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Dance in Canada Danse au

Evelyn Hart

Groupe Nouvelle Aire

Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers

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CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY

Dance in Canada Danse au

Issue Number 34 Winter 1982/83 Hiver

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FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

COVER:
Evelyn Hart in a studio portrait
by David Cooper.

Evelyn Hart
In Conversation

By Paula Citron

Evelyn Hart is one of Canada's finest ballerinas. Since winning a gold medal at the 1980 International Ballet Competition in Varna, her career has developed in new areas: foreign guest appearances, new roles and now, the opportunity to dance the great 19th-century classic Giselle with her own company, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Evelyn Hart becomes the RWB's first Giselle with the première of Peter Wright's new production in Winnipeg on December 26. Evelyn Hart discusses aspects of her recent career in conversation with Paula Citron.

PHOTO: DAVID COOPER

Evelyn Hart danced Act II *Giselle* earlier in 1982 in Florida.

Do you possess any special physical qualities that distinguish you from other dancers?
I have large hands, bigger than they should be for my size and I can really use them for effect. But I'm self-conscious about them. You can get away with mannerisms in *Belong*, for example, but not in conventional ballet. I have to be careful.

Besides giving you international recognition, how did your win at Varna affect you?
I had a feeling that I had to try harder to live up to being a gold medalist and I began to suffer from Varna. Cashing in by making David Peregrine and me dance together all the time was a mistake. I was thinking about leaving the company I was so tense in rehearsals. I was terrified.

Also, people began saying that I was holding the company together. Stephen Godfrey of *The Globe and Mail* called the Royal Winnipeg 'The Evelyn Hart Travelling Troupe'. I don't feel that.

What do you perceive to be your position with the company? With two full length ballets created for you, the audience regards you as a star. Also, there is a belief that these works have entered the Royal Winnipeg's rep in order to keep a star.
Ballets like *Giselle* and *Romeo and Juliet* are essential for a ballet company. For 35 years the Royal Winnipeg never went beyond a certain point. These full-length works are new territory. I'm a catalyst for them to do these ballets. Besides, why can't the Royal Winnipeg develop? What happened in the past is that they were locked into a certain point and everyone would leave the company who wanted to develop. We didn't have enough rep to sustain development and no full length role in our rep to invite a guest to perform. As a guest, the rep gave me nothing to take out either. A Hungarian girl in Japan asked me, 'What roles do you dance?' and I had nothing to tell her then. Now I do. These are works I want to do. I'm choosing to stay. The roles aren't there to keep me, but are helping me stay longer and feel better.

We are 25 dancers, period. That is the Royal Winnipeg. I have good relationships with the rest of the dancers. Take a look at the school. There are good dancers, a beginning for the future. I'm helping them over the hump. The rep will always be there and it can be given to others. In this way I am giving to the company and having a responsibility to other kids. It's important to create a situation that's better for everyone — a different level of art. This is part of being loyal. In this company we share identities. We are collectively together.

And regardless of what anyone thinks, I don't have Arnold Spohr wrapped around my finger!

People consider you and David Peregrine as a dancing partnership but lately you have been dancing with others. Was this separation deliberate?
I asked to switch partners and David did as well. He didn't want to be known only as Evelyn's partner. We had to begin to pull our individualities out of ourselves. Because of the popular success of our partnership we felt indirectly pressured to continue dancing together.

Technically we were good together but it was hard to grow. We had reached a certain peak and where we should have been reaching out beyond that peak, we couldn't. It was important to leave the security of the partnership. I enjoy dancing with David but it's like when you know people so well that there aren't any surprises and this makes it difficult to explore because of pre-conceived ideas. I felt we weren't developing and our partnership was like a museum piece.

David is an intelligent and efficient dancer, but his qualities differ from mine. We are different as people. I like precise, clean dancing and the subtleties

C'est en 1980 que Evelyn Hart du Royal Winnipeg Ballet a remporté la médaille d'or du Concours international de ballet à Varna. On la considère depuis comme l'une des meilleures ballerines au Canada. Sa performance en octobre avec le Royal Winnipeg Ballet à Londres en Angleterre, a été accueillie avec énormément d'enthousiasme par la critique. Dans cette interview avec Paula Citron, Evelyn Hart décrit comment elle envisage l'évolution de sa carrière. Elle rejète l'idée que le Royal Winnipeg Ballet s'adapte à elle pour satisfaire ses besoins personnels en tant qu'artiste. Elle explique également pourquoi elle éprouve la nécessité de travailler avec d'autres danseurs en plus de son partenaire à Winnipeg, David Peregrine.

PHOTO: DAVID COOPER

Evelyn Hart and David Peregrine in *Romeo and Juliet.*

of dance. David likes the exciting part of male dancing. I would rather touch people quietly. I'm not a bravura dancer. I'm also a demanding partner.

We are now finding our feet again and although we haven't spoken about it, we are very careful. However, it's heaven to dance with different people. It's also essential. The company will have to let me dance with others. It was reassuring to dance with Zane Wilson in *Our Waltzes*, for example.

You and David became associated with the Belong pas de deux after the Varna win and it seems to be frequently included in RWB programming. Aren't you beginning to grow a little tired of it?

It would be nice if it was done infrequently, when it becomes just part of the repertory. Or else we could keep it for special occasions. We do it so much that I'm having an identity crisis.

Am I a rounded artist or just the female half of *Belong?* You like to feel you've got other things to offer an audience. I could grow more in it artistically if I did it less frequently. It's been three years. I haven't kept a strict count, but I must have danced *Belong* well over a hundred times!

What are you goals as a dancer at this point in your career?

My new approach is to be relaxed on stage. What am I worried about? Dancing helps me to calm down. On stage should be a special time.

When I saw Marcia Haydée dance at the Alberta Ballet's Gala last year in Edmonton, I knew what beautiful dancing was. The whole point of dancing is to give as much as you can. On stage, Marcia disappeared and became her character. Rather than going over steps before a performance, I'm going to go over what I want to say to the audience, what I'm feeling, like Marcia does. I've relaxed since seeing Marcia dance, seeing her outpouring as an artist. It calmed me down. Don't try for it. Work at technique and trust your instincts. I'm learning that you don't have to try so hard.

I'm also trying to pare everything down. There is power and magic in stillness, in opposition to motion. This makes movement, therefore, more

PHOTO: DAVID COOPER

precise and better defines it, just like pauses define speech. Quality, not quantity is important.

I'm beginning to do more guest appearances. The Dutch National Ballet has offered me Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty* and Giselle. Also, I've always dreamed of dancing with the National since I was a little girl but I'm not the kind to go knocking on doors asking for roles so you can imagine how happy I was when they asked me to do Giselle. It will be during their February season in Toronto. I have an agreement with my company. They're glad to let me do this. In general, where my career is concerned, all my decisions will be based on what is best for me as a developing artist. Some people think of their careers in terms of fame or wealth. I want fulfilment as an artist.

