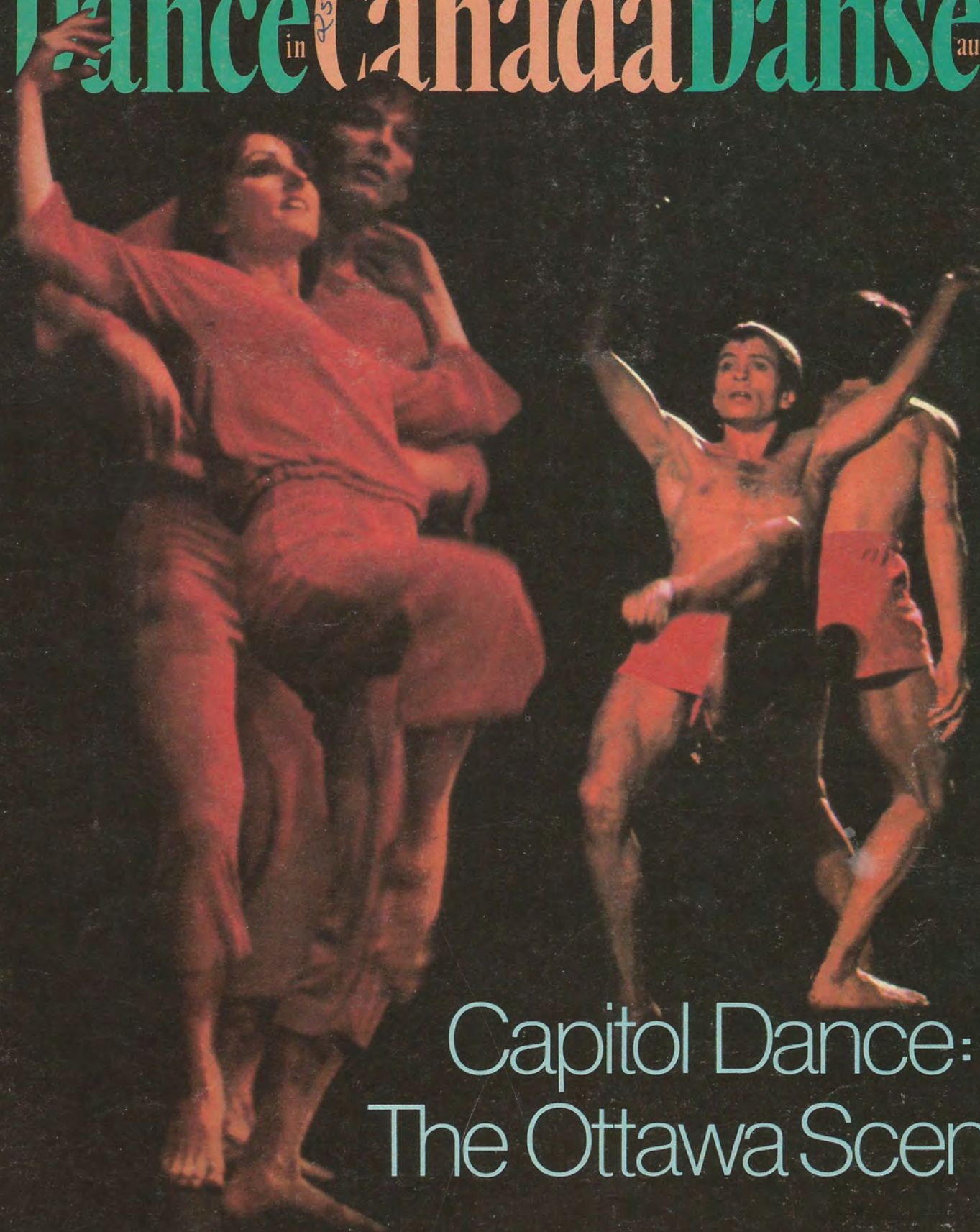
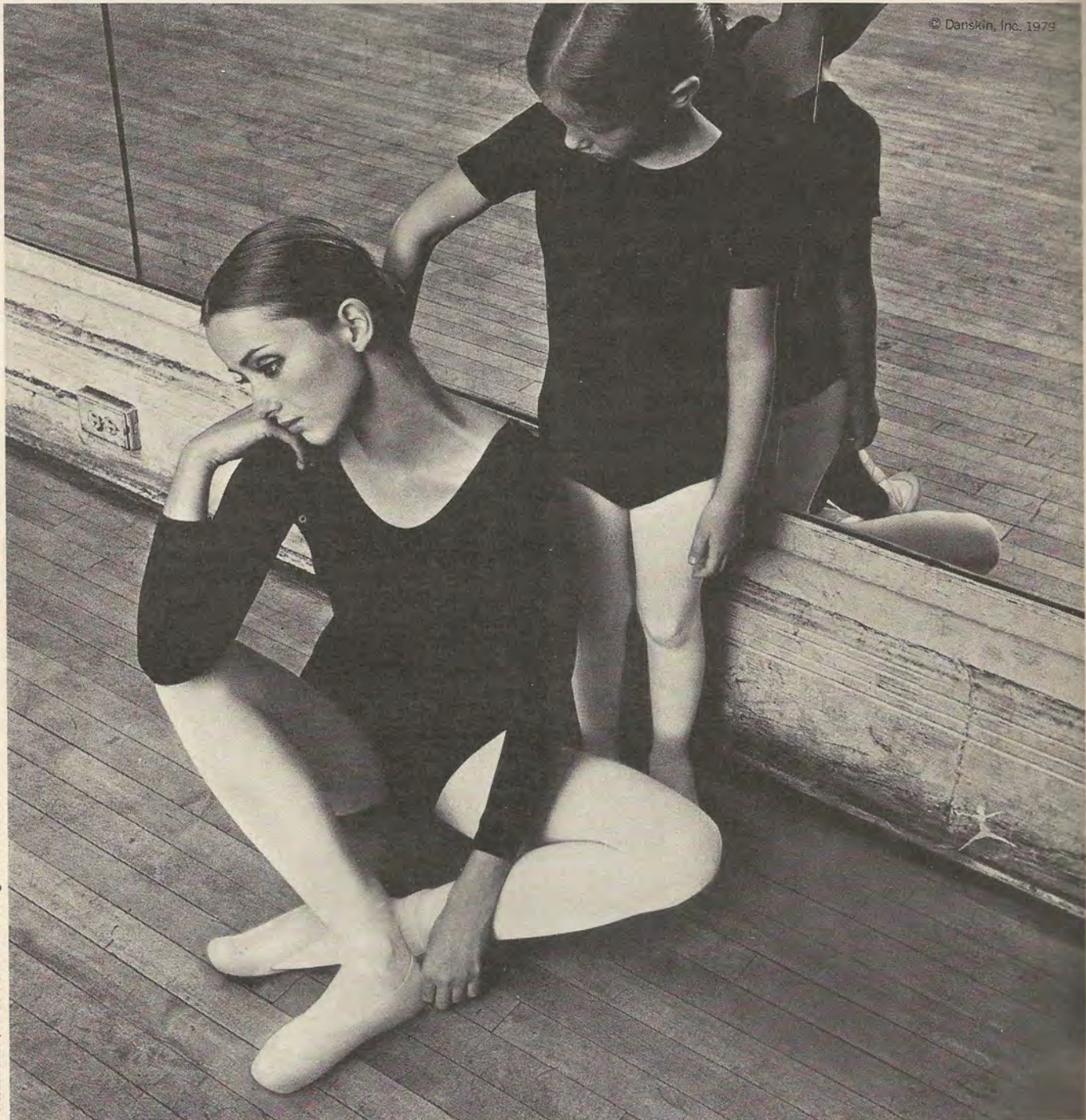


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


Capitol Dance:
The Ottawa Scene

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COVER:

Le Groupe de la Place Royale in Jean-Pierre Perreault's *Vent d'est*. Dancers (left to right): Suzanne McCarry, William James, Jean-Pierre Perreault and Michael Montanaro.
Photo by Ormsby K. Ford

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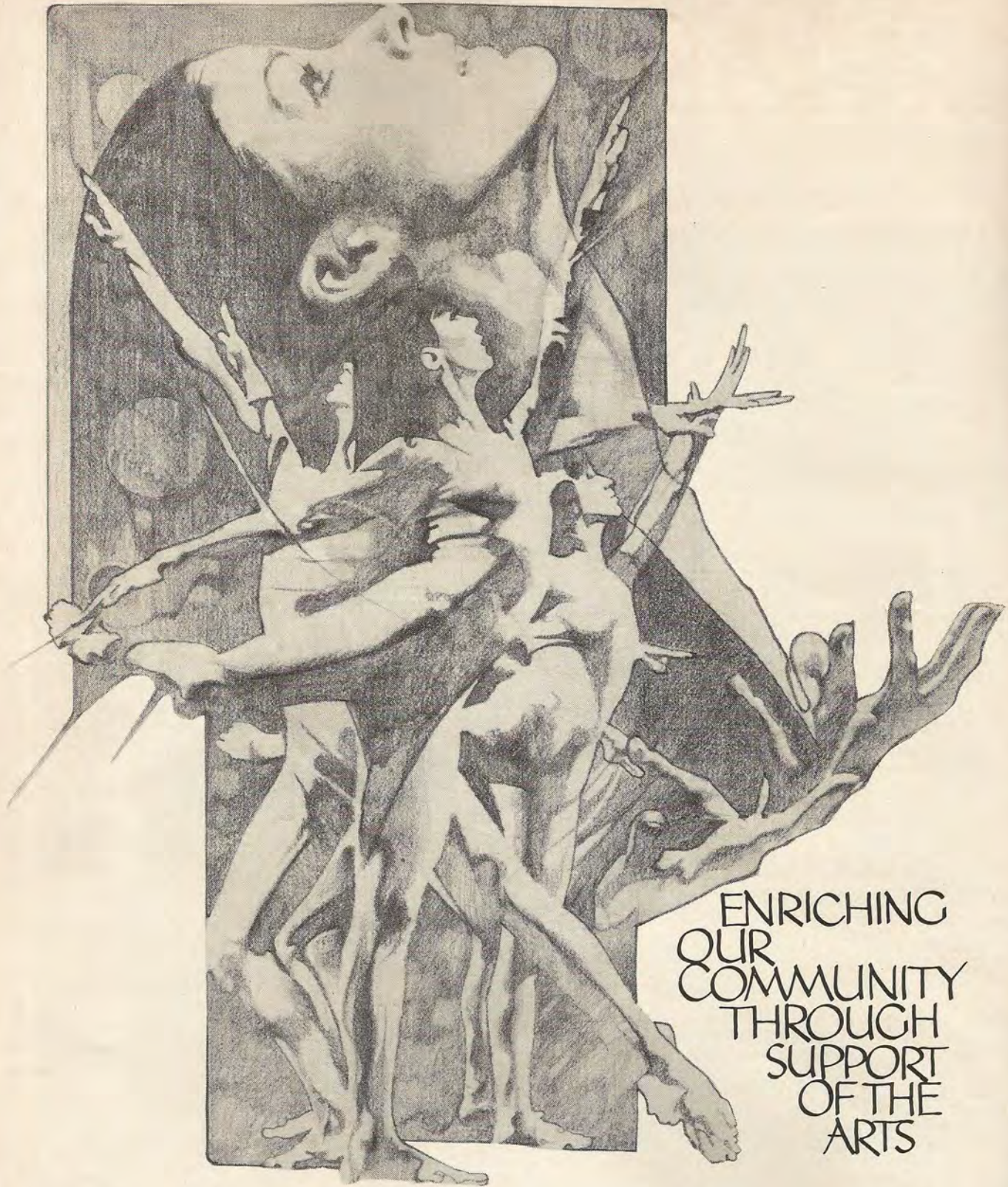
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Leland Windreich

Ian Gibson: The Re-emergence of a Legend

A great Canadian dancer returns
to the world he put behind him almost 35 years ago

On May 4, a trim, 60-year-old retired business executive drove with his wife and two adult children from their home in a halcyon corner of New Jersey to New York's Metropolitan Opera House to join former colleagues in a tribute to American Ballet Theatre's retiring director, Lucia Chase. For Ian Gibson it marked not only his first appearance on the stage of the new Met but also his return to the world of ballet after an absence of 38 years. He danced last in October 1942, at which time astounded audiences and critics extolled his phenomenal elevation and the sublime purity of his classic ballet technique. Witnesses of his performances in the four years of his short but spectacular career recall them with awe: some regard him as the essential historical link in the succession of great male dancers, beginning in this century with Vaslav Nijinsky and currently completed by Mikhail Baryshnikov.

Ian Gibson lives in Alpine, New Jersey, with his wife Nina, herself a former dancer who graced the Broadway ballets of Jerome Robbins. Show biz trappings are conspicuously absent in their attractive, rambling home, full of old panelling and antique furnishings. Only moments away from downtown Manhattan, Alpine affords a rustic setting reminiscent of the British Columbia landscape that Gibson left in 1939 when Leonide Massine auditioned him and offered him a job with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

The Gibsons have not spent the last 38 years dwelling on ballet or contemplating the brevity of their respective stage careers. Other issues have occupied their full lives, and they have enjoyed the expanded viewpoint that a livelihood of dance could not have provided them. Their children, Craig and Ellen, are in their late 20s: for them the visit to ABT's 40th anniversary gala was the first exposure to the art that had occupied their father for the first 23 years of his life. 'They were thrilled - and terribly proud', Nina Gibson explained. 'Now the scrapbooks will have real meaning for them.'

The charisma remains

Today Ian Gibson keeps fit through daily calisthenics, seasonal skiing and the outdoor pursuits that he has enjoyed since his boyhood in Victoria. 'Also, he worries a great deal', Nina Gibson elaborates: a driving perfectionist



Ian Gibson (1942)

since his days as a ballet trainee, he has continued to set the highest of standards for himself. Physically, he resembles a Lapplander, with a tidy frame, square but expressive hands and a face that has the hint of a Tartar in it. The cheekbones are high-arching, the broad forehead beautifully rounded: the eyes shine out in piercing blue.

Years of absence from the theatre have not diminished the charismatic qualities that made him such an extraordinary stage personality, and his everyday movements contain some of the glide and fluidity that a trained dancer never loses. In the few moments that he decided to demonstrate a controlled plié while we talked, I was



Ian Gibson today

obliged to accept in fragment the essence of a great performance.

Gibson was born in Glasgow, but his parents emigrated to Victoria, BC when he was six months old. His father took a job at the quarantine station at William Head, where Ian attended a one-room school for six years.

It was there that Wynne Shaw appeared from Dorothy Wilson's Russian Ballet School in Victoria to teach dancing to the isolated children, and Ian found the lessons intriguing. 'All the others finally dropped out, but I stayed with it', he recalled. It was natural then that he enroll at Mrs. Wilson's school on Broughton Street when his father was transferred to town. There Ian was the only boy in ballet training, and for several years he strove unsuccessfully to conceal his dance activities from his peers. His mother fabricated a myth which followed him through his career as an employee of Hurok Attractions - that the dancing lessons were a therapy prescribed by a doctor who diagnosed Ian as pigeon-toed. This helped to justify the means, but his continued dedication was harder to explain. At 16 he danced the part of Franz in Dorothy Wilson's production of *Coppélia* at the Royal Theatre, at which time his private and public lives irrevocably merged. A trip to Seattle with his parents to see the de Basil Ballet gave him stronger convictions about a possible dance career. The performance of the remarkable American dancer Roland Guerard in *The Bluebird Variations* was inspiration, and it became a challenge to emulate Guerard's brilliant batterie. Then Patricia Meyers, a prize

pupil of June Roper in Vancouver, destined to join the de Basil Ballet the following year, made an appearance in Victoria, dancing classical ballet on a floating stage in the inner harbour. This performance Ian remembers more vividly than any of the fabled Ballet Russe.

He graduated from Victoria High a year early and contemplated a programme at the University of British Columbia when his father accepted a transfer to Vancouver. But when he presented himself at the Seymour Street studios of June Roper's BC School of Dancing in the fall of 1937, his career plans became instantly unified.

Limited opportunities

Except for Boris Volkoff's germinal efforts in Toronto, there was no performing outlet in 1937 for ballet dancers in Canada. Small, tentative ballet units had been established at the opera house in San Francisco and Chicago, while in New York George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein witnessed the demise of their attempt to win an audience for their short-lived American Ballet. The Ballet Russe was effectively the only company to which a dancer could aspire. In 1938 it split into two factions, the parent segment of which spent most of its time until the end of World War II pioneering in Australia and Latin America.

June Roper's school was professional in every sense. Serious students were expected to spend their full day in the studio and it was presumed that a stage career was the ultimate goal. 'It never occurred to us that anything other than success was possible', Gibson recalls. Roper's intense faith in the gifts of her charges and her ability to pass on to them the perfectionism inherent in her teaching philosophy fired them with hope. In 1938 Patricia Meyers and Rosemary Deveson were accepted by the de Basil Ballet Russe and spent the next two years touring Europe and Australia. That summer June Roper took Ian Gibson to Los Angeles for special training with her own teacher, the Cecchetti disciple, Ernest Belcher, and for additional work with Nico Charisse. A performance in a dance extravaganza at the Hollywood Bowl made Gibson aware of his growing accomplishments.

An offer from Massine

The audition with Massine early the following year was an impromptu display of whatever came into Ian's head. The impassive ballet master, worshipped at that time on three continents, was non-committal until the demonstration was over. Then the offer came: 'Join us in Monte Carlo in April'.

A job as a guard to a trainload of Chinese laborers being transported across Canada enabled him to get as far as Halifax at no cost. After the Atlantic crossing, he was met by his uncle and enjoyed a brief visit to Scotland before heading for the south of France. In Monte Carlo he had no idea where to find the Ballet Russe, but the sound of familiar rehearsal music led him to a studio where Massine was preparing a new ballet for the spring season. 'You're late', the maestro quipped, fixing him with the famous binocular eyes. Then the reality of a Ballet Russe career began.

Ian learned the two new Massine ballets for the season: *Capriccio Espagnole*, prepared in collaboration with Argentinita, and the Matisse-Shostakovich *Rouge et Noir*, Massine's penultimate work in the symphonic genre. Seasons in Florence and Paris occupied the dancers that



As Petrouchka, Ballet Theatre, 1942

summer, and rehearsals were in progress for the legendary *Bacchanale*, Massine's first creation with decor by Salvador Dalí.

Escape from Nazi Europe

When, in September 1939, England and France finally decided to fight Germany Massine and many of the leading dancers vanished. They had taken passage for New York where the director began preparing for the Ballet Russe's fall engagement. The remainder of the troupe had to obtain exit visas to leave Paris. The Americans were then evacuated from Bordeaux by American ships while the rest of the company spent many weeks in Antwerp waiting for a ship and living entirely off their own resources. The situation for Gibson and the others became quite desperate but finally they boarded a ship for New York. There it was found that Massine had engaged a dummy company of

local dancers to carry the booking if the contracted dancers could not get back to New York on time.

Ian Gibson recalls Massine as, 'a very difficult person to work with ... He revised his ballets endlessly and never communicated clearly what he wanted from you'. Parts in his complex ballets were learned with the minimum of verbal instruction. In time Ian earned a solo in the short-lived *The New Yorker*, impersonating a Steig cartoon character called Small Fry. This was a taxing role in which he was required to carry his partner on his back and perform a strenuous jitterbug routine. Lubov Roudenko was his original partner, but Vancouver classmate Audree Thomas shared the spotlight with Ian during their homecoming appearances. Temporal rewards were given the young dancers when they performed in their home towns, and Ian was perfunctorily coached for a single performance of *Spectre de la rose*, which he danced in Vancouver with Nathalie Krasskovska during the Ballet Russe's winter visit in 1941.

