detail was blurred.

They finished with *Excursions*, a gymnastic frolic by Gradus to Britten's *Diversions on a Theme, for Piano, Left Hand and Orchestra*. Gradus' work always improves after a few outings when it has shaken down and *Excursions* is no exception.

In between we had guest stars and a world premiere, *Rain Gardens*, set to Debussy's piano pieces, *Jardins sous la pluie*. Gradus appears to be going through his Nikolais period though, to be fair, he has always been very conscious of production values. His use of props—butterfly nets and umbrellas turned upside down to resemble giant bluebells—is integrated into the flow of motion or used to score witty points. A length of batik, with hoops at either end, is twisted to make a tube, an oyster, a French horn, petunias or mandarin hats for a pair of squatting Chinese. The last two sections were rendered highly theatrical by Dan Hoffman's decors and James van Abbe-

ma's jungle lighting, but the start lacked definition and the dancers were often no better than porters.

The guest stars (substituting for Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn) were Youri Vámos and Joyce Cuoco from the Munich Opera Ballet—Lynn Seymour's company. They chose two bravura pas de deux: *Spring Waters*, an ardently kitsch relic from the Bolshoi which features a spectacular fish-dive from which the ballerina is rescued six inches off the ground, going 50 miles an hour. When done well, it is absolutely electrifying. The *Don Quixote Pas de Deux* brought bravos for Cuoco's incredible momentum but they danced out of context: there was no eye contact, no nuance, no complicity. Vámos is a nice lyrical dancer lacking the absolute technique one would expect from a student of Lepeshinskaya. Cuoco is a slip of a girl with great powerful haunches who can

launch herself like a rocket. For all that, somehow their spots did not fit the texture of the evening.

As for Entre-Six, the company itself is young and attractive and almost all new. In his constant search for the ideal, Gradus changes dancers as frequently as other people change shirts. Of the six newcomers this year, Douglas Alan Nakamoto of Alabama has strong technique and Carolyn Mcready, a Montrealer from the National Ballet School, contributed the sunniest smile imaginable.

The death, a scant week after the fifth anniversary celebrations, of co-founder Jacqueline Lemieux, has left the company understandably shaken but determined to carry on. Most likely Christine Clair, an ex-dancer and Mme Lemieux's assistant for the past four years, will take over her administrative duties. There are plans afoot for tours of Japan, South America and Australia. A European tour next year with Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn, will include France, Belgium, Switzerland, England and finish in North Africa.

KATI VITA

## National Ballet of Canada

Royal Opera House  
London, England  
6-11 August 1979

Seven years ago the National Ballet of Canada first showed itself in Britain at the London Coliseum as a company of interesting achievement, homogeneous style and spirited potential. Peter Williams, the doyen of British critics and then, as now, the Editor of *Dance and Dancers*, wrote that the company had been 'beautifully schooled in classicism' and paid tribute to the pioneering work of Celia Franca in this respect. Others, including myself, found much to enjoy in the performances in one direction or another, whatever the reservations that were also expressed.

So there was a generally expectant welcome for the company's return visit in August, this time to Covent Garden, where the week's performances were almost sold out in advance even with an unusual concentration of other dance events in London that included, at the same time, London Festival Ballet opening its regular summer season at the Royal Festival Hall, and the Dance Theater of Harlem in the first of two weeks at Sadler's Wells. The Canadian first-night gala had Princess Margaret as guest of honour, special floral displays, and ticket prices to benefit the Royal Opera House Development Fund.

Presumably this governed the opening choice of *Swan Lake*, which we saw on the previous visit, instead of a production such as *La Fille mal gardée* deriving from the first three years of Alexander Grant's directorship. In the event, the performances of both ballets, as well as the intervening triple bill, brought an inescapable sense of disappointment when it became apparent that there was not only no development in the company as a whole or in its individual dancers since the previous visit, but that they actually looked less assured than before and some aspects, such as the ensemble style of the corps de ballet, had even declined.

Erik Bruhn's version of *Swan Lake* has seemed to me an acceptable variation on the traditional production in all but a few details, and in spite of the Disneyish reminiscences of *Snow White* in the Heeley designs, it was again a positive treat for London audiences to see transformations that achieve in seconds what it still takes the Royal Ballet two long intermissions to bring about. This also works much to the ballet's advantage in sustaining and intensifying its dramatic character, as the scenes of social celebration move directly into lakeside fantasy without the need to build up tension all over again after each of three intermissions.

At the same time, it also imposes on the dancers—the mimes and divertissements no less than the principals—the need for corresponding depth of interpretation to





National Ballet rehearses at Covent Garden

express its dramatic character, and this was simply not forthcoming. Karen Kain's lyrical flow of movement in the 'white' acts and crisper touches in the 'black' was no more supported by depth of feeling or personality than it was seven years earlier, and Frank Augustyn, despite his polished technique, left the Prince a bland, two-dimensional character instead of projecting him as the central focus of Bruhn's conception.