How did you find the experience of dancing with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet at Sadler's Wells in London?

Well, as usual, opening night was nerve-wracking but I got over that. I liked the theatre once I got used to the raked stage. It was not so bothersome as I feared. And Sadler's Wells has such a physical thing about it and so many historical connections. I'm told I had Fonteyn's old dressing-room. And, imagine, this was the first time in my career I've had a dressing room to myself for more than six days in a row! It was nice just being in London and the theatre itself gives you such an intimate feeling with the audience.

Most of the London critics singled you out for praise during the Sadler's Wells season and, of course, you're already well known in Canada. How do you feel about becoming a celebrity?

Maybe this sounds naive, but everything I do has to do with my dancing. I don't think of myself as a personality. I'm constantly looking ahead to what I want to be.

Sometimes your dedication to dancing almost looks like an obsession.

Everybody tells me I'm obsessive but it's natural to me. And, you know, I'm so intensely tied up in what I'm doing. Every time I do an interview I laugh at myself because the result is always different – just what I felt at that moment. As for the obsession, I wonder if it has to be looked at in context. Would I be considered obsessive in New York? I doubt it. And right now is the time for me to be obsessive about my work. As I get older I just won't be able to keep it up in the same way. I have to do it now.

Isn't there a risk that you will starve other aspects of your life, the kind from which you can draw enriching experiences as an artist?

Although my work does occupy my life there is a real me behind the art. It's true that I haven't really developed any other interests and if my work isn't satisfying, if I'm uninspired, tired or just plain bored, then I feel there's a bit of a hole. As for experience of life I can tell you I've still been able to experience a hell of a lot. I know what life is all about, the pain and the joy. Through my dedication I hope to bring it to the stage. □

Groupe Nouvelle Aire
Why It Must Survive: A Personal View

By Iro Tembeck

Le Groupe Nouvelle Aire a tenu une place prépondérante dans le milieu de la danse créative à Montréal dans les quinze dernières années. Une grave crise financière met à présent son avenir en péril. Ancienne membre du groupe, Iro Tembeck s'en est détachée pour poursuivre ses propres idées artistiques. Elle explique ici le rôle important que joue le Groupe Nouvelle Aire à Montréal en manifestant vivement la nécessité de sa survie. D'après elle, la compagnie a tracé la voie de nombreux artistes qui ont maintenant lancé de nouvelles conceptions de la danse. La croissance du groupe a été telle que certains de ses membres lui ont reproché de devenir trop conventionnel pour leurs idées aventureuses et ont formé leur propre compagnie. Montréal a maintenant grand besoin d'une compagnie stable et organisée traditionnellement pour que la danse moderne trouve un équilibre et une base solide pour son évolution.

Not for the first time in its 15-year existence, Montreal's Groupe Nouvelle Aire is on the verge of collapse. Its future is heavily clouded by severe financial problems and the small amounts of government aid which have been promised are insufficient to offer hope.

Yet, Groupe Nouvelle Aire, despite the occasional turbulence of its evolution, has long been a vitally important part of Montreal's dance scene and in no small way has helped turn a great cosmopolitan city into a major centre of experimental and avant-garde dance. Groupe Nouvelle Aire paved the way for today's exciting trend-setters, individuals who found the troupe an ideal springboard from which to launch themselves into voyages of personal choreographic exploration and discovery.

Groupe Nouvelle Aire was founded in 1968 by a group of professors and gymnasts from the University of Montreal's Physical Education Department. Of the founding members many have secured themselves places in the limelight of Montreal dance. Martine Epoque, veteran among the founding members and the company's most constant image-maker, remained its artistic director from its inception until 1980 when she became a full-time faculty member in UQAM's newly formed Dance Module. Denis Poulin, another charter member, was asked by the Quebec Ministry of Education to draw up a syllabus of creative dance to be inserted into the provincial public school system at the secondary level. Yet another veteran, Rose-Marie Lebe-Neron, is presently heading the University of Montreal's Dance Certificate program. In addition, Sylvie Pinard, Philippe Vita, Diane Carrière and Paul Lapointe, all former company stalwarts have now assumed responsible positions in the field of dance education at the university and college level.

Nouvelle Aire's 15-year existence is marked by three distinct evolutionary

Nicole Laudouar, Sylvie Pinard and Paul Lapointe in Martine Epoque's *Amiboïsme*, 1970.

periods in terms of vision and purpose. The first occurred between 1968 and 1972, the second and most important period between the years 1972 and 1978, characterised by a brainstorming indicative of future trends, while the third period started in 1978 and continues to the present.

A Fledgling Company

Back in the late sixties there was not much dance to be seen in Montreal. Les Grands Ballets Canadiens' home season consisted roughly of six to eight week-ends distributed through the year. Le Groupe de la Place Royale held performances only twice a year and relied on an influx of interested dancers borrowed from the GBC. Into this sparse dance setting was born Nouvelle Aire tagging along with its 25 or so dance enthusiasts all the candour and brashness which only youth can bring.

Within two years these 'gymnasts', as they were often derisively referred to, produced two separate shows at Montreal's Place des Arts consisting of a dozen works choreographed by members of the company. Of all the pieces then premiered, two particulary stood out: Epoque's *Amiboisme* and Lapointe's *Mi-E-Meta*. *Amiboisme* was part of a larger work and was a cameo of movement invention which required the dancers to maintain the public's interest solely through floor work. Not once did the performers stand up to dance but rather slithered and crawled around the stage for the duration of this short piece. *Amiboisme* is the company's signature piece, one that is continuously being revived. Lapointe's *Mi-E-Meta*, on the other hand, not only had craftsmanship but a strong story line behind it. The piece was all the more surprising because its theme (Siamese twins wearing skull caps and heavy make-up, trying to free themselves from each other) was powerfully innovative and also Lapointe's very first choreographic venture.

The artistic mandate the company had given itself went beyond a mere wish to promote modern dance in Montreal. The backbone of the philosophy was to encourage experimentation and innovation in the creation of choreographic works, to discover and promote Quebec artists (composers, choreographers, dancers, photographers), to create a new and original movement technique which would be characteristic of the movement of style of the company and thus lay the groundwork for a Quebec style (to this purpose the GNA school was opened and at the beginning only offered courses in its indigenous technique) and, finally, to educate the public in the field of modern dance by means of school shows. With such ambitious dreams and missionary zeal it is easy to see why Nouvelle Aire became a historic landmark for modern dance in Quebec.

PHOTO: ROBERT ETCHEVERRY

Ginette Boutin, Alain Gaumond, Gilles Brisson and Charles St. Onge in Iro Tembeck's *Sources*, 1981.

