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Winter 1980 Hiver

# Dance in Canada Danse au




Les Ballets Jazz

and more on  
dance in Quebec



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# Dance in Canada

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## COVER:

Debbie Wilson of Les Ballets Jazz in Louis Falco's *Escargot*.  
Photo by Ian Westbury

## JAZZ IT UP



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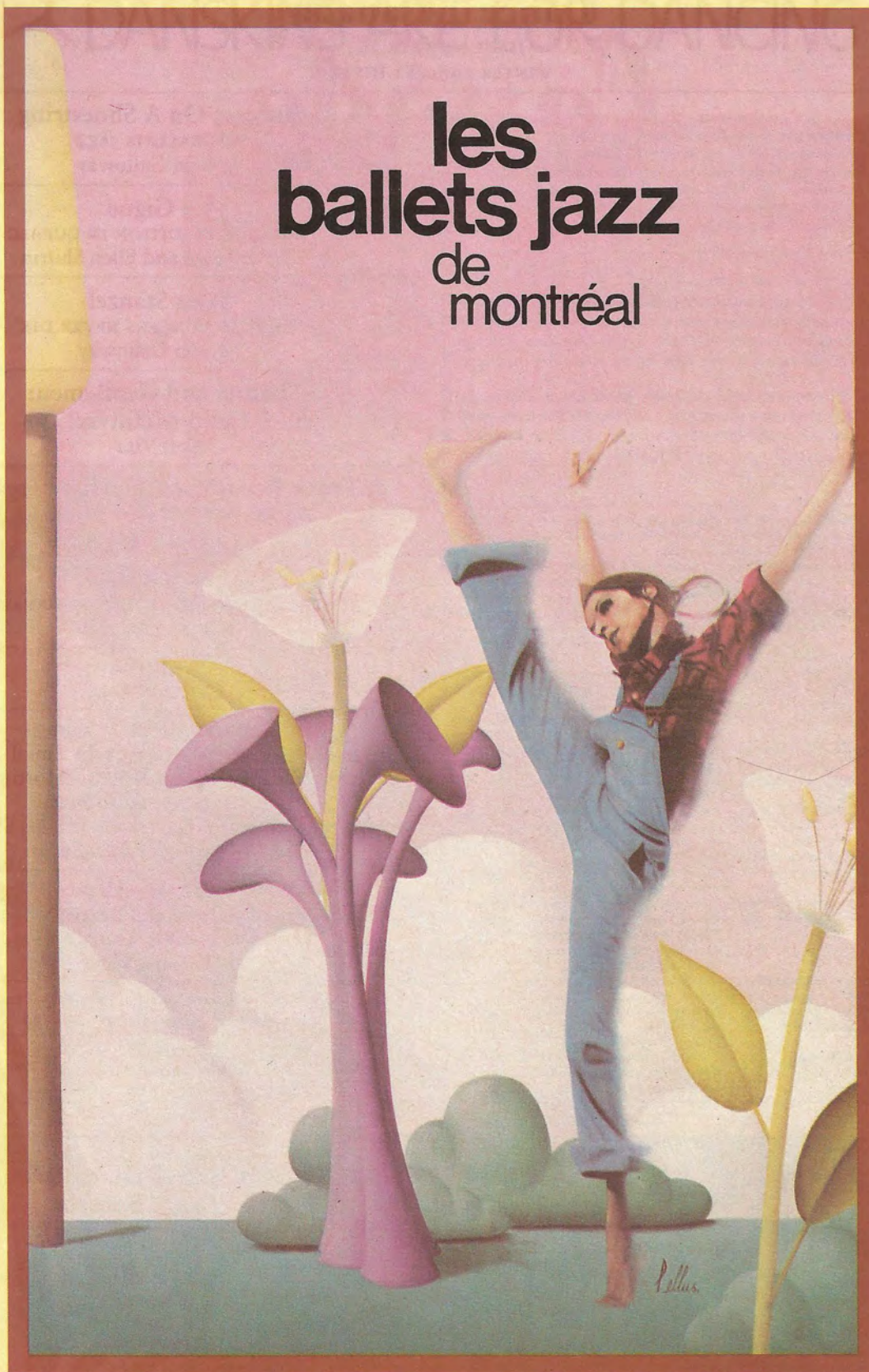
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# les ballets jazz de montréal



“Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal hit Toronto like a blast of bracing Quebec air playing to sold out houses . . .” Selma Landen Odom | Dancemagazine Sept. 1980

**‘Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal’, the Montreal-based Company,  
will perform at Ryerson Theatre,  
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DANSKIN®



Myron Galloway

# Success on a Shoestring

## Les Ballets Jazz



Members of Les Ballets Jazz in Louis Falco's *Escargot*

Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal celebrates its ninth anniversary this year. Yet if one were to trace its colorful, often financially troubled, but always ebullient history to its earliest roots one would have to return to the summer of 1961 and the unlikely location of the Banff School of Fine Arts. That was the summer choreographer Brian Macdonald opened a new jazz division in the School's dance department and invited the Hungarian-born dancer Eva Von Gency to assist him.

Born in Budapest, Miss Von Gency trained with the Russian Ballet Academy, after which, in 1945, she joined the Landes Theatre Ballet in Salzburg as a scholarship student. In 1947, unable to return to Budapest because of political unrest, she came to Canada and settled for a time in Winnipeg where she had heard there was a professional ballet company.

Those were the early years of the Winnipeg Ballet, before the Royal title had been bestowed upon it and even before the company was mounting complete productions.

It was there Miss Von Gency danced classical roles with the company's leading male dancer, a young man by the name of Arnold Spohr.

### A Fateful Meeting

Later, when Paddy Stone arrived, it was he who suggested she concentrate on modern dancing for which she displayed a distinct flair and, in 1954, she travelled east to Montreal to become a dancer with Les Ballets Chiriaeff which would eventually become better known as Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. While with Les Ballets Chiriaeff she met Geneviève Salbaing. Eight years later Von Gency and Salbaing became the co-founders of Les Ballets Jazz Contemporain.

Paris-born Geneviève Salbaing had been at one time principal dancer with the Municipal Theatre of Casablanca, having studied with Rousane and Victor Gsovsky in her native city. She herself had joined Les Ballets Chiriaeff in Montreal after three years in the United States where she had been soloist with the Washington Concert Ballet. After coming to Montreal Mme. Salbaing choreographed a number of works including, among others, *Façade* for the Montreal International Theatre, *L'Histoire du Soldat* for the McGill Chamber Orchestra and *Symphonietta* for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens.

Mme. Salbaing gave up her career as a dancer and became actively engaged in the cultural life of the city by serving on a number of committees for such organizations as the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Les Concours de Musique du Quebec and the McGill Chamber Orchestra; and Miss Von Gency took off for Banff to work with Brian Macdonald who, in that first year, 'opened my eyes to the possibilities of translating jazz rhythms into dance steps'.

After a trip to New York with Brian Macdonald, where he introduced her to most of the major jazz dance studios, Von Gency had no hesitation taking over the jazz classes at Banff the following year when other commitments obliged Macdonald to leave.

Returning to Montreal in the fall of 1962 she opened the city's first school of jazz dancing in the poorer east end section with an initial enrolment of 10 students.

'Right from the start', she says, 'Geneviève encouraged me to enlarge it and 10 years later, with the school





Les Ballets Jazz in Buzz Miller's *Kew Drew*

exploding with 1,000 students, we founded Les Ballets Jazz Contemporain'.

#### Modest beginnings

According to Eva Von Gency, the idea of establishing a dance company dedicated exclusively to jazz was entirely Mme. Salbaing's. The company was introduced to the public in due course in a modest performance at Le Théâtre du Nouveau Monde with a program of works choreographed by Von Gency and Eddy Toussaint, an associate director of the school and a dancer.

A second performance followed in Montreal a year later, again featuring the choreography of Von Gency and Toussaint as well as that of John Stanzel. One of the ballets was Von Gency's *Jérémie* based on a commissioned scenario by the French Canadian playwright Marcel Dubé.

Recalling those early years Mme. Salbaing explains that when it began the company operated as an extension of the school with the idea that it would produce its own style of jazz dancing developed on the school's dancers. 'The school operated on a non-profit basis with all monies earned used to finance the company.'

It was Mme. Salbaing's idea that the company should devote itself exclusively to the production of jazz ballets, but this idea somewhat alarmed both Von Gency and Toussaint who feared that jazz alone would not be acceptable either to government funding bodies upon whom they were dependent, or the general ballet-going public. Mme. Salbaing, however, remained adamant on this point. She felt there already existed any number of small dance companies dedicated to forms of modern dance that did not include jazz and she was determined to give her company a unique and distinct character. Eddy Toussaint disagreed, not only on this point, but with the whole idea of running the school on a non-profit basis. As a result he broke away to form a school and company of his own.

Eva Von Gency, on the other hand, agreed to concentrate the major portion of her attention on the school and leave the overall artistic administration of the company in Mme. Salbaing's hands. It was the creative, not the business end of dance that most interested her.

#### A Slap in the Face from Ottawa

In 1976, at the suggestion of the Montreal Arts Council, the school and the dance company became separate entities, largely in order to clarify and improve the company's fund-raising activities. Even so, the Canada Council, after having given subventions of \$5,000 in the first year, \$7,000 in the second and \$10,000 for the 1974-75 season, suddenly cut off all further financial support. The reasons given varied, but the main ones seemed to be that the company's jazz orientation was too crassly commercial and a sufficient amount of money was coming into the school to support the company's future programs. Jazz ballet itself was rejected as a legitimate art form worthy of the Council's continued support.

During a conversation I had with Luigi (Eugene Louis) one of the great exponents of jazz dance and with whom Von Gency had once studied in New York, I mentioned the problem the Montreal-based company was having in being recognized as a serious artistic endeavour. 'Perhaps', he said, 'it's because it's ahead of its time. Jazz ballet is still relatively new, although one might say it dates back to Jack Cole in the twenties who studied with Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn. Cole had a company of his own but it danced mostly in night clubs. People still associate jazz dancing with night clubs I'm afraid'.

When Norbert Vesak was invited to Montreal to choreograph a piece for Les Ballets Jazz I asked for his point of view.

'There's no denying the difficulty in getting people to take it seriously. I think Les Ballets Jazz is doing an



excellent job of pioneering the field right here in Canada. Even in New York, where there are any number of jazz schools, there are no large or important companies that specialize in jazz dancing exclusively. Top teachers like Luigi and Jo Jo Smith spend a lot of time teaching in France where it seems to enjoy much greater popularity. The French in France have been fascinated by it for a long time. Roland Petit choreographed a number of his pieces in jazz and *Le Jazz Hot* was one of Maurice Béjart's earliest works. One also sees a lot of it at the Ballet Théâtre Contemporain as well as at Felix Blaska's company in Paris.

#### A Genuine Art Form

'In the United States Jerome Robbins showed a considerable interest in it for a while, particularly when he formed his Ballets USA in 1958, but he folded that after about four years and moved on to other things he felt were more important. But quite frankly the popularity of jazz ballet in Quebec is phenomenal and the dancers seem to be going about it in the right way to make it a success. A great many have developed the line of the classic dancer with the plus factor of having the rhythmic sense necessary to jazz. Personally I think it could well evolve into a genuine art form.'

In May 1975, the year its Canada Council grants were cut off, Les Ballets Jazz gave its first Places des Arts performance at Théâtre Maisonneuve and was looking forward to accepting an invitation from Maurice Béjart to take part in an International Dance Festival in Venice along with such companies as the Royal Ballet, the Tokyo Ballet, the Hungarian Ballet, Ballet Rambert, soloists of the Kirov and the Paris Opera Ballets and the New York City Ballet. For this a grant was forthcoming from the Council's Touring Office, followed by a second grant the next year when the company began a series of European tours which subsequently included appearances in France, Italy, Ireland, Mexico, New York and the Caribbean.

Extensive tours were also made throughout Quebec and Ontario including notable appearances in Ottawa and Toronto.

Meanwhile, in order to keep the company's repertoire fresh and vital, Mme. Salbaing invited a number of guest choreographers from New York, either to create new works for the company's dancers or to restage existing ballets as in the case of Louis Falco's *Escargot* and dances from Lee Theodore's *American Dance Machine*.

#### Extending the Repertoire

Among those to create original works on the company were such choreographers as Rael Lamb, Herb Wilson, Richard Jones, Buzz Miller, Lynne Taylor Corbett, Norbert Vesak, Brian Macdonald and William Thompson.

The company's popularity with the general public has increased steadily, largely as a result of the sheer determination of artistic director Geneviève Salbaing who, when the going became tough, operated without a staff, by doing most of the administrative work herself and when the deficit frightened a timid board of directors a couple of years ago used personal money (her husband is a successful businessman) to keep the company afloat and got herself a new and more courageous board to support her efforts.

More than once over the past few years fund-raising drives have made it possible for Les Ballets Jazz to keep its

operation going when it teetered precariously on the brink of shut-down. But lack of sufficient money has unquestionably kept it from developing as rapidly as it might if given the financial stability that would enable it to plan at least a year or two ahead.

With a deficit that went as high as \$65,998 after the 1975-76 season and as low as \$36,000 at the close of the 1979-80 season, Les Ballets Jazz carries on into the 1980-81 season with a program scheduled to open in Montreal, January 21, that will contain four new ballets: *Entre-Nous*, choreographed by Brian Macdonald to recorded music by Jean-Pierre Rampal (flute) and Claude Bolling (piano); a still untitled work by Rael Lamb to New Wave music; another still untitled work by Herb Wilson to music by Earl Hines and a pas de deux by William Thompson to music by Doug Riley.

Eva Von Gency resigned last year and the company is now the entire responsibility of Mme. Salbaing. Artistic policy, administrative hassles, auditioning and employing dancers, commissioning new works, planning touring itineraries, travelling with the company as den mother and being answerable to her board of directors are but a fraction of the burdens she carries on her shoulders.

'There are times when I feel I'm the only one who cares whether the company lives or dies and I ask myself why I do this', she said recently. 'But then I hear the applause and bravos after a performance and see the enthusiastic reviews the next morning in cities as unlike as Montreal, Toronto, New York, Paris and Dublin and it all seems worthwhile.'

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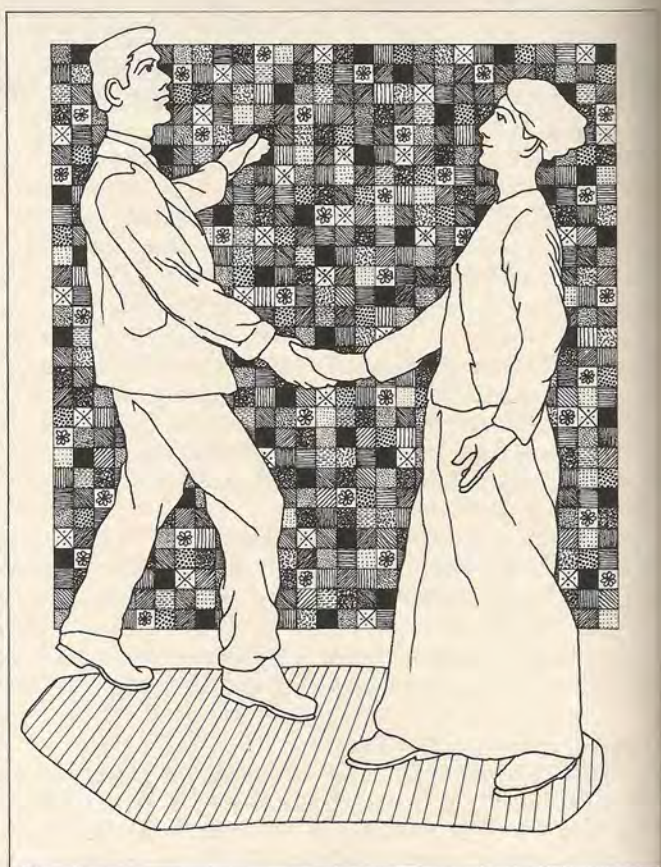
# A Dance

Saturday night, August 1980, Lysander Falls, Quebec. We arrive at the village dance hall a little late, so everyone is already there, dancing vigorously in the crowded, smokey room. The band blasts forth, urging people up on their feet to move with the lively old rhythms. This dance is a square, but later on waltzes and polkas will be added. Although the dances are old, the musical instruments are all well amplified and include a guitar, a violin and an electric piano, an interesting juxtaposition to which the regulars' ears are evidently well attuned. Highlighting and giving texture to the dancing are the complicated *pas* the dancers execute, known as *giguer* in Quebec, step dancing elsewhere. The men are definitely the more active and showy *giguers*, and some have put taps on their shoes just for the fun of making a noise.