As for the rest of the dancing, it generally lacked just those qualities of vitality, homogeneity and style which had been praised before, and there were none of the soloists that I could name as an exception. This impression owed something to the lethargic musical pace set by the conducting of George Crum, which allowed much of the spirit to drain from the music as it did from the dancing. He presumably measured the playing of the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet Orchestra to the way the dancers are schooled to perform *Swan Lake*, but the result, in sight and sound, did less than credit to what should be the most dramatic of classic ballets.

Both the music and the dancing did perk up somewhat in *La Fille mal gardée* on the third night. Other commitments that week prevented me from seeing more than the first performances of each programme, so it was again Kain and Augustyn in two very different principal roles, and I fear I found Kain no more convincing as Lise than as the Swan Queen. Her narrow range of character looked imposed on the role instead of emerging from within it and, attractive as she is, her feeling for style looked superficial, while Augustyn summoned too little brio for the full range of steps demanded of Colas.

To see Peter Schaufuss as Alain was intriguing, and I have seen nobody dance the role more snappily since Grant himself, but Schaufuss has never shown much sense of humour and its absence here left the role looking dangerously like a wayward puppet. Jacques Gorrissen had some fun as

Widow Simone, and the performance — using the Royal Ballet sets — successfully overcame an early chapter of accidents: a cockerel who lost his tail-feathers; flowers that fell out of a pot before they could be thrown; a broom that parted from its handle, and the cat's-cradle of ribbon that did not come out quite right.

Schaufuss brought dancing of a different calibre from the rest of the company to *Bayaderka* at the start of the triple bill. I was slightly disconcerted to see him clad in almost the same attire and dancing a variation with practically the same steps — give or take a *sissonne* or two — as he did in *Corsaire* at the Royal Festival Hall the week before (with other assorted celebrities in a programme known locally as *Star Wars*). However, it helped to raise the temperature from the mostly featureless female dancing, in which only Vanessa Harwood and Nadia Potts approached the requisite style in their solo variations, and a ham-fisted arrangement of the Minkus music, uncredited, did not help.

The concluding *Kettentanz* showed more of the dancers to some advantage, notably Colleen Cool, who replaced Potts in the Schnofler Tanz, and Clinton Rothwell partnering Kain in the Waltz, but the decision to show *Mad Shadows* was ill-advised. Ann Ditchburn's choreography suggested a possible if erratic flair, but it was handicapped to the point of atrocity by the turgid realism of her scenario and by the crude banalities of André Gagnon's music — both redolent of a character that I thought ballet had long since yielded to television.

NOËL GOODWIN

Noël Goodwin is Associate Editor, Dance and Dancers, and a Member of the Arts Council of Great Britain. He was formerly Music and Dance Critic for the London Daily Express for 22 years, and now freelances, reviewing regularly for the International Herald Tribune, Paris, and Ballet News, New York.

## Royal Winnipeg Ballet

Manitoba Centennial Concert Hall  
Winnipeg  
10-14 October 1979

The 'glorious new decade' that Arnold Spohr so optimistically predicted for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet several months ago did not have a particularly auspicious beginning with this opening series of hometown performances. Certainly the loss of 11 of its 26 dancers at the end of June has had a profound effect on the nature of the company. This isn't to suggest that the dancers who left were indispensable but the overall integration of the company has been badly and visibly shaken. This lack of cohesion was apparent in Michael Smuin's *Pulcinella Variations* which, mercifully, was the only work for the full company. What we saw wasn't the exciting and sparkling vitality generally associated with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet but, instead, a lack-lustre and poorly rehearsed corps with a few principal dancers trying desperately to generate enough electricity to save the piece.

Brilliant programming from the artistic staff, however, came to the rescue and immediately covered any shortcomings of the new crop of RWB school graduates. American Ballet Theatre soloists Mariana Tcherkassky and Danilo Radojevic performed *Le Corsaire Pas de Deux* and

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The Royal Winnipeg Ballet in Van Manen's *Songs Without Words*

*Tarantella* to create the only genuine excitement of the evening. Both dancers are superb technicians and both excel in the finer details of classical dancing. Tcherkassky possesses awesome balance and a delightful musicality as well as an elegant classical line. Mr. Radojevic is undoubtedly one of the most talented male dancers performing anywhere in the world today. His precise footwork, aggressive attack and giant leaps that gobble up the surrounding space combined with a secure, imaginative and even daring dance intelligence give him extraordinary control coupled with breathtaking recklessness.