The move to Ballet Theatre

That summer he decided that the nascent Ballet Theatre had more to offer and joined forces with the company just as it began to receive the wave of Russian invaders from the two Ballet Russe factions. A season of creative rehearsals in Mexico City found Gibson working with Anton Dolin on the Bluebird Variations in a new production of Act Three of *The Sleeping Beauty* under the title of *Princess Aurora*. It was with this performance, partnering the astounding Philadelphian ballerina, Karen Conrad, that Gibson began to reap the acclaim that echoed through his appearances for the next two years. Grace Robert offered the critical consensus a few years later in *The Borzoi Book of Ballets*:

Here was the ideal Bluebird, with the neat, crisp technique of Guerard and an elevation that was even more startling than Lichine's. If he lacked something of the practical stagecraft of the latter, it was not missed. Gibson had the unique ability to project, not personality nor characterization, but the fine points of classical technique. He had already displayed his ability to soar in the character role of Alain in La fille mal gardée, but as the Bluebird he exhibited a command of the danse d'école not surpassed and seldom equalled in the contemporary dance theater.

Comparisons with Nijinsky soon became legion. In Bronislava Nijinska's restaging of *La fille mal gardée*, Gibson took over the role of the simple-minded Alain, which he performed to great acclaim throughout the US-Canadian tour. Grace Robert testified to the impact of his elevation:

There was a moment in the storm scene when any member of the audience who had read of Nijinsky's ability to pause in mid-air suddenly realized what that phrase really meant.

Creating a furore in *Le Spectre de la rose*

In her column for the *New York Post*, Elsa Maxwell described Ian's performance with Annabelle Lyon in *Spectre de la rose* as the greatest she had seen since the ballet was first created by Karsavina and Nijinsky. Fokine coached the young couple personally in this final mounting of his work. A widely misunderstood interpretation, it was both acclaimed and deplored. Perhaps in acknowledgement of the American athleticism of the Ballet Theatre

dancers, the master underplayed the soft artistic features. 'He wanted to present it this tin showpiece', Gibson recalled. Some critics but Walter Terry called it, 'the most exciting this generation has seen', and Anton D performed the role himself in an earlier era autobiography its most avid champion:

The young Canadian dancer, Ian Gibson, with his dancing in Le Spectre de la rose. His strange sexless quality though in no way His jump was amazing, and though I never dance, I feel sure that Gibson rose as he effortlessly into the air, and flew through the final exit, as Nijinsky did in those earlier

In 1942 Ian earned new solo parts in Mas Don Domingo, and Michel Fokine's final Troy, gave him a remarkable vehicle as made use of the gamut of his technical ac Fokine's death shortly after the ballet Mexico consigned a brilliant creation to him by the time the company reached New York, it was totally reconceived by David Lichine during the month that Ian announced his departure for the Canadian navy. In his final months with Ballet Theatre, Ian rendered a remarkable performance of Eugene Loring's *Billy the Kid*, a revival supervised by David Nillo without the guidance of the choreographer. Critics called Ian's Billy the finest technically, but he is the first to admit that the lack of clear direction made it impossible to convey the proper nuances. 38 years later he would meet the choreographer in the elevator at the ABT rehearsal halls on the day before the gala - a long overdue encounter.

There are no critical appraisals of his brief appearances in two other Fokine roles also immortalized by Nijinsky. In *Carnaval* he danced Harlequin to Lucia Chase's Columbine, but there are no photographic records of the partnership. I was struck by the poignancy of two portraits of his *Petrouchka* - a role he shared with Jerome Robbins during his last weeks with Ballet Theatre. These gave credence to the well of talents that were yet to be tapped.

Submarines and ballet don't mix

During his three years in the Canadian navy Ian Gibson expected to return to his dancing career although his service as a submariner severely restricted his opportunities for maintaining the physical disciplines of ballet. Contact with Ballet Theatre during his war years was non-existent. When Gibson was demobilized the company was in the throes of a reorganization that would render it independent of Hurok management.

Ian Gibson started taking classes again with an intensified awareness of their physical and psychological rigour and, for the first time, questioned his own dedication to the art. Lucia Chase presented him with an offer to return to Ballet Theatre the terms of which made it clear to Gibson that he was not high on her list of priorities.

Sol Hurok then approached him with the offer of a personal contract. Had Ian accepted, he probably would have been grafted as guest star to the series of dismal Ballet Russe remnants which the impresario sponsored over the next few years, and Ian would have been required to perform those few back-breaking roles that he had mastered until his technique gave out. A career of teaching

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As Billy the Kid. Ballet Theatre, 1942.

ballet did not interest him, and the options for a dancer of his special qualities were few in 1945.

'I have no regrets'

As Christmas approached he took a job with R. H. Macy and was asked to remain with the company after the holidays. Sales and merchandising became new challenges, and in time he went into management training and assisted in the development of the branch outlets in other New York locations. The world of ballet gradually slipped into the past. In later years he turned his executive abilities into the management of a taxi service in Manhattan. In 1975 he became fully retired.

'I have no regrets at all,' he speculated. 'I've been fortunate in every undertaking since I left dancing. Had there been as many opportunities then as there are today for a dancer, I would have continued with ballet.'

In his 60th year Ian Gibson is now at another turning point. The invitation to the ABT gala brought him once again in contact with a world that had once had his total commitment. A month later he allowed himself the luxury of a nostalgia trip to Mexico City where he revisited the places where he made ballet history with the great Diaghilev protégés. I have a feeling that he will be taking a more active interest in the dance again - there are multitudes of gifts to be shared with young dancers who know only remotely of his great endowments and accomplishments.

dancers, the master underplayed the soft and fluid romantic features. 'He wanted to present it this time as a technical showpiece', Gibson recalled. Some critics took offence, but Walter Terry called it, 'the most exciting *Spectre* that this generation has seen', and Anton Dolin, who had performed the role himself in an earlier era, became in his autobiography its most avid champion:

The young Canadian dancer, Ian Gibson, created a furore with his dancing in Le Spectre de la rose. He gave the role a strange sexless quality though in no way a feminine one. His jump was amazing, and though I never saw Nijinsky dance, I feel sure that Gibson rose as high and as effortlessly into the air, and flew through the window for the final exit, as Nijinsky did in those earlier days.

In 1942 Ian earned new solo parts in Massine's *Aleko* and *Don Domingo*, and Michel Fokine's final ballet, *Helen of Troy*, gave him a remarkable vehicle as Hermes, which made use of the gamut of his technical accomplishments. Fokine's death shortly after the ballet's premiere in Mexico consigned a brilliant creation to history: forgotten by the time the company reached New York, it was totally reconceived by David Lichine during the month that Ian announced his departure for the Canadian navy. In his final months with Ballet Theatre, Ian rendered a remarkable performance of Eugene Loring's *Billy the Kid*, a revival supervised by David Nillo without the guidance of the choreographer. Critics called Ian's Billy the finest technically, but he is the first to admit that the lack of clear direction made it impossible to convey the proper nuances. 38 years later he would meet the choreographer in the elevator at the ABT rehearsal halls on the day before the gala - a long overdue encounter.

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The 1980 Dance in Canada Conference

This year's Dance in Canada Conference was something like a Sunday School picnic. It was held in the mountains at the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts during the balmy days of June 19 to 22. The get-together was small and quiet. There was lots of fresh air. And although the delegates did not break out in one big hymn-sing, it was rather peaceful.

As usual, some delegates had their tiffs, but the teeth-baring days of the '77 conference in Winnipeg seemed long-forgotten. At this conference lips remained sealed or politely turned up in the corners.

Small is beautiful

The annual general meeting passed quickly and with few interruptions.

'Any objections from the floor?' Dance in Canada chairman Ruth Priddle would ask before passing a motion. Silence.

'No objections?' she'd ask again.

'Motion passed.'

People slouched in their chairs. Sunshine streaked through the window. What could one expect from a mere handful of delegates, many of whom were nodding off to sleep despite their complementary cups of steaming coffee.

Only about 100 delegates were at this year's conference, compared to the more than 600 who attended last year's in Waterloo. But this year's small attendance was no shame to anyone. The organizers wanted it small.

As Priddle explained in her welcoming letter, the intention of the 1980 conference was to 'focus on the *gut* issues of dance in Canada'. Intimate discussion groups were favoured over the mass lectures of previous conferences.

Most delegates did not have the energy to probe whatever Priddle meant by *gut* issues. All energy went to intimate groupings. There were lots of those.

The pleasures and perils of Tunnel Mountain Chalets

Delegates who had circled 'single accommodation' on their registration forms found on arriving at the Tunnel Mountain Chalets that what they had reserved was one-half of a double bed. Bed partner unknown. Not being able to choose whom they slept with rubbed some people the wrong way. But it didn't bother everyone. When Royal Winnipeg Ballet co-founder Betty Farrally found out, she blurted, 'How exciting!'

While accommodations may have been the most titillating to date, the performances were not. Gone were the dance showcases that started after dinner and ran into the wee hours of the morning. That was when seemingly everyone who ever pointed their toes in Canada got up on stage and showed what they could do.

Sure, some of the performers were pretty dreadful. But you faithfully sat through those marathon shows hoping for a glimpse of talent. And you were never disappointed. In 1978, Margie Gillis whirled onto the stage; in 1979, Dianne Carrière performed her hilarious punk dances.

No dance showcase

In place of the showcases were two workshop performances by members of the National Choreographic Seminar. The seminar was winding down at the Banff Centre just as the Dance in Canada Conference was winding up.

The seminar delegates were plainly worn out. The six choreographers had been creating a dance-a-day for the past three weeks. And the 28 dancers had been performing those dances each day for the last three weeks. Need more be said?

They were grumpy.

Many Dance in Canada delegates found the seminar detracted from the conference. The main complaint was

Susan Pedwell

Strange Bedfellows and a Sunday School Picnic

The 1980 Dance in Canada Conference

This year's Dance in Canada Conference was something like a Sunday School picnic. It was held in the mountains at the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts during the balmy days of June 19 to 22. The get-together was small and quiet. There was lots of fresh air. And although the delegates did not break out in one big hymn-sing, it was rather peaceful.

As usual, some delegates had their tiffs, but the teeth-baring days of the '77 conference in Winnipeg seemed long-forgotten. At this conference lips remained sealed or politely turned up in the corners.

Small is beautiful

The annual general meeting passed quickly and with few interruptions.

'Any objections from the floor?' Dance in Canada chairman Ruth Priddle would ask before passing a motion. Silence.

'No objections?' she'd ask again.

'Motion passed.'

People slouched in their chairs. Sunshine streaked through the window. What could one expect from a mere handful of delegates, many of whom were nodding off to sleep despite their complementary cups of steaming coffee.

Only about 100 delegates were at this year's conference, compared to the more than 600 who attended last year's in Waterloo. But this year's small attendance was no shame to anyone. The organizers wanted it small.

As Priddle explained in her welcoming letter, the intention of the 1980 conference was to 'focus on the *gut* issues of dance in Canada'. Intimate discussion groups were favoured over the mass lectures of previous conferences.

Most delegates did not have the energy to probe whatever Priddle meant by *gut* issues. All energy went to intimate groupings. There were lots of those.

The pleasures and perils of Tunnel Mountain Chalets

Delegates who had circled 'single accommodation' on their registration forms found on arriving at the Tunnel Mountain Chalets that what they had reserved was one-half of a double bed. Bed partner unknown. Not being able to choose whom they slept with rubbed some people the wrong way. But it didn't bother everyone. When Royal Winnipeg Ballet co-founder Betty Farrally found out, she blurted, 'How exciting!'

While accommodations may have been the most titillating to date, the performances were not. Gone were the dance showcases that started after dinner and ran into the wee hours of the morning. That was when seemingly everyone who ever pointed their toes in Canada got up on stage and showed what they could do.

Sure, some of the performers were pretty dreadful. But you faithfully sat through those marathon shows hoping for a glimpse of talent. And you were never disappointed. In 1978, Margie Gillis whirled onto the stage; in 1979, Dianne Carrière performed her hilarious punk dances.

No dance showcase

In place of the showcases were two workshop performances by members of the National Choreographic Seminar. The seminar was winding down at the Banff Centre just as the Dance in Canada Conference was winding up.

The seminar delegates were plainly worn out. The six choreographers had been creating a dance-a-day for the past three weeks. And the 28 dancers had been performing those dances each day for the last three weeks. Need more be said?

They were grumpy.

Many Dance in Canada delegates found the seminar detracted from the conference. The main complaint was

that the choreographic seminar preoccupied many dancers who might have otherwise attended the conference.

Another complaint was that the two workshop performances put on by the seminar delegates did not come near to the excitement of the showcases. The seminar offered no costumes or fancy lightings. What it offered was the backbones of their choreography. And in the first performance even the backbones were missing. The performance was video-taped.

Live performances were presented on three occasions by Alberta performers. Unfortunately, the best was the worst-attended. It took place on Saturday at, of all times, supper-time. If people's growling stomachs didn't deter them from attending, the cutsey name of the concert did: Mini Performance by Young Alberta Dancers.

The few who showed up for the performance were offered one of those rare moments in dance when the limbs, the fingers, the hair knotted in buns seem to disappear and what you see are beautiful lines moving effortlessly through space.

But just for the record, the artistic moment was supplied by Denise Holden, Shannon Murphy and Lyndsay Wilson from Calgary's Lyndsay Walsh School of Dance.

The conference had its usual dose of technique classes, seminars and panels, all roughly geared to this year's theme - The Working Process.

Vincent Warren's ballet class was a big success as was Gabby Miceli's modern class.

In the Administrators Panel Discussion people spoke about dance in words like 'product' and 'commodity'. They said modern dance doesn't sell.

Down the hall in the Teachers Panel Discussion a talk about how to maintain the child's natural love of dance was becoming heated.

The philosophies of the delegates in the two groups were miles apart. But when the sessions were over and they all poured out into the hall, the delegates' lips turned up in the corners. They smiled. They exchanged kind words.

It was a peaceful sort of conference. It had to be. Back at the Tunnel Mountain Chalet everyone had to sleep side by side.

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Hilary McLaughlin

Capitol Dance

**The old saw that you can't eat out in Ottawa has been retired:
now you can also go on to the dance after dinner**

Presenting dance in Ottawa is akin to riding on the horns of a viciously circling dilemma. If there is nothing good, of course nobody will come; if there is something good, someone is probably losing his shirt. The lamentable fact seems to remain that, in terms of volume, the audience simply is not here. The National Ballet is perhaps the best draw at the National Arts Centre, with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens often filling the house too. Yet even the National played to slightly less than capacity at the Opera this spring. It has certainly been disheartening for the dance lover to sit through stellar programmes by Danny Grossman or the late Entre-Six in the company of only a few other fans.

The Arts Centre, despite the pessimistic prognoses of Donald MacSween a couple of years back, has taken the proverbial bull by the horns in its Dance Showcase Series. After a modest but incisive beginning in 1978-9, adding 'only' the Feld Ballet (in its Canadian debut) to the three largest Canadian ballet companies, it added a few more programmes last season, including Pilobolus, Paul Taylor and the Caracas Ballet, and this year presents an eight-pronged showcase. The imports: Nederlands Dans Theater, Alvin Ailey, Lar Lubovitch, the Houston Ballet and a return visit from the Ballet Internacional de Caracas - last season's surprise hit.

Modern is harder to sell

Like most series of its size, the Dance Showcase has several subscription plans for sale, and it is here that the first glimmering of realization begins to dawn. The mixed package has sold relatively well, according to NAC dance spokesman Jane Morris, as has a limited package for the ballet companies. But, as last year, the modern dance alone does not move well in subscription.

There is an apparent resistance to try the unknown here. Modern dance is not the only victim: when Eliot Feld brought his company to Ottawa for an ambitious five-performance run which included almost everything in his repertory, the first couple of nights played to subscribers and to a heavily papered audience. And yet, by week's end, the houses were all but full. An enthusiastic press and,

more importantly, word of mouth, sent people through the February snows to see a company whose name was hitherto unfamiliar to most Ottawans. Ted Demetre, Dance Administrator at the Centre, feels that was the week that turned the corner on dance at the Arts Centre, and he has never since yielded an inch of the leverage it afforded.

Demetre feels (as does MacSween) that the Arts Centre should assume some responsibility for developing dance in Ottawa but their collective hands are tied financially. Workshops, conferences, the heady dreams of the fat years, are shelved indefinitely. However, the National Arts Centre is bringing more dance into its home market than does any other single enterprise in the country with the possible exception of the indefatigable David Lui in Vancouver. This season will see 20 or more dance events at the NAC, from small modern companies to international folk troupes to such a unique offering as the National Tap Dance Company.

Yet the details on this appetizing dance menu have not been written in and that is a result of the peculiar position dance holds in the NAC bureaucracy. With a resident orchestra and two resident theatre companies, the NAC is now largely a production house. In the normal course of events, these august producers have announced their schedules by late spring. This season John Hirsch, director of English Theatre, delayed announcing his programme till high summer. As he has first dibs on the NAC's Theatre and Studio, dance, the poor relation, sat with a sheaf of applications to perform, waiting the summer through for the list of available times in the smaller halls before being able to confirm a booking for modern dance.

Space has been reserved, however, for the spring of 1981, when some sort of dance festival is projected. Still something of a gleam in its originators' eyes, it is nonetheless hoped that it will place Ottawa on the dance map and dance on the Canadian.

Working within some fairly severe restrictions, the NAC can take a certain pride in its contribution to making dance available in Ottawa. Its subscription series offers top price tickets for the eight companies for \$80, which is about as low a tariff as applied anywhere for dance of this calibre.



Monica Jeffery and Daniel Dagenais of the Ottawa Dance Theatre.

Perhaps the small companies suffer from the smaller advertising budget applied to their appearances, or maybe the dance dollars are spent when they come in.

Theatre Ballet of Canada: warming up in the wings

And yet . . . Is it a fear of the modern? This winter, Theatre Ballet of Canada, a reorganized amalgamation of the former companies Ballet Ys and Entre-Six, will make its formal debut in Ottawa (it hopes at the NAC). Nobody seems to doubt that it will pull an audience. Where in Toronto, or even Montreal, that would to some extent be attributed to the reputations of Larry Gradus, Entre-Six or Ballet Ys, these names have little currency in Ottawa. The lure is in their name, and, by God, they will have to provide something which the public can recognize as "ballet" or else.

Theatre Ballet is *in situ*, in a manner of speaking; at this time they have yet to find studios and are borrowing space from respected teacher Joyce Shietze, who runs the already well established School of Dance. The company is scheduled to 'tour the provinces' - meaning smaller centres in Ontario - in January before an official première in Ottawa in February. May and June will find them dancing in Eastern Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes, and after a summer break they will play the West. 'We'll go right across Canada in 1981', says the General Manager, Gordon Pearson, 'hence the rubric: "year of premieres"'. Theatre Ballet plans annual seasons in Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal.

Initially, all its repertoire will be choreographed by Gradus, although it has not been announced whether the early days will include some of his Entre-Six works or whether they will all be fresh. His colleagues attest that he

is having a very creative period, although he is champing at the bit to start work with his own dancers. The company will begin with 10 - five and five.

There has been some rumour about a possible alliance between Theatre Ballet and the Arts Centre; spokesmen for both react tentatively but positively to the notion of Theatre Ballet becoming the NAC's resident dance company. But it seems unlikely that the NAC would rush into a financial commitment of that order, particularly at a time when bureaucratic energies will be focused on replacing its Musical Director, Mario Bernardi.

Starting the Nutcracker tradition

Theatre Ballet does not, contrary to some feeling abroad, mark the beginning of professional dance generated in Ottawa. (Nor indeed does it represent the first attempt at professional ballet - Nesta Toumine's Ballet Imperial flourished artistically, if not financially, through several seasons in the fifties and early sixties. Madame Toumine claims to have been the first to stage *The Nutcracker* as a Christmas event in North America.) But Ottawa has in place two modern dance companies whose goals are so diverse and whose styles so disparate that many a base is touched in a single season.

Judith Davies' Ottawa Dance Theatre is the only contemporary dance company to have got off the ground in Ottawa and stayed there. Formed in 1977, the company grew, as Davies reflects, 'logically, sensibly - out of the school (Ottawa Dance Centre, a large and thriving member of the local dancing school circuit) and then through workshops into a company'. Davies works with her troupe of seven or eight, depending upon the season, in mixed modes. An evening at ODT might feature some sinuous modern work of the quasi-Graham-via-TDT variety, a snappy jazz syncopation, and any amount of choreography on pointe which might or might not be in a ballet idiom. Davies is not kidding when she says that the name of her company is deliberate and evenly weighted - dance there will be, but also theatre. Ottawa is her base, but also her goal - the ascent of Everest was easy in comparison with making the impact of her fledgling company felt.