### Tortières and Tarte aux Sucre

This type of event is usually held indoors, with musicians, dancers and observers close together on the same floor. As a weekly affair, it offers an ideal opportunity for socializing. Chairs and benches surrounding the dance floor are just as crowded with people chatting as the floor itself is with people dancing. The generations mix easily here, although the predominant age group is 40 to 60. Clothing is casual; women may wear dresses or slacks, and men similarly emphasize comfort rather than fashion. *Quadrilles*, *ronds*, *danses carrées*, *contredanses* and couple dances are interspersed with displays of the *gigue*. Refreshments also play a significant role. A midnight dinner of *tortières* and *tarte aux sucre* served at a *veillée* can be as great an allurements as the dancing itself.

The folk festival at Chapeau, Quebec, is a different type of dance event. Most of the audience rests on the grass, but some of the older people have brought lawn chairs. The musicians sit casually around the dance space of the slightly raised stage. Melodian-accordians and fiddles are lively; dancing is exuberant. The young troupe performs choreographed dances using patterns of traditional 'sets' arranged for the stage. Their costumes are colourful; pinafores cover the dresses of the women, while *ceintures flechées* decorate the waists of the men. Long white socks



La gigue à deux

and fitted black leather shoes accent the dancers' footwork. The *gigue* shares the intricate and lilting quality of the music.

### A Cultural Revival

In recent years groups have formed specifically to learn and perform step dancing. These troupes are urban-based and are comprised of young students interested in their folk culture. Performances take place at folk festivals, civic centres, or on television. The group may adopt the identity



Bettle Liota &amp; Ellen Shifrin

# La Gigue

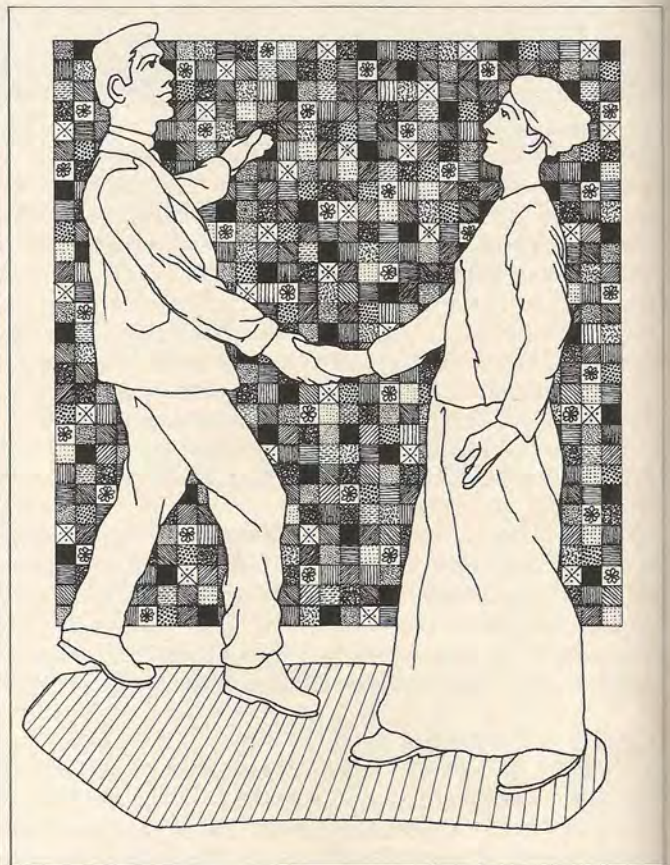
## A Dance Tradition in Quebec

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the upper body. Rather, the gigue, an on the spot dance, employs vertical displacement of energy. Hops, jumps, and 'chasing' steps, where the feet chase behind each other in rapid succession, are subtle in style. The body is held upright and still. Almost all movement is in the lower legs and feet. The rapid execution of steps is made easier by this placement of the body. A vital enthusiasm and energy characteristically infuses the gigue.

#### **The Fiddler's Challenge**

Step dance is commonly a solo dance, but dancers will also jig to each other, exchanging and sharing steps and variations. They may face each other or casually share the dance space, taking turns, dancing together, and joining and stopping at will.

Sometimes, as at Lysander Falls, a friendly competition occurs. Each gigueur steps forward and tries to outdo the previous one. There is ingenuity in the syncopations and step combinations that happen between the dancers and musicians. It is not uncommon for the fiddler to challenge the dancer's ability by unexpectedly changing from one complex rhythm to another.

The music is usually acoustic and relies on the melodian-accordion and fiddle. The tempo is generally quick. The most widely used rhythms are the 6/8 time of the gigue and the 4/4 time of the reel and hornpipe. The hornpipe features a more complex rhythm and its syncopated quality allows added room for ornamentation. Tunes are structured so that two short melodic parts are alternated and repeated. This provides great flexibility in the length of any dance which may last anywhere from a few minutes to half an hour. A good musician is able to spur people on to dance and feet start to move with the opening strains. Some musicians can, while seated, even play and step the dance simultaneously!

#### **You Gotta Have Rhythm**

Like the music, the dancing has a staccato quality. Nevertheless, a flowing effect is achieved. As in pointalistic painting, an image of continuity is created by the multiplicity of finite points over a concentrated space. The rapid succession of steps and sounds gives a visual and aural

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of a nearby rural community. Costumes, stylized but successful recreations of historical dress, unify the dancers visually and symbolize traditional and cultural group identity. This revival-type of dance approximates the steps and style of the traditional form, but it is doubtful that a rural step dancer would identify with the dancing presented. Distortion is inevitable when the traditional dance is lifted from its cultural setting. The choreography of the theatricalized *danse folklorique* is comparable to the way contemporary folk singers 'arrange' traditional songs.

The form and function of the dance is specifically determined by the dance event. There is, however, a general, identifiable structure to the gigue. Step dance is an aural dance form; the sound of the feet is intrinsic. It is performed primarily on the balls of the feet; fitted leather shoes may be worn with or without taps, depending on the occasion.

Because step dancing employs foot movements such as shuffles, brushes and occasional heel beats to produce precise percussive effects, it is often confused with tap dancing. Step dancing, however, does not employ the use of broad, horizontal direction or expansive movements of the upper body. Rather, the gigue, an 'on the spot' dance, employs vertical displacement of energy. Hops, jumps, and 'chasing' steps, where the feet chase behind each other in rapid succession, are subtle in style. The body is held upright and still. Almost all movement is in the lower legs and feet. The rapid execution of steps is made easier by this placement of the body. A vital enthusiasm and energy characteristically infuses the gigue.

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The music is usually acoustic and relies on the melodian-accordion and fiddle. The tempo is generally quick. The most widely used rhythms are the 6/8 time of the gigue and the 4/4 time of the reel and hornpipe. The hornpipe features a more complex rhythm and its syncopated quality allows added room for ornamentation. Tunes are structured so that two short melodic parts are alternated and repeated. This provides great flexibility in the length of any dance which may last anywhere from a few minutes to half an hour. A good musician is able to spur people on to dance and feet start to move with the opening strains. Some musicians can, while seated, even play and step the dance simultaneously!

#### **You Gotta Have Rhythm**

Like the music, the dancing has a staccato quality. Nevertheless, a flowing effect is achieved. As in pointalistic painting, an image of continuity is created by the multiplicity of finite points over a concentrated space. The rapid succession of steps and sounds gives a visual and aural

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sense of flow. There is a simultaneous effect both of intense activity and great stillness. The calm and easy carriage of the dancer adds to these qualities.

Audience approval of a dancer's abilities depends on his alacrity and ability to render subtle regional styles. If a gigue is particularly fine, people may show their appreciation by pausing in their social activities and giving the dancer full attention. Occasionally the musicians may put aside their instruments for a few bars to listen to the 'music' of the feet. A good dancer can create a full scale of musical sounds of varying qualities depending on the amount of pressure applied and the parts of the feet used. Perfect timing and the skill to syncopate the music are essential.

To call these dancers 'self-trained' is a misnomer; rather, they are guided within the tradition of the society. Learning to step dance occurs in many ways. Traditionally children were and continue to be present at dance events, whether at a *veillée* or community hall dance. This exposure provides incidental impressions from an early age. They are encouraged to participate and to emulate the movements of the adults. In this way learning is largely a matter of trial and error. Placement and gestures are acquired subliminally and come naturally because they are related to daily patterns of activity within the community. The nuance of body language can be compared to regional dialect, so that in the same way that a child speaks the accent that he hears, he adopts the movement quality that he sees. Important to the aesthetic of the Québécois gigue is this embodiment of distinctive regional quality. Another way children can become proficient is by taking lessons from an accomplished step dancer in his home. But little or no emphasis is placed on analytical technique, a facet of teaching all too familiar to students of the classical dance forms.

#### A Dance For Celebration and Mourning

Before the impact of man communication and technology, step dancing was an integral part of the social fabric. Work was community oriented and dance naturally followed as a release from hard physical labour, such as barn-raising and corn-husking. Other occasions to dance included weddings, holidays and funerals. Socio-cultural outlets were contained within the community and a neighbourly visit often incorporated dancing. Some dancers would use gigue steps throughout the patterned social dances. (This practice is still prevalent.) The pleasure that these events gave is clearly evident: they were lively and often lasted until dawn.

The transition from a closely-knit rural community to an urban-oriented society has changed the role and opportunities for step dancing. Today it is more of a special event. The use of taps, amplification and choreography greatly alters the traditional structure. Yet the revival of step dancing offers the individual a humanistic approach to shared experiences in an increasingly technological environment. An offshoot of this renaissance is the growing awareness of the inherited form. For today's gigueurs, step dancing is not a return to the past, it is the evolution of a heritage which has a dynamic existence in contemporary society.



Myron Galloway

# John Stanzel

## 'Old tap dancers never die'



John Stanzel

He's been a character dancer with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens for more than 25 years yet today, though his bushy and once fiery red beard may have silvered, the twinkle in his eye is as bright as ever and the spring in his step as lively and John Stanzel waves aside all thoughts of retirement.

'Old tap dancers never die', says Stanzel, 'they keep on tapping along'.

We were chatting one afternoon in October in his enormous loft apartment on Viger Square in the old quarter of Montreal. The house in which it is located was built in 1875 and is one of a row of houses in front of which stands a nine-foot bronze statue of Joan of Arc. With but a bit of rearranging of the furniture, Stanzel's apartment could easily pass as a dance studio. Certainly it is larger than most and brighter, as light streams through a series of mansard windows and bounces blindingly off its gleaming white walls.

He busied himself making tea and cutting a large sticky

pecan bun into pieces. The bun had been purchased for my benefit since Stanzel watches carefully what he eats, maintaining, in his mid-to-late fifties, the slim, trim figure of a teenager. His precise age he does not discuss, dismissing any questions with a wave of the hand and a 'well, we needn't talk about that'. But he does talk of a time in the early 1930s when he was a boy of 10. Nothing too exact, but enough to do a little general calculating.

Born in Carleton Place, Ontario, which he refers to as 'that huge metropolis 35 miles outside Ottawa with a population close to 4,000', there were no dance schools to tempt him into taking classes at an early age.

### Jigging and Clogging Around

'I come from solid working class people and my earliest recollection of my father was when he would entertain friends at parties by step dancing; you know, jigging and clogging around. Even as a child I thought that was pretty corny, but I used to imitate him. That is until I saw my first Fred Astaire movie. After that I saw every Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers movie that was made. I watched every step Fred danced and then would go home and practise them myself.'

When he was 10 Stanzel heard about an English girl who had arrived in Carleton Place with her family to escape the Depression and who, in order to help out at home, gave tap lessons. Her name was Eileen Snowden.

'She didn't have a proper school or anything like that. She'd just brought along her tap shoes and gave lessons to anyone, like me at that age, who was interested. She used to put on shows at the Town Hall for which she'd make all the costumes and sets, such as they were, herself. I used to be in them all as the only boy in the group.'

'As a matter of fact I was under the impression I was actually studying classical ballet because she'd get us to do all kinds of bends and jumps and kicks and things which she'd learned out of a book I suppose. Frankly I don't think she knew the first thing about classic training, but she certainly knew everything there was to know about tap dancing in those days.'

### The Ottawa Years

His first practical job came in 1941 when he made the



move to Ottawa and was employed in a government office as a secretary.

'That was during the war when jobs were easier to get than they are today. I stayed in that for two years after which I went to work at the Royal Bank for another three and since then I've been able to keep myself going by dancing and teaching.

'I discovered a lively woman by the name of Marjorie Lyon who had a dance studio in Ottawa and studied there for a couple of years and then taught there as well. And I also enrolled in Yolande Leduc's ballet studio which was where I first met Ludmilla Chiriaeff who used to come up from Montreal once a week to teach there.'

During the 10 years he spent in Ottawa he would save what money he could to get to New York every summer for a three-week vacation where he took classes with the best tap teachers he could find. And for a few years after the end of the war he opened a small studio of his own in Ottawa. By the end of the 1940s he was also teaching at Yolande Leduc's studio.

#### Montreal and Les Ballet Chiriaeff

'In 1953 Ludmilla invited me to Montreal to dance with Les Ballets Chiriaeff, a small company she had just formed. Needless to say I went and I've been in Montreal ever since. With Les Ballets Chiriaeff I used to dance in the sort of variety shows it would do, mostly on French television which was just getting underway. The money was nothing in those days, but that wasn't important. The important thing was I was dancing.'

Stanzel's association with Les Ballets Chiriaeff continued when in 1958 it became Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and it has continued to the present day, though his style of dancing is not classical.

'As a character dancer there have been lots of roles for me', he said with a contented chuckle.

'Drosselmeyer in Les Grands' annual *Nutcracker Suite* is perhaps the one I'm best known for, although I had a long run of performances which lasted several years as Uncle Ernie in *Tommy*.'

Other roles in which he has become equally familiar to Les Grands Ballets Canadiens' fans have been the Joker in *Jeu de cartes*, Friar Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet*, the death figure in *Cantate pour une joie* and in recent years the Giguier in Brian Macdonald's *Tam Ti Delam*, which has become the company's party piece on most of its cross-country tours. Stanzel also has fond memories of two South American and two European tours with the company.

#### Showbiz Dreams

'I always dreamed of being in show business as a kid', he said. 'It's ironic that I ended up with one of the country's major ballet companies.'

A taste of show business however has not been entirely denied him. In 1968 he assisted Brian Macdonald with the choreography for the Broadway musical *Maggie Flynn* in which he also appeared as a character actor and dancer with Jack Cassidy and Shirley Jones.

'That was one of the most exciting experiences in my life, being part of a Broadway show, even though it didn't have as long a run as we would have liked. What surprised me was the family-like atmosphere that prevailed backstage. Everyone was so concerned every night about

everyone else's performance, and, on the whole, very kind, thoughtful and considerate of each other.'

Although he has been associated with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens longer than any other dancer, John Stanzel has never been a member of the permanent company except for a brief two-year period when *Tommy* was touring Canada, the United States and Europe.

'I've been a free-lancer all my life. You might call me a loner. But I like it that way.'

Dancer, choreographer (he has choreographed, among other things, the musical comedy production of Michel Tremblay's *Demain matin*, *Montreal m'attend* and works for Les Ballets Jazz) and teacher, Stanzel now divides his time working with four jazz dance studios in Montreal, including Les Ballets Jazz.

#### Supreme Contentment

'I do a lot of travelling every day on bus and metro, summer and winter, but that gives me time to think. Now, when the major part of my career as a dancer is behind me, the thing I enjoy most is passing on what I've learned to the new young crop of dancers whose careers are still ahead of them.'

Stanzel is a happy man, a man with no regrets and the memory of many deeply felt satisfactions and when his day's work is done he climbs back up to this spacious aerie on Viger Square and from its many windows, north and south, looks down upon the old world and the new, the past and the present, and gives the impression at any rate of being a supremely contented man.

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Kati Vita

# Ladies & Gentlemen: Colin McIntyre!

There it is in black and white, sandwiched between the 'Sweetheart of the Midlands' and 'Scotland's Funniest Comedian': 'Magic Moments with Martin Collins, the Sophisticated Sorcerer.' It's The Summer Show of 1963 at the Priory Theatre in Whitley Bay, Yorkshire, and he is mesmerizing the Tyneside crowd by magic, ESP and escapology.

Seventeen years later, Colin McIntyre has discarded his stage name but, as director general of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, he still dabbles in magic, mind reading and brinkmanship.

Rumpled, hirsute and 6'4", he could pass for Erik the Red. The cadences echo Edinburgh where he grew up, son of a prosperous grain merchant. An indifferent student, he excelled at rugby but astounded his Presbyterian milieu by less manly pursuits. By the age of 10, he had built 30 puppet theatres, peopled with characters made of rags and papier mâché. The random gift of a magic set eventually lead to a flourishing career as a professional magician while he was still in his teens. Though childhood exposure to the arts was limited to, 'the annual Xmas Panto, the Edinburgh Tattoo and lots of Gilbert and Sullivan', he now says: 'Something about the theatre was always very much in my blood'.