Oscar Araiz' *Women*, to music by Trace Slick, was a disappointing follow-up. Essentially a brilliantly conceived ballet with stunning theatrical power, the absence of the original but departed dancers Sheri Cook, Marina Eglevsky and Eva Christiansen left a notable gap. Although Margaret Slota and Bonnie Wyckoff danced with their usual style and drama, they were unable to hold the work together. Certainly there is nothing inadequate about the technical prowess of Pattie Caplette, Julie Whittaker and Kathleen Duffy, but these relative newcomers to the ballet need more time to redefine the sharp clarity of the gestures and simply more experience in creating their demanding individual characterizations.

Last on the programme was the Winnipeg premiere of Hans van Manen's *Songs Without Words*. This work may, perhaps, suggest the new direction in which Spohr is taking the repertoire. Since Winnipeg audiences seem to have a penchant for classical ballet, Spohr is incorporating the work of choreographers who seem committed to the idea of 'modern ballet,' that hybrid form of dance with its reliance on the technique of classical dance and the expressive abstraction of modern dance. Although the Dutch choreographers and their distinctive repertoire have not been well received in Winnipeg in the past, audiences here gave at least polite

applause to this work. *Songs Without Words* creates a highly sophisticated balance between the Mendelssohn piano score – beautifully played by Earl Stafford – and the witty, sensual, understated dance for four couples. Not a profound or even particularly thought provoking work (especially when compared to the mind-blasting experiences that the work of Jiri Kylian, another Dutch choreographer can be) *Songs Without Words* is simply a smooth, light affirmation of the simplicity and dignity of dance.

A highlight of the evening was the return of Bonnie Wyckoff from her season in New York with the Joffrey Ballet. Her welcome back from the audience was warm and enthusiastic. An interesting aspect of Bonnie's return is the increased responsibility being placed on her capable but small shoulders. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet seems to be heavily relying on her to get the company back on its feet. In fact, her dancing is more secure than it ever was and her obvious love for Winnipeg and her work here is contagious. But can a ballet company of the international stature of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet rely for its rebirth on the ability of a single dancer?

Essentially, this hometown season was a successful one thanks to brilliant guest artists and the skill of many of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's soloists and principals. However, the real test of whether or not they have overcome the crisis of last summer has merely been postponed. The Christmas performances of *Nutcracker* demand enormous technical proficiency from all the dancers. For better or worse, *Nutcracker* will tell the tale of the new Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Certainly they have weathered internal crises before and, in fact, seem to thrive on them. But just how long can a ballet company continually sacrifice a mature and recognizable style for new, young, humble blood?

RICHARD FORZLEY

## Les Grands Ballets Canadiens

European Tour

July 1979

In France we seldom have the opportunity of seeing Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. Their visit to Europe last summer was, therefore, a real event. For a month they toured the summer festival centres in Switzerland, France, Yugoslavia and Italy. From June 25 to July 25 the company gave 20 performances in 11 towns. Most of the time the performances were given in open-air theatres, Roman monuments for example in the south of France and in Italy, where the conditions for the dancers were very poor. Only one performance had to be cancelled because of bad weather but the very late sunset in summer compelled the company to wait until dark before starting the show and very often it was a bit cold on the old stone stages. Once in Vienne (France) a storm burst during the evening, not long enough for the performance to be cancelled or postponed, but big enough for the stage to get slippery and dangerous. Thus the tour represented a real *tour de force* and the whole company showed good health, scrupulous training and athletic strength which made the audience unaware of the difficult conditions and to feel charmed instead.

The performances I liked best were in the Palais Beaulieu in Lausanne (Switzerland). In France the shows were insufficiently publicized. In Troyes, for example, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens were announced after a Medieval Feast in the middle of a long list of entertainment. It was impossible to discover any poster announcing the company in the town. It was a pity, because audiences everywhere were cheerful and appreciated the youth, perfect homogeneity, technical skill and artistic sense of this company whom leading contemporary choreographers, Brian Macdonald, John Butler, Lar Lubovitch and George Balanchine trust enough to have them dance their best works. The shows in Lausanne were a great success whether judged by the applause and the cheers or by the newspaper reviews.

First of all, there was Nicholas Cernovitch's lighting, which bathed every moment of the different ballets in a magic atmosphere perfectly matching the music.

*Time Out of Mind*, which opened the show, displayed the cohesion of the dancers. With supreme artistry, they seemed to move freely in response to the music. The principals, the delightful Annette av Paul, and Dwight Shelton, eschewed any attempt at playing the star part and thus they proved their high professionalism, their perfect understanding of the choreography they uplifted. Unfortunately we had the proof that what seemed so easy to dance was really very difficult when a girl slipped



from her partner's grasp and landed on the stage.