Ottawa Dance Theatre's quality and eclecticism

The Ottawa Dance Theatre, which opened the 1979 Dance in Canada Conference showcase and has a fair number of theatrical bookings each year, depends for its bread and butter upon residencies and community performances. There is not a unique history in Canadian modern dance - driving through the night to Kapuskasing, racing to Waterloo for the Conference then back to open the summer school the next day, playing in high school auditoriums in Ottawa. Last season a breakthrough was made when ODT played for two nights at the NAC and surprised everyone, including themselves, with one of the best turnouts for modern dance of the whole NAC season.

Also surprising to many was the quality of what they presented. The dancers are all able, and Daniel Dagenais and Karen Zisoff stand out for their technique and force of attack. Davies does some of the choreography herself, and her NAC piece, *Ceremonies*, though somewhat unfinished, has a mature cohesion which, more than anything else in the current repertoire, stretches the dancers. Gail Benn has set works on the company, and now joins it



The Lar Lubovitch Dance Company: Part of the NAC Dance Showcase

full time as assistant to the artistic director, retaining her former part-time employment as ballet mistress.

'Bookings are no problem', says Davies, whose carefully-guarded deficit has risen sharply this past year because of touring costs. 'But we'll be sticking closer to home this year - "down the valley"'. The company presents four Ottawa seasons, one in the fall, the highly-successful ballet *The Snow Queen* at Christmas, winter workshops, and a spring season. They will not likely return to the NAC this year as policy there is inclined to the turn and turn about school of thought. 'But it did great things for our credibility, to be presented there', says Davies, who plans a large-scale production for the Opera in the winter of 1981. 'Meantime, I'm just concerned to keep going.'

Le Groupe de la Place Royale appear to be tripping over large Canada Council grants

In far more stable financial condition, it seems, is Le Groupe de la Place Royale, locally dubbed Le Groupe de la Sparks Street Mall, reflecting their new (and elegant) address since they moved to Ottawa in 1977. They appear to be tripping over large Canada Council grants, and these always-energetic purveyors of the advanced forms of dance are busily plotting a season designed to imprint themselves upon the hearts and minds of all the wide world.

'The money reflects our progress in audience development', notes the new General Manager, Anne Valois. Le Groupe hit Ottawa with trumpets and drums when it moved from Montreal; their publicity was a model for any artistic company anywhere. Against some formidable odds, they have indeed developed an audience, even here.

Although the number of people who go to see Le Groupe once and never return is sizeable the residue of loyal supporters has given the company a respectable and very serious following - in fact, they probably constitute the most serious *dance* audience in Ottawa.

Le Groupe has been specializing for some time now in sung dances, with the dancers themselves doing the vocalizing. The dancers also play a number of exotic instruments for which much of their music is scored. Peter Boneham and Jean-Pierre Perreault have highly-developed aesthetics which result in dance which is often opaque, always difficult and never fun. This is a serious company and taxes the dance viewer to the limits. 'We will never appeal to a mass audience', Boneham constantly admits, a little defiantly. But why should he? He is dealing with some of the finest modern dancers anywhere, and the company is exploring movement to the limit. The departure of two dancers this year marks the first change in company personnel in years, and perhaps new dancers will bring new influences. Boneham and Perreault are always looking.

After opening, with luck, at the NAC in October, Le Groupe will be touring in Quebec and in the northern US. Between November and March they will launch their first subscription series - Le Groupe has been diligent in bringing in dancers, particularly independents like Margie Gillis and Maria Formolo, for guest concerts - with performances by the company and others this year, including Lily Eng. Back to the US in March, and then to Europe, where they expect to play several major festivals and a number of minor ones in between. 'Nothing is signed', says Valois, 'but it's looking good'. Each April sees

their spring 'Events' series in the Company studios, an 'event' being the GPR term for a once-only artistic fusion of dance, space and influence.

Amateur is not a dirty word

The companies are ambitious, and hard-working. Amateur theatrical dance companies also perform in Ottawa through the year, notably Michele Danesh's Ballet Shayda, the International Dance Ensemble of Maki Kabayama and Nicolaas Hilferink, and Sylvia Rosenes' Ami Hai (which played to a sellout audience in the NAC Studio last spring). Ami Hai is essentially a product of the Jewish Community Centre which happens to have reached a distinctly accomplished level of performance, but Kabayama and Hilferink are openly hoping to make their company a professional one, and Ballet Shayda, the most polished of the three, is non-professional at the specific insistence of its director.

Countless thousands of dancers study in area schools - the dance boom will probably hit Ottawa in about 1992 when all these devotees have enough money for tickets - and the ethnic communities, centred in the embassies, often provide some enriching dance experiences. A number of independent dancer/choreographers make Ottawa their base, notably among them Anna Haltrecht and Anjali whose remarkable accomplishments as an Indian dancer belie the fact that her off-stage name is Ann-Marie Gaston and that she was born in Ottawa. With Michael Montanaro of GPR now not only producing choreography for his company's repertoire but also acting as assistant to Peter Boneham while Jean-Pierre Perreault takes a year's sabbatical, there are possible shifts in choreographic direction there. But the most pleasing surprise, in strictly local terms, of last season was Ottawa Dance Theatre's Choreographic Workshop, where almost every piece on the programme showed sufficient promise to be developed for the company. It was a pretty lousy (and almost danceless) summer, and unspeakable horrors lie awaiting Ottawans in the Greenland's Coast that is a capital winter, but somewhere lurks sufficient warmth for young choreographers to strike productive notes. The old saw that you can't eat in Ottawa has been retired; now you can also go on to the dance after dinner.



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Donna McDonald

DANNY GROSSMAN

Building on Success

If Danny Grossman has not been in the news a great deal in recent months, it's not because he hasn't been working but because he has. He's trying to develop a work which he says will take him off in a new direction both physically and emotionally.

The Danny Grossman Dance Company was founded at York University but quickly moved off campus for performances at the Montreal Olympic Games, dates in New York and a showcase booking at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. When the company applied for grants for their 1979-80 season, they confidently stated they were going to Europe, though the invitation to London's Dance Umbrella had not then been issued. Grossman and the company thrive on the stimulus of new venues and new experiences and till now have actively pursued them. But when it was put to him that he should capitalize in a year's time on the warm audiences and good reviews London provided, Grossman drew back.

'I would like to be in something extraordinarily different, personally, when I come back,' he said in London, 'and that might take more than a year'.

He's aware that building an audience is hard and that he should take advantage of the headway he's already made. He's also aware that audiences and critics don't necessarily respond the same way on a second viewing. Dominating both the optimism and the caution, however, is the internal pressure demanding a new work.

Grossman talks about *Higher*, the first work he created for himself, as a trap. He believed that when he made *Curious Schools of Theatrical Dancing*, his first solo piece, he was escaping from that trap. In fact, he merely created another one.

Ignoring the fine tensions the work creates, Grossman describes *Higher* as, 'hanging on a ladder doing acrobatic tricks'. He loves the circus and wanted to evoke that magic. 'But I ended up with Judy Hendin, a partner, so the whole relationship between the two people on the props became fascinating to me.' It was not what he thought he had set out to do.

'Then I decided to do a solo for myself in which I would dance all over the stage, but it turned into an enclosed circus ring. Physically or emotionally I wasn't ready to



Curious Schools of Theatrical Dancing Part I

dance all over the stage.' He laughed with a touch of embarrassment, realizing that what he says has personal implications.

'I didn't know I was setting a trap for myself in *Curious Schools*, but I ended up trapped in a circus ring.'

He's now working his way out of that trap, improvising to music to free his body. He's minutely aware of the physical responses his emotional states engender. When he started work on *Curious Schools*, a work about conventional 17th-century dance steps distorted by physical or perhaps mental deformity, he was conscious of the deterioration in his own body. He says the emotional tension in the piece nearly strangled him. 'To have the stamina to



Higher

get through this distorted, dramatic, very fast, virtuoso piece, I had to free my body even more.'

That freedom was the beginning of work on the next piece. The practical chore of teaching *Higher* and *Curious Schools* to other members of the company followed next.

He says he's thinner now and looser, with a faster jump. 'I could dance on a saxophone', he says.

As for specifics, Grossman knows better than to talk about a work in gestation. He's remarkably willing, however, to discuss how he creates a new work. So many choreographers won't or can't, especially those who are drawing on the depths of inarticulate emotion. 'I start through improvisation,' he explains, not surprisingly. 'My muscles literally tell me what the next work will be about.'

Music features from the beginning. Chosen instinctively, the music and his emotional response to it dictate a physical response to which he is closely attuned. He may reject his original music for something more accurately approximating the physical response he achieves, and work from that towards a more explicit form – or theme, as he calls it.

In part, what Danny Grossman seems to be saying is that he wants, and is going to take, the time to let this process happen slowly. He says he wants to start 'the way I dance

at a party, all over the place. I want to free myself and the dancers from any set, prop or restriction'.

He explains that he 'falls around in the dark' for a long time, and then the theme starts taking over and calling the shots. 'I do not want to follow a theme quickly. I want lots of free time before that theme starts making me do what it says.' The end result, he believes will be a more expansive work.

When Danny Grossman founded his company, he was choreographer, dancer and artistic director. He still is, but he's got a company manager now and other administrative help. The responsibility, however, is ultimately Grossman's and he says frankly that it has taken its toll. Last year, he thought he was seeing indications of a nervous breakdown – 'just hysteria in certain situations that I could not control'.

So he sat back and took stock. Respect, money and bookings are all coming in. The company has grown in confidence and competence.

'You know, I'm so pleased just by what I've done and what the dancers have done that now I'm relaxing,' he says. 'I want to disappear and choreograph on that new energy.'

Iro Tembeck

Probing the Choreographic Mysteries



Dancer Ted Robinson at work in the Seminar

The National Choreographic Seminar, the second of its kind to be conducted in Canada, was held at the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts from June 1 to 21. Montreal dancer/choreographer/writer *Iro Tembeck* was present throughout the seminar as a participating dancer and writer-in-residence. Here she reflects on what happened and we hear directly from four other participants about the effects of three weeks' intense creative activity.

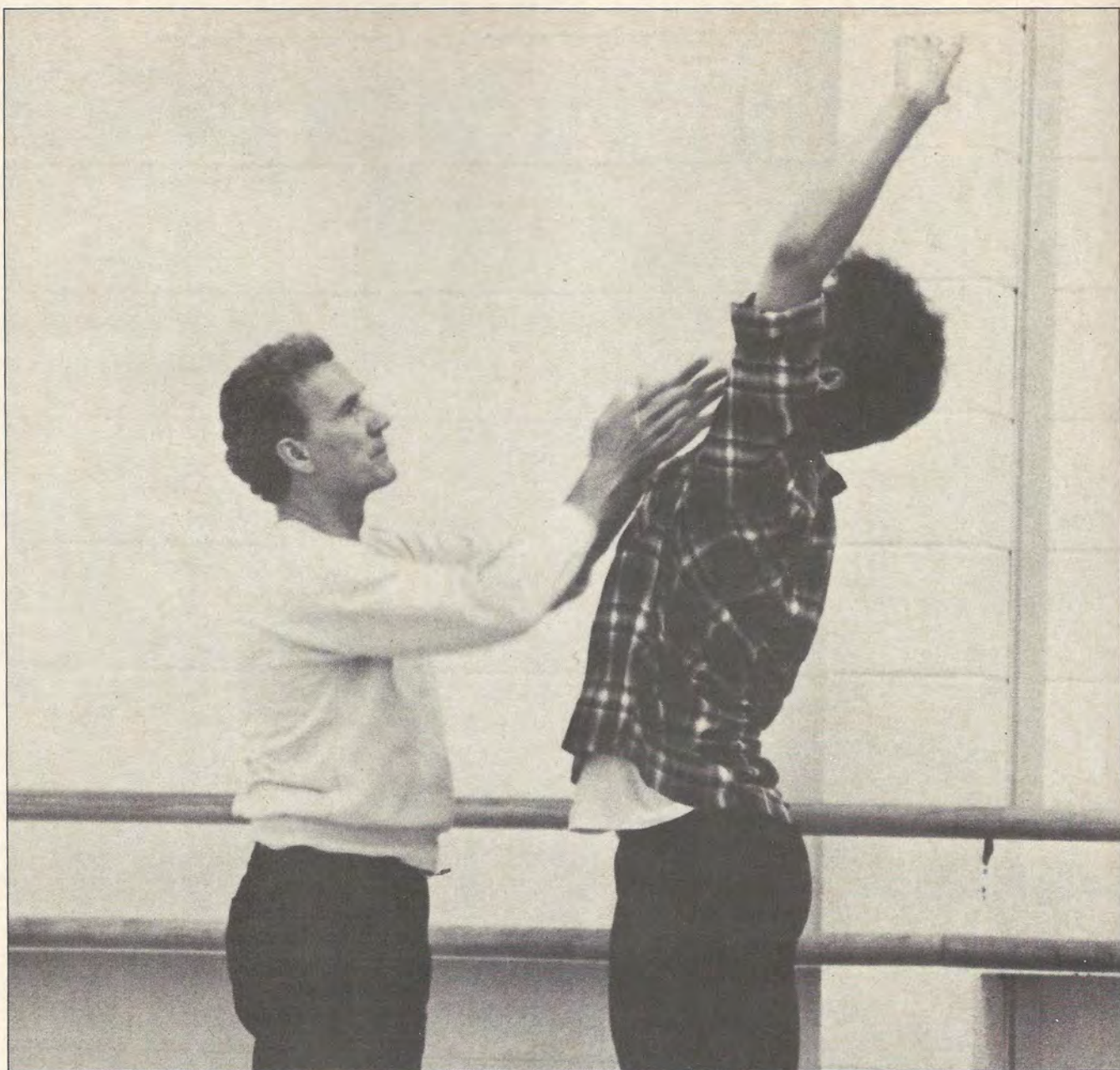
We had come from many different parts of Canada, altogether 46 participants in the National Choreographic Seminar: choreographers, dancers and musicians. We were mostly strangers to each other and the temperature reading during that first night at dinner together was largely governed by apprehension and apologies – apprehension about the ‘performance/achievement’ syndrome which everybody desperately kept trying to pretend did not exist but which was surfacing unmistakably. Then there were apologies – lack of shape, lack of time to mount pieces, lack of ideas when confronted with unknown dancers, unfamiliar scores, unwanted themes.

The importance of failure

Grant Strate and John Herbert McDowell both told us

at the outset about the important role of failure. We could not expect to produce brilliant ideas without a share of bad ones too. Failure, they explained, is an integral part of learning. At the Seminar the emphasis was to be on process rather than finished product. Acceptance of momentary failure would induce further growth.

For the first three days, as we were bombarded with assignments we were all trying to find our bearings and to discover exactly what our contributions were to be. Images, concepts, structures kept running through our minds: FORM FORMULATE DEFORM REFORM TRANSFORM and DISCOVER UNCOVER RECOVER. Most of all we were made aware of the consciousness factor in the process. Like a scientific experiment, every stage of the process was to be the subject of daily scrutiny and assessment by



Grant Strate at work

ourselves and our peers. Notepads and pencils became necessary tools to record the events of our 13-hour workdays.

Every morning, class would start at nine with Grant Strate taking us through the ballet ritual. It was Grant who, more than any other individual, had made this and the earlier choreographic seminar at York University (1978) realities for Canada. He placed himself as a near silent partner in the process of these three weeks, responding with quiet but resourceful insights. We drew energy from his presence throughout the day beginning with the very dancy quality with which he would colour his ballet class. For many of us it was like finding a long lost friend in ballet. Because we weren't required to limit ourselves to that expressive technique we could enjoy the hard workout and feel free within the confines of a classical movement vocabulary. Lubos Czerny's piano accompaniment was inspirational and his style would change to syncopated jazzed-up rhythms for Helen

McGehee's classes – an accompaniment reinforced by the exuberant drumming of Ahmed Hassan, a sound which forced us to emote from the guts to respond to the pulse.

And Helen herself? She is a slight woman of deceptive frailty. Her inner strength and clarity of line shone through her entire class and we were taught to achieve the happy balance between restraint and exuberance, of being clear and precise but still taking the image of the movement beyond its kinesthetic sense. It was not always easy to throw off the padding and embellishments that had become habitual to most of us as Helen McGehee urged us towards a further purity and economy of line and effort – but she was always there to serve as an example of poise and measure.

Then there was the comic humour of John Herbert McDowell whose antics, such as allowing a few dancers to shave his moustache while he delivered a lecture on Paul Taylor's choreographic techniques, might sound a trifle bizarre but which helped impress on us the power of

concentration, of precision and timing – elements which inform his musical sense as much as his comic sense.

Contrasting approaches to the process of choreography

Our first choreographic director was Todd Bolender, a strong exponent of form and structure who was probably confounded by the anarchic, free-style answers he got to the assignments landed upon us. He was there to provide the 'conventions' behind choreography – the step by step recipe, the 'how to' manual of choreography.

The end result was curious. During Todd Bolender's stay the choreographers, struggling to grapple with the conventions of structure and form more often than not opted for the rebellious principle of intuition over craft. By the time Robert Cohan stepped in as the second choreographic director they had effectively exhausted their store of original ideas. In contrast to Todd, Robert Cohan was more interested in *de*-composition, in the analytical approach of breaking down into component parts – time, space, energy – in finding new ways of approaching these elements. It took time to reprogramme ourselves to this rigorous approach but we learned to analyse the relationship of music to dance, the process of transmitting ideas from choreographers to dancers to audience. Bob had a way of giving cryptic assignments. Significantly enough, he kept referring to dance as a series of hieroglyphs. The demands he made were great but they touched the root of the matter – the search for a full awareness of the choreographic process.

A dancer's Shangri La

As day succeeded day it seemed as if we had almost entered into another world, a kind of dancer's Shangri La filled with all the necessary ingredients for work and creation. In a sense we were spoiled by the luxury of such a favoured environment, by the quiet, deft skill with which Michael Kobayashi smoothed problems and kept us even-keeled, by the glory of the Rockies all around. In a way, we became so programmed to a routine that most of us must certainly have experienced the shock of decompression when the seminar was over – a sensation combining jet-lag with culture-shock. You could argue that too much had been crammed into our brains and bodies in too short a space of time.

Inevitably as fatigue set in during the second week our approach to assignments changed. There was a move

towards conceptualization and a definite decomposition, towards abstraction and the paring away of extraneous material. Sometimes the concepts would become so mathematical that there was no room left for the dance to emerge but in the process of it all certain principles of choreography became apparent. The choreographer's intention has to be clear in his or her own mind and be made clear to the performers who themselves must acknowledge a responsibility towards the material; they *must* believe in it to 'make it work'. Choreographers and performers must remain fully conscious of the whole process of creation. The relationship of music and dance must be clear even if they are intended to work at different levels or as discrete entities.

Unanswered questions

These lessons were learned in a context which in most respects was experimental and often improvisational and which yielded results of varying value. It was hardly surprising that some fell flat. Others were amazing. Each day we worked at fever pitch, making instant decisions, always aware that as the process of creation, rehearsal and performance occurred it was unique, done once and then abandoned. We wrestled with the essential ephemerality of dance itself and all the other philosophical questions which inevitably arose from the daily experience.

All the participants in the seminar reached a state of total nakedness and vulnerability. We had come to be challenged in every way but it was, after all, a *choreographic* seminar which may explain why some of the dancers felt they were not as fully used as they might have been nor were their concerns adequately addressed. It was Grant Strate who accurately called us 'cannon fodder'! As dancers, the constant performing experience was useful especially in terms of learning to take risks but we never really explored the full significance of the performer's role in the total process of choreography. Dancers are the human, expressive tool of the choreographer and without them nothing can be achieved. Their conviction and intelligence is what makes the process complete – or dooms it to failure.