## Some Useful Tips From Convicts

On sallying forth from public school he took a brief detour as cutlery salesman during the day while wreaking magic in hospitals, old folks' homes and prisons at night. Inmates gave him useful tips on perfecting his sleight of hand technique and fellow performers made a lifelong music hall devotee of him. He speaks with a nostalgia belying his 35 years of a simple, beautiful time which has gone for ever.

From silverware in Edinburgh McIntyre went to the sylvan greenery of Sidcup, Kent, where he enrolled in a two-year technical course at the Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama. A year later he was on the teaching staff. He left in 1965 to try his luck in London.

'It was a very exciting period and a great learning experience', he recalls. 'Olivier was just starting up the National Theatre, Peter Hall was in his heyday at the Royal Shakespeare, the Royal Court was presenting Edward Bond for the first time. I used to have a wall in my house, which started as just a little corner, where I used to stick the stubs of theatre tickets and when I left that apartment, the whole wall was covered with stubs of tickets to shows I'd seen.'

Eventually opportunity knocked in the form of London Festival Ballet where the sudden dismissal of a drunk and



Martin Collins (Colin McIntyre) as 'The Sophisticated Sorcerer'

disorderly stage manager precipitated his meteoric rise to full SM within three months at the then princely sum of £ 2.1 a week. In the beginning he faked it, as he had had to fake it at Rose Bruford. 'I'm still faking it,' he chuckles, 'I still can't read music but I'm teaching musical management at the National Theatre School'.

His five years at Festival Ballet proved to be a speed reading course at the school of hard knocks. Number two in Britain at the time and woefully under-subsidized, the company had to try harder and did. There was a succession of one-night stands, quick sorties by train to the Continent, a major tour of the Far East, playing on stages of all shapes and sizes, in church halls and converted cinemas, travelling by day, striking sets all night, willing things to work. It was invaluable training which left him, in later years, a hard man to surprise.

**He Found the Pointe Shoe Remarkable and the Girls Pretty**  
It was also his first prolonged exposure to dance. He found the pointe shoe remarkable, the girls pretty, the largely Diaghilev-based repertoire charming. He was hooked.

He was just getting restive when a phone call from



Laban brought him a dream job on a platter. 'When I started work as stage director for The Gulbenkian Foundation, they had a revenue from investments of one million dollars per day. It was cultural Utopia', McIntyre sighs. 'I was coordinating three theatres and a garden amphitheatre, serving an orchestra, a choir and the ballet. Each summer we had a festival and according to the terms of old Calouste's will, part of it was always devoted to a major contemporary composer. We had Berio, Xenakis, Penderecki. A phenomenal Rodin retrospective. The best of contemporary dance: Murray Louis, Paul Taylor. Milko Sparembek was artistic director and I did all his lighting designs. I had a staff of 70; I was well paid. Of course an enormous Latin bureaucracy ran the whole thing which was sometimes hard to deal with but even that was a useful learning experience.'

Nineteen hours with the Portuguese secret police, as a result of mislaying the mandatory identification card, began to colour his view of the artistic paradise and in 1973 he moved to New York.

### The Move to Montreal

It was there that he heard that Uriel Luft was about to leave Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and that the company was looking for an assistant to the director general. The rest, as they say, is history.

'I liked Montreal immediately', he says. 'Big seaports are always cosmopolitan. I was intrigued by the two cultures. My French was no good at the time (he has since solved that problem by marrying a French Canadian). I had heard about the Canada Council and it seemed to me that the arts were supported in a very adventurous way in this country. And I thought the company had potential. I felt that they created excitement on the stage. I thought my experience could be of value to them and I was keen to participate in administrative decision making.'

By December, 1975, after an uneasy interregnum, Colin McIntyre was making decisions as Les GBC's director general. Artistically, the company was setting new standards under the recently appointed Brian Macdonald; financially it was on the brink of the abyss. McIntyre inherited a deficit of \$335,000 on a \$1.6 million annual budget. There were cash-flow problems, frozen grants; it was sink or swim.

In one year, 'by wheeling and dealing, lying, cheating and conning people any way I could', he had stopped the rot and in April, 1976, came up with a net surplus of \$456,77. It was not much but it was sufficient to re-establish credibility. In March, 1980, the surplus was just over \$6,000. In the meantime Quebec has wiped out a part of the deficit and sound management has held the line against inflation by keeping staff to a bare minimum (9 office and 5 production personnel for 38 dancers) and by extending markets.

### 'It's a mistake to put ballet into a cultural showcase.'

It began with a fabulously successful South American tour in 1977 (10 weeks in as many countries, scalpers, riots, glowing reviews). There was a tour of European festivals last summer. January, 1981, will find les GBC on its fourth Columbia Artists-sponsored tour of the US in 12 months. The initiative has been all McIntyre's. 'It's a mistake to put ballet into a cultural showcase', he argues. 'Prestige is fine but we have to go everywhere to create markets.' By the



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Colin McIntyre Director General of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens

end of this year, 4 million people in 400 cities will have seen about 2,300 performances by the company. There will be nine performances in Montreal this season (plus 10 Nutcrackers over Christmas), most of them pre-sold to 2,500 subscribers.

Is there a grand design?

'There is no magic formula', he shrugs. 'When you're running a Canadian ballet company, there are a number of balls you've got to keep in the air at the same time, a number of people you have to please all of the time.'

'Being the flagship of Quebec dance, sometimes we have to be more conservative in our programming than we'd like to be because we have to get bottoms on seats to pay our bills. This year our gross income from box office will be \$1.3 million. We have to protect that, so we will sandwich *The Miraculous Mandarin* between proven favourites like *Les Sylphides* and *Tam Ti Delam*.

'Then, we want to reflect the roots of the company, thus the works by Fernand Nault and Brian Macdonald take on a special significance for us, not simply as Canadian content (higher, incidentally than either of the other two major Canadian ballet companies). Hell, this is where we come from and we want to do something that is indigenous to this time and place.

#### A Twentieth Century Company

'At the same time one wants to reflect all forms of the growth of dance in the 20th century and one wants to set artistic challenges for the dancers. But last year the company gave 122 performances and travelled 58,000 miles. This does not leave much time for the creation of new works, though Linda Rabin will do one for us next April and so will Judy Marcuse eventually. In the meantime we have marvellous modern classics coming into the repertoire, like Tudor's *Lilac Garden*, Limón's *There Is a Time*, Sparembek's *Soldier's Song* and Balanchine's *Capriccio*. With wonderful people like Linda Stearns and Daniel

## Jillian Officer

### A Track Record of Canadian Creativity- Les GBC a Clear Winner!

It is a popular pastime among many dancegoers to make comparative judgements about the merits of our three major ballet companies. Yet, however amusing this may be it overlooks the absence of any common ground on which the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the National Ballet of Canada and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens may be assessed, especially if one is concerned with their contributions to the artistic development of the Canadian dance scene. Each company has its own history and thus its own distinctive personality for which we should, as an audience, be thankful.

What we should acknowledge, however, is the surprisingly healthy quantity (not necessarily quality) of Canadian choreography produced within these companies - the lion's share going to Les Grand Ballets Canadiens.

With the generous help of the Canada Council I have been able to record a list of over 200 works in which choreography, music and design were created by Canadians, native-born or naturalized.

Since its stage career began in 1955 (as Les Ballets Chiriaeff) Les Grands Ballets Canadiens has produced at least 79 works by Canadian choreographers including 27 for which the composers and designers were also Canadian and 16 that were based on Canadian themes.

Why so intense an output from Les Grands Ballets? All three companies have made efforts to train and employ Canadian dancers - all have used Canadian choreographers. The difference lies in the divergent environments. The National Ballet's foundation was a planned effort by members of the local community to establish a large classical company in Toronto. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet's seeds were sown by Gwenneth Lloyd and Bern Farrally and it grew to be an integral part of its local culture. But Ludmilla Chiriaeff found a very different atmosphere in Quebec.

Montreal in the early fifties was artistically very vital. The French network of CBC Television began broadcasting from Montreal in 1953. Chiriaeff, who came to Canada in 1952, choreographed ballets for the CBC *Concert Hour* series and many other programs. Les Ballets Chiriaeff



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provided regular work for several Canadian dancers until, reaching a saturation point, the CBC began to decrease the number of its dance programs.

In 1955, Chiriaeff turned to stage performance where acceptance by the public comes in tangible form—at the box office. A certain audience in Montreal welcomed the formation of a ballet company, but many French-Canadians had no particular feelings towards an outsider presenting an unfamiliar art performed predominantly by non-French dancers.

Chiriaeff's response to her critics was a comprehensive adaptation of the art to its environment. Despite early resistance from church-oriented schools, Chiriaeff spread a network of technique classes in communities which now had uncovered talent to the company school. The program also provides enrichment to the education of hundreds of children and builds future audiences. Sylvie Gagnon-Chevalier (silver medal winner at Varna, 1976) is a shining example of the program's success. No longer is it necessary to use French equivalents of dancers' names to make them acceptable to the public.

Another approach was to utilize the abundant artistic talent in Montreal to contribute ballets which would either introduce new audiences to the classical style or provide a mirror in which the Québécois might see themselves. French-Canadian music, folk dance and legends were used in abundance. During the first six years, such ballets as *Fête Canadienne* (1957), *Sea Gallows* (1959), *La Belle Rivière* (1959), *Bérubee* (1960), *Les Folies Françaises* (1960), *Canadiana* (1960/61) were totally Canadian creations. Other original ballets from this period employed music by composers Robert Fleming, Clermont Pepin, Michel Perrault and Jean Vallerand and designs by Odette de Borgne, Josephine Boss, Alexis Chiriaeff, Richard Lorrain, Nicole Martinet, Jacques Pelletier, Claudette Picard, Robert Prévost, Claude Rinfret and Gilles-André Villancourt. Les Grand Ballets has an impressive record in the number of Canadian designers it has used over the years and those first six years alone produced at least 29 original Canadian works. They varied in length and substance but choreographers Ludmilla Chiriaeff and Eric Gagnon created a suitable base for ballet's existence in Quebec. The form adapted without compromising the classic tradition, producing a company that truly reflects its home culture, from the sophistication of *Double Quartet* to the irresistible merriment of *Fête Carignan* now renamed *Hangman's Reel*.

Jackson, our ballet masters, we can keep a large repertoire going. We want to remain a classical company with a strong classical technique as its base but we want our dancers to be open to other dance developments. So we choose our repertoire very carefully with that in view. We add about 6 or 7 new works each year. It's part of the juggling act: how do you find the time to rehearse new works without reducing the number of performances you need to give in order to get the money to pay the bills? An octopus wouldn't have enough arms to keep all the balls in the air all of the time. And you get tired trying to find new solutions to old problems. The current economic climate is not helpful to artistic institutions but I think too many administrators walk around with long faces. I've made a commitment to this company and I intend to see it through. I believe in what I'm doing. I see it as evolution. We want the reputation of the company to improve with time and, when all we've talked about dovetails, we will go forward . . . but you go forward one small step at a time.'

In its 23rd season, les Grand Ballets Canadiens is about to make a quantum leap forward into a home of its own. With a 49-year lease from Esso and a \$450,000 grant from the province, it is renovating a derelict service station on mid-town St-Denis Street that once belonged to Prime Minister Trudeau's father. By March, the entire organization hopes to be in there. The new building will cover 34,000 square feet, (up from the current 20,000) and have three studios for the company and eight smaller ones for l'Ecole Supérieure and l'Académie. It will not be de luxe but it will have all the needed facilities under one roof. ('Heavens! Real showers', Vincent Warren is reported to have said upon being shown the blueprints.)

While the company is just beginning to get excited about the move, Colin McIntyre is already elsewhere, planning for the gala 25th anniversary celebrations two years hence. He is toying with a number of rabbits he can pull out of his hat but with eyes on the future, he remains always aware of the past.

'We wouldn't be here at all if it weren't for Madame Chiriaeff', he says, paying tribute to Les GBC's founder. 'Her spirit in many ways continues in the work we do; we're just accelerating the process. And in the process, we change.'

McIntyre's own processes are about to undergo a radical change. McIntyre junior is expected just before Christmas.

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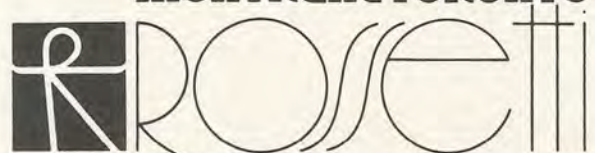
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## Après le Japon, La Joie de Danser!

Linda Rabin

Linda Rabin, la chorégraphe montréalaise que les milieux de la danse moderne au Canada connaissent bien, revient d'un séjour d'un an au pays des samurai, l'énigmatique Japon. Une bourse accordée par le Conseil des Arts lui a permis d'aller scruter le monde de la danse japonaise et d'en revenir avec des impressions très fortes et aussi multiples que les mille et un temples du pays du soleil levant.

C'est en sirotant de nombreuses tasses de thé japonais qui lui a été offert par M. Ono, (l'un des précurseurs de la nouvelle danse au Japon) que nous avons revisité le Japon et parlé de ce qu'elle y a trouvé. Linda Rabin semble toute transformée par ce Japon qui est encore très inbu de ses traditions de théâtre et de danse très bien conservées, comme le théâtre Noh, le Kabuki et le Kagura. Malgré sa couche de vernis occidental, on trouve le Japon féodal presque intact, si on gratte un peu la surface. Cependant, la danse classique (fortement influencée par les écoles russe et anglaise) est encore en voie de prendre forme et la danse moderne n'est souvent qu'un pâle reflet des écoles allemande et américaine (la technique Graham est immédiatement reconnaissable).

### A la recherche d'une nouvelle vitalité de la danse

Ce dépaysement était pourtant nécessaire à Linda Rabin qui était à la recherche d'une nouvelle vitalité et d'approches différentes dans sa danse. 'J'avais besoin de retrouver la joie de danser. J'étais rendue dans une sorte de cul-de-sac, surtout après l'une des dernières chorégraphiques, *La déesse blanche* (danse-théâtre ritualiste présentée à Montréal et Toronto en 1977). Il fallait un changement radical

dans ma vie afin d'être en mesure de découvrir de nouvelles voies.'

A 34 ans, Linda Rabin se définit comme une moderne classique influencée par la danse folklorique (elle connaît surtout les danses folkloriques israéliennes qu'elle a apprises dans les camps d'été), et au Japon elle a pu en apprendre à profusion à tous les festivals (omatsuri) où la population prend d'assaut les rues des villages. Dans ce pays, la danse n'est pas seulement réservée à une élite, comme on peut souvent le croire. Partout en dehors des grands centres urbains, la danse émane du peuple qui maintient les traditions bien vivantes. Ces danses séculaires revêtent souvent un caractère religieux et cultivent l'amour des ancêtres et la crainte des morts. Un court séjour dans les îles Ryûkyû, au sud, l'ont particulièrement émue. Elle s'y est rendu une semaine avant les célébrations afin d'assister aux préparatifs de la fête. 'J'observais les mouvements qu'ils répétaient sans relâche et les copiais. J'étais bien sûr une curiosité dans le village, mais sans plus. Les Japonais me trouvaient souvent étrange d'être là à apprendre leurs danses.' Rabin explique que les danses du sud (contrairement à celles du nord) sont à la fois légères comme l'air et fluides comme l'eau. Les mouvements coulent et s'enchaînent facilement, et c'est cette qualité que Rabin recherche constamment dans le mouvement. De plus, les danses sont simples, les mouvements répétitifs et les pieds prennent fortement racine dans le sol. Le rythme est omniprésent et leur confère beaucoup de dynamisme. Les Japonais attachent aussi beaucoup d'importance aux costumes multicolores regorgeant de motifs et taillés dans des tissus tous aussi riches les uns que les autres. Les



danseurs s'en recouvrent de plusieurs épaisseurs, ce qui donne beaucoup de relief à leurs mouvements. Enfin, le visage est souvent recouvert d'un masque qui peut rappeler un démon ou d'autres divinités du bien et du mal.

### La Kagura—plus ancienne que le théâtre Noh

Mais la forme de danse qui l'a le plus marquée et fascinée est le Kagura, encore plus ancienne que le théâtre Noh. Et elle se met soudain à m'expliquer, avec force gestes, cette forme de danse théâtre le qu'elle a vue dans un temple de la région de Tôhoku (partie nord-est de l'île de Honshû). Ainsi qu'elle l'écrit dans l'un des deux articles publiés dans le *Center News* (une petite brochure publiée par le Centre d'études japonaises): 'Le Kagura est une danse sacrée qui vient du peuple. Ses origines remontent au shintoïsme (la religion des '800 myriades de dieux' et une sorte de polythéisme animiste se traduisant souvent par l'exaltation de l'empereur et de la race japonaise) et elle comprend plusieurs danses. Certaines sont vibrantes, d'autres sont au contraire très lentes et rappellent le Noh. Les danses sont aussi rituelles et font souvent penser aux danses des Indiens d'Amérique. Quelques-unes racontent des histoires et d'autres constituent un hymne à la prière. Les danseurs représentent des dieux, des héros des guerriers, des femmes, des prêtres, la nature, des animaux.' Rabin s'étonne du fait que même si elle ne comprenait pas toujours la signification profonde de ces rituels dansants, elle pouvait tout de même en saisir la dimension spirituelle; les rythmes bien scandés, les chants, les tambours, le frapement des pieds contre le sol, le corps le plus près possible de la terre, l'éventail ouvert comme les plumes d'un paon dans une main et dans l'autre, un bâton décoré de clochettes en sont les principales composantes.