Years of Incubation

The second phase in the company's history began about 1972 when the company was pared down to 15 members. These dancers came from a rich variety of backgrounds: some were ballet trained, others had studied mime, still others were concerned with theatre, literature, film or sports. But most of all they were, in the majority, university graduates. They brought with them an inquisitive spirit, which questioned the role of dance and asked how one could best express a vision through the medium of choreography.

Although the underlying principle of the group was originality — which often proved to be a double-edged sword — the members were conscious of the process of experimentation and the influences they were undergoing. As a core member of that group I personally recall spending many hours discussing, over reheated cups of coffee, problems pertaining to dance aesthetics with my fellow dancers and choreographers long after the day's rehersals were over. Although still at a chrysalis stage, the influence of this kind of brainstorming

Michèle Fèbvre and Paul-André Fortier in Martine Epoque's *Lianes*.

gave rise to new choreographic approaches which still bore the characteristic stamp of their nurturing ground.

A great deal of that Nouvelle Aire 'stamp' lies in how one attacks or composes a movement phrase. Nouvelle Aire's technique, the brainchild of Epoque, was originally arid and quite difficult to master. It evolved through the years into a more fluid and versatile vocabulary while retaining its trademark: irregular and complex rhythmic structure, technical difficulty bred of sharp contrasts in dynamics and line, and an emphasis on isolations of the different parts of the body. The GNA 'derivative' style still bears, today, hints of this approach as can be seen in the works of some of Montreal's young choreographers where both the compositional concern and the orginality are evident in their pieces.

If the GNA experience was such an enriching one from the inside why was it that its wealth rarely came across to the public-at-large? There are several possible explanations. The group had gathered together a number of strong individuals of diverse talents who intellectualised about the creative process in dance at a time when the public was largely ignorant of modern dance aesthetics. Consequently, the artistic product of the company was rightly labelled as hermetic and intellectual. At no point did the

objectives of the company allow for a more accessible and marketable commodity. The dancers found themselves caught in a double bind: on the one hand they enjoyed the creative process they were part of, but on the other they were hampered by the relatively small number of shows that were offered them. Furthermore, when they did perform, their product was often misunderstood.

Reaching a Plateau

Such years turned out to be formative ones for those involved and laid the cornerstones of several future independent creative expeditions. Not only did the company need more recognition as rapidly maturing artists busy refining their art but they also needed to find their own individual expression. The name of Martine Epoque had always been linked to the group since its inception. It was very difficult to change the company's image with the same artistic director heading it all along. The group reached a plateau round 1975. It had nowhere to go because it did not have the financial independence, administrative resources and firm but flexible artistic vision which are the prerequisites of sound company development.

The dancers still all earned their living as teachers in the various colleges, universities and professional dance studios around town. Being part of Groupe Nouvelle Aire was a labour of love and dedication rather than a lucrative job. The dancers wanted to be part of that experience and were ready to sacrifice time and money to do so.

The six-hour work day (noon to six) would start with a class followed by rehearsals. The availability of new blood in terms of technique teachers had always been scarce in Montreal but the need now became imperative. Limon company members, coming through Montreal, would be lured into staying for a while to teach the company and Nouvelle Aire was thus largely responsible for introducing the Limon technique to Montreal.

Martine Epoque also felt she needed to gain some perspective on both the company and her own growth as an artist. She consequently left for a sabbatical at the University of Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1975. The company reached a turning-point during her absence. With Christina Coleman as acting artistic director, some new choreographers emerged, Edouard Lock, Christina and myself. That year's dance program featured only one work by Epoque and another by Lapointe, the remaining pieces being the product of the new budding choreographers. The trend set by these newcomers showed a different approach from the old GNA framework. There emerged the idea of 'danse-théâtre' — a rapprochement between theatre and dance in which the pieces would reflect a mood rather than merely dwell on stylistic innovation. With a new image in the making the company members felt they needed to be in closer contact with their audience and a tradition started whereby the avant-première of a work would be presented to an invited audience which was encouraged to say what it thought.

These informal gatherings grew to become the 'Chorechanges'. The public was more familiar with theatre than with dance and related more easily to the group's modified image. The performers meanwhile had been steadily gaining maturity as individual artists and the company once again pared itself down, this time to 10 dancers.

Chorechanges: A Success Story

When Epoque returned from her sabbatical she was quick to perceive that Montrealers needed an intimate view of modern dance and that the technically controlled remoteness of a Place des Arts was alienating. The Chorechange formula (literally dance exchange) was then established and the tradition was kept until last year. The aim of the Chorechanges was to demystify modern dance by providing an informal framework for the performances. The spacious studios became host to various exchanges between Canadian troupes and even some of international calibre. The heyday of these series occurred in 1977 when Montreal witnessed the first gathering of modern dance pioneers such as Elsie Solomons, Seda Zare, Françoise Sullivan, Françoise Riopelle, Jeanne Renaud, Ludmilla Chiriaeff and Fernand Nault. As a direct result of these reunions both Sullivan and Riopelle returned to a second career in dance having earlier left the field to concentrate on other art forms. Their comeback as choreographers also occurred within the Chorechanges framework when they reconstructed some of their past works for Nouvelle Aire dancers. It was also that same year that Merce Cunningham came to lecture, teach and perform at the GNA studios.

Caught between the crossfires of the elitist art form propounded by GBC on the one hand and the sudden craze for jazz dance on the other, the Chorechanges formula greatly helped the struggling modern dance to emerge and gain recognition. Since Nouvelle Aire became the only remaining modern dance company in Montreal after Le Groupe de la Place Royale's flight to Ottawa, the group's emphasis swung back to being a repertory company rather than one of continuous experimentation from within.

By the spring of 1977, it became evident that the company members had gained certain artistic visions of their own and an exodus was imminent. I was the first to leave the group to follow my own independent choreographic path. I founded Axis together with Christina Coleman as a rallying point for professional dancers and choreographers who wished to explore new avenues of dance theatre expression. Axis would perform roughly three different shows a year choosing its dancers and paying them for rehearsals from individual grants given by either the Canada Council or the Quebec Cultural Affairs Ministry. The emphasis was on experimentation in dance theatre and not in maintaining a repertory. Many of the GNA dancers took part in Axis shows and also started their first choreographic endeavours there.

The Axis formula actually went a step further than the Chorechanges. It sought performances in alternate stages: museums, art galleries, university theatres for lecture-demonstrations as well as proscenium-stage performances. Each season brought new artistic product and members. This updated Chorechanges framework used by Axis was followed by other similar endeavours with such collectives as Catpoto, Qui Danse and Tangente. Eventually the popularity of the medium proved to be the unmaking of its very originator, the Chorechanges. Because of severe financial setbacks Nouvelle Aire at that time came very close to closing its doors; a last-minute substantial grant from Quebec reprieved the group but its artistic scope and policies had to be changed. The GNA no longer needed to demystify dance to the public; this mission was taken over by others, leaving the company to opt for touring in such places as Toronto and New York. It was the end of an era and the ushering in of a new one.