*Lignes et Points*, by Brydon Paige and Brian Macdonald is set to the electronic music of Jean Mercure and is for two couples, in this case danced by the delicate Cathy Buchanan, partnered by David La Hay, (a young dancer of great talent) and the brilliant Jerilyn Dana partnered by Vincent Warren, well-known and beloved in Europe.

*Double Quartet* is a relatively new work of Brian Macdonald. It could seem audacious to conjugate musicians as different as Schubert and Schaffer. However the result, thanks to the choreographer, is a perfectly balanced structure in which each movement creates pure beauty and makes the difficult score accessible. The four dancers are incredibly beautiful to look at in even their most extreme contortions.

The fireworks of the evening were provided by the sumptuous ballet of John Butler to the music of Carl Orff, *Catulli Carmina*, for which nothing can be felt but admiration. So rich a choreography, particularly in its use of lifts, was helped by the perfect skill of each couple and the harmony of the lighting, the colours of the costumes and the decors. Alexandre Bélin, as Catulle, performed feats of virtuosity with incredible ease and a perfect sense of timing. Sylvie Kinal-Chevalier, still in first bloom of youth, was Leslie. She possesses technical flair and conveyed the emotion of the part well. Jerilyn Dana, as Ipsitilla, with her expressive body, was partnered by Dwight Shelton who danced Caelius's part as he had danced *Double Quartet* and *Time Out of Mind* with abundant energy and more than a touch of poetry. Such interpreters are able to insure the success of the ballet with any public.

The next performance began with Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco*. The ballet, like the Concerto itself, is a perfect masterpiece which cannot be danced by any cast but the best, the most precise. And so they were. I think Balanchine himself could not have found anything to fault.

*Les Noces*, to the Stravinsky score, was choreographed by Lar Lubovitch with a real sense of rustic comedy. The audience is made to believe in the characters as people and in the situation as a natural part of everyday life. Cathy Buchanan was very touching as the bride. The passive rag doll, the aimless victim of social manipulation, was adorned by the end of the ballet with a shy and delicate tenderness as she discovers her husband little by little. Edward Hillyer as the bridegroom was the perfect partner in the similar role. The audience felt uplifted in a giddy round transcending Stravinsky's music.

Everybody knows and loves Gilles Vigneault's songs in France. We have often listened to them on radio and television even if we have not seen Vigneault himself on stage. But now there is something more,

*Tam Ti Delam*, the Canadian ballet created by Macdonald to Vigneault's songs seen recently on French television. *Tam Ti Delam* is perfectly built, charming, filled with liveliness and irresistible humour. Sylvie Kinal-Chevalier and David La Hay, one as young as the other, were cast as the leads that evening in Lausanne and the whole company was headed by the unique John Stanzel, astonishing in his vivid sturdiness.

It was a great professional company we admired during Les Grands Ballet's tour, one that gave audiences much pleasure. Now we are going to wait for them in Paris where they must find the public they deserve.

YVONNE BIGGI

*Yvonne Biggi writes for Les saisons de la danse.*

## The Danny Grossman Dance Company

Toronto Workshop Productions Theatre

10-11 August 1979

A benefit performance by the Danny Grossman Dance Company to raise money for the company's 1979-80 season was a single event in an otherwise dance-dry Toronto August. The troupe has been notable so far for its idiosyncratic style, stabbing humour and exuberance rather than for its technical proficiency. This time instead we got strong bodies in an atmosphere of hard work and painful constraint. *National Spirit*, *Higher* and even, to some extent, *Curious Schools of Theatrical Dancing*, all seemed to have acquired an overtired and grim intent about them in place of their former athletic joyousness.



*Flurry and Bebop Meet Sideslip and the Muse*

One piece that escaped this excessive premeditation was the now completed *Ecce Homo*. The movement is archetypal and sculptural, set to conflict-laden strains of Bach, and inspired by medieval painting and sculpture. The mood ranges from the sacred to the capricious as the dancers gaze up with arm-stretched reverence to heaven, point accusing fingers or scitter in circles with bubbling joy. There is one extraordinary section in which Eric Bobrow appears to be invoking an incantation. He rubs his stomach and lifts his head by the hair. The costumes, spare cheesecloth wrappings, are able to transform their

character as quickly as the dance, giving the dancers a sickly, pale quality one minute and appearing the next as a moulting golden skin that enhances the sculptural effect. Unfortunately much of the mood of the piece was dissipated because of inadequate lighting. One was forced to squint into the gloom. Blackouts between the many sections also broke the line of action.

*Ecce Homo* shows once again Danny Grossman's remarkable eye for line and grouping. Circles dissolve into lines and lines become multi-levelled groups. The piece ends with a Pietà-like frieze as Greg Parks rolls onto the collective laps of the other dancers who, sitting in a line, raise their eyes heavenward.