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PROBING THE CHOREOGRAPHIC MYSTERIES

CHOREOGRAPHER

Louise Latreille

Artistic Director, Pointépiénu

Je suis seule avec moi-mêmes c'est maintenant terminé mais je n'oublierai jamais ce bel épisode de ma vie que nous avons vécu comme frères et soeurs au séminaire chorégraphique de Banff.

Les projets étaient crevants mais toute cette pression était nécessaire. Nous étions plongés dans cet environnement idéal où les montagnes et la nature nous aidaient à nous concentrer sur notre art; nous nous sommes gavés de travail et de création pour en être rassasiés pour quelque temps.

J'ai le coeur à la nostalgie en imaginant que je dois retourner à la vie normale, retrouver ma famille et mes proches et tous les problèmes de ma compagnie, continuer encore et encore à me battre avec les obstacles de toujours.

Cette merveilleuse expérience fut glorieuse mais en même temps libératrice de beaucoup de frustrations, elle a régénéré en moi mon sourire et ma joie de vivre de mes 18 ans.

Je ne peux que glorifier ce séminaire et encourager les artistes à y participer car je crois qu'il est nécessaire au développement des arts et de la danse en particulier.

Qu'il fut agréable et tendre de partager avec toutes ces personnes venant des quatre coins du pays cette belle expérience!

CHOREOGRAPHER

James Kudelka

Soloist, National Ballet of Canada

It is really very simple. Whatever it was that happened at Banff has changed me. Originally I had thought it changed my life, but now I'm home and back to old friends, baking bread and performing familiar, crowd-pleasing work, I feel I can't go as far as saying that.

But things aren't completely normal. My faithful record collection has begun to seem rather uninteresting, my address book is full of new names and phone numbers of people who have seen me and helped me to see myself as I could be.

Probably (and fortunately) the Banff experience can never be relived, and I quickly gave up searching for it outside it.

I have to admit that there are few times in my life that I've ever been that vulnerable, or that happy.

I learned that I am not alone in what I'm doing; that maybe my classically-trained, structured background was not an impediment to creativity; and that as the single 'ballet' person in a decidedly contemporary crowd, there was room for me. This was an area of acceptance which astounded me and has opened up avenues I scarcely dreamed were at my disposal.

Being in Banff has made my life more difficult. The knowledge that I am capable of coping with such a strenuous and stimulating schedule has made me want to keep that pace all the time. I am hungry and - heavenforbid - impatient. For several mornings after my return I would wake up in eager anticipation of seeing new friends and attacking the next assignment, only to be rudely awakened by the prospect of a normal day. But I've discovered I can use the vividness to my advantage and when I care to I can dream of it, go there in my mind, relive a small portion and then come back refreshed - like a tonic.

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PROBING THE CHOREOGRAPHIC MYSTERIES

DANCER

Roberta Mohler

Independent dancer/choreographer

June 1 – *It is truly a beautiful site. It took a long time before I accepted that the mountains weren't just very large photographs – they do look ominous and cold.*

June 2 – *Of course it's the first night so everyone is polite – but I really thought he (Todd) would be creatively critical. He could be working by the theory that everything is okay – and that's okay by me – but I want to know why it's okay.*

June 3 – *The destruction of old ideas has begun for me.*

June 4 – *Well, it was the most difficult afternoon so far and I imagine it can't get much more difficult – but who knows! He (James) made a real 'ballet' with lots of counts and little foot work. By the time it was over, I was a nervous wreck. I couldn't remember the ordering plus I had to do 'Mother Nature' variations which he gave me because my ankle had begun to swell.*

June 11 – *All the excitement in the beginning wears off.*

June 14 – *My mind is a ball of anger. I can't remember Christopher's dance to save my life. The music gives me a headache. This whole seminar has gone berzerk! Everyone is crying, or mad, or talking non-stop.*

June 16 – *I feel like a blank canvas being painted. All our energies seem to have meshed and I think I might disappear.*

June 17 – *She came in with her usual confusion and openness. Openness can drive other people crazy.*

June 18 – *I'm seeing that caffeine, nicotine and sugar have no effect after awhile. I'm beginning to wonder if protein and sleep help either.*

June 19 – *Why, why, why must I lose all faith just because there are a few things I can't do? I can hardly believe what's going on here. It's getting so intense. Savanna ripped her heart out on stage. James did his solo – what pain. It's all coming out – none of us can hide anything. I feel so much love for everyone.*

July 15 – *Sometime has passed since my return from the seminar. I'm sorry it had to end. But then, I would probably die at the ripe old age of 27 – had I continued much longer at such a pace. However, the experience has given me a lot of faith – in myself, in dance, in music and in my dreams – even though they never look in performance as they did in my imagination.*

MUSICIAN

Terry Hunter

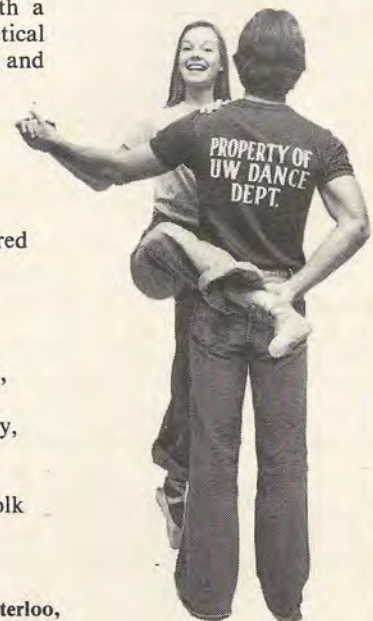
Dancer/Musician, Terminal City Dance

The strongest experience, among many, was the demystification of the musical process. Previously, my experience with this process was fairly limited; I had a general feeling of being intimidated by the massiveness and mystery of the beast. Through seeing and participating in the creation of approximately 128 compositions I was quickly and intensively exposed to a wide and varied spectrum of musical thought. This onslaught totally opened up the realm of musical possibilities. Many of the strongest compositions were extremely simple in concept. I came to accept this simplicity as valid process and product. The result is I am more able and confident to compose music on my own.

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Susana Menck

Writing Dance

The Choreologist at Work

An Interview With Susana Menck

From 1971 until last fall, Susana Menck was choreologist of the National Ballet of Canada. Compelled to restrict her performing career to character roles because of a serious knee injury, she has found satisfaction and fulfillment as one of a small but growing breed of dance specialists trained to notate dance. A graduate of the Institute of Choreology in London, Susana Menck has now returned to her homeland, Germany, to work as a choreologist with John Neumeier's company in Hamburg. Before leaving Canada, she spoke with Dance in Canada Magazine about the nature of her work and about future developments in the field of dance notation.

DIC: What exactly does the term 'choreology' mean?

MENCK: Rudolf Benesh defined it as a scientific study of human movement through notation. He put the word together from 'choreo' and 'logos', the writing of movement. However, I have seen it defined quite differently. It seems 'choreology' is a debatable term, but the way we use it means more than just notating something, it means using notation to analyse, study and research movement.

DIC: So it isn't just a practical tool for recording ballets?

MENCK: No. That is why we don't just call ourselves notators, although really, most of the time, we are being used that way.

DIC: Historically there have been many attempts to devise dance notation systems, but the ones currently most used appear to be the Benesh and Laban methods. One gets the impression that notators tend to specialize in one of these.

MENCK: Yes, although, there are some who practise both Benesh and Laban, but there are not too many of them.

DIC: What is the important practical difference between Laban and Benesh?

MENCK: It's hard for me to say because I don't really know enough about Laban, but from what I can see the Benesh notation is visually clearer and simpler and the use of it is easier and faster than Laban. I believe that explains why

Benesh people are choreologists in companies and why no Laban people are - yet.

DIC: Does it have anything to do with the actual analytical potential of the notation system itself for different types of movement? I've noticed that some modern dance people have trained in Laban.

MENCK: Well, that's partly because of the way the systems started. Laban had a long professional association with modern dancer Lisa Ullmann so naturally his notation developed from the modern side, whereas Mrs. Benesh was a ballet dancer. It has somehow fixed a belief in the popular mind that Benesh is the classical notation and Laban the modern.

DIC: Well, is it possible to notate ballet as accurately and usefully in Laban as in Benesh?

MENCK: Oh I think so, I really do, although I can't prove it. That's surely why we don't call it *dance* notation, we call it *movement* notation. Laban and Benesh have differing approaches, however. Benesh has a sort of visual outside approach; Laban starts from the inside, from the motivation. Actually, the Benesh system stands out from all the others (apart from Sutton) in that it keeps a visual image very strongly. That was part of the purpose. If you look at Laban notation it really does not *resemble* in any way what you want to picture. An attitude just does not give you the idea of an attitude when you read it on the paper. It's much more symbolic, scientific and removed from the image-thinking of a dancer. In contrast, if you know just a few little symbols of Benesh notation you can very easily picture what is going on. Perhaps that's why people say Benesh notation works better for dancers!

DIC: As a company choreologist are you responsible for notating just new works or do you try to notate existing repertoire?

MENCK: It's hard to catch up on something that has already been done. The only chance to get something down completely is when you do it right from the beginning - when the dancers are taught how to do it. When a ballet in the existing rep is revived and rehearsed not all the parts



Susa Menck

will necessarily be taught from scratch. Maybe a few corps swans, or a solo variation, but you only get bits.

DIC: Are there some choreographers, who, because of the way they work, you tend to favour?

MENCK: Yes! John Neumeier, or James Kudelka. It was a pleasure to work with James because he's very musical and clear in what he's doing. He's very aware of what he's doing and can analyse it. That helps tremendously. John Neumeier gave me a really good feeling too. For him, notation is part of the whole work, not just something tolerated and permitted to happen in the corner. He gave me, constantly, the feeling that, yes, what you do is a help, let's use it. Besides, I like his way of working. I like his ballets.

DIC: The implication of what you say is that some choreographers are a little bit suspicious of notation?

MENCK: Yes, even that. For instance Ann Ditchburn was very suspicious at the beginning. She didn't think it would be of any help until finally I did get into the process of writing it down. In the end she realized what a great help it could be. But she didn't quite know. She had seen me work all the time but concerning her ballet she said, 'You know, we don't have anything yet, we just have to try around, we have to feel our way'. And that is the process that I have to be at to really understand the ballet! Particularly a ballet like *Mad Shadows*, with so many 'inside' things involved, not just the steps. She didn't understand that at first. I think many choreographers are like that. They don't quite know what is involved so they almost think you can go and notate a ballet from the performance which is, of course, impossible.

DIC: From what you've said, it seems it would help if

dancers and choreographers knew a little bit about notation. It would make them more sympathetic.

MENCK: Definitely.

DIC: When you say who, from your point of view, are favourite choreographers, presumably that doesn't necessarily imply that the choreographer who a choreologist finds it easier to work with is the best choreographer. I was wondering, for example, how a choreologist would get along with somebody like Ashton, who reputedly, when he is actually creating a ballet is rather vague to begin with and simply gives dancers an idea and says 'Well, do something like this', and then, 'No, not quite like that', and so on, until he finally evolves something.

MENCK: Well, I think one has to learn to get to know that particular choreographer and see how he works.

DIC: You're fairly confident that there's really nothing that one can choreograph for dance that can't be notated if you can get at it?

MENCK: Yes, I mean there are certain things we still talk about and the notation is still developing and we do come across problems but, basically, we can notate everything.

DIC: Can notation incorporate the element of style?

MENCK: Now, that's a different matter and a very debatable point. Part of the reason I am so attracted to working with one choreographer as opposed to what I did at the National is because I feel the better I get to know that one choreographer the more I will be able to catch the style as well. A composer writes his own score down. He knows what to put into his score to give it his own character but because we are two people, the choreographer and the choreologist, that becomes harder. With people like Monica Parker who has done a lot of MacMillan ballets or Faith Worth who has done all the Ashton ballets they come pretty close to knowing the style so well that it is somehow possible to work it into the score. It's like music. You have to know the style of Mahler or Brahms in order really to present it in the way it should be presented.

DIC: Then if you are a choreologist who has been able to work fairly exclusively with a particular choreographer and become sensitive and familiar with that choreographer's style and you have produced a score, what happens when you're not around to interpret that score for dancers?

MENCK: Someone else will take it and either make a mess of it or not. There again, it's the same as with conductors. It's really up to the talent and sensitivity and the feel for styling of that other choreologist what he or she will make out of a score. One of the big arguments against notation attacks the idea of having someone else try to do the ballet without the choreographer, without the original people or whatever. They say it will be so different it won't be valid. Maybe it will, maybe it won't. If the ballet is strong, if it's a good ballet, even if it's not done exactly the same way it was done originally, it may still be meaningful or valid. I think we are only trying to put down the skeleton. We can't do more than that.

DIC: There's so much hogwash talked about style and authenticity in ballet anyway. When we talk about the



Benesh Notation

Petipa ballets, the real element of Petipa left is debatable.

MENCK: Yes, and what does it really matter? If we enjoy watching these things as they are now I think that's valid. I'm sure Beethoven or Bach wouldn't like certain things the way we play them now. I'm sure they sound quite different but they're beautiful, and no one is against it.

DIC: It seems to me there is an analogy here. In the case of music the actual general level of musicianship and the quality of some instruments has improved so dramatically that technically speaking the performances are far finer than many performances in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. Similarly, dancers have become generally more technically competent. That doesn't mean there weren't dancers who could do particular things but there's a much broader spread of technical ability now. This means, in a sense, that trying to recreate Petipa exactly as it was would be rather futile.

MENCK: Well, that's what Beriosoff was saying two years ago when we learned *Coq d'or*. He said, 'If I teach you the bare things we did in those days it would be so boring because we do so much more now'. I think dance people tend to belittle dance because they say it can only be done 'this way' and it can only be done with 'this cast'. If a ballet is strong, if it is really an art, it should stand on its own. They say you can't kill Beethoven; even if it was a bad performance still the music is gorgeous. Well that should be possible in dance. They say, 'Yes, but bodies are different'. There are even famous examples like Maurice Béjart who just won't have anything written down. He says, 'I choreograph for my people and for this century and for nothing else'. It's a shame, because he does masterpieces, and I am sure they are strong enough to be done by other people, maybe with a slightly different flavour and it will still be Béjart.

I think part of the reason for this is that dance notation is relatively young, whereas music has been notated for centuries. The thinking patterns of musicians have gone along with it, whereas we have survived for centuries without it. All of a sudden it's here. It's threatening in a way. There are very few people who have caught on to the basic idea that it's helpful, that it's just a recording.

DIC: Let's change the tack a little bit. How do you communicate with dancers if they mostly don't read notation?

MENCK: I really have to act like a ballet master or choreographer. I have to show them, which is the reason we say a choreologist has to have been a dancer. You have to have a

feeling for the movement, how a dancer moves, works and thinks. The only way they work is by learning visually. You just have to demonstrate. It doesn't have to be perfect but it has to give the feel and the look.

DIC: To return then to an earlier point, you personally feel that it would be a progressive development if more and more dancers, ballet dancers in this particular case, could read notation?

MENCK: Yes, I think so, for several reasons. First, they could take parts and look at them and be prepared. They might not be able to dance a whole variation from just looking at the score, although it should be possible, but they will have a good idea what's going on when they come into rehearsal, particularly if it's just one or two dancers who have to get into a big piece.

DIC: If they were all trained in Benesh as part of their ballet schooling, presumably they could all achieve some level of competence in it. It would be equivalent to sight-reading music, which would produce a greater degree of uniformity in terms of learning speed which in a company might help the scheduling of rehearsal periods.

MENCK: Yes, that's why I think it should be taught in the ballet school so that right from the beginning they develop this skill of seeing something on paper and immediately transferring it into the body. Even by sitting on a chair, if they see an attitude they'll know 'Ahah. It feels like this'.

DIC: So there would be benefits in accuracy, benefits in speed of rehearsal, and it would give the dancers more confidence in that they knew there was something they could go to. If they came to a point where they were not quite sure at least they would have that to turn to.

MENCK: Yes. Now of course we also have video tape but it's a questionable aid. It represents only one interpretation: maybe a dancer has made a mistake on that particular taping, or you're not able to see that particular dancer because someone is in front of him. It is a great help but it is not the only thing.

DIC: The problem surely with working with video as a learning instrument is that it's slower than Benesh. One can sight read a musical score in your mind without actually hearing the music at its performance tempo, in the same way you can read a book more quickly than you can read it out loud.

MENCK: Exactly! Besides it's more handy. You can take a book on tour. I take all my books on tour whereas you

can't necessarily take this big video machine with you. Another thing that would be good for dancers if they could read notation is that it would make them more aware of what they were doing because you have to analyse the movement even if you just read it: that kind of awareness of what they are doing wouldn't be bad for dancers.

DIC: I've detected in speaking to some older dancers a kind of suspicion about notation which I think is rooted in a feeling that notation is a science and in their particular view of it a science cannot be an art and ballet is an art and therefore notation is bad! It's not very sound logic but nevertheless it's a very real feeling among some dancers. Is notation art or science?

MENCK: It's neither art nor science really. Notation is a tool. Choreology is a science, if you want to call it so, but that's going above and beyond what concerns dancing and notation. It is a bit of an art to find out what Ann *really* meant there and to put it on paper but it really is not an 'Art'. Dancers have nothing to fear, but you're right, they do feel that way. Even in the National Ballet, after eight years, when I demonstrated something from my book dancers still tended to go to another dancer and say, 'Can you show me?'. It would be exactly what I had shown them and yet they'd say, 'Oh, good. That's it'.

DIC: Presumably there are some things that notation, Benesh notation in this particular case, is best able to record but how accurately can it preserve what you might call the interpretive points as opposed purely to steps - the dynamics and the subtleties?

MENCK: Interpretive points I don't even attempt to do because I don't think that's what I should be doing. Dynamics - our notation still has problems with this. I think the Laban people are a bit ahead of us there; after all their system is three years older than ours. I don't attempt to do any interpretation. I do write different steps for different people if they have accepted variations on the theme, but not the way they interpret little things.

DIC: So you're obviously not a replacement for a coach who really helps the dancer with interpretation?

MENCK: No, although a really talented choreologist who understands the style of the choreographer could coach. There are choreologists who coach extensively. Their work is just the basis, a means of writing it down so they won't forget like ballet masters did before in longhand. It doesn't make me a coach *because* I can notate, but if I have the talent for doing it then why not?

DIC: Notation could be useful to critics by the sound of things.

MENCK: Oh, I definitely feel so. I had a chat with Bill Littler about that and he very much thinks so. Imagine if dance critics, like any of the music critics, could read a score. Let's face it, they only work from what they see. They can't sit down and really study and analyse the construction of that particular work. They could with notation.

DIC: One imagines a sound knowledge of music is essential to the choreologist.

MENCK: Yes, it is one of the major skills we must have. Luckily I had done a lot of music before: in Germany you learn music in the schools throughout. It's half the job, to

Labanotation

find out where the dancers are doing this and that and find where it is in the score.

DIC: There are a lot of choreographers themselves who don't have that kind of awareness of music.

MENCK: Oh yes, that's why I say that James Kudelka is a dream to work with because he can count it for you if you are a counter, or he can sing it for you, or he can show it to you in the score. He's just marvelous. Miss Franca's another. She's incredibly musical. She can even say, 'Now on the B minor chord there you do it'. But most choreographers are fairly vague about it, they can't explain it. Some are beautifully musical, in an artistic sense - intuitively - but they can't analyse it. Most choreographers are vague about where things happen in the music. They hear the sound and they hear the rhythm and that's what they go by and the big job for me is to put that in the score.

DIC: What about the value of notation for the actual ballet teacher, not somebody working in a company? Does it help a teacher to record her classes and therefore to be able to pass on her experience to other teachers? It seems there would be value in that.

MENCK: Yes, actually quite a few teachers now say to me, 'I wish I could just jot it down like you can'. It's common nowadays for student teachers to go to a summer course and see someone else teach. It would be much easier to throw down a variation on paper in notation than to write it out in words. Sandra Caverly is a good example. When she started getting interested in Bournonville she went to Denmark and did that summer course there. When another group was on the floor she went and wrote it down. Now the longhand teachers just could not cope with that. By the end of the day Sandra had the work written down and the others didn't so they came to her and said, 'What did we do there and there?'