The New Generation

With the financial set-up completely altered, a stronger administration and steady salaries for dancers, veteran members of GNA found themselves having to adjust. What used to be a labor of love and dedication now became a job. The blood, sweat, and tears as well as the drive that propelled the questionings and redefinitions and intellectual concern were all receding. These mature dancers gradually found that they also needed to grow independently of Nouvelle Aire. By 1979, all of the old group had left to carve their own place in Montreal dance and Epoque found herself more secure financially but without dancers. The new recruits came from the professional programs of Les Ballets Jazz and Pointépiénu. They were roughly 10 years younger and thus had no sense of the company's aesthetic evolution.

They were technically more homogeneous although less inclined to take certain initiatives during a work-in-progress. They tackled the complexities of the GNA vocabulary well but would not dwell on aesthetic questions. Theirs was a generation of ease: daily technique classes offered by a roster of teachers, often ex-members of the group. There were the luxuries of rehearsal mistresses, video equipment, secure jobs, and a full day's work. What the previous generation had fought for, others were now reaping. The company was surely set for success. But the public had changed. It had slowly awakened to modern dance and was going to all the informal performances and shunning the conventional ones. University and college students would attend the performances of the independents who had branched out individually and acquired a following through their teaching. Dance departments emerged at the universities of Quebec and Concordia and a Dance Certificate program at the University of Montreal. The trend was towards informal shows and an intellectual concern regarding dance.

The independent choreographers had adopted the Axis formula and would hire dancers for the period prior to the shows; they even created their own companies. With the erosion of the public's interest, GNA found itself being pushed right out of the market. Last year it valiantly tried to rally back the old forces by inviting commissioned works from the independents but it became apparent that the group needed a new image. With Epoque now a full-time faculty member at UQAM it was logical that her title would change to that of founding director and resident choreographer. A new and strong artistic director was desperately needed. Paul Lapointe who had left choreography for a time while still teaching dance was ready to take on the job. He had great plans, was knowledgeable regarding the company's evolution and present set-up, and had choreographic experience.

Now it is ironic that with the group potentially set to acquire a new image, government cutbacks are threatening its very existence. Owing to economic and political pressures, the three-year subsidy plan that Nouvelle Aire had been promised from Quebec (to run until 1983) has fallen through and the actual amount of the present subsidy is undetermined. Consequently, at the present moment, the company is dormant. The artistic, social and political impact of its complete demise

Photo-Gallery: David Street

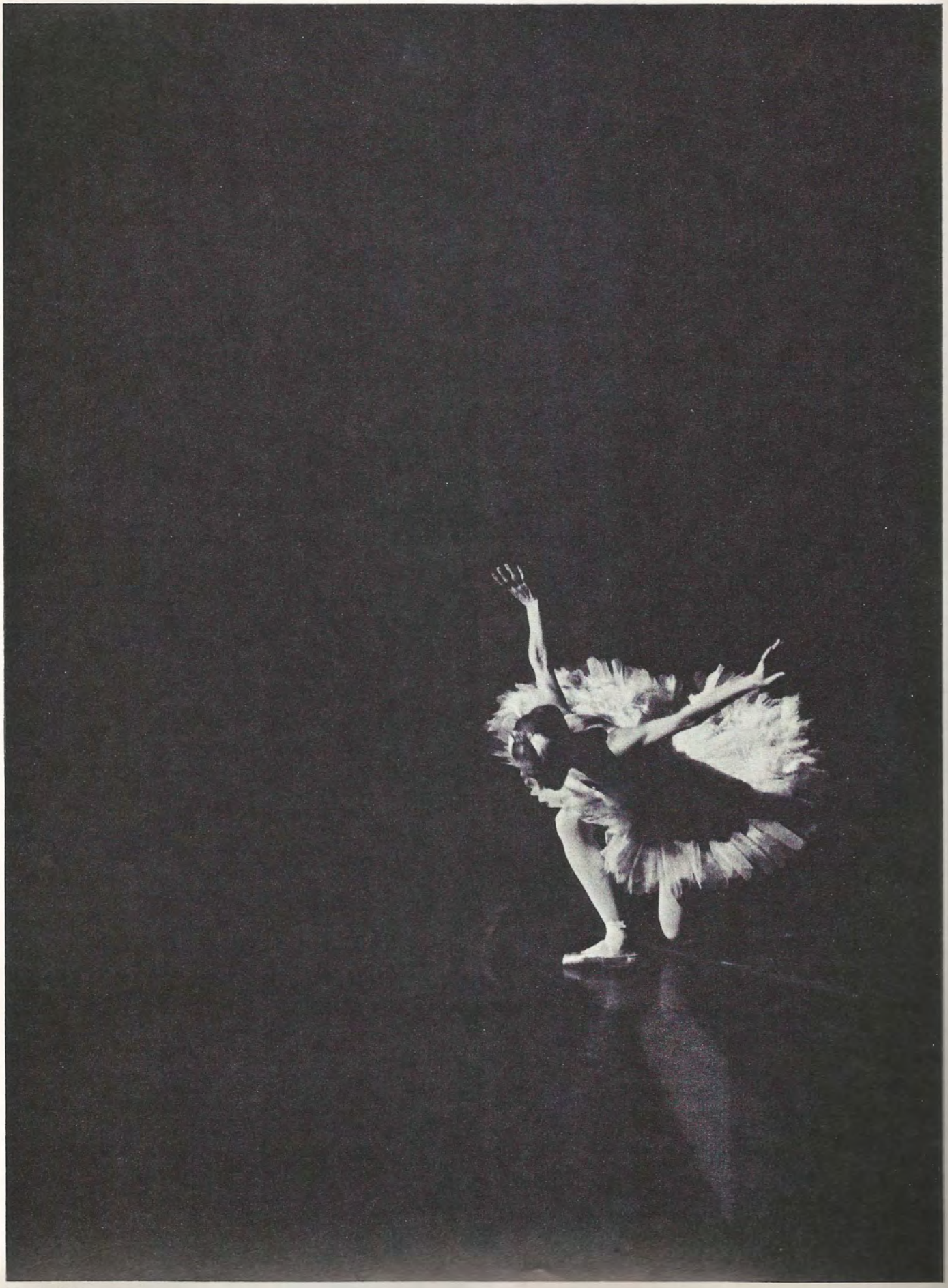
British-born photographer David Street became Canada's most popularly known dance photographer with the publication, in 1978, of his book, *Karen Kain: Lady of Dance*. It was while working on an earlier and equally successful book about skater Toller Cranston that Street's interest in dance photography was first triggered. Working with Karen Kain confirmed it. 'It is to the infinite patience and perfectionism she showed me in the year and a half we worked together on the book that I owe my love of dance photography.'