The gala marked the premiere of *Flurry and Bebop Meet Sideslip and the Muse*. It is the most technically and emotionally complex work the Grossman Company has produced. The piece represents perhaps a new phase in Danny Grossman's choreography and one senses that it has been created as a special tribute to the dazzling presence of Judith Hendin. As 'Flurry', Hendin plays a doll-like creature who flirts alternately with 'Bebop' (Randy Glynn) and 'Sideslip' (Eric Bobrow), flitting from one to the other with saucy eyes and split-legged jumps that freeze in the air, all to the jazz music of Thelonius Monk, Cecil Taylor and Art Tatum. The action, like the music, is rich and many-faceted and must be seen several times to catch its full intent. Flurry is eventually wooed by Bebop and they take off on a motionally complex journey along the floor, kneeling and crawling over one another. Throughout the piece their actions are mirrored and interfered with by a peculiar duo in black and white patched costumes, 'The Muse' (danced by Greg Parks and Judith Ann Miller), who can intertwine themselves to look like a single many-limbed creature. They make many trips across the back of the stage, sometimes crawling with Judith dragging under Greg's body. Several times she is tossed unexpectedly from the wings into her partner's arms. Meanwhile all is not well with Flurry and Bebop. Their flirtation has gone wrong and the tender regard for one another becomes progressively more fragmented, then sexual and violent, matching a savage turn in the music. Finally all five dancers come to rest in an exhausted heap. Flurry disentangles herself. She retraces some of the motions of her initial enthrallment with a disillusionment and nostalgia which is all that is left after the heat of the act.

This new piece, with its intricate exploration of human relationships is a welcome complement to Grossman's already developed off-beat and idiosyncratic movement style.

KATHRYN BROWNELL



## Noticeboard

The **Floyd S. Chalmers Foundation** has turned over its assets, which amount to more than \$1 million, to the Ontario Arts Council. The fund will be matched by a special Wintario grant in recognition of the Chalmers family's distinguished contribution to the culture of Ontario over the last half-century. The estimated \$200,000 annual income from the endowment will be used to administer a new programme of grants for innovative/creative projects and training in the performing arts.

The **Magic of Dance**, a series illustrating the evolution of ballet and modern dance, is scheduled for broadcast after Christmas. The series, hosted by Margot Fonteyn, explores such themes as The Romantic Ballet in France and Denmark, Imperial Russian Ballet and the growth of modern dance in the United States.

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Simon Fraser University Centre for the Arts** celebrates its Fifteenth Anniversary Season with a performance series including music, theatre and a tremendous quantity of dance. The series began in September with an 'outdoor event' presented by Burnaby's Mountain Dance Theatre. November featured two very different dance programmes; Montreal's Entre-Six Dance Company, and a collaborative work, *Smashed Carapace*, by Jennifer Mascall and Sara Shelton Mann. Margie Gillis appeared in December. Companies booked for the new year are: The Danny Grossman Dance Company (Jan. 24, 25), Le Groupe de la Place Royale (Jan. 31), Paul Gaulin Mime Company (Feb. 27), The Bill Evans Dance Company of Seattle in their Canadian debut (Feb. 29), and members of the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre (March 25).

### ALBERTA

The **Alberta Ballet Company** has recently added two new principal dancers to its ranks. They are Svea Eklof and Michel Rahn, both former principals of the North Carolina Dance Theatre.

A note to choreographers: The deadline for submission for this year's **Clifford E. Lee Award in Choreography** is January 15, 1980. The award is worth \$3,000 and will enable the chosen choreographer to spend six weeks in residence at the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts mounting a new ballet for the Banff Festival in August. For details contact The Banff Centre School of Fine Arts, Banff, Alberta.

The **Banff Centre School of Fine Arts** is also co-sponsoring with the **Dance in Canada Association** a **National Choreographic Seminar** to be held at the Centre. A select group of six choreographers, six composers, six musicians and 24 dancers will spend an intensive three weeks (June 2 - 21) working together under the direction of Robert Cohan (Choreographic Director), John Herbert McDowell (Musical Director), Helen McGehee (Modern Dance Instructor) and Grant Strate (Ballet Instructor). For information and applications contact the Seminar Administrator, Grant Strate, at 100 Richmond St. E., Suite 325, Toronto, Ontario. M5C 2P9.

### SASKATCHEWAN

In November solo dance artist **Roberta Mohler** and musician/composer **Geoff Reilly** presented their collaborative work *Respondance* as part of the Dance Works performance series. Ms. Mohler spent the fall in Regina as guest instructor of Dance Works' Community School. The Dance Works Company, performing with the Regina Symphony Chamber Orchestra, will stage its own Christmas Programme December 26 - 30 featuring Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* and the premiere of *The Winter Piece*, an original dance/theatre piece based on the work of prairie artist William Kurelek with music by Regina composer Tom Schudel.