DIC: Do you think since choreology is very much a developing force in the art that it's really going to have a direct aesthetic impact on what the art looks like? Are we, for example, going to find that as more and more dancers and choreographers become aware of notation that the choreography itself is going to be more and more choreography that is easily notated?

MENCK: No, I don't think that a dancer or choreographer will ever feel or think that way. It may happen that choreographers study notation, although I doubt it, and compose on the paper, just sit down and decide what to do

with the dancers as musical composers do. But I think that will be the exception and I don't believe it will have that kind of an impact on dance. It would mean replacing the physical aspect of dancing with something written down and that will never happen. Physicality is what dance is all about! If used, the notation will have its effect generally in the importance of dance in all the different aspects that we have talked about starting with critics who will know what they're talking about, dancers who can read and maybe write their art and can prepare themselves, choreographers writing their own thoughts down before they go into the rehearsal room - all those things surely must help improve the art of dance rather than hinder it or destroy it or damage it as so many people are thinking will happen. Incidentally, notation is one way choreographers can copyright their work. That *does* appeal to them! I don't think the creative process itself will change. Most choreographers aren't very analytically minded. Most of them are visually and intuitively talented. They look at the dance and they look for shapes, lines and so on. For those people notation is not helpful or useful and some plainly can't be bothered trying to analyse what they're doing. However *if* notation really becomes an integrated thing in every dance group then maybe choreographers will develop differently too; they will develop a certain analytical way of thinking about what they are doing. But that's very much in the future. First of all we have to get down to basics and get the dancers to accept what we are doing. That will be the first major step.

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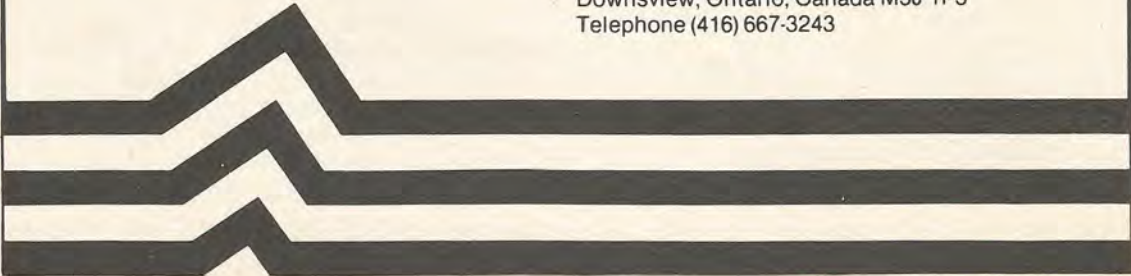
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In Review

Edouard Lock et Danseurs

Theatre l'Eskabel

Montreal

4-22 June 1980

Although he is not quite 25, Edouard Lock has been visible on the local choreographic scene for some time. Despite his English surname, he is a Moroccan whose parents came to Canada when he was two years old. At the time, the French schools here would not take non-Catholics, so Lock went through the English system and landed up studying cinema at Concordia University. At the age of 19, he began to gravitate toward dance, first with Le Groupe de la Place Royale, then during a period of discovery, with everyone under the Montreal sun, from Lawrence Gradus and Les Grands Ballets to Hugo Romero and Nouvelle Aire. He was looking for a style with which he could identify. That he has identified with none, that his is an entirely individual dance vocabulary, has been obvious all along. Whether it is an accessible language is as much in doubt today as it was in his earliest efforts five works, and years, ago.

L'Eskabel is a converted garage in Point St-Charles, deep in Fennario country. It is there that Lock presented his latest creation, a 75-minute piece called *Lily Marlene in the Jungle*. Lock and his four dancers had been working on it for six months, financed by a \$5,000 Canada Council Explorations grant. Its arrival had been imminent since March but it did not actually open till early June and even then, the first night audience had to be sent home because an overloaded fuse box blew up. L'Eskabel seats only about 80 people but the original two-week run had to be extended for an extra week. Even a two-week run is unheard of in this city, as elsewhere, for experimental dance, so Lock was obviously communicating with someone.

There is no doubt that he makes an impact. A previous long work, *Rémus*, was

as irritating as anything I had ever seen but its extraordinary images are still vivid today, two years later.

Like many of his contemporaries, Lock deals entirely in intellectual dance. He moves bodies about, devoid of subtext or emotional baggage; he makes moving pictures without a message. He discards past works as a snake sheds its skin. 'In a year', he says, 'I'll be elsewhere'. Old works are just the trail he has left behind.



Edouard Locke and Monique Giard

Lock does not yield his secrets easily but he is obviously a man with a highly developed visual sense who creates stream-of-consciousness movement without ever catering to an audience. All I can say with certainty is that although the current work has certain elements of hard edge German Expressionism, it has nothing to do with *Lili Marlene*, with Dietrich or war - except perhaps as an idea buried deep in the choreographer's mind.

Lily Marlene in the Jungle uses five

dancers, including Lock himself, and occasionally one musician, Robert Racine. Racine is probably the most inventive music maker in the city. At a concert last year he elicited unlikely but delightful sounds from an oven grill, of all things. This time he plays the accordion, some of the time. At others, there is dead silence. Embedded in the floor on stage right are parallel rows of light bulbs framing a diagonal sandpit. Apart from that, the performance area is empty.

The work is quite conventionally structured with solos, pas de deux and ensemble sections. What is not conventional is the movement: constantly shifting images which defy codification after a single viewing, except as solo contact improvisation, which is in itself a contradiction in terms.

The choreography is melismatic: there are endless variations on a limited number of movements. There is a brutal tap-dance solo, almost like a zapateado; there are flying leaps and bruising slides along the floor. Each body is responsive to the least shift in motion; they flow with the punches like rag dolls. A backward jump, where a half-naked girl, dramatically backlit, never quite achieves a perch on her partner's shoulder, wilts into a soft slide to the floor. All motions follow through downward, bending, falling, finally spread out in a heap. Lock uses clothes as tools, he has his dancers hissing like geese, blowing noisy kisses, declaiming in German, strewing rose petals, daubing crosses on themselves and the walls, treading water, shaking and shimmying or writhing spread-eagled on the floor. He is certainly light years ahead of anything I saw as a member of the jury for the Chalmers award in choreography. A pity Lock did not apply. *Lily Marlene* is still in the crucible stage of Lock's development but I think he will set us all on our ears with the finished product a few years hence.

KATI VITA



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Colloque sur la Recherche en Danse

Université de Montréal
25-26 avril 1980

Une importante rencontre printanière s'ajoutait aux activités déjà nombreuses et variées du monde québécois de la danse. En effet, le colloque sur la recherche en danse, se tenait à l'Université de Montréal les 25 et 26 avril derniers. Cet événement fut une occasion pour les artistes professionnels, scientifiques et étudiants de discuter de leurs travaux récents et de faire un bilan de l'état de santé de la vie artistique et scientifique de la danse au Québec. Aboutissement logique du cours 'travaux dirigés' du certificat en danse et mouvement expressif du Département d'éducation physique de l'Université de Montréal, ce colloque venait souligner l'avènement de programmes universitaires en danse au Québec et couronnait la fin de la première année académique du certificat.

Un riche programme était à l'ordre du jour. Il fut ouvert par le conférencier invité, monsieur André Paré, professeur chercheur à l'Université Laval. Ce dernier s'est penché sur les complémentarités et particularités des approches scientifiques et artistiques comme mode d'acquisition de connaissances en danse. Les nombreuses questions et commentaires suscités par ses réflexions ont témoigné de l'intérêt des participants sur ce sujet et sur ses implications en regard de l'intégration de la danse aux structures universitaires.

Étudiants et professionnels ont traité d'une grande variété de sujets à caractère tantôt théorique ou scientifique, tantôt artistique. Sous la rubrique scientifique ou théorique, Sylvie Fortin (étudiante, Université de Montréal) a fait part de son expérience de l'enseignement de la danse à claquettes à un groupe de personnes du 3^e âge, tandis que Jasmine Schaubhut (étudiante, Université de Montréal) a proposé et discuté un mode d'évaluation de chorégraphies de danseurs débutants. Un recul historique s'est fait par le biais de la présentation de Lynn Huppé (étudiante, Université de Montréal) intitulée 'La danse à Montréal en 1936' et celle de Carole Tanguay (étudiante, Université de Montréal) portant sur les implications du manifeste 'Le Refus Global' pour la danse moderne. Enfin, l'analyse de la dynamique du groupe des petites compagnies de danse moderne et l'idéokineses de Lulu Sweigard furent respectivement abordés par Françoise Ouellet (étudiante, Université de Montréal) et Sylvie Brossard (étudiante, Université de Montréal).

Du côté des professionnels, Martine Epoque (Groupe Nouvelle Aire) s'est interrogée sur la situation de la création en danse. Elizabeth Langley (Université de Concordia) a souligné les rôles respectifs que jouent chorégraphes, danseurs et

spectateurs, dans le développement de l'art de la danse. Ninoska Gomez (Université de Montréal) a traité des bases psychomotrices des apprentissages en danse, tandis que Paulette C. Laurence (Université de Sherbrooke) s'est penchée sur le rythme comme pronostic d'apprentissage. La condition physique du danseur fut abordée par Jean-Marc Lavoie (Université de Montréal) et Monique Hubert (Ministère de l'éducation du Québec) s'est livrée à un parallèle entre apprentissage, jeu et art.

Plusieurs types de problèmes chorégraphiques furent abordés et illustrés sous la rubrique artistique. Il a été entre autre question d'utilisation d'objets - accessoires, ('apprivoise-moi', Nicole L. Coulanges, étudiante, Université de Montréal), de développement de gestes (petite chanson rose-mauve, Nicole Laudouar, étudiante, Université de Montréal), d'utilisation de la structure musicale ('Zoo', Hélène Girard, étudiante, Université de Montréal), d'utilisation d'un danseur et d'une comédienne ('Tout autour et dans le fond', Françoise Riopelle, Université de Québec à Montréal), d'utilisation de la répétition ('le jet d'eau qui jase', Monique Giard et Danièle Soulières, chorégraphes indépendantes), de limitations d'espace ('Kouros', Iro Tembeck, Groupe Axis) et enfin de chorégraphie pédagogique (Groupe Contre danse). Par ses films 'Ni scène, ni coulisse' et 'Off Stage', Denis Poulin (Ministère de l'éducation du Québec) a illustré les possibilités visuelles résultant de la combinaison des média cinématographique et mouvement. Chantal Cadieux (étudiante, Université de Montréal) pour sa part a traité de l'élaboration d'une création collection pour non-danseurs. Enfin le Groupe de recherche en improvisation dansée a fait part des possibilités du 'coaching' en improvisation et le groupe Catpoto a parlé de l'improvisation en contact.

Comme en témoignaient la diversité et la qualité des présentations du Colloque sur la recherche en danse, des idées nouvelles, autant scientifiques qu'artistiques, bourgeonnent sans cesse au Québec. Le colloque aura été l'occasion de souligner le besoin de s'ouvrir à des populations nouvelles (3^e âge), à des approches scientifiques diversifiées (socio-politique, sociologique, neurophysiologique etc.), à des approches chorégraphiques nouvelles et enfin, de remettre continuellement en question les 'vérités' acquises.

Comme par les années passées, (Symposium des éducateurs universitaires en mouvement expressif, mai 1977; Colloque sur la danse en éducation, mai 1979, l'Université de Montréal a su rejoindre les éducateurs et professionnels des divers milieux de la danse. Des retombées intéressantes sont à prévoir.

NINOSKA GOMEZ et MADELEINE LORD

José Limón Dance Company

Music Hall Theatre
Toronto
3-7 June 1980

Nothing in my previous experience of the work of José Limón had prepared me for the impact made in Toronto by the 34-year-old José Limón Dance Company, now minus its creator and so directed by Carla Maxwell, but rooted, nevertheless, in the earth of the master's choreography, vital, growing, and abundant.

It was an extraordinary engagement, the Toronto debut, of this 11-dancer company, extraordinary in that it was brought here on spec, as it were, by Spedici, Montreal impresario Uriel Luft's organization which recently sponsored Jennifer Mueller at Places des Arts and which has undertaken a dance subscription series at Ryerson Theatre in Toronto next fall.

The Music Hall Theatre on Danforth, with its tiny lobby, water-stained ceiling and general air of past, lost gentility seemed too small, too remote, too ill-equipped. There appeared on opening night only a negligible audience (150 of us; mostly paper?) and it was an odd time of year in the Toronto calendar. Money was going to be lost. And face. And chances for the future.

But it was not to be so. Money was lost

undoubtedly, but mature skilled dancers and often superb choreography combined with conviction. Musicality was everywhere evident. Lighting caught it all. José Limón's oaken insights fell as leaves to new ground to grow again like gifts.

The word spread. The closing night was full, but still, over six performances, it was a damningly microscopic Toronto audience.

The Limón pieces spanned 21 years: *The Moor's Pavane* (1949), *A Choreographic Offering* (1964), excerpts from *Psalm* (1967) and *The Unsung* (1970). Choreographies newer to the company included Charles Weidman's *Flickers*, Daniel Negrin's *Indeterminate Figure* and *Strange Hero*, Clay Taliaferro's *Dancing Woman*, and Murray Louis' *Figura*. These were presented in three different programmes.

* * *

What remains most in my mind of Limón the man, strangely enough, is a photograph of him, used by the Royal Opera House in Stockholm, when a full evening of his work was presented there in 1970, as a poster. A striking head, gleaming with intensity, rather like the famous portrait of Antony Tudor, but with none of Tudor's whimsical cunning in the eyes; sorrow is what I remember, a kind of manly sorrow. The posters were dotted all over Stockholm, as was the Opera's custom, and the memory of those eyes has stayed with me.

Of Limón the dancer, I remember only

once seeing him, at Connecticut College in the mid sixties, being the Moor for a dance audience, dragging on his back the Iago-figure across the stage, Gothic in his addiction, the anger never being contrived for a moment, but welling up from the gut, a fuse.

After some years of seeing the Pavane danced by predominantly classically trained dancers I had forgotten its real power in the theatre. Nureyev with the National Ballet at the Met was line-perfect and a powerful presence, but there was no coiled killer in his gut; the play was clear, but the lesson of it shrouded. Not like the good old days.

On opening night in Toronto young Kevin Moore made his debut as the Moor, his close-cropped black head suggesting the Limón of the memories, and his Iago Robert Swinston, Desdemona Nina Watt, and Emilia Carla Maxwell giving infinite nuance to the roles they had obviously danced many times. Their assurance, versus his inexperience, created yet another dimension to the piece. Swinston's fear and cunning, compressed in time and space, reminded me of the Credo in Verdi's *Otello*, bursting out of him like an aria. Carla Maxwell's Emilia was sensually Italian and more subtle than I ever thought this role could be. Nina Watt, highborn and gentle, wore her innocence like a skin. When young Moore gets his legs under him he will complete this quartet superbly.

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Carla Maxwell (standing) and Jennifer Scanlon in José Limón's *The Moor's Pavane*

Here is a modern masterwork: Shakespeare, Purcell (the score is, oddly, dead right for this dance drama) and Limón the choreographer. That he is no longer here to dance the central figure seems not now so important. The work is in the best of hands, (and the best of dancer-actors), reason enough that the Limón Company should go on and on and on . . .

There are other reasons.

* * *

A *Choreographic Offering*, created in memory of Doris Humphrey, needed more space than the small stage would allow, and, presumably, a twelfth dancer. There is a thrilling lyricism to it, the falls and recoveries that seem to start with Bach, the rounded arms that grow out of the movements of the torso in unhurried ways and the formations that flow to rival Balanchine. The ladies in their shades of yellow looked a little *zaftig* perhaps, but it was very lovingly danced. In spite of the dedication it held a love without sorrow, love of the dancers for the dance, the music, each other, harmony more than melody. Bach won, of course. Even incomplete, A *Musical Offering* is a pinnacle of music; I

would like to see the dance, in the open air, or a Roman theatre, with live orchestra, before sunset.

Excerpts from Psalm manages to be radiant and percussive, very effective in shifting groups and big soft jumps; it looked to be great fun to dance, it swung in places, and the dancers danced carelessly though not sloppily. The score by Eugene Lester was one with the choreography and made me want to experience the entire Psalm, not just excerpts. Again there was a great feeling of harmony, and of well-being. I wanted to run out onto Danforth, gather up passers-by, and pull them in to be part of it too. Or better still go back to class.

* * *

The Unsung stuns. Explained in the programme simply as a paean to the heroic defenders of American Patrimony (the Pantheon, Metacomet, Pontiac, Tecumseh, Red Eagle, Black Hawk, Osceola, Sitting Bull, Geronimo), it is the most extraordinary theatre piece I have seen in many years.

Six men in loincloths pull us abruptly into one long deaththroe, that of the

American Indian. It is impossible to avoid its significance. It's not a paean, it is a damning political statement, and it is ruthless.

Ruthless on the dancers; they crash on to their knees and thighs, beat soles and arches on the floor, twist while falling and rebound to the off-balance, they make all the sounds of great and prolonged physical effort, they gasp for breath and all but cry out in pain. They are wrapped in conviction like those political protesters who set themselves on fire. They are unsparing of joints and tendons. They sing in silence of the despair of an entire race.

Ruthless on the public. Images abound faster than film. Images of brotherhood and dignity caught in the half-light. Fingers as headdresses. Hunting. Being at one with animals. Revering birds. Worshipping nature and gods. Greeting death stoically. Of running until muscles become cords. Of peering into sky and eternity. Of helplessness and slaughter. Of love between men and great virility. Of epic virility and pride.

The choreographic invention is endless. Limón, not long before his death, was fertile and demanding, obviously as much of himself as of his dancers. It is one thing to believe in the majesty of man and the great nations of the Indian. It is another to find, in the studio, movement eloquently to express that; to eschew music. This is a masterpiece apart from his others, doubly a monument, a Gotterdammerung uniquely American. The men who danced it, Cratty, Orta, Pier, Swinston, Weiner, Wynn, transcended any technical limitations they perhaps had by sheer force.

Of the newer pieces I rather liked Murray Louis' *Figura*, two men and two women in a Latin mood to Latin music. It avoided cliché skillfully while maintaining a mysterious sexual by-play, as elusive as perfume, and noncommittal, nothing high-powered but beautifully danced. *Strange Hero* was the marriage of Philip Marlowe and Stan Kenton, who haven't been lead to the altar before I think. Bill Cratty danced Daniel Negrin's choreography to the manner born, tough and insouciant. And oh those falls! An unusual combination of Brahms piano works distinguished Clay Taliaferro's *Dancing Woman*, a long solo in what should have been a laughable costume, but wasn't; not quite in focus, though Jennifer Scanlon was richly feminine, with effortless arms. Unfortunately I didn't find *Flickers* uproariously funny, although I wanted to, if only out of homage to Charles Weidman. There were wonderful idiotic moments, but unnecessary waits between movements triggered me to think of the previous choreography, or the next Limón piece. I didn't laugh much. Coals to Newcastle.

* * *

What a wonderful company this is, a compact National Treasure, keeping Limón's work vital and available. The dancing is

just fine, Cratty, Wynn, Swinston, Carla, Nina, Jennifer, all of them. Seen over three performances, apparently they hold the torch high for the Limón technique, the choreography, and the heritage. Proudly is the word that comes most readily to mind when I think back on the way they moved and projected.

But I have other memories of Limón, too. Of a pair of Israeli dancers with the Batsheva company dancing the hell out of the *Exiles* night after night on a tour of various kibbutz; of *There is a Time* danced by the Royal Swedish Ballet to Norman Dello Joio's long song after being coached by Limón; and of a piece I once saw performed by the students at Juillard, plague victims tumbling endlessly down a ramp into the orchestra pit, inspired by Mac Aber, the Scotsman who entered our language as 'macabre'. I want to see those pieces again!

Big themes Limon seized on; for all of us an extraordinary legacy.

Now that we know the company is fine, the only questions are how soon will it come back to Canada and where was the Toronto audience?