### Un communauté d'artistes

Sur la route qui l'a menée dans plusieurs régions du Japon, Rabin a découvert dans un genre de kibbutz, à Warabi-za, une communauté qui ne vit que par et pour les arts de la scène. Ce centre a été fondé il y a à peu près 30 ans par un chanteur, un danseur et un compositeur. Cette communauté emploie toutes ses énergies à sillonner les routes du pays pour présenter à la population japonaise un recueil de ses danses, chants et histoires traditionnel. La commune est scindée en cinq groupes qui font des tournées tout au cours de l'année, sauf en juillet et août, période pendant laquelle ils préparent les tournées de l'année suivante. Ceux et celles qui ont toujours rêvé de vivre dans un climat culturel qui réunit dans les faits les artistes de la musique, du chant, de la danse et du théâtre peuvent se rendre à cet endroit et y demeurer quelque temps.

Même si Rabin apprécie ce genre d'unification des arts de la scène, elle n'en demeure pas moins une artiste foncièrement indépendante. Elle préfère collaborer à différentes entreprises et à ce titre sa fiche est bien garnie: après avoir étudié à Juilliard, elle a été répétitrice à la compagnie Batsheva en Israël, assistante-répétitrice au Ballet Rambert en Angleterre, elle a aussi enseigné au Contemporary Dancers de Winnipeg, et à l'Université Simon Fraser.

### Les Japonais mettent la longueur d'une vie à maîtriser leur formes d'art

Ces dernières années, sa danse était devenue 'minimale' et d'une lenteur étudiée. Son but visait à toucher l'essence même de sa danse en faisant une sorte d'introspection, de



Kazuo Ono: creator of Butto

repli intérieur. Son cheminement l'avait amenée à rejeter l'éducation classique pour se rapprocher un peu plus de la danse à l'état pur, primitif. Cependant, son passage au Japon lui a appris d'autres vérités. D'une part, elle a redécouvert la joie de bouger et d'autre part, elle a appris qu'il n'existe pas de placement idéal. Chaque type de danse trouve 'son' meilleur placement. En suivant quelques cours de Noh (la première forme de danse japonaise avec laquelle elle s'est familiarisée) elle a soudainement réalisé que tout était différent: la tension requise, la fluidité, l'emphase, le placement du corps. Elle a donc réappris à travailler de l'extérieur vers l'intérieur, alors qu'elle suivait des leçons privées. Environ 30 minutes étaient consacrées au chant et 30 autres à la danse (principalement la danse finale qui est exécutée par le protagoniste à la fin d'une pièce de théâtre Noh). Le période consacrée au chant était plutôt aride: les sons étaient notés en japonais puis traduits phonétiquement en anglais et ensuite des signes indiquaient les tonalités exigées. 'La voix requise doit être grave et naturelle à la fois. C'est extrêmement compliqué de renvoyer les sons justes et je réalisais fort bien que je n'arrivais pas à répéter correctement après le professeur. C'est un entraînement de plusieurs années qui doit commencer à la tendre enfance.' Pour ce qui est de la danse, il fallait l'apprendre en entier avant que le professeur ne consente à faire des corrections. Leur façon d'enseigner est vraiment aux antipodes de la nôtre. Rabin explique que les Japonais ont la patience d'attendre toute une vie avant de maîtriser cette forme d'art. Malheureusement en Amérique, l'entraînement est souvent trop court. Cependant, l'expression individuelle est beaucoup plus mise à l'honneur qu'elle ne l'est au Japon.

### La danse moderne japonaise—une déception

Il en est de même de la danse moderne japonaise. Rabin est profondément déçue de ce qu'elle a vu. Selon ses observations, toutes les troupes se ressemblent. Aucune individualité, aucune recherche. Les danseurs donnent un spectacle et ne laissent pas l'impression qu'ils ont vraiment assimilé l'essence du mouvement. Rien n'est senti, rien n'est vécu. Le style découle nettement du ballet et les mouvements ressemblent souvent à du Graham. De plus, les chorégraphes sont plutôt simplistes: tous les danseurs répètent le même mouvement et se détachent rarement les uns des autres. Cependant, les danseurs japonais ne manquent pas



de technique: leurs mouvements sont précis, rapides, dynamiques, l'attaque est énergique et la musculature est aussi beaucoup plus tendue. L'utilisation de l'espace est fort différente de la nôtre: Rabin souligne que leurs mouvements sont plutôt compacts et confinés à une aire bien limitée. Elle a remarqué ce fait alors qu'elle enseignait dans une école de Tokyo dirigée par la chorégraphe Kaoru Ishii (qu'elle a connue à New York et qui lui a ouvert beaucoup de portes au Japon). Les locaux sont si petits qu'ils affectent directement l'ampleur du mouvement. Chacun dispose d'un espace vital si réduit que beaucoup de danseurs nord-américains se sentiraient beaucoup trop à l'étroit. La danse moderne en Amérique n'a pas évolué de la même façon; c'est au contraire l'usage illimité de la scène qui est le plus souvent encouragé. Notre culture et notre environnement naturel y sont pour quelque chose.

#### Tenir le milieu entre introversion et extraversion

Depuis qu'elle est revenue au pays, Rabin recherche le juste milieu entre l'introversion et l'extraversion. Elle sent qu'elle se dirige de plus en plus vers une danse vivante, pleine de fougue. 'Avant, je réduisais le mouvement à sa plus simple expression. J'ai appris à redécouvrir la joie de bouger sans pourtant que ma danse soit un spectacle purement superficiel.'

Rabin avoue cependant être beaucoup plus portée vers l'enseignement que vers la création. Elle a déjà enseigné en Angleterre, en France, en Israël et bien sûr au pays à Halifax, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montréal. Toutefois, ses récentes oeuvres chorégraphiques (elle en a un peu plus d'une dizaine à son actif) dont *La déesse blanche*, laissent présager d'autres oeuvres qui seront sûrement fort différentes. Elles seront probablement rituelles, avec un rythme bien marqué et un mouvement qui coule abondamment.

#### Le Buto

Mais après ce bain de culture japonaise, elle nous fera possiblement découvrir toute une gamme de mouvements qu'elle nous avaient cachait depuis quelques années alors qu'elle ne s'en tenait qu'au strict minimum. Pourtant, elle a toujours aussi d'attrance pour le théâtre et le nouveau mouvement de danse moderne purement japonais, le Buto, dont l'une des figures de proue est sans nul doute M. Ono. Le Buto se veut essentiellement expressionniste, qui colle de près au mouvement de la vie, une forme de représentation théâtrale du mouvement comme le prolongement du moi.

#### Après le mystère exotique du Japon, l'accueil de Bali

Le séjour de Rabin au Japon n'en fut pas un des plus relaxant. Elle était constamment confrontée à une culture si différente, toute en nuances, en bonnes manières et en codes d'éthiques auxquels il ne faut pas déroger pour survivre agréablement. C'est la raison pour laquelle elle s'est réfugiée pour une période de deux mois à Bali où elle se sentait en pays de connaissance, la danse jouissant d'une plus grande liberté d'expression.

Mais avant de quitter le Japon, Linda Rabin n'a pas manqué d'apprécier les bains publics où les hommes et les femmes vont faire leur toilette journalière - une sorte de rituel qu'elle a apprécié à sa juste valeur et qui lui a dévoilé une autre facette un peu plus décontractée de la vie à la japonaise!



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## In Review

### Barry Smith, Germaine Salsberg and Dancers

#### An Evening of Dance

Harbourfront  
Toronto

13-17 August 1980

When Merle and Kathryn and Helen danced the trio of ladies in Peter Randazzo's *Three-Sided Room*, they created a drama that was almost epic in its sweep. Their performances proved that Toronto Dance Theatre was absolutely right in placing its bets on strong personalities as the most immediate and interesting way of communicating dance. When one by one these ladies left for different parts - Merle and Helen to New York City and Kathryn to Marie Marchowsky and later the Pavlychenko Studios - the company seemed to hedge those bets a little by filling their places with ex-ballet dancers who, for all their virtues, never generated the same kind of intense personal interaction with an audience as did their predecessors. (Helen Jones, a Royal Ballet School trainee, counts as ex-ballet in technical terms, but that bright performing edge which she has honed to razor sharpness during her stay with Martha Graham, is modern in its urgency.) Now that Claudia Moore and Nancy Ferguson have, in their turn, departed, the company's attitude to its 'image' will no doubt shift again; if the recent Toronto appearances of several TDT alumni augur anything at all, that shift could mean a less homogeneous look for the company than it has projected of late.

All auguring aside, one of the most heartening dance events of the summer was the concert given by Barry Smith and Germaine (Merle, of old) Salsberg at Harbourfront. In addition to their extraordinary talents, the concert also featured some fine support from Grant McDaniel of Dancemakers and Fred McKittrick and Seth Walsh of New York - all three danced with Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers for a period - as well as fellow TDT alumni, Kathryn Brown and David Wood. Seeing Salsberg, Smith, Brown and Wood together on stage in Smith's *Electric Twilight*



Barry Smith and Germaine Salsberg

reminded me once more of what made TDT so strong in the early 1970s. They all possess their old power as performers and, in Smith and Salsberg's cases, the power has been heightened by a new-found self-awareness. Smith is more sensual, Salsberg more assured.

When Barry Smith was the great Baroque genie of TDT, he could always be counted on to dominate a stage. A remarkable physical presence, he possesses blondness, another-worldly pallor, height and a steely strength, especially in the torso, that used to earn him all the mythic and Death-figure roles. For all his strength, however, the impression he often created was one of filigree delicacy. Like most large people, he always communicated a self-consciousness about his conspicuity; the restraint he imposed on his movements translated as fussily detailed. He even made a dance with little hobbled steps and prissily flexed hands that he called *Lacemakers* (1971); it was meant to be an exploration of delicacy-as-style.

In the Harbourfront concert, Smith still showed some of his old restraint, but its expression has become congruous with his size; the delicacy seems more organic, less appliqué, less mannered. It seems to stem now from an emotional centre that has felt the breath of calm and harmony. In both *Electric Twilight* and his jaggedly tentative, even frosty duet, *Bridge of Glass*, those strange flexed hands and twining arm movements he has always liked showing us might belong to oriental ritual. Smith has grasped their full beauty or he has ascertained what they contain of him. Instead of using them as a mask as he once did, I think, he now presents them as a confession of self. Incongruity has become a lovely ambivalence.

With Germaine Salsberg, there was never any question of holding back. She was always very frank as a dancer. New York has not mellowed that frankness. As she demonstrated in her dance, *Trouble in Paradise*, she is only too willing to play the soubrette, a role that used to plague her at TDT. As the matchgirl who crashes an exclusive dance club in pursuit of a beautiful man (Smith), Salsberg etches a characterization of clarity that gives each of the work's episodes a definite focus. The difference between her performance of this role and the one she played in *Harold Morgan's Delicate Balance*, for instance, must be, like Smith's, one of self-acceptance. A prickly defensiveness is gone - and only temporarily missed. The new confidence in her technical skills which she displayed in the dancier *Bridge of Glass* and *Electric Twilight* no doubt allows her to embrace comic roles with a genuine relish.

Smith's choreography is probably not entirely right for her; it is perhaps too spacey - its home is among the stars. Someone seemingly as earthy as Kathryn Brown can convince us she's comfortable in Smith's firmament because her dramatic sense is less defined than Salsberg's. Salsberg seems to demand specific roles to show off her unique qualities as a performer.

I don't want to suggest that Kathryn Brown doesn't possess dramatic power. To the contrary: she is absolutely riveting.



Like Barry Smith, her every movement has an echo in space. Her ability to captivate an audience comes, I'm sure, from an unexplored ferocity combined with an almost flirtatious evasiveness. In TDT days, she was equally effective in an angry, vengeful work like Peter Randazzo's *Figure in the Pit* and in his trance-dance *Continuum*. Smith's *Electric Twilight*, a stylish work not unlike *Continuum* in mood and, with its acidic bluish-purple costumes, like *Figure in hue*, offers Brown the opportunity to engage both aspects of her personality through assertive solos alternating with frieze-like ensemble work.

*Electric Twilight* is another of those dances in which Smith acknowledges the existence of a mystical force. His eight-year-old Gothic horror piece, *Third Awakening*, and his brand new *Hoedown* are similar to it in this respect. Even when that force is represented quite literally—David Wood's satin-caped magician in *Hoedown*—the symbolic intent is unmistakable.

So much contemporary dance that attempts to communicate a particular mystical state descends to the expression of a pseudo-rapture, because the psycho-spiritual process that induces that rapture and, in fact, gives it a kind of credence cannot be captured in any theatrical terms short of *Seraphic Dialogue*. Smith's *Electric Twilight* avoids that pitfall largely by

not forcing its religiosity. It could be another smart dance-dance to pop-electronic music and the dancers' peculiar concentration on the details of their performance could be another display of dancerly self-consciousness. Even though it doesn't proclaim its beliefs in reverential tones, however, its satellite motif suggests that something more than narcissism is at the core of this dance.

As a choreographer, Kathryn Brown seems interested in that same capital-F force. As with Smith, the Force often takes an accessible form—it's a bit like Zeus in his various disguises. The arrival of a 'stranger' in *Rude Awakening* (TDT, 1976) wreaks irreparable damage on a family, while the all too twittery Birdwoman in *The Lark* (given its Toronto première at the Choreographic Workshop presented by the students of the Pavlychenko Studios in June) has a potent influence on the destinies of two pairs of troubled lovers. The Jamaican woman in *Pocomania* (TDT, 1974), like the Elizabethan sorcerer and his gnome-like accomplice in Smith's *Third Awakening*, actually possesses occult powers. However, where Brown most powerfully represents the Force is in a dance such as *Waiting* (TDT, 1975); where she traces the Force back to the mind of its perceiver. In *Waiting*, the Force becomes the mind of the heroine; its capacity to create dreaded possibilities grows truly

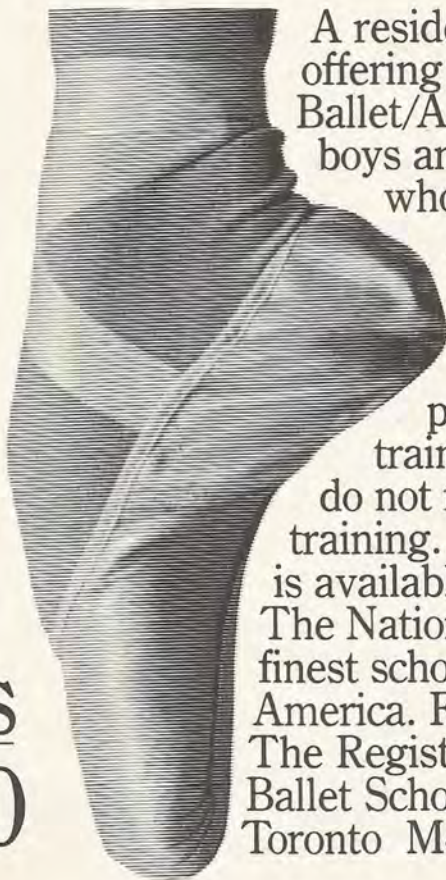
awesome. In a more positive way, Smith's *Electric Twilight* also seems to be saying that we contain the Force within us and that it can inspire us to ennobling action. Each member of Smith's quintet becomes a kind of priest or priestess—a possessor of the Force. Brown's Lucifer-like heroine is by contrast possessed by it; she is helpless to use it constructively.

It was hard to see Smith and Salsberg return to New York after such a provocative reunion. Especially as it means we'll also see David Wood head northwards to the wilds of York University's dance department, and Kathryn Brown disappear into the blue and white convent of the Pavlychenko Studios with too little trace. Wood is an accomplished, mature performer with a sure dramatic sense and Brown, without exaggeration, one of the country's priceless treasures. Both of them should be dancing more than they have in the last few years. Not out of any obligation to keep memories alive or a past current—that would be asking them to support a bridge of glass too fragile for conscious protection—but because they represent a style of performance that counterbalances the smug inexpressiveness of so much contemporary dancing. They shake us up a little.