In the new year **Dance Works** will sponsor performances by **Le Groupe de la Place Royale** from Ottawa (Feb. 9, 10) and **Menaka Thakkar** from Toronto (March 8, 9).

### MANITOBA

The **Royal Winnipeg Ballet's** fall season marked the beginning of its fifth decade. The season featured guest artist, Moscow Gold Medal winner, Danilo Radojevic and his partner Marianna Tcherkassy, both leading dancers with American Ballet Theatre. The programme included the Canadian premiere of *Song Without Words* by Hans van Manen, with Michael Smuin's *Pulcinella Variations*, and *Family Scenes* by Oscar Araiz.

The company's spring season (Feb. 27 - March 2) will feature *Les Sylphides*, which the company premiered last year, a new work by Larry McKinnon and John Butler's *Sebastian*.

### ONTARIO

**Toronto Dance Theatre** made its third tour of Eastern Canada during October and November. Included in the tour were performances in many cities and towns of Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia and a three-day residency with the Halifax Dance Co-op. The tour programme included *Courances*, *Seastill*, *L'Assassin Menace*, *Recital*, *Boat*, *River*, *Moon* and *A Simple Melody*. The company on tour consisted of Peter Randazzo (artistic director), Claudia Moore, Nancy Ferguson, Grace Miyagawa, Sherry Lanier, Karen Duplisea, Charles Flanders, Dennis Rene Highway, Robert Desrosiers, Christopher House and Mitchell Kirsch.

While most of the company was away on tour, Danish director **Reider Nilsson** spent the month of October working with students and remaining company members of TDT on a new collaborative dance/theatre work entitled *Seven Plus One: Love Stories*. The company also highlighted the gala opening of the *Treasures of Tutankhamun* with an Egyptian dance extravaganza choreographed by David Earle.

Early in the fall **Ballet Ys** toured Eastern Canada. They performed in several Maritime cities including Halifax, Moncton,



Fredericton and St. John, and then, teaming up with Barde, a Québécois-Celtic band from Montreal, the company made an extensive tour of Quebec. The tour marked the Canadian premier of *Incident at Blackbriar*, a piece choreographed by Ron Cunningham of the Boston Ballet to an original score by William Sleator. The company's last Toronto performances of the year will be three evenings of dance at the NDWT Theatre, (Dec. 6 - 8), and their children's programme, *Clown of Hearts*, at Harbourfront (Dec. 21 - 23 and 27 - 30).

By the way, as of January 1980 Ballet Ys will be known as Theatre Ballet of Canada!

Kitchener's Dance Plus Four has disbanded. Company founder Gaby Miceli has moved to Montreal to join Pointépienu while her partner Nancy Roberts-Forbes is furthering her dance studies in New York.

Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise presented new work at Fifteen Dance Lab the first two weekends in November. T.I.D.E., comprised this season of Paula Ravitz, Denise Fujiwara, Allan Risdill and Dancemaker's Zella Wolofsky, generally features the choreography of Paula Ravitz, but the group's philosophy of collaboration ensures the full participation of dancer, choreographer and composer in the realization of the work. Dances presented included *Rushes*, *Common Ground* and *Attic* by Paula Ravitz and two new pieces by Allan Risdill.

Toronto choreographer Robyn Simpson presented her first full evening of dances at Toronto Free Theatre in October. Two new works were *The Whale Piece* and *Insane Whispers*, both with music by John Kuipers. The rest of the programme consisted of works she has created over the last four years for Ace Buddies.

Rina Schenfeld, a founding member of the Batsheva Dance Company of Israel, performed in Toronto in mid-October at the Leah Posluns Theatre. The three evenings of solo dance, entitled *Threads*, were followed by a master class at the Koffler Centre of the Arts, School of Dance.

From October to December, Sara Mann and Jennifer Mascall made a coast to coast Canadian tour performing their new full-length collaborative piece *Smashed Carapace*. They performed in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, Vancouver and many cities in between.

Toronto's well-known Indian dancer Menaka Thakkar presented an unusual performance of Indian dances for both adults and children at the St. Lawrence Centre this September. Menaka performed several new solo Bharata Natyam pieces learned on a recent trip to India she made with her gurus and musicians. The second half of the programme was a 45-minute dance-drama, *The Crocodile and*

*the Monkey*, engagingly performed by 17 children elaborately costumed as the creatures of the jungle.