BRIAN MACDONALD

The Royal Ballet and The Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet

Royal Opera House
London
May 1980

A delayed revival and a rare local tour combined this spring to provide the opportunity to see both the Royal Ballet and the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet perform highly varied mixed programmes in the hospitable surroundings of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

The Royal Ballet had planned to revive Sir Frederick Ashton's *Ondine* this past April but the time available was insufficient to reproduce the work to the choreographer's satisfaction. In its place, the Royal Ballet presented a diverse triple bill of ballets new to the company: Robert North's *Troy Game*, created for the London Contemporary Dance Theatre in 1974; the première of *Adieu*, 22-year-old choreographer David Bintley's first work for the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden; and Kenneth MacMillan's *My Brother, My Sisters*, created for the Stuttgart Ballet in May, 1978.

The Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet, the touring company, normally performs, as its name suggests, at the Sadler's Wells

Theatre in London. However since the Royal Ballet visited Manchester and Liverpool for three weeks in May, the Sadler's Wells company was able to perform on the much larger Covent Garden stage.

Its triple bill was even more diverse than the bigger company's including: Hans van Manen's *Grosse Fuge*, Kenneth MacMillan's *Playground*, and Galina Samsova's production of Marius Petipa's *Paquita*.

The Royal Ballet programme was peculiar because it opened with what seemed the logical closer, *Troy Game*. It is exuberant, energetic, funny, accessible and the first choreography acquired by the Royal Ballet from a modern dance company.

Robert North's 25-minute work for 10 men is full of angular, athletic, loose-limbed movement. There are hints of the martial arts, appropriate for a ballet loosely representing classical soldiers in training, but with none of the ponderous regimentation this might suggest. There are 'Look at me! Aren't I clever?' solos interspersed among the ensemble passages. It is inventive and zesty.

North was born in the United States and studied at the Royal Ballet School before joining the London Contemporary School of Dance. He also performed with the Martha Graham Company for a year. He has been choreographing for the London



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Canadians Jennifer Penney and Wayne Eagling in Kenneth MacMillan's *My Brother, My Sisters*

Contemporary Dance Theatre and other companies for about 10 years.

The music for *Troy Game* was composed by Jon Kelifitio, based on Batucada (Brazilian percussion) with additional music by Bob Downes. It was quite peculiar to hear this jazzy, bouncy music in the gilded 19th-century surroundings of Covent Garden.

MacMillan's dramatic *My Brother, My Sisters* was the middle work of the evening. It is a grim tale of family rivalry among a brother and five sisters. Richard Cragun and Birgit Keil who created the roles in Stuttgart danced at two of the London performances in May. Cragun's dancing was in sharp contrast to the Romeo he performed with the National Ballet of Canada 18 months ago. He seethed and brooded and dominated the stage.

Birgit Keil was a wonderful child/woman, at once innocent and seductive. Lesley Collier was strong as the ugly duckling sister tormented by her siblings.

The Royal Ballet mixed programme concluded with David Bintley's *Adieu*. He is the youngest choreographer to have a work presented by the Royal Ballet on the Covent Garden stage. He has used the violin concerto of Andrzej Panufnik and the choreography follows quite closely this soulful score.

At the outset, Monica Mason leads a corps of turbaned women in light, graceful, flickering movements. The men enter solemnly but then explode in great leaps

and lift the women who glide in the air.

The slow middle movement is a delightful pas de deux for David Wall and Monica Mason. The movements reminded me of the work of Brian Macdonald. Wall carries Mason back to back, their arms interlocked. There are also a series of fluid lifts and throws.

The final movement brings all 19 dancers on stage for a rousing enthusiastic finale.

David Bintley is a prolific young choreographer. In the last two years he has created four full ballets for the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet as well as works for colleagues to dance on concert programmes. He is obviously a young man to watch.

The following week it was the turn of the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet and the highlight of this evening was Galina Samsova's production of *Paquita*. This divertissement is all that remains from the ballet created by Marius Petipa.

It is a classical ballet in the grand tradition . . . all tutus and tiaras. The melodies are by Leon Minkus and the elegantly complimentary setting for this production was by Peter Farmer.

Paquita is a highly rigorous classical set-piece, a useful challenge to the dancers and a delightful bonbon for audiences. It includes a leading couple, six soloists and a corps of 10 women. Galina Samsova, who danced with the National Ballet of Canada in the mid sixties, was breathtaking - swift,

clean of line, and thoroughly regal. David Ashmole was dashing and noble as her partner if a touch insecure in some of his landings.

Kenneth MacMillan's *Playground* is a candy of quite another sort with a very hard centre. Is this a school yard we see, or an insane asylum? The ballet is a conflict-filled look at the activity in the yard of a mental hospital. It was very odd to see the Covent Garden stage enclosed with a 20-foot high chain link fence, the design of Yolande Sonnabend who also created the dark, ominous atmosphere for the other MacMillan ballet, *My Brother, My Sisters*.

The evening opened with Dutch choreographer Hans van Manen's *Grosse Fuge* to the music of Beethoven. This abstract ballet features four men and four women. The men enter in floor-length black skirts which they shed mid-way through the ballet. The women are then dragged about the stage clutching the wide belts worn by the men. The movements are lean and quirky, physical, mostly unemotional.

The two mixed evenings provided a chance to see the more modern side of the two companies' repertoires. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that the Royal Ballet will bring any of these works when it performs in Toronto in July, 1981. Impresarios tend to demand safe full length classics.

JOHN BURGESS

San Francisco Ballet

War Memorial Opera House

19 May 1980

In San Francisco the elegant and the exquisite are perpetually vying with the tawdry and outrageous for the visitor's attention. Michael Smuin's new evening-length ballet based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest* reflects the influences of a regional schizophrenia. It was to be televised live on PBS stations during its world premiere on May 13, but fate kindly intervened and the network offering was postponed indefinitely. This gives Mr. Smuin ample time to decide what he wants his ballet to be before displaying it to several million viewers.

I'm not convinced that this particularly cerebral play, with its mysticism, philosophical overtones and several personages whose characters are doubtlessly best revealed through their words, is ideally suited to the ballet medium. But Smuin, who describes his creation as 'a 20th-century view of a 17th-century art form' is determined to achieve a clear narrative. Which he does, using means both sublime and ridiculous.

Act One contains most of the dramatic action; the second act is devoted to a parody of an Elizabethan masque celebrating the betrothal of Miranda and Ferdinand, after which the elements of the various plots are resolved through mime passages, enhanced with theatrical effects. First, the good news: the staging of the storm at sea is nothing short of enchanting, and Tony Walton's ingenious sets and amorphous fixtures create a magic that does justice to Shakespeare's whimsical intent. There are lovely dance passages for Prospero, enacted by the deliciously fidgety Attila Ficzere, SFB's most brilliant interpreter of heroic roles. Awesome are the soaring legato dances which Smuin has devised for Ariel, a truly remarkable dance character which the superb David McNaughton renders in weightless fashion. A highlight is the poignant exchange at the conclusion of the ballet when Prospero releases Ariel from his services. In this the textures of the two men's characterizations are contrasted. Ficzere's movements appear to be generated by crackling fires, while McNaughton seems propelled by the play of cool winds. When he is actually transported aloft mechanically on a wire, the ascent seems the natural outcome of what he has attempted on the ground.

A few of the divertissements in the masque are worth mention. There's a sinuous dance for the elegant contortionist Betsy Erickson, who represents the Spirit of the Rainbow, and a virile tarantella for her two attendants, Jonathan Miller and Alexander Topciy. Smuin also provides some robust humor in the character dances for the jester Trinculo and the inebriated Stephano, who enjoys a raucous encounter



David McNaughton (above) and Horacio Cifuentes in Michael Smuin's *The Tempest*

with the savage Caliban and a bottle. When Smuin settles for movement alone to make a point, he can call upon the huge vocabulary of his variegated theatrical career for material which serves any number of purposes. I wonder why he feels he must add further layers of theatrical stuff to statements that are already quite clear.

This brings me to the bad news. The production contains every device short of name-tags to let you know what's happening. The curtain rises on a scrim which has the play's title brazenly sprawled in contemporary italics over a projection of Shakespeare's text. This must go. So must the figure dressed as Will Shakespeare himself behind the scrim, who manipulates a quill pen at a podium. Also expendable are the stuffed hounds who become affixed to the backsides of the three comic drunkards, and the four glowing tables laden with food and drink, which perform a rumba in the vision Prospero creates to baffle his enemies. Neither device is likely to amuse the second time around.

Dance material for Alonso, Sebastian and Gonzalo is generally undistinguished. For Miranda and Ferdinand, Smuin has provided some of his difficult and awesome lifts and tosses in the duets, but he's left the characters quite empty. Vivian Little and Jim Sohm, both attractive and capable dancers, might flesh out their roles in subsequent performances. The ballet disintegrates into utter nonsense in the masque when Smuin decides that 20th-century vernacular is not outré in the proceedings and interpolates nightclub dances with the traditional forms of the soloists representing mythological deities and the various grains at harvest time. A beguine is

particularly offensive, performed on pointe with pelvic rotations and shoulder shakes. It destroys whatever style the ballet had achieved to that point and inspires mass embarrassment. I'm sure that Paul Seiko Chihara can compose a half-dozen new variations to replace the smart-ass ones which divert us abruptly to Las Vegas. His score, which has rambled on like the Orient Express to that point, taking on the trappings of several cultures and epochs, includes such disparate materials as genuine themes from the music of Henry Purcell and electronically rendered whippers and tinkles. It never really offends until he agrees to collaborate with Smuin in mooning the audience with those cited digressions. But its lack of a center weakens the effect of two ensemble dances for 16 girls, where a stronger structure is needed to support a typically Petipa symmetry.

Willa Kim's costumes range from the marvelous to the gross. Her best creations are those which heighten or enhance the dancer's movement, and she is more considerate to the mortal characters than she is to gods or dream figures. Some of the overloaded garments devised for the banquet vision in the opening act and for the Olympian figures in the masque bring to mind the 'Springtime for Hitler' number in Mel Brooks' film, *The Producers*. In a press comment Ms Kim pointed out that the fabrics used are drip-dry, so most of her seemingly elaborate creations can be tossed into the laundromat and rendered hygienic for the next performance. Certainly this is a landmark theatrical achievement in itself.

The SFB is one of my favorite companies, and I'm invariably thrilled by the intensity of its performances. It's one of the few groups that means business in its disdain for the star system and its refusal to deal with the museum ballets. Each dancer is a unique personality, capable of working individually and collectively to realize the accomplishments reflective of the company's rich ballet heritage. Michael Smuin, Paul Chihara and Willa Kim have collaborated far more successfully for their SFB creations in the past when there was less money to throw around. I hope prosperity hasn't gone to their heads. At this point it doesn't look as if *The Tempest* is slated for immortality, but with some sober reappraisal and a concern for stylistic focus, it may still become a cohesive and congruent piece of theatre ballet.

LELAND WINDREICH

American Ballet Theatre 40th Anniversary Season Metropolitan Opera House New York June 1980

When I first saw this company early in the 1940s it was called simply Ballet Theatre. Sol Hurok was managing it and touting it as 'the greatest in Russian Ballet'. Most of the Ballet Russe luminaries were brought in and the repertory offered a number of works in keeping with their dancing style. Many who helped launch Ballet Theatre as an American dance repository were unhappy about the Russians and couldn't wait for them to leave. By 1946 they did, and for some time Lucia Chase, assisted by Oliver Smith, ran the company herself without guest stars.

Without the Russians, the audiences stayed away in droves and Ballet Theatre faced bankruptcy every few years until 1967, when Miss Chase got tired of covering the losses from her own funds and decided to offer the ultimate in Russian ballet by bringing in David Blair to stage a four-act *Swan Lake* for the company. Her artistic board was miserable about this, but the audiences who would not come to see contemporary repertory returned for *Swan Lake* - even when not danced by Russians.

So from then on Miss Chase saw to it that eight more full-length 19th-century ballets were restored. Soon Russian dancers defected from the Soviet companies to dance ABT's wide and challenging repertory, but ultimately they ended up doing those very ballets that they had found so archaic at home. Many of the non-Russians are miserable about their presence, just as they were nearly 40 years ago. And this is known as going full circle.

Natalia Makarova's recent staging of the Petipa-Minkus *La Bayadère* has been immensely popular with both audiences and critics (except for Anna Kisselgoff, who stated that it had set ballet back 75 years), and by the time I arrived in New York it had become an old friend to many. I actually heard some foyer chatter by two balletomanes who compared various interpretations of the role of Gamzotti they had seen, and one was sure that Makarova would offer the definitive one when she took on this lesser role later in the season. But between *Bayadère* week and a long sequence of *Giselles*, ABT offered several days of its choice repertory. During this spell any dancer affiliated with the company who cared to perform was given a crack at a favorite old role.

If ABT did nothing but Jerome Robbins' *Les Noces* it would still rank high among the world's great ballet organizations. The work is so costly now to perform that it must have subsidy whenever presented and



American Ballet Theatre in Tetley's *Voluntaries*

cannot be taken on the road. Robbins' vision is both intimate and huge. Stravinsky's cantata on a Russian wedding is basically a chamber work, and the choreographer uses only 26 dancers. The scope becomes apparent in the relation of the theme to life itself and in Robbins' infinitely fascinating dance designs - the medium of ballet barely contains the soaring statement. As to staging, it's rare that we see a chorus, four pianists, six percussionists and four singers on stage with the dancing group, and the collaboration adds another dimension of theatrical grandeur for anyone who has just come to New York from watching regional ballet performances to scratchy tapes.

Two Robbins works from the early 1940s fared less successfully. *Interplay*, to Morton Gould's music is a pale xerox of the original. Both this work and *Fancy Free* were created in an era when sexual innocence was the status quo. Vast changes in social mores have produced temperaments incapable of comprehending the whimsical erotic horseplay of an age long before the pill and the various liberations of all genders. The cool body of today which has matured on the impulses of rock and disco

music is as alien to wartime jive as it would be to the hula. *Interplay* as danced by eight youngsters who were not born when the work was made is simply without marrow. *Fancy Free* survives because it's treated as camp, and the young dancers of ABT enjoy an opportunity to do some broad parody. John Gardner as the second sailor has some of the natural, naive charm that John Kriza oozed in earlier years, but Danilo Radojevic and Fernando Bujones - both extraordinary technicians - have overstudied the tars they portray and have made them slightly bigger than life. The general deglamorization of the military in recent years has moreover stripped sailors of the romantic mystique they possessed in wartime when they were recognizable civilians rendered special by nautical drag. Today's ABT dancers perform *Fancy Free* (1944) as if it were *Les Matelots* (1925) - as a cunning and whimsical period piece.

Two Glen Tetley works new to me show the cold majesty that this choreographer can achieve with the splendid music he chooses. I was particularly involved with the broad sweep of *Voluntaries*, with its pointillist decor and the rich sounds of the Poulenc *Organ Concerto*. Lisa Houlton

and Patrick Bissell danced this lovely ballet with quiet reverence. With *Sphynx* Tetley uses a concerto by Martinu for a narrative reflecting Jean Cocteau's vision of the Oedipus myth, but the needed intimacy is impossible because of the huge arena which the choreographer requires. The luminous Martine van Hamel dominated the proceedings, partnered by guest star Clark Tippett and with Kirk Peterson in the curious role of Anubis.

I found Tudor's recent *Tiller in the Fields* enchanting if inconsequential. It's always a joy to marvel over the inventive dance gestures which are unmistakably his, the distinctive lifts which convey a variety of encounters, the fascinating groupings connoting transactions rather than decorative symmetries. I thought Marianna Tcherkassy's performance in the role designed for Gelsey Kirkland quite sensitive, but I'm told that she has missed the wit of the original. Tcherkassy danced like the proverbial dream with George de la Peña in the remarkable Eliot Feld ballet, *At Midnight*, and Cynthia Gregory returned to assume her role as the lone woman in mauve in this haunting interlude set to the Ruckert songs of Gustav Mahler.

Virtuosity had its day with *Etudes*, a rather jejeune ballet which always makes one its happy slave when danced to the hilt. Patrick Bissell and Eleanor d'Antuono pulled out all the stops and brought the house down. Cynthia Gregory may indeed

have the partner that she has been waiting for in Alexander Godunov, but they will have to come to some terms concerning who's in charge. In a tense *Black Swan Pas de Deux*, the Russian danced with dignity despite the perpetually puzzled expression he effects, but he makes it clear that he can resist his partners outrageous showiness. Much more subtle were Makarova and Dowell in Robbins' *Other Dances*, adoring each other, Chopin, and Jerome Robbins at his sophisticated and jaded most.

When *Giselle* week started, the real patrons returned en masse and were capable of criminal acts in the scramble to get tickets for Makarova's first night with Godunov. She begged off sick, so Eva Evdokimova was air-lifted in from Berlin and won a glowing press. At 40, ABT still has something for everyone, and if it has become more economically stable than it has ever been before, it's obviously because of those meddling Russians who periodically return to help bring the hard currency in.

Now, as Baryshnikov assumes control of the company, it remains to be seen in which direction American Ballet Theatre heads for its fifth decade. The programming announced for his first season suggests that Baryshnikov prefers a throwback to the 1930s and 1940s rather than further celebration of Russian antiquities.

LELAND WINDREICH

ABT - La Bayadère

The full-length production of *La Bayadère*, first staged by Marius Petipa in 1877 for the Bolshoi Theatre in St. Petersburg, and restaged this past season for American Ballet Theatre by Natalia Makarova, is a fascinating combination of the various styles that have come down to us under the broad heading 'classical ballet'. The story, in which the Indian temple dancer Nikiya, is betrayed by her lover, the warrior Solor, and killed by her jealous rival Gamzatti, is a kind of Oriental *Giselle*, with the famous 'Kingdom of the Shades' scene providing the same romantic metaphysical link between the earthly and the divine as *Giselle's* spirit does in Act II of that ballet. The temple sequences and the betrothal scene in Act I, with their character dances, divertissement, and grand pas de deux for Solor and Gamzatti, are in Petipa's familiar style of bravura formalism, while the 'Shades' sequence, in spirit harking back to the Romantic era, is considered the earliest example of symphonic choreography, pre-dating by 20 years Ivanov's work in the white acts of *Swan Lake*. In addition, the dancing sequences of the ballet are linked by a series of mime confrontations, with an almost separate dramatic integrity.

With so many different styles abounding in one ballet, there is inevitably an unsettled feeling about the production, but Makarova, as director/choreographer, has

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Natalia Makarova in her ABT production of *La Bayadère*

worked hard for a unity of feeling and structure. She uses recurring motifs, both in mime and in dance, to create subtle resonances throughout. In Act I, Solor and Nikiya pledge their love to one another in a pas de deux which anticipates the famous one from the 'Shades' sequence, and in the early stages of his remorseful opium dream, after the death of Nikiya, Solor dances with her invisible shade, who returns in the final act to disrupt his marriage to Gamzatti. In the mime sequences a single, savage downward thrust of the arm is used first by The High Brahmin, then by the Radjah and his daughter Gamzatti, to pledge destruction to Nikiya.

Except in the 'Shades' scene, where classicism in its purest form becomes a symbol for an Elysian world beyond this one, Petipa's choreography for Nikiya lacked his usual rigour and flamboyance, because he was afraid that anything too intricate or bold would destroy the spiritual nature of her role. It is Gamzatti who gets the grand pas de deux, and Makarova, following Petipa, has emphasized throughout her production the division between the

earthly realm, as represented by the sensual Gamzatti and the gilded magnificence of the court, and the spiritual realm, expressed by the devout and lyrical Nikiya. She describes her production as 'mystical' and 'religious in feeling', thus making the restored ending, in which the gods collapse the temple and crush all the members of the wedding, emotionally right as well as theatrically sensational.

On opening night, Makarova, though injured, was a touching and evanescent Nikiya, and Anthony Dowell a fine Solor, with just the right touch of boldness in his dancing and recklessness in his character. Cynthia Harvey, as Gamzatti, was neither compulsively alluring nor implacable enough to create the same tension between the flesh and the spirit that exists so fascinatingly in *Swan Lake*, but the potential is there in the ballet, and this new production is one in which the company can grow dramatically and technically. Makarova is to be congratulated for making impressive whole cloth out of so many patches.