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Michael Montanaro and Janet Oxley of Le Groupe de la Place Royale

## Le Groupe de la Place Royale

Studio Theatre  
National Arts Centre  
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9-11 October 1980

When it was still based in Montreal, Le Groupe de la Place Royale used to come each year to Ottawa and I always felt rather cold and distant toward them. It was hard to figure them out: they seemed to have some interesting new insights but one thought, 'Why don't they relax and have a bit more fun?' They used film and live dancers sometimes in the same work and the film was invariably more interesting than the figures on stage.

Then they moved to Ottawa. In August of 1977 they did Perreault's *Nanti Malam* (Balinese for *Later The Same Evening*) in a large old upper room in the teachers college on Cartier Square, and I suddenly realized that I liked what they were doing: using their bodies and their voices, and making their own music. They weren't telling a story or working out personal problems through dance; they were working together. It was like seeing a family where each person was both an individual and a member of a happy group. It was a revelation and a turning point.

In the last three years Le Groupe has

performed once a year at the National Arts Centre and more often in their studios (once the workplace of Yousuf Karsh) above the Hardy Arcade on Sparks Street. They seemed warmer and livelier there than at the NAC—until now. Between October 9 and 11 they gave a new program at the NAC Studio that was well balanced, had a good solid rhythm, stimulated and intrigued the audience and made everybody want to see more of Le Groupe de la Place Royale. It was like another breakthrough: now, more people know why some of us think Le Groupe is one of the most original and exciting modern dance companies in Canada.

The evening opened with *Miniatures*, a group of five short pieces, each choreographed by one, two or three others. The ones not dancing were playing the various instruments that banked the rear of the stage and made a handsome set for the dance—drums and percussion, a series of large metal frames with metal and wood objects suspended in them, and a small glass orchestra. Michael Montanaro composed the music, which sounded beautiful—both primitive and spacey, sounds of hands thumping skin drums, beating wood and metal, gurgling and patting water in glass, occasionally voices chanting.

Each item was different, beginning with a bright cheery opener by Tassy Teekman

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for Bill James, Michael Montanaro and Janet Oxley. Then Cathy Kyle (a tall, slim, lubricious goddess, a new member of the group) doing a sexy, funny polymorphous-perverse solo by Bill James. Bill alone, stripped down to basketball shorts, looking very muscular under a powerful spotlight, with Michael sitting next to him, accompanying him with drumbeats. A wonderful undulating duo of two girls in red bathing suits, Suzy and Cathy, that seemed to come from way under water, done to watery music and voices from the glass orchestra. It was like two undersea creatures frolicking and mirroring each other. Finally a long, cerebral, physical, sometimes perplexing meditation designed by Michael Montanaro for his wife, Tassy Teekman. It was the closest I'd ever seen them come to expressing anxiety in a dance performance, and it was fascinating: it both expressed and transcended anxiety.

Sometimes the dancers looked expert, leaping and dancing together. At other times they hunched or crumpled, bending into strange lumps of movement. But in all of it, even in strange or different moments, we felt that it wasn't five different dances, it was all one work.

Then we saw the parents of these young dancer-choreographers. The second number on the program was Jean-Pierre Perreault's *Dernière Paille*, that we saw

three years ago at the Odéon of the University of Ottawa. It's a dance of heaviness, of energy, of community; it was first done in silence, the dancers covered in grey-green garage mechanics' overalls, only bare hands, heads and feet showing out of the baggy costumes. For this performance Jean-Pierre asked Michael Montanaro to make some background music for it—just something to fill the silence—and he obliged with three endless chords transforming themselves electronically, like a Terry Riley or Steve Reich score.

Again it's a tribal experience. The dancers grow out of a row, out of the floor, out of the ground. They run up and down ramps, they hang from two thick ropes, they lift each other and push each other around. They leap and dance and lug and fall: they're people, they're bags, they're dead weights, they're beautiful bodies hidden in old green canvas sacks, they hang suspended in air: they make us feel things we never knew we had, that we couldn't quite put a name to, but we wanted to break into wild applause when it was over.

During the first two numbers none of the dancers had spoken, although they had often sung, chanted and spoken while they were dancing in other works, such as Peter Boneham's *What Happened*, that weird little non-play by Gertrude Stein. His new work, *The Collector of Cold Weather*,

using poems of Connecticut poet Laurence Raab, made them into everything ('God,' somebody said, 'you used to be dancers, then you were dancers, singers and musicians, now you're dancers, singers and actors!') *Collector* is a series of 12 or 13 sketches, the first 13 of 21, to music by John Plant. They're dreams, they're scenes of violence, they're disconnected melodies, enacted with bodies, voices and chairs—heavy, square, solid pastel-coloured chairs. There were scenes of watching, scenes of violence, and—beautifully—two wonderful scenes, one of a western sagebrush song, with two gunfighters killing each other; the other a mad schoolroom scene, with Tassy as a schoolteacher wielding a gun and a whip (that turned into a skipping rope), the students counting on their fingers and acting up in class behind the teacher's back.

Who was the Collector? John Plant thinks it was Edward, a character mentioned but never seen. *The Collector of Cold Weather* will continue another time in its finished version (Plant has already written the music for the whole work)—and we hope and trust that the Groupe de la Place Royale will continue to amaze, perplex and delight us, too.

BURF KAY

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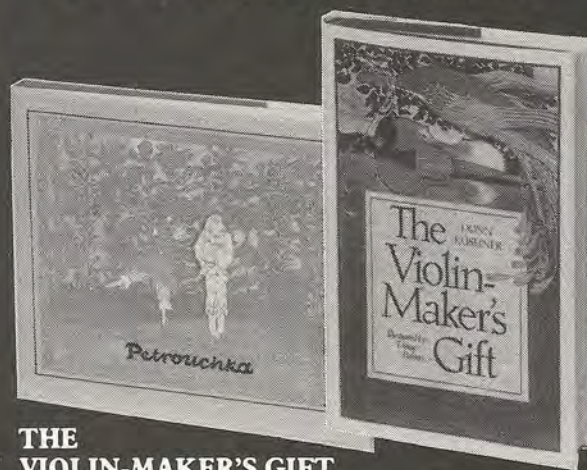
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## Mirrors, Masques and Transformations

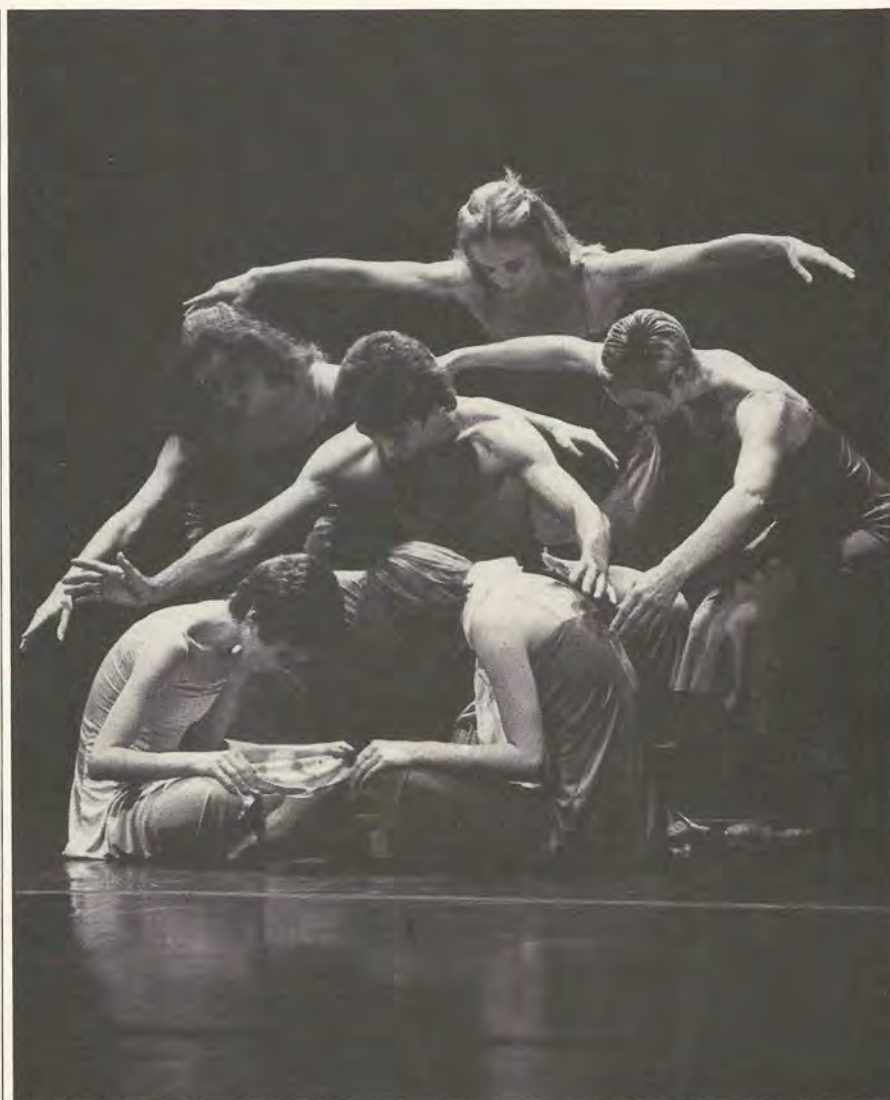
Shaw Festival Theatre  
Niagara-on-the-Lake  
5-7 September 1980

*Mirrors, Masques and Transformations*, Judith Marcuse's dance extravaganza for the Shaw Festival, turned out to be one of those works which it is easier to admire than wholeheartedly to adore. Nearly 80 minutes long and framed in three distinct parts, *Mirrors* gave plentiful evidence of the hot-house creation which advance publicity suggested it might be. It was out of season for sure, one gets to see little Canadian dance in the summer months, but it also had the rather vivid, slightly artificial colouring of a flower that has been forced.

In fact, we know, because Marcuse made no secret of the fact, that she had to create *Mirrors* in a feverish five weeks of rehearsal and although the work to some extent synthesizes much of what she has done already as a choreographer it must still have been hellish trying to make a working ensemble and a new dance in so short a time.

Still, Judith Marcuse was largely able to handpick her dancers for a project originally suggested by Shaw's artistic director Christopher Newton and then expanded with his concurrence by Marcuse into what we eventually saw. It has been one of her artistic tenets that there really is a meeting point of dance styles, contemporary and traditional, and it was no accident that Marcuse chose her cast from diverse sources. For the record, the company included James Kudelka of the National Ballet, John Kaminski and Patti Caplette of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Alexandre Bélin of Pointépiénu (and for many years formerly with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens), Peggy Smith Baker of Dancemakers, David Brown of the Martha Graham Company and Sheila McCarthy, a Vancouver-based actress/dancer. Claudia Moore completed the company, replacing the originally announced Veronica Tennant. Also, for the first time, Marcuse chose to dance in one of her own ensemble pieces.

By and large, this improbable combination of artists worked well and by the evening's end it was hard not to think of the dancers as a seasoned company. Certainly each remained an individual and in the last section was given a flamboyant solo, yet at other times they all blended into a harmoniously working ensemble, symbolized aptly by the striking human sculpture of multiple bodies which introduced each of the first two parts of *Mirrors*. One of the evening's pleasures was to see dancers as different in physique and style as Claudia Moore and Peggy Smith Baker together on stage, each moving in



*Mirrors, Masques and Transformations*

ways that revealed something new about their artistic personalities.

In her published statements about *Mirrors, Masques and Transformations*, Judith Marcuse had been vague and non-committal concerning its content and meaning. There *was* a structure linking the three parts in a day in the life of a generalized female personality—A Woman—but it was a forced structure that often did little to make sense of the actual images thrown out in the dancing. These themselves were often drawn from earlier works and occasionally seemed to be hinting at social/political themes also raised in earlier works.

Only at one's peril, however, should one forget the showman in Judith Marcuse and much of *Mirrors* was just that—a good show of what engaging dancing can be even if it does not add up to all that much. The earlier part of the last section, a nightclub scene, looked for all the world like an updated version of the traditional act three divertissements in a 19th century story ballet. The context was but a pretext for flashy show dancing until Judith reasserted

her control by injecting her own infatuation with ritual dance so that the performers began to create their own inner, onstage world instead of projecting something to the audience. It was for a moment like the *Sadhana Dhoti* she created for Banff students and Contemporary Dancers last year.

In a way, *Mirrors* may prove to be a summing up of a particular stage in Judith Marcuse's development as a choreographer. The suggestion often given in the taped electronic score sound-collage that the workaday world is essentially banal, self-destructing and cruel is something Marcuse has now thoroughly worked over and may happily choose to leave alone. Perhaps the new direction will take her towards a more abstracted, less intensely felt and altogether purer choreographic form of expression—in which case *Mirrors, Masques and Transformations* must represent a very important chapter in her artistic biography.

KEVIN SINGEN



## Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise

Théâtre Passe Muraille  
Toronto  
3 - 20 September 1980

Mention the word 'tide' and automatically one thinks of the sea or that famous laundry detergent of the same name. 'T.I.D.E.', however, the short-form name for the Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise, is one of the most exciting modern dance groups working currently in Toronto. In terms of performance, T.I.D.E. offers a 'new dance'—progressive, innovative, energetic, at times comic, slightly outrageous and at other times seriously analytical and academic.

T.I.D.E. consists of three core members, Paula Ravitz, Denise Fujiwara and Allan Risdill. Paula, the spokesman of the group, as well as a dancer, is T.I.D.E.'s choreographer and artistic co-ordinator. A graduate of York University, she has received two choreographic awards from the Ontario Arts Council. Denise, also an honours York graduate and former Canadian Modern Rhythmic Gymnastics champion is an original member of T.I.D.E. A versatile technician, strong and precise yet delicate and graceful in movement, she is a lovely dancer to watch. Allan's previous fertile association with Regina Modern Dance Works and his experience in working with theatre and puppetry makes him a valuable member of the group. Other artists working with T.I.D.E. include a small number of 'new music' composers and designers who specialize in visual arts, landscape architecture, fashion, lighting and theatre design. The most exciting aspect of a working co-operative like this is the opportunity each artist has to contribute his or her particular talent towards the creation of a work.

In keeping with this innovative creative policy T.I.D.E. frequently holds talk sessions with its audience following a dance concert. The group will sit down with the spectators to explain techniques or discuss its personal philosophy towards dance. An unusual approach, this 'didactic' method illustrates T.I.D.E.'s commitment to progressive dance and provides the public with a valuable opportunity to widen its understanding of the performance in particular and the dynamics of new dance as an art

form in general. This fresh, unstuffy informality affords a pleasurable extension of an already stimulating dance performance.

Recently at a workshop session, Paula, describing her group's investigation into the technique of contact improvisation, said, 'We (the first two dancers) give resistance with our bodies. Then the third dancer jumps off the impulser. How he jumps is completely up to him. We go through that cycle, maybe three times and the point of contact can be the shoulder, the side or anything. You just have to open everything'. Obviously T.I.D.E. is not fixed into set choreographic patterns. The creativity of the dancer is allowed to become an integral part of the composition.

From September 3-20 T.I.D.E. presented its unique approach to dance in concert at the Théâtre Passe Muraille. *Common Ground*, the opening piece is an abstract composition based on the interdependence between dancers as they move through a series of spatial patterns and linear designs. The dancer investigates the interactions of energy and rhythm created by their bodies moving in geometric patterns. Allan, Denise and Paula, wearing matching blue, green and pink jeans and shirt combinations, looked like serious workers in the midst of an experiment. And the experiment worked. Although there is obviously a set structural pattern, the individuality of movement of each dancer heightened and complimented it, thus extending its initial form. The trio managed to convey to the audience a marvellous sense of energy and force that linked them together even when there was no physical contact. The music, a series of conversations about the dance (a subtle pedagogic note) and a Bulgarian folk song maintained the flow of the piece centring the pulsing energies of the dancers.

*Mitred*, is a true co-operative. Its object is to examine two disparate elements at the point of junction. This concept is developed not only through Allan Risdill's choreography, but through the music, a combination of two separate tapes, one of grinding glass, the other of the layered pitch of a Japanese temple bell. The stage design, a series of slides, illustrates the same idea. The slides, composed of brightly coloured abstract shapes, throw the dancers into unusual relief and create the impression that they are moving

through water. The resulting impact—dancer on dancer over slide over music—creates a many-layered dance and offers a wealth of perceptual possibilities.

*Hit 'N' Run, Slide*, performed by the three dancers is another delightful exercise in rhythmic exploration and contact improvisation. Although the dance is set to the disco music of Sugarhill Gang, it is not a disco dance, but rather a manifestation of the music's energy. It looks like fun—exuberant, exhilarating and engulfing. A memorable image is Denise, walking out of the vortex of movement, the audience's mental image of her beautiful dancing still fresh, shaking her head saying, 'I think I'd rather paint'. The absurdity and the mirth of the moment infuses the audience with laughter.