The National Ballet of Canada has recently finished a three-week season in Toronto which included guest appearances in *The Dream* and *Four Schumann Pieces* by the Royal Ballet's leading male principal, Anthony Dowell. Other guests included Erik Bruhn in *Coppélia* (Dr. Coppélius) and Lois Smith in *The Sleeping Beauty* (the Queen). Preceding the O'Keefe Centre performances, the National toured a number of western Canadian centres during which there were several interesting debuts: David Nixon and Albert Forister as Oberon in *The Dream*, Mary Jago as Odette/Odile and Raymond Smith as Siegfried in *Swan Lake*, Peter Ottmann as Morris Townshend in *Washington Square* and both Ottmann and Smith in their first performances as The Poet in *Les Sylphides*. Veronica Tennant also returned to the role of Odette/Odile for the first time in almost a decade.

In their next O'Keefe season (February/March 1980) the National will present Frank Augustyn and Tomas Schramek in Maurice Béjart's *Song of a Wayfarer* and a staging of *Etudes* by Toni Lander. Although plans for a production of Fokine's *Petrushka* have been postponed owing to lack of funds, it is rumoured that the National may produce *Le Spectre de la Rose* during the season. Both ballets were taught to the company earlier this year by Nicholas Beriozoff.

Gerre Cimino, for several years a member of the National's publicity staff has become publicity director of Toronto Dance Theatre.

Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn each received an honorary degree from McMaster University on November 1, and at the end of the graduation ceremony performed *Le Corsaire* pas de deux in lieu of a convocation address. The ceremony was held at Hamilton Place.



Veronica Tennant in the film of *Mad Shadows*

The film of Ann Ditchburn's *Mad Shadows*, produced by Don Richards and directed by Eric Till, was screened on CBC television, November 14. The film stars Veronica Tennant in what must be one of her best performances on either screen or stage.



Pierre Quinn

Pierre Quinn is the star of a new 25-minute film, *Young and Just Beginning - Pierre*, about the National Ballet School from Kinetic Film Enterprises of Toronto. The production uses Pierre as the human focus for a look at the school's activities while Betty Oliphant provides a commentary.

Dance London is a new non-profit organization formed to encourage dance activities in London and the surrounding communities. Its first project is the sponsorship of a dance series at the newly renovated Theatre London. The series began with performances by Toronto Dance Theatre in September and Dancemakers in October. Upcoming performances are by Montreal's Entre-Six Dance Company (Dec. 20, 21), The National Ballet (March 12, 13), and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens (May 20, 21).

The Third Annual Dance Ontario Conference, a three-day event held in Toronto November 30 - December 2, began with a session hosted by the Ontario Arts Council for Ontario dance sponsors and touring dance companies. The session investigated the problems and potentials of touring in Ontario and was punctuated by a performance exclusively by Ontario touring dance companies that evening. Other activities of the conference included dance classes, seminars, improvisation groups, the presentation of the annual Dance Ontario Award, and to end the conference, the dancers' 'Gourmet Brunch'.



## QUEBEC

Early in September *Les Grands Ballets Canadiens* appeared at the New York Dance Festival and shortly after the company went on to visit Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Included in the 12 ballets of the tour programme were Brian Macdonald's ever popular *Double Quartet* and *Tam ti Delam* and three works new to the company: *Divertimento #5* by George Balanchine, *Exsultate Jubilate* by Lar Lubovitch and Paul Taylor's *Cloven Kingdom*.

*Entre-Six* Dance Company celebrated its fifth anniversary in September with three performances at Montreal's Place des Arts. The programme featured guest artists Joyce Cuocco and Yuri Vamos of the Bavarian State Opera Ballet who danced two pas de deux—*Don Quixote* and *Spring Water*. The company performed *Rain Gardens*, a new work by Lawrence Gradus to music of Claude Debussy, as well as Gradus' *Excursions* and Murray Louis' *Proximities*.

*Les Ballets Jazz* of Montreal left on October 31 for a series of 29 performances in France and Italy. Travelling with the company is Judith Lander who performs the vocal and musical accompaniment for the ballet *Diary* which she composed in collaboration with choreographer Lynn

Taylor-Corbett. There are several new works on the tour programme including *Musical Chairs* also by Taylor-Corbett and four revivals of forgotten gems of Broadway theatre dance mounted for *Ballets Jazz* by Nancy Chismar from the 'Living Archives' of Lee Theodore.

The Company returns December 15 to appear in a CBC variety show with René Simard and to make an extensive tour of Ontario and Alberta throughout January. Their annual appearance at Montreal's Place des Arts is scheduled for February 28, 29 and March 1, 2 and will feature the premiere performances of three new ballets.

Quebec City's *Dansepartout* toured New Brunswick and Quebec this fall giving a total of 35 performances. The company presented three works by Chantal Belhumeur; *Totem*, *Surprise* and *Le Petit Prince* and a new ballet by Fernand Nault. Dancers Lucie Boissinot, Suzanne Clermont, Louise Lemonde and Geneviève Pépin have joined the company this season.