David Street's career behind the camera goes back to his teenage years in southern England when, having left high school at 17, he got a job working for a news service, 'the most intensive training for any aspiring people

Peter Schaufuss and his manager and osteopath Dr. Dimitri Papoutsis

D'origine britannique, David Street a commencé très jeune dans le photo-journalisme au Canada. Il s'est distingué dans le monde de la danse par la publication en 1978 de son livre "Karen Kain: Lady of Dance". C'est à la suite du succès de son livre consacré au patineur artistique Toller Cranston que David Street est venu à la danse. Il prépare actuellement un volume sur le danseur de ballet de renomée internationale Peter Schaufuss. David Street pense que le photographe doit interpréter la danse avec son objectif. Il ne recherche pas son essence. A son avis, capturer le mouvement dans sa plénitude n'est pas nécessairement le meilleur moyen de photographier la danse. Il étudie attentivement les mouvements du danseur et c'est ainsi qu'il peut donner un caractère personnel à une danse dans ses photos.

Peter Schaufuss

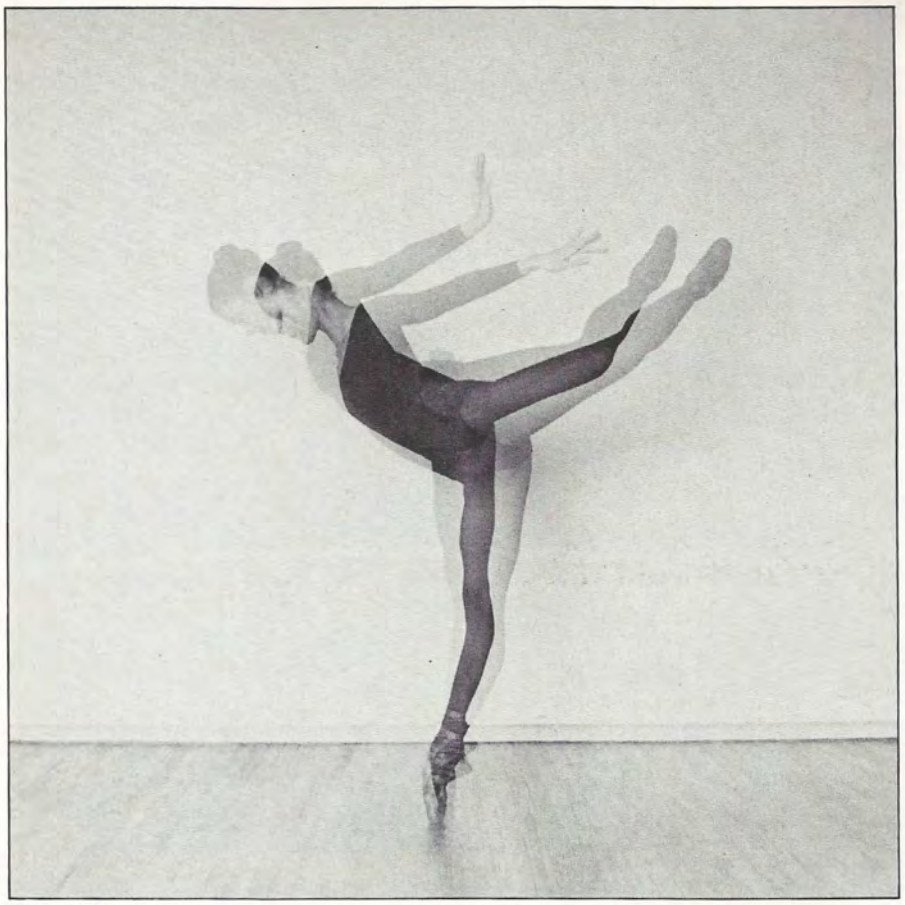


Natalia Makarova

photographer', says Street. At 19 he came to Canada and has since earned his way as a photo-journalist. 'Photo-journalist is a title that encompasses many aspects of the business, from editorial to advertising.' Apart from his books on Karen Kain and Toller Cranston, he has produced three others, one on working horses, another about the Cabot Trail and a third on female impersonator, Craig Russell. He is currently working on a photo-biography of international star Peter Schaufuss and a book on classical dance positions.

Street is clear in his own mind about the limitations of dance photography and has evolved his own approach.

'The photographer can never really capture the true essence of the dancer. Dance, whether classical or modern, is a fluid, three-dimensional art form. The art of photography by its very nature is static and two-dimensional. As a photographer, therefore, one can at best capture but a moment of dance. It is how the photographer interprets that moment, how he manipulates the mechanics of photography, that is his art form. It is not always the capture of the pinnacle of a dance movement that



Karen Kain

Students of the Royal Ballet School, England.

Randy Glynn in Danny Grossman's *Curious Schools of Theatrical Dancing: Part 1*

which allow rapid in-camera multiple exposures as well as power-drive for fast sequences. For black and white work he usually favours Ilford FP5 and for colour chooses Kodak 64 and high-speed Ektachrome (daylight and tungsten) usually 'pushed' one or two stops to compensate for the poor lighting conditions under which most action dance photography must be carried out. □

necessarily best exemplifies the photographer's interpretation. Sometimes a blur of light and dark can make a dramatic print. The dance photographer must understand the purity of a dance position before he can truly interpret it within his camera.'

David Street uses Leica and Nikon 35mm cameras with a variety of lens. For his characteristic multiple-exposure images he uses Nikon F2 motor-drive

Frank Augustyn and Tomas Schramek in Maurice Béjart's *Song of a Wayfarer.*

The Case of the Vanishing Program Note
Are Audiences Deliberately Left in the Dark?

By Leland Windreich

A dancer I know refuses to read her program before a perfomance. She maintains that a good dance-work needs no explanation. If its values are not visibly apparent, the piece simply doesn't work.

George Balanchine takes a similar stand with his own creations, insisting that a good ballet needs no notes. Since he devises ballets these days which have no topical or literal materials and invariably assigns to them the names of the musical compositions to which they are set, it's hard to disagree. Titles such as *Brahms-Schönberg Quartet* and *Piano Concerto No. 2* were certainly not chosen to bewilder the viewer.

Patrons of contemporary dance seem to expect very little in the way of program aids. A printed sheet gives the names of the works and of the dancers performing them. As in the case of productions of non-objective art, the title may serve simply to differentiate one piece from another. Descriptive titles are superfluous for many dance works, particularly those which deal with processes.

Ballet audiences, who tend to come to the theatre expecting more literal fare, demand rather substantial guidelines. Experience suggests that dance — a non-verbal medium — does not always convey the many-layered intention of its creators, particularly when there are cultural barriers to cross.