*Banana Envy* and *Swank (Olors)* are additional works based in rhythmic exploration. *Swank (Olors)* is a humorous, 'classy' portrait piece, as the title suggests, featuring a soloist dressed in stylish green garbage bag, red-polished fingernails, body powdered deadly white. Bright spotlights emphasize energetic dance ably performed by Susan McKenzie, performing associate of T.I.D.E. In contrast, *Banana Envy* is a dance performed in almost complete darkness. The occasional flash of light reveals Paula Ravitz in black costume and tap shoes but the main action is auditory—voice and feet—the beat of tap shoes and Denise's chant 'Banana-an-an...'

The creation and development of a particular quality of images is another facet of T.I.D.E.'s dance presentation. The images are not only representative of everyday activities but are also emotional in nature. Allan Risdill's solo, *Excerpt (Awakenings)* is a portrayal of such emotional images as fear, surprise, laughter and despair. *Rushes*, the group's longest piece, is a kaleidoscope of its various experiments, an intricate and complex composition.

T.I.D.E.'s appearance at Théâtre Passe Muraille was an important step in the company's development—the chance it had been awaiting to present its work on a decent stage for a full season. Yet this does not mean that T.I.D.E. has in any sense changed its image. It is still dedicated to innovation. 'Sometimes', says Paula, 'we're surprised with what we create... and we never know for sure how we're going to go'.

GAIL VANSTONE

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Brian Macdonald's *Time Out of Mind*

## Banff Festival of the Arts Dance

Eric Harvie Theatre  
Banff Centre  
15-16 August 1980

The wealthiest of Canada's western provinces was in the throes of a birthday party, its own, and Alberta's artists and guest artists spent weeks pondering appropriate gifts. In the visual arts, Dave More won \$1,000 for his design of a Calgary commemorative arch featuring casts of labourers lounging around the base of a massive structure topped by a steel lunchbucket. More than \$400,000 was spent creating and touring a musical simply called *Alberta!*, which professed to present a capsule history of the province's 75 years in a short tuneless evening.

The dance presents were both as lavish and as modest, respectively, as the offerings in its sister arts. David H. Lui, the Vancouver impresario, dazzled everyone with his choice gift, a spectacular evening of dance highlights featuring the likes of Valentina and Leonid Kozlov, Evelyn Hart and Frank Augustyn in a selection from ballet's favourite hits.

At the Banff Centre, the Summer Festival of the Arts had an offering of a different sort. The dance program annually presents a selection of classical, modern and contemporary works, including the premiere of a dance created on the Banff Centre's students by the winner of the Clifford E. Lee Choreography Award. Named after a wealthy Albertan philanthropist, the award this year went to the artistic director of the Pacific Ballet Theatre, Renald Rabu, whose immediate response on winning the prize was to plan a work on an Alberta theme.

Cowboys, he was overheard to say, had

already been done to death, which rather limited the field. What remained as an obvious and not yet stale theme—in distance, at any rate—was energy, the boom-province's political bane and lifeblood. *Sparks* was to be the title. It would feature six men and one woman and it would be set to the music for *Oedipus* of Calgary composer Quentin Doolittle.

The result was not the highlight either of the birthday or of the Banff dance presentation as a whole. The five men wore black from head to toe, with red gloves and shoes, and looked for all the world like dancing matches. Worse, they were clumsy matches. There was no questioning the dance technique of the men involved. In other works on the program, or in workshop presentations seen in the preceding weeks, all had distinguished themselves. Yet here the lifts were awkwardly executed, the various ensembles were, contrary to design, chaotic, and the incessant quivering induced in the five men by the single female dancer was indifferently maintained.

Natasha Hosein had virtually no opportunity to demonstrate whatever skills she may possess. The dark-haired beauty was little more than the flame around which the male matches quaked suggestively yet without eroticism. The audience's marked lack of enthusiasm for *Sparks* was the choreographer's first slap. The second came in the school's ill-timed announcement that the criteria for winning the Lee Award in coming years would be more stringently drawn to effect stricter quality control.

An observer might feel less dispirited about the event as a whole had Rabu's been demonstrably the worst work in the evening. Yet there was no cause for celebrating Jorge Garcia's *Majismo*, a vapid attempt to recreate the elegance of the

Spanish Majas immortalized in various states of undress by Goya. The vitality of the portraits and of Spain's dance heritage was denied in a series of precious, self-consciously showy dances which were every bit as trivial as those seen in *Paquita* the previous year.

The estimable Larry Hayden also contributed a dud in the buffo pastiche *Venetian Twins*. The tale centres on twin brothers whose misadventures carry them through the usual problems, romantic and otherwise, and through some cramped exhibitions of a degraded dance vocabulary. Hayden has gone beyond pastiche into the palest imitation of academic classical dance, and has created nothing more notable than disposable dance.

The program would have been a lengthy waste of time but for the superb work of the dancers and technical staff of the Centre in Brian Macdonald's *Time Out of Mind*. Well past its thousandth performance, this piece has become one of the staples of the repertoire yet never stale. The centre was dominated here by Dwight Shelton and Annette av Paul, both supported by the Banff corps boasting all the athleticism and critical precision of line and physical statement that their work elsewhere lacked.

ERIC DAWSON

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## The Paul Gaulin Mime Company

Harbourfront Theatre  
Toronto  
17-20 September 1980

Ironically the tremendous international success of the French mime master, Marcel Marceau, has had a narrowing effect on the expectations audiences have of the art of mime in general. Marcel Marceau, who has paid several visits to Canada, uses the traditional white face, Pierrot costume and works in silence.

Today, however, there is a revolution afoot within the art of mime which happily threatens to overturn many unnecessarily rooted traditions and to open mime up both in terms of technique and of artistic objectives.

Paul Gaulin, who himself studied with Marceau and with Marceau's great teacher, Etienne Decroux, is at least skirting the fringes of the current mime revolution. His first Toronto show in two years, given in Harbourfront's cosy little theatre, was as refreshing in variety of content as it was admirable in its technical skill. There were mood pieces, short narrative vignettes and even a very pleasant interlude during which Gaulin chatted to the audience about the work he does.

For Paul Gaulin and his company, Niki Tilroe and Jay Fisher, the Toronto appearance meant giving up any thought of attending the big mime festival then being held in Vancouver. Gaulin, however, is based in Toronto and rightly feels he should be seen here more often. Now in its sixth year, the little mime troupe has made many tours, including excursions into the United States yet it deserves to be seen more often in the larger urban theatres.

A good deal of the show was old or reworked material within Gaulin's repertoire but little of it had been seen, or at least remembered, in Toronto. Therefore, Gaulin's audience was duly appreciative of the black undertones of the humour in *Heads*—a bizarre duet in Victorian costume for mimes with artificial necks that can grow and twist in awkward ways.

Illusion is of course part of the delight of mime shows but it can take far more interesting forms than the creation of invisible brick walls. *Crossing the River* was billed as a 'traditional Chinese Boat piece'



Paul Gaulin's *Heads*

but unless one had had a solid grounding in Chinese mime traditions this information was of far less consequence than the miraculous way in which Gaulin and Tilroe turned the Harbourfront stage into a palpable river—an effect achieved by the exact synchronization of their movements as they stood at opposing ends of an imaginary boat.

Occasionally Paul Gaulin's imagination which can soar beautifully, whimsically and at times almost surrealistically also falters. *Lessons*, in which we follow the progress of a far from engaging boy and girl through their school careers loads one

cliché upon another. They are well executed clichés but unsubtle. Only the pathetic figure of the teacher is endowed with more intricate character.

The ancient art of mime is clearly not stagnating and with the general expansion of public interest in dance may also find itself a wider audience especially if such talented exponents as Paul Gaulin continue to provide programs that stretch and test the possibilities of the medium.

KEVIN SINGEN



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Nederlands Dans Theater in Jiri Kylian's *Symphony of Psalms*

## Nederlands Dans Theater

Queen Elizabeth Theatre  
Vancouver

14-17 August 1980

Jiri Kylian, artistic director of the Nederlands Dans Theater, has earned an international reputation for his inspiring and unique choreography. Kylian was born in Prague and takes great pride in sharing a birthplace with his favorite composer, Leoš Janáček. His studies at both the Prague National Theater Ballet School and the Prague Conservatory included classical ballet, Graham-inspired modern dance, folk styles and theatre. From there he went on a scholarship to the Royal Ballet School in London and, in 1968, joined the Stuttgart Ballet under the late John Cranko. Although he loved performing, he jumped at Cranko's offer to choreograph, thus beginning his career under ideal conditions: he had a full orchestra, top-notch dancers, and unlimited time and space for creativity. Kylian spent the next seven years with the Stuttgart, moving on in 1975 to join Hans Knill, (now regisseur for the Nederlands), as co-director of the company. It took him a few years to make

his mark and assume sole directorship as he continued to develop the company's ballet/modern stylistic synthesis. Today the NDT displays the superb control, strength and emotion that Kylian's arduous movement demands.

Kylian's choreography combines a wholly personal style of contemporary dance with a strong classical base. Technically we see both the poised, extended line of ballet and the sinuous spine and flexed knees and feet of modern.

Spatially, Kylian stretches the conventions of each discipline as well. His dancers use the floor for deep lunges and rolls. In most pieces (except the satiric *Symphony In D*), the women wear soft ballet shoes: this helps us to see each dancer's strong contact with and rebound from the floor. Then, with quick transitions they spring airbound, leaping across the stage or being thrust into apparent flight.

The brilliance of Kylian's approach also lies in his ability to use complex contemporary music as the structure for movement. For his choreography Kylian chooses composers such as Janáček, Stravinsky, Martinu, Schönberg and Berio. He creates dance that is equivalent to the

score: sometimes the movement counterpoints the music, but it has its own rationale. He amalgamates technical, natural and athletic styles to transform the score into motion and to create a powerful association between the two. He is successful in his intention. The kinetics reflect the impulse, speed and characteristics of the music.

The dancers move through Kylian's work as a tight, well-connected ensemble. There are no stars nor corps de ballet to produce what Kylian has referred to in interviews as a 'waste in the company'. Superstars imply that there will also be insignificant members—hence the waste. In fact, all the dancers are stunning movers. Watching them is a vital experience. Their eyes and faces express an aware commitment to their roles. In their expression of human qualities they communicate intimately with the audience. Physically, they demonstrate balance, strength and ease, even through their most difficult steps. Smooth transitions connect phrases of eloquent movement.

Kylian's choreography often calls for large groups of dancers, moving in unison. Unexpectedly, one dancer will break to



dance a solo. Again without warning, a duet will emerge from another part of the ensemble. Surprises occur all over—simultaneous dances which are then woven and wrapped back into the group.

Effectively, Kylian often directs the dancers' focus towards the back or from one side to the other. When the ensemble moves slowly in either direction there is the appearance of limitless space.

The first piece of the company's program was *Symphony of Psalms*. Set to music by Stravinsky with decor by William Katz, the piece depicts several different relationships between members of the group. There are beautiful movement themes repeated in the form which suggest both an envelopment and uncovering of bodies. For example, the dancers frequently cover their faces with long, undulating arms which extend over their heads to reach mid-spine. This is a passionate work, speaking to people's belief in human co-existence. Katz' backdrop, made up of lavish layers of oriental carpets lends a primitive and spiritual nature to the environment.

*Sinfonietta* was premiered in Charleston, South Carolina, for the 1978 Spoleto Festival's Janáček celebration. It depicts the characteristic exuberance of the Czech people with vigorous, jubilant movements. According to the program notes, Janáček had in mind 'the free Czech in all his

beauty, joy of living and power'. Kylian has sensitively brought the dance close to that expression.

*Field Mass* is set to a composition by Bohuslav Martinu, suggested by the annihilation of a complete Czech battalion during the First World War. Kylian has derived from this occurrence a universal statement about the imposed bravery of a group of soldiers contrasted with the fear and anguish of the individual man. The piece is a masterful, provocative work: all 14 men dance convincingly of their hardship.

Kylian ventures into the light-hearted and comic with *Dream Dances* and *Symphony in D*:

*Dream Dances* is a series of vignettes, all set to Berio's arrangement of folk songs from various countries. However, Kylian has not used folk steps. He has created original choreography derived from several ethnic elements—customs, heritage, festivities. The piece has moments when costume, music and dazzling allegro create robust crescendos.

*Symphony in D* is Kylian's ode to the clichés of movement techniques: ballet, athletics and the classrooms of modern dance. Its success rests in its wit. We see a mockery of a pas-de-deux, fancy pointe-work (this being the only piece where it is used), and spoofs on competitive activity. The dancers perform virtuosic technique

while laughing at the evident craziness of their games.

In Kylian's exquisite story, *Transfigured Night*, we see the conceptual development of emotional and physical contrasts. The work is based on a poem by Richard Dehmel and set to Arnold Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht*. It involves a woman, her lover and her husband and three characters who represent their alter egos. Thus the external and internal actions of each individual create the oppositions reflected in their movement styles. For example, the woman's lyrical, romantic adagio contrasts the thrusting, explosive solo of her alter ego. The supported work is intricate and quite spectacular. It varies in tone from fragile to exertive as the couples move through sculpturesque lifts.

Kylian is obviously a man of great talents and insight. It's no wonder that several artistic directors, including Arnold Spohr, are after him to choreograph for their companies. But Kylian is staying put for the time being. He will likely invite other choreographers such as Hans van Manen, Louis Falco and Twyla Tharp to choreograph for NDT. In the meantime, however, he and his company are touring extensively throughout the United States and Europe, and one hopes we'll see them back in Canada in the near future.

CATHY LEVY

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Lar Lubovitch Dance Company

## Lar Lubovitch Dance Company

Ryerson Theatre  
Toronto

22-25 October 1980

Even that special brand of optimism that marks the impresario from ordinary mortals could hardly have led Mark Hammond and Uriel Luft (masterminds of Toronto's first dance subscription series) to expect such a success as that achieved by the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, their season opener. As if to counter the rather austere carpetless atmosphere of Ryerson Theatre the first-night audience greeted the New York-based company with the kind of enthusiasm generally reserved in this city for spectacular three-act ballets. Only the arbitrary decision of stage management to cut short the calls prevented a standing ovation. On closing night many of the audience were on their feet shouting and hollering before any stage manager could pre-empt them.

The reasons for this warm reception naturally have to do with the way this 10-member troupe performs and with the nature of what they dance. The Lar Lubovitch Dance Company is a cracker-jack troupe of great technical versatility and sensitivity. They exude devotion to the work in hand and joy in the process of doing it. As individuals they shine, as a company they merge into one of the most beautifully integrated ensembles you could hope to see. They become a living, breathing, organism. Whether this is the result of the particular combination of personalities involved, or of the way they are trained, or of Lar Lubovitch's way of choreographing is anybody's guess. This

anybody would say it has much to do with Lar Lubovitch.

Judging by the four items repeated each night for the Toronto engagement, it is clear that Lubovitch has a very personal view of what dance is about. He has command of a clear but expressive movement vocabulary which seems to owe little to anyone but himself, the imaginative processor of a wide range of past artistic and theatrical experiences. He is one of a handful of modern dance choreographers whose work has sufficient interest to sustain a whole evening of dance.

Not all devotees of modern dance admire Lar Lubovitch. Like Twyla Tharp and, even, to an extent, Paul Taylor, he is sometimes dismissed as a light-weight, as one willing to betray seriousness of purpose for immediate theatrical effect. Yet, as much as Lubovitch provides dance that is accessible and dynamic, he is obviously serious. One senses his commitment to the principle of movement as the prime concern of dance and a belief that joy, humour and levity are far from incompatible with the higher purposes of the art.

*Exultate, Jubilare*, a work ably performed in the repertoire of our own Grands Ballets Canadiens, exemplifies Lubovitch's kind of reverence for dancing and also the marvellous kinetic imagination he can bring to bear on a musical score with a religious theme. As in *North Star* and *Cavalcade* (a Canadian première) we see Lubovitch's extraordinary gift for creating choric movement, for shifting patterns, for creating resolution from seeming disorder, for weaving a seamless stream of movement that energizes its audience almost as much as it does the dancers themselves. I suspect that as with the work of Twyla Tharp, a good deal of the

audience's appreciation derives from the sense that it would be both fun and possible to get up and join in.

Of course that is an illusion. The intricacy, speed and sustained energy of Lubovitch's choreography requires a very high order of dancer and somehow he has found just the right artists for his purposes. They in their turn appear to have found just the right choreographer. They project strong conviction in the value of what they are dancing and also a clear sense of enjoyment. In fact, this inner life, the private enjoyment Lubovitch's dancers get from doing his work, prevents them from overselling to the audience and from pushing what might be tasteful extravagance, as in the closing passage of *Cavalcade*, across the line into commercial crassness. Those whirling ribbons are teetering on the brink.