## NOVA SCOTIA

Halifax dancer/choreographer *Jeanne Robinson* has become equally well-known as a writer since the publication of *Star-dance*, a science-fiction/dance novel. The extraordinary success of this collaboration

with her husband Spider Robinson (award-winning science-fiction author and critic) has resulted in numerous guest appearances and interviews including an invitation to dance at the 1980 World Science Fiction Convention in Boston. Ms. Robinson is currently at work on a choreographic project with multi-media expert Bob Atkinson of Halifax. The piece will include simulated zero-gravity dance in its examination of the evolution of mankind's yearning for the stars.

On a more down-to-earth level, we might add that in September *Jeanne Robinson* opened *DancExchange*, a dance resource centre located in downtown Halifax and offering 1,000 square feet of studio space for rehearsals and dance classes.

*The Dance*, CBC-FM's Sunday afternoon programme, will die on December 30. Despite strong protests from the dance community, CBC management has stuck to its plan to incorporate more dance material in *Arts National* while dropping *The Dance* completely. The final programme, produced like all the rest, by *Diana Brown*, will feature an interview with *Dame Ninette de Valois*.



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'Yeah Sam, I found some kind of blueprints alright, but— look, just get down here, will ya?'



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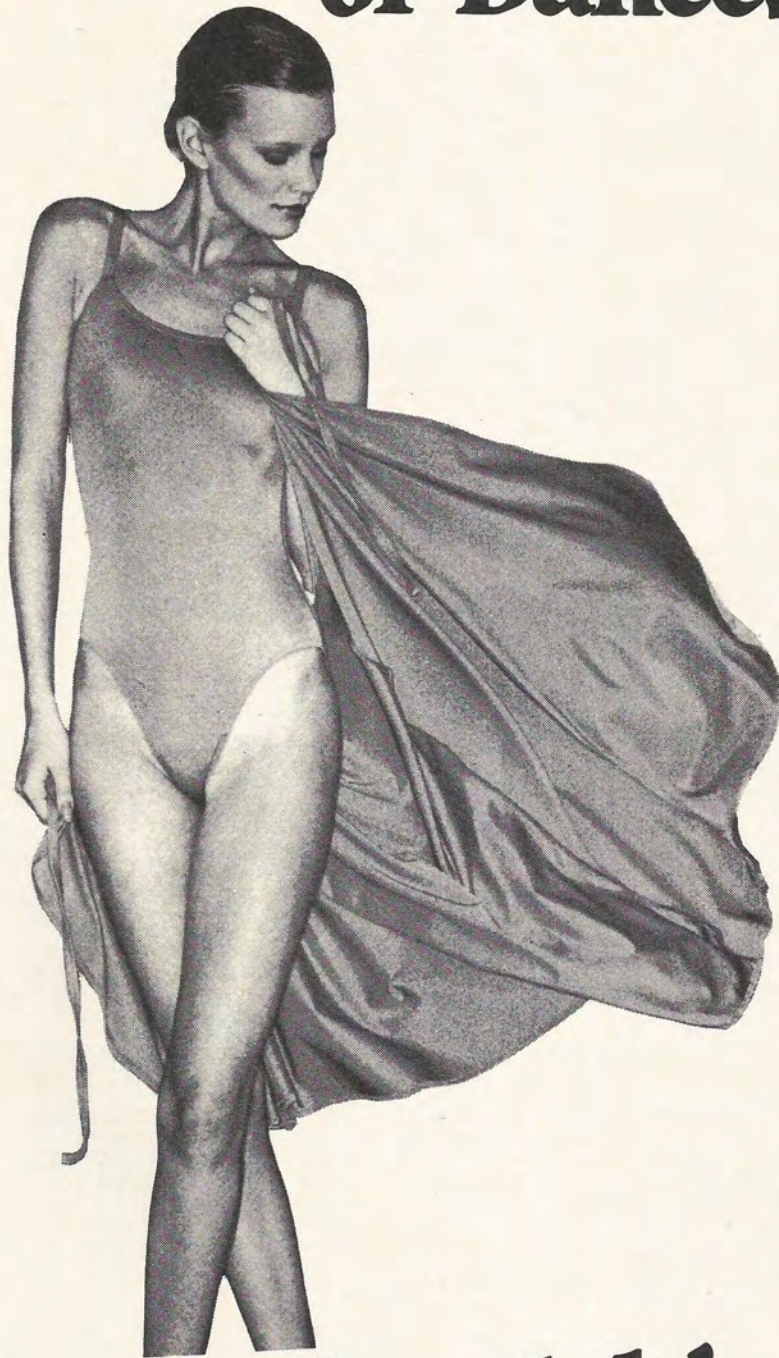
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