Bridging a Cultural Divide

When American Ballet Theatre danced in Russia in 1966, audiences there were

On considère souvent que la danse peut se passer d'explications. Les brèves descriptions d'une oeuvre sur les programmes de spectacles sont pourtant largement appréciées et attendues du public. Les programmes de ballet classique ont les notes les plus complètes alors que l'on pourrait penser que le spectateur sait déjà à quoi s'attendre. Par contre, on ne donne au public de la danse contemporaine que peu de renseignements sur les intentions du chorégraphe, et l'oeuvre pourrait bénéficier de quelques éclaircissements. Son interprétation est par conséquent totalement différente d'un spectateur à l'autre. Les chorégraphes semblent n'avoir plus aucune obligation de clarifier leurs intentions. Leland Windreich pense qu'ils ne devraient pas laisser leur public dans une telle confusion.

Senta Driver's Resettings. Improvisations on *La Sylphide?*

ill prepared to comprehend unfamiliar choreography. The cultural freeze of official Soviet policy had isolated Russian dance from all outside forms of 20th-century art and theatre. Despite ABT's pleas, Moscow theatre officials refused to print and distribute program notes. They had not been requested far enough in advance to permit the proper official translations and the various bureaucratic editing processes! Moreover, it was of little concern to them whether the American works made sense or not. Viewers who hadn't a clue what the word *Rodeo* meant (some confessed a vague association of the word with bullfighting) and who had no previous exposure to American vernacular dance, sat in bewilderment through Agnes de Mille's folksy ballet. Antony Tudor's *Pillar of Fire* fared much worse. This was the first ballet to be seen in Moscow constructed as a continous narrative, set to a musical score which does not admit the customary pauses for virtuoso soli. The desperate sexual fling of a turn-of-the-century spinster in a brothel and her ultimate achievement of mature love with an understanding man, was interpreted by many as the transition of a woman from a miserable bourgeoise existence to contented communism after a brief indoctrination by the leader of a neighbourhood cell. The title naturally meant little in a country where the Bible is not widely perused.

An audience relates what is seen on stage to that which is familiar, becoming vexed when there is nothing in personal experience to provide the link. Program notes can assure some connection or suffice as a pain-killer. Viewers who continue to insist that the dance-work speak for itself are not obliged to read their programs, but the assistance will be there when the expected communication is not forthcoming from the stage.

Signposts to the Classics

Paradoxically, ballets from the traditional repertory still get the full treatment in the program. Managements seem only too pleased to serve those viewers who are each evening witnessing their very first *Giselle* with ample notes on its origin, historical significance and plot. Many 20th-century choreographers such as Michel Fokine, Frederick Ashton and Martha Graham, wrote themselves or commissioned notes which are succinct précis of their ballets' often complicated plots, preferring to lead the viewer in the proper direction rather than providing a blow-by-blow description. Serge Diaghilev wrote notes for many of his protegés' creations, insisting that the audience share the jokes in those particularly outrageous pieces involving a sharp departure from established decorum.

Today most of the works causing balletgoers to squirm come from the post-modern offerings which are now entering the repertories of both the major and regional companies. For these works, program notes appear to be a cop-out. Titles are often one-word multiordinals, such as *Reaches, Greening, Circles, Manifestations, Metaphors, Ramifications* and *Mutations*, which convey little to begin with. If what takes place on stage thus offers no message to the viewer, he has the choice of considering himself the pitiful victim of cultural deprivation, or of accepting the premise that the choreographer intended no more than to move several bodies through space — and hardly thought the audience needed to be told so! There is even the more maddening possibility that he wanted only to tease the viewer into anticipating certain contents which he had no intention of delivering.

Many post-modernists are least of all interested in creating enduring dance works and are content to have their pieces expire on presentation.

Ballet audiences don't know this. They invariably face an intermission feeling they've been duped or cheated. For consolation, they await the utterances of the local newspaper critic who will hopefully relieve their anxieties next morning with a sober explanation of what they have seen but failed to comprehend. The fact that the critic may too be the victim of mass bewilderment is rarely considered. A good critic will share his dismay. Others will pussyfoot around, unwilling to divulge anything which might be construed as ignorance or human weakness.

Critics in a Quandary

A few years ago the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre in Vancouver presented a piece by a locally unknown choreographer, Kathryn Posin. It was called *Later That Day*, and a single note in the program indicated that Posin had utilized music from Philip Glass' controversial opera, *Einstein on the Beach*. The curtain rose to reveal at front stage left a distinguished man in a three-piece suit, who consulted and periodically reacted flamboyantly to a folio-sized book, while at stage right a young couple dressed as 1920s street toughs alternately smooched, argued, sulked and made peace with each other on a park bench. Soon a snake-like chorus of similarly attired youths took over the stage, splitting into couples and realigning itself in various combinations. Hip thrusts, bumps and other jazzy movements were executed, together with falls to the stage which ended with the dancers in the position for push-ups.

The work had its première on tour, and local critics, unable to come to terms with its confusing issues, preferred to deal with the quality and textures of the movements, resorting to such terms as 'provocative' and 'insinuating' to camouflage their cluelessness. As the ballet moved eastward, other critics used equally cowardly means until *Washington Danceview* editor Alexandra Tomalonis honestly admitted total bewilderment. However, having some familiarity with the opera from which the music was extracted, she found in the work other values which were for her equally valid theatrically. Likewise, *New Yorker* critic Arlene Croce, unsure of the dramatic assignments of the protagonists, saw in the piece an attempt to devise a stylized ritual to match Glass' repetitive score. Later a Chicago critic told *Dancemagazine* readers that *Later that Day* was about a monster (the man in the three-piece suit) intent on recruiting a young couple into his society of zombies (represented by the corps). This simplistic diagnosis raises some significant questions: was the Chicago critic the only one on the continent smart enough to have discerned a genuine plot, or did he have a personal pipeline to the tight-lipped choreographer?

Senta Driver, like many of her peers in post-modern dance, is highly educated and articulate to the point of being the star of any panel in which she participates at various dance festivals and conferences. As a choreographer, her batting average is somewhat lower; the fact that she calls her company of dancers *Harry* suggest that she favors a light touch. But in her dances performers frequently give recognizable signals in a game where the rules may be dramatically changed from one moment to the next. Thus, one wonders if the dancer whose eyeballs are rolling skyward is in extreme anguish or experiencing simple boredom. Or does the one walking on

her ankles want us to think her courageous, imaginative, masochistic or simply misguided?