SARAH MONTAGUE

The Bolshoi: Opera and Ballet at the Greatest Theatre in Russia

Boris Alexandrovich Pokrovsky and Yuri Nikolayevich Grigorovich
Toronto: Gage
1979

This tome, which commemorates the Bolshoi's 200th anniversary, is a triumph of form over content. Produced by Mondadori, whose imprint is a guarantee of quality, it is the epitome of the high gloss coffee-table book. Its introduction is by that well known patron of the arts, Leonid Brezhnev, so it would be naive to expect anything in the way of truth or revelation.

The text, which barely stretches to two dozen pages and bristles with ponderous, polysyllabic patronymics, presents a selective view of history, redolent of revisionism. Two centuries of opera are covered in six pages by Boris Pokrovsky, Principal Director of the Bolshoi Theatre. Much of it prompted by the wisdom of hindsight, Pokrovsky's essay heaps scorn on those 19th-century reactionaries who did not immediately fall under the spell of Tchaikovsky.

Yuri Grigorovich, Principal Ballet Master of the Bolshoi, fills eight hefty pages acknowledging the old but praising the new. This view is borne out by the choice of photographs. Though the book purports to trace the Bolshoi's evolution, it eschews archival treasures, with the exception of the odd nod to Ulanova and Chaliapin, in favor of contemporary production shots. In vain does one search for Reizen's Boris or Fadeychev's Albrecht. Instead, we get several sequences of Karskhvili, Mazurok and Atlantov and endless pictures of Natalia Bessmertnova - in private life she is Mrs. Grigorovich.

The photographs are mostly good. Copious captions are sometimes confusing; for example the authors do not distinguish between Gabovich père and fils. There are useful thumbnail plot outlines and alternate casts. This is particularly helpful in the case of such seldom exported productions as *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh* (seen here in 1967) or *The Red Poppy* - never, to my knowledge, danced abroad. So it does serve a purpose as a reference book if one wants to track down footnotes to the history of Soviet opera and ballet.

The writing, except for the odd aphorism and a genuinely moving tribute to Ulanova by Grigorovich, is depressingly dialectic. It dutifully traces the history of the Bolshoi (big) Theatre from March 28, 1776 through multiple fires and revolutions to the present. The authors' message is ubiquitous: since opera and ballet were domesticized in Russia by the ruling classes, they remained reactionary; now that they belong to the people and reflect Soviet

socialist realism, they are progressive. Leningrad, which concentrated on form, has been left behind; Moscow, where content is all, is the most prestigious and influential theatre in the entire USSR.

Those who saw the Bolshoi Ballet during its Canadian tour last summer can draw their own conclusions!

Had Asaf Messerer been able to get away also when his sister Sulamit defected from the Bolshoi in February, and given the services of Solomon Volkov who had done such an excellent job on the Shostakovich memoirs, we might have had the real backstage story. As it is, this pretty picture book is nothing but the official version, with all that that implies. The story of Vasiliev and Maximova, Liepa and Plisetskaya, is yet to be told.

I cannot imagine that anyone other than a dyed-in-the-wool ballet groupie would lay out \$39.95 for what is essentially propaganda and polemic plus pictures of current Bolshoi stars - but of course it is still cheaper than going to Mockba.

KATI VITA

Where She Danced

Elizabeth Kendall
Cooksville, Ont.: Random House
1979

The 'she' of Elizabeth Kendall's *Where She Danced* is the mother of American modern dance. She is an awesome Amazon consisting of Ruth St. Denis, Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, Maud Allan and many others besides. That she dresses herself in a variety of personalities and colourful guises - Egyptian, Roman, Greek, Middle Eastern - cannot hide the single-mindedness of her purpose: to find a mode of dance expression that is right for her place and time.

This, then, is a history of the curious conception of Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey. 'A wonderfully alive history' is how the editors describe it on the flyleaf, and, indeed, it is wonderfully alive - the way an ordinance map is alive with pathways, trails, rural routes, hedges and milestones. The reader discovers very early on that Kendall is not going to give him a straightforward story and, given the multitude of avenues that cross and recross one another in the early history of American dance, he accepts that; but, in so doing he is hardly prepared for the maze in which he eventually finds himself. It often feels to him as if the material has been 'jostled crazily and cut up and decorated with lines and pieces of angles'. Kendall introduces a subject, abandons it and then a little while

later returns to it, at which point a reintroduction of the subject becomes imperative for the reader's sake. The way Kendall handles her subjects is reminiscent of Dickens' handling of characters in his voluminous serial novels. There's also much jumping backwards and forwards in time in an effort to pinpoint all the intersections - major and minor - in her history. And then there is the flood of detail.

When the editors describe Kendall as a 'scholar', they obviously mean 'academic', for like so many academics, Kendall revels in detail for its own sake. Had she had more control of the details she has assembled, her revelry might have proved infectious. Certainly the first two-thirds of her book contain many fascinating 'bits': Ruth St. Denis' involvement with the theatrical impresario David Belasco and his leading lady Mrs. Leslie Carter; the performing aplomb of Irene and Vernon Castle; the contributions of Canadian poet Bliss Carman to the turn-of-the-century mania for dress reform, pastoral living and Delsartean self-expression; and the role played by dance in the early silent movies, particularly those of that Titan of film directors, D. W. Griffiths. Anyone of these bits could have been expanded into a compelling monograph. In Kendall's hands they remain just bits. To the reader trying to hold on to the golden string of Kendall's narrative, they are interruptions - annoying distractions.

The aimlessness of so much of the detail is directly attributable to Kendall's lack of both passion and vision which becomes painfully apparent in the last third of the book when her subject is the blossoming career of Martha Graham. Not only is it unexcitingly, even ineptly presented by comparison with St. Denis' story, it is presented without any sense of the monumental importance this great artist would have on the world of dance. Kendall mentions only a few of the elements that could have affected Graham's development and most of these - the Catholic/Protestant ambivalence, for instance - are not adequately examined. The author prefers to emphasize Graham's intellect, her sobriety and her self-consciousness at the expense of her passion and vision in order, it seems, to deny her rightful prominence over the eccentrics and the curiosities who were her predecessors. However, Kendall the academic predictably grants the predecessors pride of place, with the result that her history ends up scanning like a medieval map of the world - without perspective or rational justification. Accusing Graham of being humourless and colourless seems *almost* funny, but calling her work 'self-limiting' is ugly in its distortion.

Really the most revealing aspect of *Where She Danced* is the way it exposes by example an approach to writing about the arts that is unique to New York critics. To describe the approach, one might employ

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such words as 'prolix', 'superficially casual', 'smug' and particularly 'narcissistic'. Its insensitivity to anything outside the range of its own reflection produces many partial truths and trivializations. At one point in her book, Kendall identifies Tennyson, Victorian poet laureate, as a Romantic; at another, she numbers Walt Whitman among 'all the popular artistic and theatrical currents that brought her (Martha Graham's) predecessors close to dance' - in grade school, Kendall's teacher would have written a neat 'Please explain!' in the margin. She is guilty of greater trivialization still when she describes Graham's *Lamentation* as 'a final fantasy on the fashionable woman-as-tube'; the emotional intensity of the dance is wasted on her.

As a member of the silver-tongued world of New York's dance critics, Kendall tends to lean towards the Denby-Croce school of writerliness which, even at its best, is prone to monstrous affectations. With a sentence like 'not until then did Astaire forge a style that consciously recognized the undercurrent of sadness in the twenties legend, the moral crises and the anesthetic dreams, all the dark beautiful stuff that impinged like shadows on the illuminated center of the decade's life', Kendall is desperately imitating Croce's style, but it's a relatively flattering imitation at least. Later, discussing Graham's technique in exceedingly ambiguous terms, she seems to be parodying her gurus: 'She caused her students to jump again and again, to jump-turn in great arcs, to fall swiftly backward in perfect control, to roll on the ground taut and held in at the stomach'. 'Taut and held in at the stomach'? By describing a contraction in this artificial manner, Kendall is also minimizing the very essence of Graham's technique for the average reader.

Such indulgence raises an important question: are Kendall and her colleagues writing primarily for themselves? They pretend to want to illuminate their subject, but what they're really doing is trafficking in pseudo-scholarly, back-patting obscurantism.

To this reader, that's as low as a writer can go.

GRAHAM JACKSON



Terpsichore in Sneakers Post-Modern Dance

Sally Banes

Markham, Ont.: Thomas Allen
1980

Terpsichore in Sneakers is the second intelligent dance book (the first was Makarova's *A Dance Autobiography*) I've come across this season. Letting her subjects, 10 post-modern choreographers and one collective which includes five of them, speak for themselves, Sally Banes gives the lie to the myth that dancers are pretty, non-verbal creatures in whose heads it's so breezy that the moths wear overcoats.

Banes' comprehensive introduction places the post-modern dance movement of the sixties and seventies in the context of the theatre and dance world of the late forties and fifties, and traces its development alongside the Happenings in the visual art and theatre community. Robert Alexander's informal photographs of the dancers at work both grace the chapters and inhabit a special section of their own at the back, adding depth and liveliness to an already vital study. It's an interesting commentary on post-modern dance itself, (and on Sally Banes' skill as a dance critic and historian), that I did not find myself skipping back and forth from picture to text as I so often do when reading other collections of dance criticism, or books about ballets. The text of *Terpsichore* carries the full texture of the choreographers' works.

Banes, who is currently dance editor of New York's *Soho Weekly News*, discusses the work of Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, Trisha Brown, David Gordon, Deborah Hay, Lucinda Childs, Meredith Monk, Kenneth King and Douglas Dunn, as well as that of the Grand Union, the product of a collaboration among Rainer, Paxton, Dunn, Brown, Gordon and others. She brings to her discussion substantial philosophical underpinnings, and a thorough familiarity with the milieu of which she writes.

The post-modern dancers, it would seem, utterly embodied their time: the collectivist sixties, and the crumbling faith in institutions and governments manifest everywhere in the seventies. Simone Forti, at 45 now something of the grand old lady of the post-modern community, threw herself wholeheartedly into the social, cultural and chemical experiments of the Woodstock generation, and into collaborations with a variety of experimental musicians; her imagery is that of animals, of the simplest movements, of games and playing, of dance as an altered state. She makes dance, says Banes, 'another instrument in the ideology of organic living'.

Banes' subjects seem to have in common a separation from fantasy and narrative in their dance work, a concentration on the

real and present moment or on a simple mathematical or other structure for organizing movement. She focuses on the roots of their work, on the assumptions and decisions they make about the nature of dancing, and the way they express themselves. These dance-makers dissect reality rather than imitate it.

The author reprints the most seminal material from Yvonne Rainer's substantial writings on art and dance; she invokes Heidegger, who identified the 'thingly' and 'workly' characteristics of a work of art, and frequently uses 'workly' adverbially and adjectivally to describe the way the dances are made and the focus with which they are done. The choreographers she studies are almost uniformly concerned with exploring the edge of the realm of performance, with the boundary between life and art, and with determining what, beyond a sleek sexuality and gymnastic skill, can hold intelligent beings together on stage or in a dance audience.

They have been at work, most of them in New York, for as long as 20 years. They're middle-aged now, or getting there, and in some ways they are becoming an establishment; the irony is that the generation following them has found few ways to go except back to a conservative formalism. Most of these artists are still working actively in New York. Deborah Hay is living in Austin, Texas and touring with workshop material she shares with groups who come together around her. This makes Banes' book the very best kind of criticism; a reader can absorb it and then go to see the work, allowing her critical intelligence to point to and illuminate the concerns and artifacts of the dancing. I'm sure she was helped along considerably by the fact that so many of these artists are themselves literate, verbal and intelligent about their work.

In post-modern dance, she notes, the breakdown of the distinction between art and life often becomes the material for the dance, or the purpose for making it. 'The choreographer,' she says, 'becomes a critic, educating spectators in ways to look at dance, challenging the expectations the audience brings to the performance, framing parts of the dance for closer inspection, commenting on the dance as it progresses'.

Terpsichore in Sneakers is at least as absorbing as most of the dance on New York stages this season, and will be particularly useful in creating a context for viewing the derivative experimental work of several indigenous Canadian companies, especially when the dancers, but not the audience, have been exposed to these contemporary developments.

ELIZABETH ZIMMER



Leslie Browne with George de la Peña

Nijinsky

Directed by Herbert Ross
Paramount
1980

In Hollywood's terms, Herbert Ross is a very successful movie director. A partial list of his credits easily converts, at least in the eyes of a producer, into a string of dollar signs: *Funny Lady*, *The Sunshine Boys*, *The Goodbye Girl*, *California Suite*. Film buffs would class him as a 'commercial' director and it is in these terms that dance lovers have to understand Ross's much publicized excursions into their world, first with *The Turning Point* and this year with *Nijinsky*.

Each movie seems to be aspiring to the level of high-grade soap opera. This in itself is no crime. Yet, at the same time, Herbert Ross provides hints that he may

also have been aspiring to something greater - to producing films that succeed on a higher level as art. In each case the producer has been his wife Nora Kaye. The husband and wife team have been closely associated with American ballet for almost 40 years and one assumes this personal interest had important bearings on their decision to make movies set in the world of dance. Regrettably neither *The Turning Point* nor *Nijinsky* suggest any special sensitivity towards dance on the part of their makers. On the contrary, they suggest a gross insensitivity which while it rightly angers dance lovers is also condescending towards the broad movie-going public.

Behind the triviality of each film lurks the assumption that a dance subject has to be dressed up in disguise if it is to have a chance at the box-office. In the case of *The Turning Point* it was the theme of women,

careers and liberation. In *Nijinsky* it is a tacky, morbid preoccupation with homosexuality - tastefully (i.e. distortingly) handled so as to titillate but not offend audiences.

The *Nijinsky* film has been and gone and both movie and dance critics have had ample opportunity to carve it up for its multiplicity of faults. Some of these deserve underlining.

Despite the sub-title, *Nijinsky* is not 'A True Story'. Anyone coming to the subject fresh through the movie will not only be mislead and confused in terms of events but seriously misinformed in terms of character. Although we do not yet have Bronislava's diaries (Anna Kisselgoff of the *New York Times* is editing them) to provide the true story, there is enough recorded either in Romola Nijinsky's biography of her husband and in the later



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Alan Bates as Diaghilev and George de la Peña as Nijinsky

researches of historians such as Richard Buckle to give us a good narrative picture.

In the film, screenwriter Hugh Wheeler has jumbled up events and compressed them into a small time-frame, 1912-13, to suit his own apparent explanation for Nijinsky's madness within the context of the legendary dancer's marriage and related break from Diaghilev. In the movie Nijinsky is presented as a troubled homosexual pursued by the loathsome Romola de Pulskey until, in mid-ocean on a ship bound for South America (sans Diaghilev), she finally elicits a spark of heterosexuality from the great Russian with the help of suggestive throbbing from Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. Nijinsky, however, still pines for Diaghilev. Romola offers him back to the impresario who refuses soiled goods. Result? Vaslav goes mad.

The list of historical inaccuracies is long but, in itself, would not matter if the poetic

essence of the story were true, which, of course, it is not. Nijinsky was a dancer of incomparable ability and a choreographer of fertile and innovative genius whose career was cut short through a mental illness which in all likelihood was biochemically, not emotionally, generated.

Real dance and dancing is what is sorely missing in the film. In total there's not much more than 10 minutes of it. Considering the fortune it must have cost to rent London Festival Ballet for a week's shooting one might have expected to see more in the final cut. The costuming and re-creation of Ballet Russe decors (like every other decorative aspect of the film) is stunning but too often the dance sequences stop just as they are getting interesting. Kenneth MacMillan's attempts to restage *Sacre* and *Jeux* warrant more than the fleeting view we get of them.

In part, the answer to this problem may rest in the casting division. George de la

Peña, the young former ABT dancer who was chosen to portray Nijinsky, lacks the technical prowess necessary. Of living dancers Baryshnikov is, arguably, the only person who could do it. The casting problem does not stop there. Leslie Browne, the embarrassment of *The Turning Point*, shows up again as the pushy, ambitious Hungarian girl who determines to and finally succeeds in wedding Nijinsky. We are forced to focus our attention on her when far more interesting things are happening on stage and to listen to her ghostly, whining tone as she mouths Hugh Wheeler's ludicrously stupid screenplay.

Alan Bates must have sensed what havoc was being wrought about him because his performance as Diaghilev has hints of self-conscious disdain about it. How he must have choked on some of his lines. Yet, in its little touches it was an intelligent portrayal and suggested a thorough study of the historical subject. If only those who made the movie had been equally studious and less concerned with what would appeal to a broad audience we might have had the movie which Nijinsky's memory deserves.

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Noticeboard

This year the **Jean A. Chalmers Award in Choreography**, which has been increased to \$5,000, is shared among three Canadian choreographers. Karen Rimmer of Vancouver was awarded \$3,000 while William Thompson of Toronto and Maria Formolo of Regina both received \$1,000. This is the first time since it began in 1974 that the award has been increased and the first time it has been split. Not to be seen as a precedent, the award was given to all three because the jury, consisting of Iris Garland (Vancouver), Vincent Warren and Kati Vita (Montreal), and Miriam Adams and Judy Jarvis (Toronto) wished to encourage the different directions in dance represented by the three choreographers.

As an extension of the Chalmers Award, the Ontario Arts Council in co-operation with the Dance in Canada Association has established a dance archives to preserve a video-tape record of Canadian choreography. The video-tapes which all applicants for the Chalmers Award are required to submit will form the basis of a permanent collection of major value to researchers, historians and students.

Grant Strate, recognized across the country as one of the prime motive forces in the dance life of Canada has left Toronto, the scene of his major activity for more than 25 years, to become Director of the Centre for the Arts at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia. Professor Strate's work as a choreographer, teacher and administrator has made him a key figure in the recent expansion and development of dance in this country. Earlier this year his achievements and continuing contributions were recognized when he was presented with the prestigious Dance Ontario Award.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The **Anna Wyman Dance Theatre** has found a new home in the former West Vancouver YMCA building. When renovations are complete, hopefully by the end of this year, the building will have two large studios, shower and sauna facilities and plenty of office space.

In July the company gave a week-long choreographic workshop in Nelson, BC at the Kootenay Lake Summer School of the Arts which culminated in two performances on August 2. On September 25 they will perform at Simon Fraser University and shortly after will begin a month-long tour of Ontario, visiting London (Oct.



Grant Strate

16-18), Guelph (Oct. 20), Waterloo (Oct. 22, 23), Kingston (Oct. 28, 29), St. Catherines (Oct. 31, Nov. 1), and Toronto (Nov. 14-16). Upon their return to Vancouver the company will perform at the North Vancouver Centennial Theatre as part of the second *Canadance* series (Dec. 4, 5).

At Christmas the CBC will televise a film documentary of the AWDT's visit to Ms. Wyman's native city, Graz, Austria last November.

The **Paula Ross Dance Company** has received two grants for its upcoming season. The Leon Thea Koernar Foundation has donated \$1,500 towards costuming Ross's new work *Paulatics*. The Vancouver

Foundation has contributed \$6,000 towards company salaries.

Mariko Kage, a local dancer, has joined the company which will perform at the Citadel Theatre, Edmonton (Oct. 6), the Margaret Jenkins Studio, San Francisco (Oct. 10-12) and at the Paula Ross Studio Theatre (Oct. 18-Nov. 1).

Vancouver's **Terminal City Dance** will open their fall season with performances at the Western Front (Oct. 17-19, 24-26).

Pacific Ballet Theatre of Vancouver has a busy 1980/81 season planned with more than 178 performances scheduled in British Columbia and Alberta. Artistic Director Renald Rabu will choreograph two new works for his company - *Rainbow* - with a Judy Garland theme and music, and *The Creation of Eve* inspired by Haida Indian painter Roy Vickers.