Although his taste is clearly for dances that leave much to the audience's imagination Lar Lubovitch can channel that imagination so that it gets across more than a general message. *The Time Before The Time After (After The Time Before)*, inspirationally set to Stravinsky's *Concertino for String Quartet*, examines with sensitivity but little sentimentality the all too familiar aspects of a human relationship that is obsessive, self-wounding yet inescapable.

It is not surprising that Lar Lubovitch is a 'hot' choreographer, his works sought after around the world. He has something to say and says it in a way that is unmistakably his own. Presented through the mouthpiece of his own chosen troupe of dancers it takes on the richness of both poetry and song.

MICHAEL CRABB



## Berlin Opera Ballet

Metropolitan Opera House  
New York  
July 1980

When Valeri Panov finally left the USSR in 1974, after 27 months of intense hounding by the Soviet authorities, every western company in the world wanted him. He and his wife Galina danced from Europe to Australia, Israel to the Americas. They were in bad shape, their repertoire was old fashioned and the verdict was in even before the novelty had worn off: Panov was over the hill. He had been a seven day wonder and he was written off.

Two years ago Panov resurfaced under a new guise, as choreographer. Two of his full-length ballets, *Cinderella* and *The Rite of Spring*, received cautiously optimistic reviews when the Berlin Opera Ballet made its New York debut in the summer of 1978.

In mid-July of this year, Panov and the Ballett der Deutschen-Oper, Berlin, returned to the Metropolitan Opera to provide conclusive proof that Panov, at 43, is still a crackerjack dancer and an all round man of the theatre.

He has woven a tapestry as richly textured as a Persian carpet, entirely faithful to the spirit, if not always to the letter, of Dostoevsky's 1867 novel, *The Idiot*. The focus has been slightly altered but so convincing is his concept that he has stamped this work as his own, as definitively as Gérard Philipe had for a previous generation of movie goers. Mr. Panov has created an instant classic, a magnificent warhorse in the classical idiom, infinitely more than the sum of its parts.

Admittedly, in reducing Dostoevsky's vast canvas to its essence, (the reverse sides of the same coin: good and evil,) nuances are necessarily lost. People and relationships are rendered in shorthand, larger than life but devoid of any half-tones.

To Roghozin, the uncouth nouveau-riche merchant, a *muzhik* just one step removed from his crude origins, Panov has given the *sturm und drang* choreography of the steppes: the sliding, dipping, whirlwind movements of Russian and Georgian folk dance. As danced by Panov himself, he comes across like Genghis Khan—an elemental force made wild by the pain in his soul.

At the other extreme is Prince Mishkin, the holy simpleton. He is a recurring figure in Russian literature: both victim and redeemer. In giving the role (created by Vladimir Gelvan) to Rudolf Nureyev, the choreographer cast against type. Until now Nureyev's native dynamism has all but overwhelmed his characterizations. (Invisible inside a burlap bag, he was nonetheless instantly recognizable in Paul Taylor's *Book of Beasts*, for example.) As *The Idiot*, he opts for texture over bravura



Valeri Panov and Rudolf Nureyev in *The Idiot*

and submerges himself in the gauche, gentle, other-worldly epileptic. His gaze is as direct as a child's. His style is lean and elegant.

Panov's achievement is that he has not simply thrown together all the diverse elements and set them in pulsating motion to a thunderous collage of 31 Shostakovich excerpts. He has created a densely packed, many layered, consistently probing character study. It is not merely a succession of solos, pas de deux and ensemble pieces. Each sequence, each movement illuminates the inner landscape while propelling the action forward.

The two feminine leads go to Galina Panova, softer and more mature than the eternal soubrettes she usually dances, as Aglaja, the pure young bourgeoisie in love with Mishkin, and to Eva Evdokimova as Nastasya Filippovna, a woman desired by all but ultimately destroyed. Evdokimova dances with her nerve ends, a woman possessed. In a smaller supporting role, as Ganya, another young man torn between the two, Sándor Némethy, a Hungarian on loan from the Zurich Opera Ballet, made an electrifying appearance. Slighter than Nureyev but possessed of the same stormy petrel quality, Némethy's energy and elevation were nothing short of spectacular.

Panov's *Idiot* is a two-and-a-half-hour, three-act spectacular in 18 scenes. It moves with cinematic fluidity from the train carriage bearing Mishkin home from abroad, through the ornate salons and frozen streets of St-Petersburg, to scenes of drunken revelry and sylvan tranquillity. Though costumier Bernd Müller has used too sombre a palette and the lighting is

both too dark and unimaginative, Günther Schneider-Siemssen's scenery and projections are magnificent. He needs no introduction; his name has been on the greatest opera productions of the last decade. Nonetheless, in *The Idiot* he has outdone himself. The spires of St-Peter and St-Paul silhouetted against lowering, snow-laden skies; the arches of the bridges spanning the Neva; the vulnerability of the birch saplings on a country estate; a towering Russian doll that fills the entire Met stage, like a giant maypole around which a street carnival rages; a family outing, complete with children, parasols and wolfhounds on a leash, that could have stepped out of a Watteau; each scene is informed by the thousand memories it trails: this fence from *Onegin*, that cathedral from *Godunov*, heroic stances from *War and Peace*. Director and designer seem to have worked together as extensions of the same mind. It makes for unforgettable moments, such as Evdokimova's exit at the end of Act I, borne aloft by Roghozin's ragamuffins, sailing through the air like the prow of a ship, echoing Panov's first entrance. It's magic. His finale, when a naked Prince Mishkin, his mind finally broken, dangles from the rope of an enormous bell, throws into sharp relief man's infinitesimal size in the universe, gives a visual reference to Dostoevsky's ardent Christianity and, flames blazing, brasses blaring, painted an indelible *coup de théâtre*. It caps an evening of pathos and pageantry and dances of such ferocious, anguished beauty, one dare not breathe.

KATI VITA



## The Royal Ballet

Royal Opera House  
London  
Summer 1980

A new ballet by Sir Frederick Ashton is always a gala event, and when the new work in question offers Mikhail Baryshnikov in his first specially created Ashton role and is presented at Covent Garden as the highpoint of the celebration of Elizabeth the Queen Mother's 80th birthday, on August 4th, 1980, that's a gala to be reckoned with.

Dedicated to the Queen Mother, Ashton's *Rhapsody* is a well-wrought diadem set to Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, and the choreography (for one leading and six supporting couples) is as sparkling, sumptuous, and sophisticated as the score. (Arguably it's carrying sophistication rather far to choose for this occasion a composition in which the traditional 'Dies Irae' theme from the Requiem Mass intrudes, but let that pass!)

*Rhapsody* is reminiscent in its geometrical corps patterns and its chic of Ashton's 1948 *Scènes de Ballets*, and of Balanchine's *Theme and Variations* in its inouciant assumption of virtuosity. On one level, *Rhapsody* gives us what Ashton has called 'the purity of the dance expressing nothing but itself' as variation follows well-made variation in an astonishing Mannheim crescendo of pyrotechnical display, a dazzling tribute to the shade of Paganini himself. But there's nothing of the circus here; this is, for all its bravura and flash, a somewhat introspective work, a ballet about ballet, its history, its conventions, its tensions between tradition and the individual talent, to use T. S. Eliot's catchy phrase. *Rhapsody* is dance reflecting on its very nature, its classical and courtly roots and its continuous, and sometimes disruptive, eclecticism and innovation, its sometimes grudging accommodation of expansive and unorthodox talent.

If Ashton, rather like Chaucer and Mozart, is essentially a brilliant inventor within the great tradition, Baryshnikov—as Ashton sees him, as Twyla Tharp saw him in *Push Comes To Shove*—is essentially an individualist, a master of classicism but ultimately more at home with irony than with the passionate commitment of the *danseur noble*. Ashton casts him as a rather quizzical outsider trying to establish a *modus vivendi* in the restrained atmosphere of the Royal Ballet—or, indeed, in the world of Russian classicism, the Kirov tradition that reared this extraordinary changeling.

Ashton's choreography for the ballerina (Lesley Collier) and for the corps couples is thus a kind of homage to Petipa, Ashton's acknowledged master; one sees the reference in the deployment of the corps



Natalia Makarova and Anthony Dowell in Ashton's *A Month in the Country*

couples, in the blend of brilliance and sensuousness of the girls' passages, in the quick, sharp delicacy of variations that owe much to the fairy and jewel variations of *The Sleeping Beauty*.

'Into this elegant, brittle, diamonds-and-furs world Baryshnikov erupts, a splendid and exuberant creature too outrageous to be contained in the glossy framework that awaits him, too intelligent and curious to settle for being an exponent of traditional assumptions, conventions, decorum. He investigates the possibilities, tries on roles, considers peaceful coexistence—in short, does all the things any genius does when he's asked to conform to existing artistic practice. Sometimes he goes along with the conventions: he pursues the coy, evasive ballerina as she tempts him with tantalizing glances and odalisque arms, or he plays the hide-and-seek game when Collier and the six corps girls veil their faces with their arms, and Baryshnikov, like Siegfried in *Swan Lake*, searches for his beloved, in the process startling every other girl off into the wings at his touch. Or he comments ironically: to a lush violin solo, he mimes a violinist. Or he explodes into defiant virtuosity, fast chainé turns giving way to three unprepared tours en l'air followed by a creamy pirouette. He even tries an ardent pas de deux with Collier once he's caught her. But the ironic stance prevails: at the end, Collier, who has pretty much gone her own way with a series of quicksilver variations, maintains the tradition, standing triumphant on a raised arcade, while Baryshnikov, still the outsider, gives a stylized shrug: well, I tried!

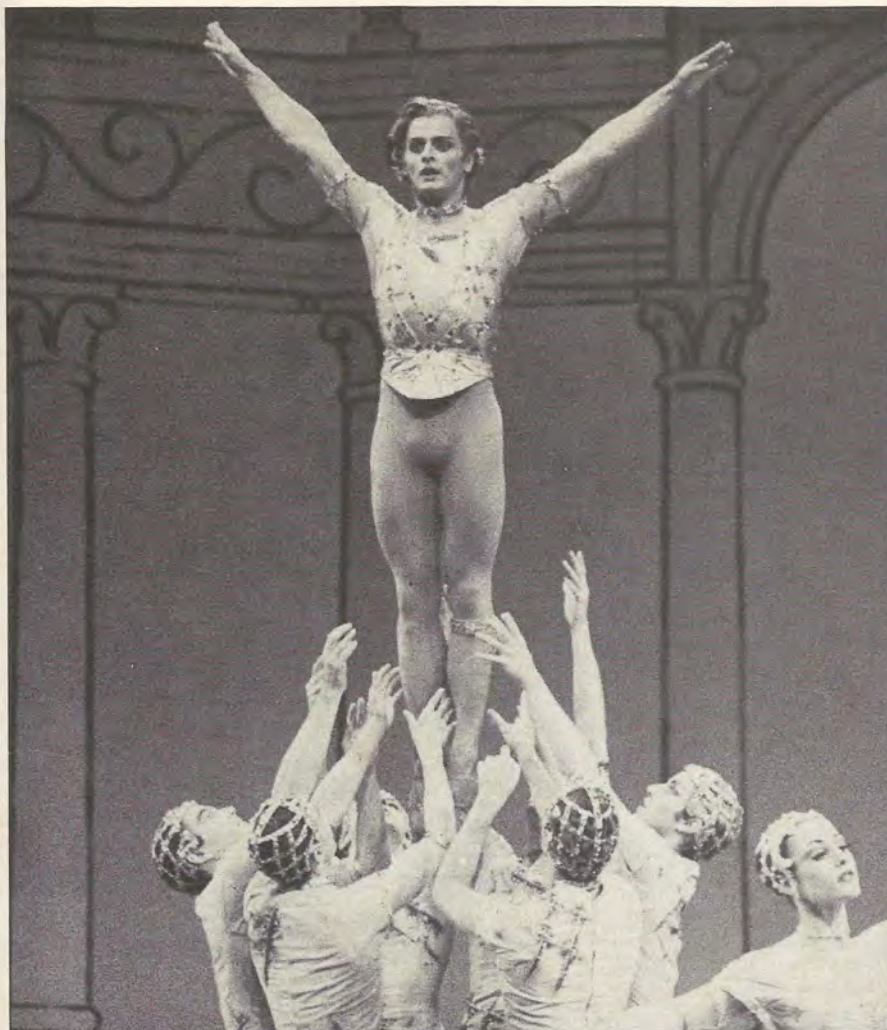
Even William Chappell's flamboyant (and rather dated) costumes begin to make sense in this context: the golden, spangled outfits evoke some Ashton works of the thirties and forties and the lavishness of the

Maryinsky, and although Collier and the wonderful supporting couples just about carry them off, Baryshnikov looks like a kid at Halloween, ill at ease in such opulent artifice, an emblem of the artist who instinctively breaks out of the mold whenever anyone tries to make him fit in.

*Rhapsody* may have been the most eagerly anticipated event of the July-August Royal Ballet season, but it was hardly the only highlight. Guest artist Gelsey Kirkland joined Anthony Dowell, and later Wayne Eagling, in MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet*, with incandescent results. Kirkland's technique, musicality, and exquisite line are incomparable, always, and here her interpretation and acting were as intelligent and convincing as could be. An impetuous but easily abashed child on her first entry, in the ballroom scene she tremulously assumed a haughty adult identity in her pas de deux with Paris; when she saw Romeo, and later in their pas de deux, she was self-absorbed, oddly impassive, as if shocked into senselessness by her strange new emotion. Her Balcony Scene, one of MacMillan's masterpieces, shaded imperceptibly from the frozen terror of a startled animal to spontaneous flashes of daring, as when she placed Romeo's hand on her breast, and finally to totally abandoned eroticism that left her once again terrified and bewildered as Romeo leaves. Her Juliet's fragility and strength, physically echoed in Kirkland's own apparent frailty and technical prowess, informed her subtle reading of the role, and her deliberate underplaying of early scenes made her later passion the more poignant. The best performance of the year, I suspect—and, as no less an authority than Ninette de Valois confirmed, she runs like Pavlova!

That other incomparable lady, Natalia Makarova, danced Natalia Petrovna in





Mikhail Baryshnikov in Ashton's *Rhapsody*

Ashton's *A Month in the Country* as if the role had been made for her. Almost crushed by summer heat and ennui at the beginning, she hid her intoxication with Anthony Dowell's Tutor beneath a mask of sullen apathy, but once her tenuous self-control was breached, she neared hysteria, vacillating unpredictably between generous sweetness, self-disgust, and alarming irascibility. Again, an impassioned, honest, and finely detailed performance, very Russian and very moving.

But what of the Royal Ballet itself? There were the great performances we've come to expect, though perhaps fewer than there were five years ago. Dowell remains, for us, the finest all-around male performer there is, his technique impeccable, his acting ever more compelling, his elegant simplicity irresistible, and the new sharpness and flash he's acquired with ABT a perfect complement to his engaging natural reticence. Wayne Eagling, whose first Messenger of Death in *Song of the Earth* was ideally sardonic, commanding, and grotesque by turns, has fulfilled his early promise; the *Manon* that he and fellow-Canadian Jennifer Penney danced embodied all the painful corruption of innocence by sensuality that that extraordinary

and savage ballet demands, and for phrasing, musicality, and sheer technique, they are *the* cast to see. Stephen Jefferies, back from an injury, was consistently splendid as Mercutio, Albrecht, and Hilarion; a born actor, he dominates the stage. Favourites like Monica Mason, the grandest and strongest of the Royal's ballerinas, and Derek Rencher, that brilliant character-dancer are in fine form, and Marguerite Porter, a young ballerina with a very Russian eloquence and generosity of movement, is deservedly prominent as Giselle, Odette-Odile, and Juliet. A host of young dancers are coming up, too: Mark Silver, Michael Batchelor, Stephen Beagley, Ashley Page, and, among the girls, Rosalyn Whitten, Karen Paisey, Fiona Chadwick, and a true prima ballerina in the making, the willowy, ravishing Bryony Brind. With or without guest artists, the Royal Ballet will be worth seeing in July, 1981, when it comes to Canada, even though I suspect it will be a still grander company in five years' time.

PENELOPE DOOB

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## Dance in New York

Ellen Jacob and Christopher Jonas  
Agingcourt, Ont.: Gage  
1980

## Balletomania

Andrew Mark Wentink  
Toronto: Doubleday  
1980

Sub-titles, especially in the literary world, have a nasty habit of misleading the potential purchaser so it is pleasant to encounter two recent dance paperbacks that do indeed live up to their subtitles. In the case of Ellen Jacob and Christopher Jonas's *Dance in New York* this is a matter for celebration. With Andrew Mark Wentink's *Balletomania* the cause for celebration is less insistent.

*Dance in New York* really is 'An Indispensable Companion to the Dance Capital of the World'. Only the churlish could pretend that New York has not surpassed every other city in its concentration of fine teachers, companies and all manner of dance-related activities and objects.