A Heavy Lump of Unappealing Minimalism

Resettings, a Driver work presented recently in Vancouver by the Pennsylvania Ballet, was shown but once on an evening which opened with Act II of *Swan Lake*. In the program the Petipa fragment got 61 lines of prose, while Driver's creation got none. *Province* critic Max Wyman responded most positively to the hint in the title and described the work as a whimsical survey of the human life cycle. His enthusiasm had not been shared by the angry and confused ballet audience that had paid for ballet's olympic and literary resources and got a heavy lump of unappealing minimalism. But several months later Marilyn Hunt, who saw the Driver piece in Brooklyn and reviewed it for *Dancemagazine* noted, that '*Resettings* gives the impression of contemporary young dancers improvising on themes from ballet in general and *La Sylphide* in particular, including the pas de trois from Filippo Taglioni's version'. Not content to stop with this blithe comparison, Hunt goes on to allude to specific movements performed by dancers she has identified as Effie and James and to a dance performed on her knees by a young woman designed as the Sylph.

Most of the new dance works currently making Canadian audiences miserable at ballet performances have come from abroad; the Dutch and the Americans are particularly to blame. However, Canadian companies can no longer claim immunity. During a recent tour of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, James Kudelka offered his first work for his new home team. Set to three ascerbic chamber pieces by Igor Stravinsky, the ballet is danced by two men and two wome
and white attire, who perform jagged, jazzy little solos within the confines of an illuminated square, using their chairs as pedestals, partners, and modes of navigation as required. The work was given the maddening title of *Genesis*, and since there's nary a word in the program to defend its choice, audiences are destined to hate it from coast to coast. Anyone remembering Kudelka's *Washington Square*, an hour-long narrative ballet he set on the National Ballet of Canada a few years ago, may recall that it had everything short of name-tags and balloons to let one know what is happening on stage, and that it was amply served by program notes which fully described the Henry James novel on which it is based.

Recently Kudelka went abroad to watch other choreographers create, and while some balletgoers might have hoped that he would loosen up a bit, few would surely have hoped him to replace rigidity with irresponsibility. Somewhere in transit he has learned that a dance need not be constructed to last a lifetime. In Vancouver, *Genesis* would be forgotten within the week, but in that time it reaped a great deal more comment than it deserved, being the one piece which so many resented for having left them in the dark. The dark is simply no place where any ballet patron deserves to be. □

Contemporary Dancers

A Prairie Lament becomes a Song of Hope

By Robert Enright

Les Contemporary Dancers de Winnipeg ont fait face à de graves problèmes pendant leur saison 81-82. Ils ont dû annuler plusieurs spectacles en raison de leur déficit, et la compétence de la direction de la compagnie a été publiquement remise en question. Le Conseil des Arts du Canada a même été jusqu'à examiner leur production. Il semble à présent que la compagnie soit largement sortie de ses problèmes et sa nouvelle saison a commencé avec succès à Winnipeg. Ils se produisent maintenant dans une nouvelle salle au Warehouse Theatre, et offrent une plus grande variété de chorégraphies. Tedd Robinson, membre de la compagnie et chorégraphe, joue un rôle important dans les efforts des Contemporary Dancers pour s'attirer un public. Il semble certain maintenant que la compagnie va survivre et prospérer malgré des difficultés persistantes.

It may be taken as a case of life imitating art that Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers plan to present José Limon's *Exiles* during the company's spring hometown engagement. *Exiles* deals with Adam and Eve's fall from grace and subsequent expulsion from the Garden of Eden. In case inveterate cynics judge the Limon classic an inappropriate choice for a company which has only just emerged from under an almost overwhelming deficit, it is useful to recall the more positive dimensions of the Edenic myth implicit in the *felix culpa*, the fortunate fall.

At the end of the 1981-82 season the Contemporary Dancers faced a $188,000 deficit; when the company staged its season opener in October the deficit had been almost entirely eliminated and the company was again excited — even optimistic — about its future. The company's negotiations through last season were difficult: it played to small houses, was forced to cancel performances during a Saskatchewan tour and, most embarrassing of all, had to withdraw from England's Camden Festival, after having been the first dance company invited to perform at the festival. To make matters worse, Monique Michaud head of the Canada Council's dance division, rattled the sabre of disapproval from her fortress in Ottawa, while local cultural mandarins began choosing floral arrangements for the company's funeral.

Today, thanks to the resilience of the Contemporary Dancers, those same pundits are not paying interest charges on their Visa Cards, the Dance Section is smiling benignly towards the West and Rachel Browne, the company's founding artistic director, was flattered by an invitation to take her company to New York next spring for the Riverside Dance Festival. However, Contemporary Dancers' commitment to financial restraint means New York will have to wait.

Rachel Browne's Responsibility

Much of the responsibility for the present success and, I suppose, for past disappointments experienced by the Contemporary Dancers, legitimately falls on the slim shoulders of Rachel Browne, who founded the company in 1964 and who remains its artistic director after 18 years. Her commitment to sustain a modern dance company in Winnipeg has impressed even those people who are critical of her leadership and choreographic capabilities. She admits that the past year was the most difficult she has ever experienced. When it became apparent that the company would indeed be saved, thanks to a profitable casino, corporate fund-raising and increased subscription sales, Browne collapsed.

As always, she maintains her body was telling her something and she has emerged with a quiet, even philosophical attitude towards last season's financial and administrative crisis. 'I feel the ups and downs are inevitable and that it's not going to be a straight line for any company, least of all ours. We had such a helluva time just keeping ourselves together that I forgot about the things we'd already accomplished. I think that we're very, very good and that doesn't mean that we don't have to worry about the quality. But we have to just keep making dances as well as we can and reach as many people as we can.'

Rachel Browne's formula for survival is simply enough said, but more complex in its implementation. There is a decidedly different attitude these days in the church loft where the company has its offices and studios and it's not because of the benevolence of the patron saint of dances. (Who would that be anyway...Mary Magdalene or the Virgin Mary?) The company is better promoted, better choreographed and has a better understanding of its role in Winnipeg's dance community than ever before.

First of all, it has finally found a permanent and accommodating performance space in the Warehouse Theatre, the Manitoba Theatre Centre's second stage. Contemporary Dancers have been in a kind of diaspora for years now, moving from one space to another like reluctant gypsies. The problem this posed was that the company's audience couldn't identify the troupe with a specific location.

It also reflected a confusion on the administration's part about the kind of company it was and what its ambitions were: Should it present *A Christmas Carol* in the cavernous space of MTC's Mainstage, or should it present choreographic workshops in the admittedly economical space of its church studios?

To a large extent, the Warehouse is a compromise. It allows the intimacy and scale that this company needs to communicate effectively while at the same time it offers a sufficiently large house to make the performance venture worthwhile.

More and Better Choreography

More significant than the attractiveness of the space is that Contemporary Dancers are now performing a wider and more appealing range of choreography. The repertoire has always been eclectic — choreographers who have set pieces on the company include Cliff Keuter, Judith Marcuse, Brian Macdonald, Anna Blewchamp, Karen Rimmer, Lynne Taylor and the list goes on — but recently the company has been looking inside rather than outside for its choreographic resources. The appointment of Stephanie Ballard as associate artistic director in 1980 not

PHOTO: JOHN FLETCHER

Rachel Browne and Ron Holbrook in Robert Moulton's *True Believer*, 1971.