ALBERTA

David Lui's **Dance, Dance, Dance** production in celebration of Alberta's 75th Anniversary presented 10 international dance artists to Calgary, Alberta and six other smaller centres in the province this July and August. The programme followed the traditional gala format running the gamut from classical ballet to modern dance. Dancers performing in the programme included Frank Augustyn, now of the Berlin Oper Ballet with Marianna Tscherkass of American Ballet Theatre, Ann Marie de Angelo of the Joffrey Ballet with Danilo Radojevic (also ABT), Donna Wood and Ulysses Dove of the Alvin Ailey American

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Dance Theatre, Valentina Kozlova and Leonid Kozlov, husband and wife defectors from the Bolshoi Ballet, and Varna medal winners Evelyn Hart and David Peregrine of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. A special feature of the programme was the premier of a specially commissioned work from choreographer Vincente Nebrada, danced by Evelyn Hart and Frank Augustyn.

On September 29 the Banff Centre launches a six-week pilot project called the Music Theatre Studio Ensemble. The ensemble of approximately 30 professional theatre artists and musicians will study a broad range of theatrical genres from opera to multi-media performances. A principal requirement of the participating artists is that they be versatile with facility in two or more of the performing arts. All participants receive full scholarships. The pilot project is leading up to a six-month training ensemble with an emphasis on music theatre scheduled to begin in 1981 as part of the Banff Centre's 'winter cycle'.

The Alberta Ballet will perform at the twin Jubilee theatres of Calgary (Oct. 7, 8) and Edmonton (Oct. 14, 15) as part of Alberta's 75th Anniversary Celebrations. They will have two new ballets in their repertoire; *Dreamscapes* by Charles Czarny to the music of Philip Glass and Steve Reich, and Lambros Lambrou's new work *Pro-digal Son*, described as an 'Alberta story'.

Calgary's Sun-Ergos attended the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland, where they gave 12 performances of *Watermarks*, *Children's Chautauquau* and several new pieces.

MANITOBA

In July the Royal Winnipeg Ballet participated with the CBC and ZDF (a West German network) in the making of a television documentary about Agnes de Milles' *Fall River Legend*. Sallie Wilson, principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre, danced the lead role of Lizzie Borden, the 19th-century woman accused of murdering her parents with an axe. The hour-long programme combines 35 minutes of the ballet and 25 minutes of interviews with de Milles and composer Morton Gould. It will be shown on CBC early in 1981 and as part of a weekly dance series on ZDF. *Fall River Legend* will return to RWB's repertoire for the coming season. It has not been performed since 1974. The company has also revived another dramatic and popular ballet - Norbert Vesak's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* set to the folk songs of Ann Mortifée. Two new works will enter the repertoire this season, Hans van Manen's *Five Tangos*, and Vincente Nebrada's signature piece *Our Waltz*. In May RWB principal dancers Evelyn Hart and David Peregrine won the bronze medal at the World Ballet Concours in Osaka, Japan.

They were also presented with a gold medal for Choreography when they performed Norbert Vesak's *Belong*. In July the couple competed in the International Ballet Competition in Varna, Bulgaria. Hart won a gold medal (she is the first Canadian to win the top award). Peregrine won a bronze medal and Earl Stafford, the company's principal pianist, won a gold medal for his accompaniment. The couple's performance of *Belong* won the choreographer another gold medal.

Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers' fall season at the Playhouse Theatre (Oct. 2-4) will feature new works by Fred Mathews and Brian Macdonald. The company has two new members, Conrad Alexandrowicz formerly of Mountain Dance Theatre, and Robert Jayne from New York.

ONTARIO

The National Ballet will mount a new production of the Bournonville classic *Napoli*, to be premiered during the company's 30th anniversary season. The ballet will be restaged by principal dancer Peter Schaufuss, who recently staged another Bournonville work, *La Sylphide*, for London Festival Ballet and was awarded both the Society of West End Theatres annual award and the Evening Standard Drama Award for that ballet. Schaufuss was trained in the Bournonville tradition at the Royal Danish Ballet School and made his stage debut with that company in *Napoli*.

The National Ballet will be the first North American company to dance *Napoli*. Company Artistic Director Alexander Grant will appear in the

character role of Giacomo, the pasta seller. This is the first full-length classic the National Ballet has mounted since Sir Frederick Ashton's *La Fille mal gardée* five years ago.

Frank Augustyn, principal dancer with the National Ballet has taken a leave of absence to join the Berlin Oper Ballet for its 1980-81 season. According to Gert Reinholm, Artistic Director, Augustyn will have 'carte blanche' with regard to repertoire, which includes recently choreographed works such as Panov's *The Idiot* and *War and Peace* and Nureyev's *The Nutcracker*. Augustyn will appear with the National Ballet for a limited number of performances during its November and March seasons.

Betty Oliphant, Artistic Director and Ballet Principal of the National Ballet School received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree at the spring convocation of the University of Toronto. She also gave the convocation address to the graduating class. Miss Oliphant's work in ballet has been acknowledged with several other awards including the Order of Canada (1973) and the Molson Prize (1978).

Harbourfront is fast becoming the focus of modern dance performance in Toronto. The picturesque waterfront cultural centre will host a dance series opening in mid-November and continuing on into Spring of 1981. It will feature eight Canadian dance companies at a very reasonable subscription price (any six performances for \$25, students \$20), which include The Anna Wyman Dance Company (Nov. 14-16), Robert Desrosiers and Dancers (Nov. 19-30), City Ballet's *Alice in Wonderland* (Dec. 15-28), Dancemakers

Robert Desrosiers in *Visions: With Death as a Clown*



(Jan. 15-18), Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers (Feb. 4, 5), Peggy McCann and Dancers (Feb. 11-14).

Now that 15 Dance Lab has closed, the smaller dance companies and independent dance artists are in need of performing space in Toronto. Roy Higgins, Manager of Performing Arts at Harbourfront, has met this need with a series of 'one nighters'. The first artist to take advantage of this single performance booking is Odette Oliver from Montreal. She will perform *Mommy can I dance without my crutches?* on September 11.

After several years' association with the Toronto Dance Theatre dancers Claudia Moore and Robert Desrosiers are striking out on their own. This fall they will perform two of Desrosiers' much acclaimed works, *Dream in a Dream* and *Night Clown* (formerly *Visions: With Death as a Clown*) at Brock University, St. Catharines (Oct. 3, 4) and Harbourfront, Toronto (Nov. 19-30). Among the dancers working with them will be another former TDT member, Mitch Kirsch.

The group will be teaching classes and sharing studio space in Toronto with dance therapist and teacher Melodie Bengier.

The Queen Street West area where Melodie Bengier has her studio is indeed a fashionable one these days. *Les Ballet Jazz de Montreal* has just opened a Toronto branch of their thriving Montreal school in this neighbourhood. The new school is directed by Dennis Michaelson and Louis-André Paquette who were both teachers in the Montreal school as well as soloists and rehearsal masters of the company. The new school offers jazz classes at all levels and has plans for video workshops and a scholarship programme for serious students pursuing a career in jazz dance.

Dancemakers will travel to the Maritimes this fall for a three-week tour, giving performances, workshops and children's shows throughout the eastern provinces. Confirmed dates are: Oromocto, NB (Nov. 6), Fredericton, NB (Nov. 8), Antigonish, NS (Nov. 16), Sydney, NS (Nov. 18), and Halifax, NS (Nov. 22). Bill Douglas of Toronto and Dale Woodland of New York have joined the company this season. **Dancemakers** has toured Ontario every year since it was formed and has made two successful tours of Western Canada in the last two years. This will be the company's first Eastern tour.

The **Musicdance Orchestra** is a new group of performers directed by composer Andrew Timar and choreographer Terrill Maguire with a core of members including Holly Small, Robert W. Stevenson and Wes Wragget. The central goal of the group is to explore the relationships possible between dance and music and towards this end they will be giving a series of



Holly Small and Wes Wragget of the Musicdance Orchestra

workshops this fall and winter open to dancers and musicians in Toronto. The group's critically successful performance at Harbourfront in July was the second in a series of experiments in dance and music scheduled for the 1980/81 season.

Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise presents its fall season at Theatre Passe Muraille, September 2-13. The company will premier works by Paula Ravitz, Allan Risdill and Sara Shelton Mann. Dancers include Ravitz, Risdill, Denise Fujiwara and Susan McKenzie (formerly of Regina Modern Dance Works). TIDE has also just completed a 'new-dance-musical', *Gerald McBoing Boing*, the story of a boy who grows up without the gift of speech. The company has collaborated on the piece with composer Stuart Shepherd, director Richard Rose and designer Dorian Clark and will perform it at Harbourfront, Toronto, November 15, 16, 22, and 23. They plan to tour to Montreal and Eastern Ontario in late September.

To help fund their activities TIDE took time out from rehearsals every Sunday

during July and August to hold a benefit brunch at Maison d'Alsace, a Toronto restaurant. Each brunch was prepared and served by TIDE company members at a fixed price of \$5 and all proceeds went towards covering expenses of the company's fall performances.

During July the **Toronto Dance Theatre** held a symposium for choreographers and composers funded by the Laidlaw Foundation. Directed by choreographers Patricia Beatty and David Earle and composers Milton Barnes and Ann Southam, the symposium brought together the talents of choreographers Anna Blewchamp, Nancy Ferguson, Mitch Kirsch and Terrill Maguire and composers Michael Baker, Bob Daigneault, Alexina Louie, Marjan Mozetich, David Passmore, Lawrence Shragge, Sharon Smith and Alan Torok. The finished pieces resulting from the symposium were performed at the TDT Studio Theatre, July 26 and 27.

In June Toronto's **Pavlychenko Studio**, under the direction of Kathryn Brown,



Cathryn Rankin of Pavlychenko Studio

presented a choreographic workshop featuring new dances by Brown, Cathryn Rankin, Susan McNaughton, Roberta Mohler and Paris Terezakis. In August Kathryn Brown joined three other ex-members of Toronto Dance Theatre, Germaine Salsberg, Barry Smith and David Wood for performances at the Harbourfront Theatre. The programme featured the Canadian premier of several works choreographed by Salsberg and Smith.

Choreographer Gina Lori Riley of Windsor received a Canada Council award to attend the summer programme at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in London, England. She was one of 60 dancers and 30 visual artists and musician/composers who studied with Merce Cunningham, John Cage, Bonnie Bird, Valerie Preston-Dunlop, Dorothy Madden and members of the Cunningham Dance Company.

Ottawa's National Arts Centre began its 1980-81 Dance Showcase series with performances by the Nederlands Dans Theatre (Aug. 11, 12). A total of eight companies will appear at the Opera, including the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre (Sept. 29, 30), Les Grands Ballets Canadiens (Oct. 23-25), the Royal Winnipeg Ballet (Nov. 27-29), the Lar

Lubovitch Company (Feb. 23, 24), The National Ballet (Mar. 19-21), the Houston Ballet (April 3-5) and the Ballet International de Caracas (Apr. 24-26).

QUEBEC

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens' fall season at Place des Arts November 6-8 will feature the company premier of George Balanchine's *Capriccio* to the music of Stravinsky, and the world premier of Fernand Nault's *Songs of Sorrow, Songs of Joy* set to the music of Poulenc. The programme will also include *Hangman's Reel* by Brian Macdonald.

Focus on Jazz is a three-week dance programme which takes place annually at the Centre de Danse Jeanne Marler in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, in August. Dance instructors this summer were Eva von Gency, Peter George, Rael Lamb, Jean-Louis Morin and Claire Patry. Guest speakers were Elizabeth Langley, head of the dance department, Concordia, Rosemarie LeVeNeron, head of the dance department, University of Montreal and Iro Tembeck, free-lance choreographer in Montreal.

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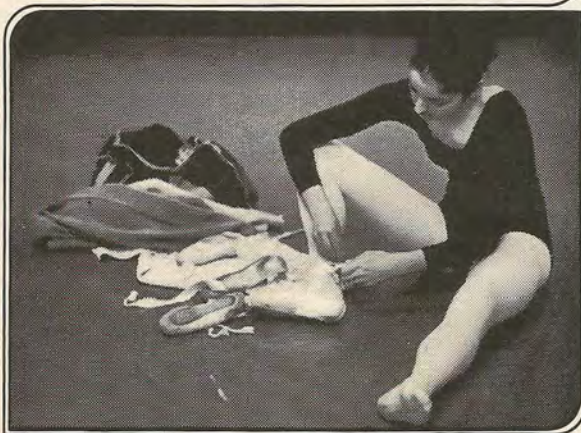
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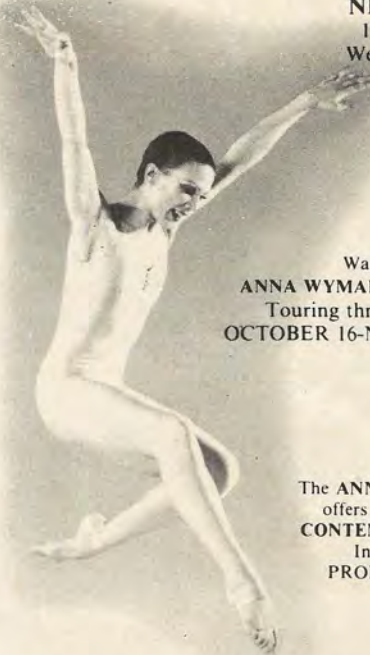
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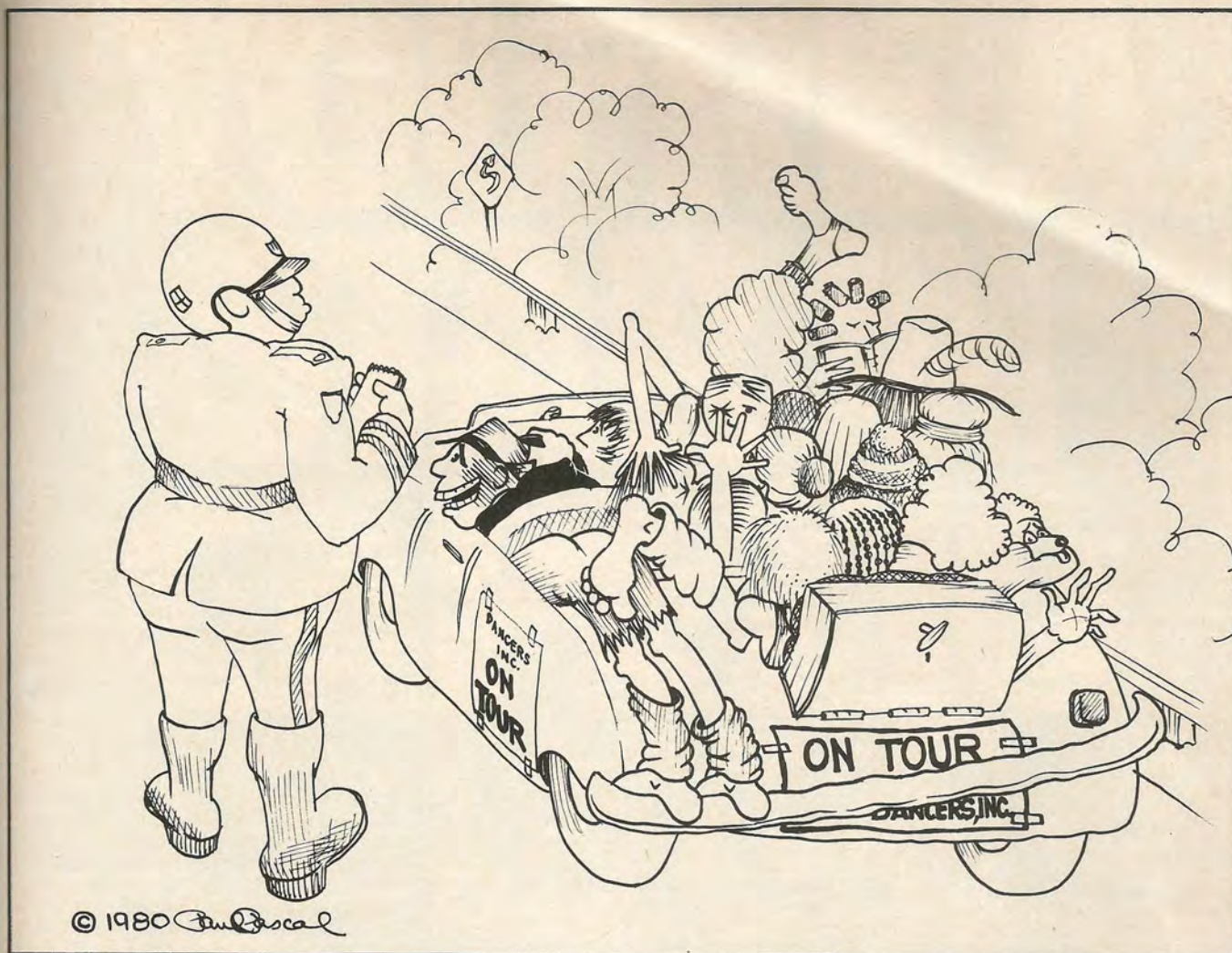
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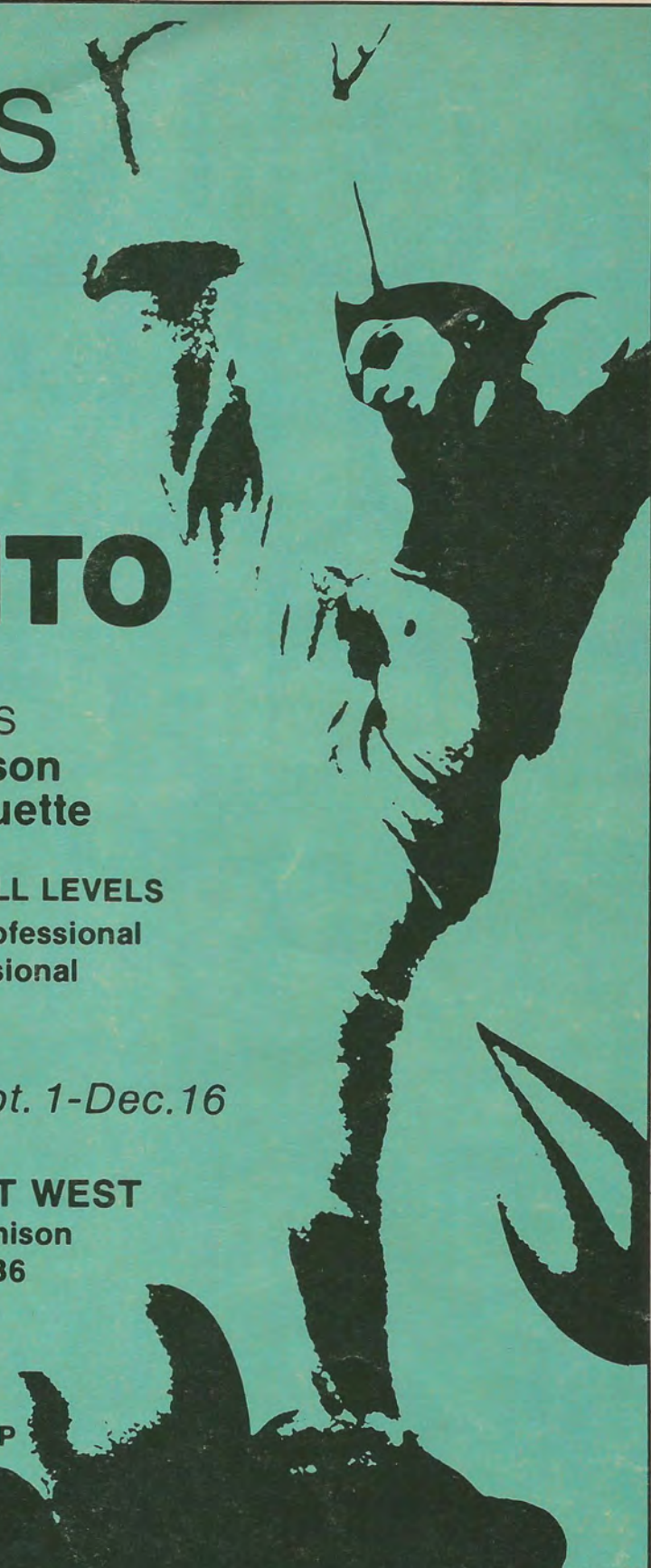
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