The book is well-organized, an easy-to-use and practical guide which, while of primary interest to the professional or serious student, will prove interesting to the general dance-lover too. When you put the book down there is not much about dance in New York that has not been

answered. Unusually, part of the production costs have been covered by advertising but this interferes little with the visual flow of the book.

The core is a compendium of information about companies, teachers, studios, college programs, dance publications and bookstores, professional organizations, therapists and more, but in the process of presenting their information the authors inject much useful comment and explanation. The section on where to see dance, for example, even tells what kind of comforts the audience can expect. The notes on companies are useful historical summaries (in which, incidentally and thankfully, the authors have not succeeded in hiding their own personal biases). The listings of studios and independent teachers will be of particular help to Canadians heading to New York for the first time. Apart from allowing each studio to state its own philosophy, the authors add frank comments of their own. This section is usefully cross-indexed so it is easy to find the right teacher for one's particular needs.

The compendium of information at the end, 'The Dance Lover's Black Book', is equally valuable. For example, there you will find a tantalizing list of recommended masseurs. One's back begins to crave kneading just from reading it!

Inevitably, in a work of this scope, there are some minor factual inaccuracies: for one thing, entries can quickly become out-

dated. However, the intention is to keep publishing new editions of this directory, superior to any of its predecessors, so its currency can be maintained.

*Balletomania* bills itself as 'A quizzical potpourri of ballet facts, stars, trivia, and lore' as indeed it is. That however does not guarantee its value.

It is arranged as a series of quizzes with the answers thoughtfully provided at the back. These are interspersed with occasional notes on curious ballet matters. The emphasis is heavily American and the questions range in difficulty from the obscure to the moronic. Also, if you work through the quizzes in sequence you will find that one answer doubles for another question here and there.

A few questions deal with points of ballet technique. There could well have been more to offset the emphasis on personalities. Yet the book's content no doubt sadly reflects the average ballet-nut's mind—consumed with a concern for minutiae (armed with which he may outwit rival fans) while at the same time missing the broader aesthetic realities. Some of the anecdotes, however, are memorable.

It took me 40 minutes to get 80% of the questions right which at \$12.50 is pricey entertainment.

MICHAEL CRABB

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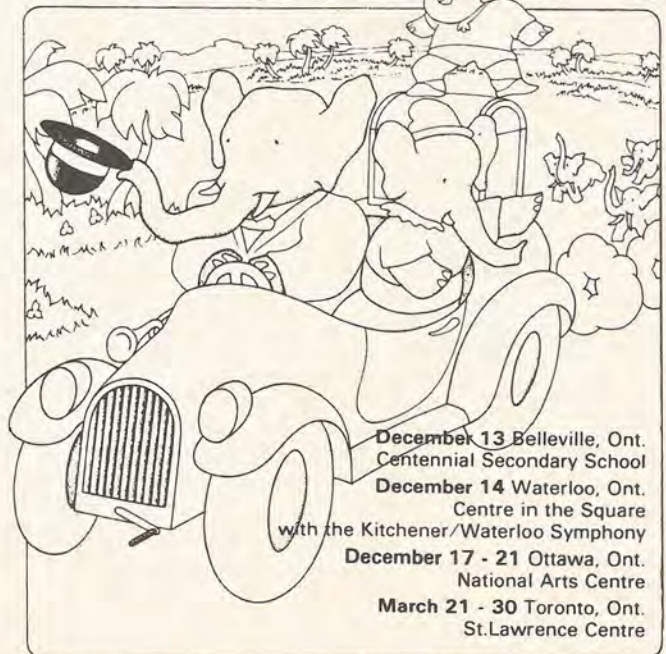


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St. Lawrence Centre



## Noticeboard



Terrill Maguire in the Noguchi Sculpture Fountain

In September dancer/choreographer **Terrill Maguire** gave one noon-hour performance of solo dance in the Noguchi Sculpture Garden, of the Chase Manhattan Bank Plaza in New York City. While musician Richard Cohen added his clarinet sounds to the environment of glass and rock and water, Maguire danced on and around Noguchi's hand-picked rocks and in the swirling waters surrounding them. This performance was one of a continuing series of environmental pieces which includes a group work performed on battlements of Castle Clinton overlooking the Statue of Liberty. In November and December Maguire was guest teacher at the dance department of Randolph-Macon College in Virginia and in January she returns to Canada to tour the Maritimes

with musician/composer Gail Young who works with specially tuned instruments which she designs and makes herself.

After three years of periodic discussions and consultations, the **Royal Academy of Dancing**, the **Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing** and the **Cecchetti Society** have agreed to initiate the first qualifying examination at a standard acceptable to all three societies. Successful candidates will receive the **National Diploma for Dance Teachers** and while still specializing in the dance system of their chosen society, will be equally recognized by the three societies. Details of common written papers are still under final discussion. The first written examinations are planned for September 1981 to be followed by the first

practical examinations in October 1981. Examiners will be drawn from all three societies. The trend to standardization does not stop there. It is hoped other societies will join in the future. Discussions have already begun with the Society of Russian Style Ballet Schools and while the London School of Contemporary Dance has no examination system it has been closely associated with the project for the last three years.

**The London Eurythmy Group** made its first North American tour this fall, visiting 17 cities including Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. Many Canadians may well have received their first exposure to the art of eurythmy two years ago when Eurythmeum Stuttgart toured here. Both



groups perform a specialized movement style originated in 1911 by Rudolf Steiner in Switzerland. It is a movement language which aims to express music or spoken words in movement, particularly those of the hands and arms.

**Muna Tseng and Dancers** presented four performances at Dance Theatre Workshop, New York, this fall. The program included three premières - *Bach Suite*, *Ocean Dreams*, a collaborative duet by Muna Tseng and Peggy Florin with an original score by Nigel Rollings, and *Epochal Songs*, a piece for five dancers and puppets. Ms. Tseng also performed three solos from her repertoire.

Muna Tseng is a Canadian dancer/choreographer who has been collaborating with Canadian performing and visual artists since 1973. Following her company's New York season she set to work preparing a program of solos and duets with Peggy Florin, a former dancer with the Anna Wyman Dance Theatre. They will premier this programme in a Canadian tour planned for 1981.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Mauryne Allan**, dancer, choreographer and artistic director of **Mountain Dance Theatre**, has struggled since 1973 to keep the Burnaby-based dance company afloat. In recognition of her dedication and success the board of directors has decided the company will now be known as Mauryne Allan's Mountain Dance Theatre. Stephen Karcher has returned after a three-year absence when he was performing with Regina Modern Danceworks and Toronto's Dancemakers. He will assist Ms. Allan in the direction of the company this season. Chris Bauman from the University of Waterloo, Ontario, has joined the company and two dancers from the Anna Wyman school, Joanne Dollin and Sarah Williams, have joined as junior member and apprentice, respectively. Barbara Bourget is returning as MDT's Artist-in-Residence. During the Christmas season the company will premier Ms. Allan's new modern ballet for children, *The Golden Slipper* at the James Cowan Theatre.

**Anna Wyman**, artistic director and choreographer of the Anna Wyman Dance Theatre travelled to China in October as the Canadian representative for the National Minorities Dance Festival held in Peking. Ms. Wyman was a guest of the China Dance Association (the same organization that welcomed Margie Gillis with open arms in 1979.) She was treated to nightly performances covering the full spectrum of Chinese dance.

On returning to Canada Ms. Wyman joined her company at the start of their tour of eastern Canada in London, Ontario.



Muna Tseng

## ALBERTA

**The National Ballet School** has announced it will open a branch school in Calgary in September, 1981. The new school will be known as the **Western Junior Division** of the NBS and will fall under the jurisdiction of the Calgary Board of Education alternative schools program. The new school will accommodate children seven to 10 years old who at the present time must leave home to study in Toronto. Academic classes will be co-ordinated by the Calgary Board of Education and the director of the National Ballet School, Betty Oliphant, will be in Calgary some time in the new year to organize the artistic side of the school. It will remain small, importing only two ballet teachers from the Toronto school and will receive no Canada Council funding at all but will be self-sufficient.

Canada's oldest non-professional dance company, **The Calgary Dance Workshop**

has a team of three directors for the 1980-81 season. They are Lynette Abra, former principal dancer with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Carol Robertson, formerly with Toronto's Ballet Ys and Sydney Sparling. The company will present its Christmas performances of *The Little Match Girl* at the University of Calgary Theatre (Dec. 19-20). A spring season is planned for late March 1981.

## SASKATCHEWAN

**Amelia Itcush** has been appointed acting artistic/educational director for the **Prairie Dance Lab Association** in Regina. Ms. Itcush is well known to Toronto dancers as a dynamic performer with Toronto Dance Theatre and more recently as a teacher of Graham and Alexander techniques. She replaces Marianne Livant who is on an eight-month study leave in New York.





Tedd Robinson of Contemporary Dancers

## MANITOBA

Winnipeg's **Contemporary Dancers** currently employ more York University graduates than any other company so it was fitting that they should be the one dance company invited to perform at the 20th Anniversary festivities of that university. Artistic Director Rachel Browne brought five dancers with her to Toronto — Mark Chambers and grads Tedd Robinson, Monica George, Francisco Alvarez and Marilyn Biderman. They performed Ms. Brown's *To The Year 2,000* and Karen Rimmer's *Snakes and Ladders*.

In December the company will premier *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens' classic

Christmas tale has been adapted for modern dance by Martin Reed. Choreography is by company assistant artistic director Stephanie Ballard and the score is by Toronto composer Michael Baker. Performances are at the Main Stage, Manitoba Theatre Centre (Dec. 11-13). In January and February the company will tour Ontario.

## ONTARIO

A disastrous fire on September 16 destroyed Ottawa's historic Sussex Block and with it went the studios, equipment, files, photographs and video tapes of the **Ottawa Dance Theatre**. A class was in

progress when the fire broke out but the teachers and 27 students managed to escape without injury. ODT director Judith Davies estimates they have lost over \$30,000 worth of equipment. Nevertheless it was business almost as usual as the company continued rehearsals and classes in makeshift studios lodged temporarily in a church hall. In November ODT made an educational tour of the Napanee/Kingston area and in early December they will give a series of performances in Ottawa premiering new works by Ms. Davies, Anna Blewchamp and Gail Benn. The company will finish the year out with its annual Christmas production *The Snow Queen* at the Odeon Theatre, University of Ottawa (Dec. 19-21, 26, 27). ODT has received a Wintario Grant towards outfitting new studios and with the addition of much needed donations from the private sector they are well on the road to recovery.

**Lois Smith**, Chairman of the George Brown College School of Dance, Toronto, was made an Officer of the Order of Canada this fall in recognition of her outstanding contribution to ballet. When the National Ballet of Canada was formed in 1951, Ms. Smith left a successful performing career in Los Angeles to join the new company as a principal dancer. She was an important member of the company during its formative years and became Canada's first prima ballerina. A chronic injury forced her early retirement in 1969 when she established her own school of dance. In 1975 the school became part of George Brown College with more than 1,100 students attending dance classes. In October 1979, Lois Smith launched her own ballet company — The Dance Company of Ontario — with the goal of bringing ballet to smaller communities across the province. The company has, since then, made a successful Prologue tour of Ontario schools and plans more touring in 1981.

**The National Ballet** toured eastern Canada from September 25 to October 18, performing in Montreal, Saint John and Sackville, New Brunswick, Charlottetown, PEI, Halifax, NS and St. John's, Nfld. They performed a varied repertoire of full-length classics and mixed programs. The company's fall season featured two premieres. *The Newcomers*, choreographed by Brian Macdonald and commissioned by Imperial Oil Limited to celebrate its 100th Anniversary, featured Veronica Tennant, Mary Jago, Clinton Rothwell, Raymond Smith, Hazaros Surmeyan and Victoria Bertram. James Kudelka's new ballet, *Playhouse*, an abstract work, explores the tenuous relationship between audience and performer.

**Veronica Tennant** will appear in two performances of the National Tap Dance Company's production of *The Tin Soldier* at the Saint Lawrence Centre this month.





Jeff Hyslop in *The Tin Soldier*

She will be dancing the part of the ballerina to Jeff Hyslop's tin soldier. Co-Artistic Director Bill Orlowski will play the troll for these performances. Jeff Hyslop, Bill Orlowski and Glen Kotyk will alternate roles for the remainder of the performances, Dec. 19 to Dec. 29.

Nadia Pavlychenko died on July 18, 1980. For the past two years she had been living in the village of Sonada in the foothills of the Himalayas in India. The studio she founded in Toronto in 1974 to teach her technique of dance through tension relaxation still continues operating and is more than ever an active part of the Toronto dance community.

In mid-October choreographer Paris Terezakis presented his first full-evening of dance at Toronto's Harbourfront. The performances featured dancers from the Pavlychenko Studio and live music by Diaspora.

City Ballet of Toronto celebrated its fifth anniversary with performances at Hart House Theatre, University of Toronto this fall. The program featured company director Marijan Bayer's production of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Ballet for Rodney* by Howard Crabtree.

Peggy Baker co-founder, director and dancer with Toronto's Dancemakers has joined the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company in New York. Carol Anderson and Patricia

Fraser will assume directorship of Dancemakers.

## QUEBEC

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens inaugurated its 23rd season in November with the company premiere of George Balanchine's *Capriccio*, a neo-classical work to the Stravinsky score of the same name. The New York City Ballet, for whom *Capriccio* was created in 1967, call it *Rubies* and perform it as the second part of an evening-long trilogy entitled *Jewels*. Even as a solitary work it is an important addition to Les GBC's growing collection of Balanchine ballets. The company also presented two revivals—*The Miraculous Mandarin* by Milko Sparembek and Brian Macdonald's homage to the Quebecois fiddler Jean Carignan, *Hangman's Reel*.

In January the company will leave for an extensive eight-week tour of western Canada and parts of the United States returning just before their spring season at Montreal's Place des Arts (March 5-7, 19-21). The program will include Fernand Nault's new ballet *Songs of Sorrow, Songs of Joy* (which was to have been premiered in the fall), Ronald Hynd's *Silver and the Circle of Messages*, Antony Tudor's *Lilac Garden* and a new work by Milko Sparembek.

Choreographer Brian Macdonald is directing a production of *The Merry Widow*

for the Paris Opera which opens in Nancy, France, December 23 and then tours the country. Mr. Macdonald recently directed Maureen Forrester as Bloody Mary in the Edmonton Opera production of *South Pacific*. He will direct two productions of *Cendrillon* for the San Francisco and New York City Operas in the new year. He will also direct and choreograph the opera, *Postcard from Morocco* for the Guelph Spring Festival in April 1981.

Of the four major universities in Quebec, three have instituted dance programs this year. The University of Quebec at Montreal offers a BA program in dance headed by Michele Febvre. Concordia University has a BA program in dance, performance and choreography headed by Elizabeth Langley and the University of Montreal has a one-year certificate program for dance teachers. In line with this dramatic growth in the Quebec dance establishment the Ministry of Cultural Affairs has formed a Dance Office headed by Jeanne Renaud.

In January la Federation de loisir/danse du Quebec will launch a new dance journal—*Re-flex: cahier de la danse*. Published in French six times a year, the journal will deal with all aspects of dance as an expressive art. Inquiries and contributions are welcome, material written in English will be translated. Contact Arlene Côté (514) 374-4700.



Dansepartout of Quebec City returned on October 15 from a three-week sojourn in Paris where they laid the groundwork for a tour to France in November 1981. The six-member company studied with Michel Nourkil (Theatre de la Danse) and gave one performance in Paris. The company under the direction of Chantale Belhumeur and Claude Latouche, gave a performance in Quebec City on October 25 and then embarked on a Prologue to the Performing Arts tour of Ontario schools. Their next hometown appearance will be at the Grand Théâtre de Quebec (Jan. 30, 31).

Marie Chouinard, Françoise Riopelle, Monique Giard and Daniel Soulières will also be travelling to France in December as part of a general cultural exchange between France and Quebec. They will visit Bordeaux to give performances and lectures. In the new year a contingent of performing artists from Bordeaux will visit Montreal.

Edouard Lock et Danseurs performed in New York City this fall. They presented Lock's latest work, *Lily Marlene in the Jungle* at The Kitchen, one of New York's leading alternate theatre spaces.

Le Groupe Axis presents a new work in three parts by Iro Tembeck at D. B. Clarke Theatre (Dec. 4-7). The choreographers collective, *Qui Danse* will host performances by Quebec choreographers (Dec. 22, 23).

NOVA SCOTIA

Halifax is on the brink of establishing a resident modern dance company. The provincial government has awarded a start-up grant to the Dance Advance Association to help form a Halifax-based professional company within the next few years. Dance Advance Artistic Director Jeanne Robinson, who has just recently finished a performance series at the James Dunn

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