Stephanie Ballard and Tedd Robinson in her *Time Out*.

PHOTO: DAVID COOPER

Stephanie Ballard's *Christmas Carol*

only lessened the administrative load for Rachel Browne, but also added another choreographer to the company. Ballard won the Clifford E. Lee Choreography Award this year and certain of her works, the rambunctious *Construction Company*, the enigmatic *Prairie Song* and the story ballet, *A Christmas Carol*, are extremely popular additions to the company's repertoire.

But the bright spot this year in the choreographic ranks of Contemporary Dancers appears in the protean form of Tedd Robinson, the spritely, demonic hybrid who has been appointed resident choreographer for the 1982-83 season. More than either Rachel Browne or Stephanie Ballard, Robinson has an instinctive sense of theatre and an abiding interest in the myth-tapping potential of dance. Taken together, this choreographic trinity is a potent force, and its collective strength augurs well for the company's future.

These new strengths emerged in Contemporary Dancers' season opener in October.

Five of the three program items were by company choreographers and generally they fared better than either *Baggage*, Anna Blewchamp's somewhat dated investigation of female stereotyping, or Rodney Griffin's *Rialto. Time Out*, Stephanie Ballard's scoring of the obsessive and ambiguous marriage between F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, was an exceedingly more danceable foray into male/female relationships than was *Baggage*. Everything about the dance is absorbing, including the way in which the two dancers (Ballard and Robinson) move in and out of four large circles of light, as if engaged in wildly serious children's games on a carousel of their own making. The music, by Laraaji, delivers the right sense of the fairy-tale gone manic with the result that watching the entire dance is like being inside the eye of an emotional hurricane; everything is slowed down and imminently destructive.

Tedd Robinson's *Who Could Ask for Anything More*, a moveable feast set to the irrepressible music of George Gershwin, made Griffin's *Rialto* seem positively antedeluvian. Robinson is amazingly adept at ciphering a contemporary sensibility back through traditional music. (An earlier piece performed in June at the 'Dance Weekend' made a timely political statement by combining the music of Respighi with the verbal venom of William Burroughs.) In his new work Robinson was able to effect an equally incongruous partnering for purposes of pure entertainment, this time with the additional help of Marvin Schlichting splendid costumes. The dancers wore black miliskins with velour multi-coloured tubes at the waist, bust, arms and head and looked like nothing so much as athletic, sleek, New Wave Michelin men and women. They were under the compulsive direction of Tedd Robinson, (costumed in a taffeta dress that would have made him the envy of

Princess Di) acting the role of mischievous elf punk.

The premier of *M.L.W.*, Rachel Browne's tribute to Jazz pianist Mary Lou Williams, was easily her most effective choreography in years. It is more fluid and more complicated than her previous efforts and sensitized the dances to the degree that they became kinetic piano notes, as if they were human sprung rhythms. Browne began the piece during the company's tribulations last year and, in a paradoxical way, the adversity has provoked her most ambitious and satisfying dance.

Challenges Remain

Because there is new choreography, there are new challenges for the company as well, and not necessarily for the same dancers who have been called upon in past seasons. Gaile Petursson-Hiley remains the company's most expressive dancer; she is a beautiful woman whose long hair, facial features and angular body conjure up a pride of desirable women from Salome on. Her versatility is, however, being challenged by other company members, especially D-Anne Kuby who has a more athletic style. There is something of the street kid and the wanton in D-Anne Kuby and it is proving to be a seductive combination. Yet, in her overall abilities and style Kuby is not unique. Contemporary Dancers is a strong, handsome company and, for the most part, they strike one as wholesome; not quite the dancing equivalent of Pat Boone's family, but with little portions of milk and cookies thrown in along with the veils and sensuality.

It would be foolhardy to predict a comfortable future for Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, but it is clear the company has survived the worst that dubious management and misdirected promotion could muster against it. As the company moves into its eighteenth season, its true character is becoming increasingly apparent. It is a dedicated, versatile and political company, whose repertoire is less about movement than about the obsessions and celebration of the human spirit. Rachel Browne, more simply, calls the company humanist. 'I feel today more than ever that art and dance have to point in the direction of hope and away from machines, madness and alienation', she says. 'We have to trust in the power of the artist to speak fervently and movingly. We are missionaries, pioneers, still....' That's the way the talk is in the studios of Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers this year. Things won't be easy for this resilient, past-troubled company, but on the strength of the last half year, it looks as if it will dance through one difficulty after another.

Robert Enright is western correspondent for CBC-FM's Stereo Morning. □

In Review

Karen Kain, Frank Augustyn and Friends
Jubilee Auditorium, Edmonton. 10 October, 1982.

Caught somewhat off guard by a poorly publicised show, dance-loving Edmontonians nevertheless lined up en masse for a Sunday evening with the stars, one stop in a five-city western Canadian tour produced by Karen Kain's manager, Peter Diggins.

Surprisingly, however, the group of nine, headed by Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn, put on a performance which provided a far better showcase for some of the less familiar dancers than for the main attractions. In a very mixed program, the best came mostly in the first half, and much of the vitality overall stemmed from the efforts of Christine Sarry and Gary Chryst, both small in stature but consistently large in stage presence.

The introduction, clearly an attempt to give an upbeat flavour to the evening, didn't quite come off. Danced in part to 'I Got Rhythm', it seemed intended to convey the message that ballet stars aren't necessarily tied to their tutus, and that, freed from the confines of a large company, they too can let their hair down. Sarry and Chryst apart, the natural zest these few minutes needed was lacking, and there were even moments when coordination in the group was amiss and everyone appeared to be trying just a little too hard.

The first real set dance, the pas de deux from *La Fille Mal Gardée* got the evening proper off to a flying start with a light-hearted, wholly joyful performance. Supported by Hérold's slightly zany music, Laura Young and Donn Edwards gave an interpretation of Bruce Wells' choreography in which grace, confidence, and a sheer delight in dancing combined to give a very fresh look to a rather wellworn piece.

PHOTO: GREG BOS

Laura Young and Donn Edwards in the pas de deux from *La Fille Mal Gardée.*

Their second duet, to music from Bellini's *La Somnambula,* was much less successful, despite Donn Edwards' efforts to enliven some intrinsically dull Balanchine choreography. Repetition, especially in a fairly slow-moving duet, tends to become boring, and the choreographer's jokes became particularly tedious towards the end. A sleepwalking ballerina being manipulated into twirling and tip-toeing may be slightly amusing once or even twice but becomes a choreographic cliché third time around.

Oddly enough, the pas de deux from *Don Quixote* was less of a grand finale than might have been anticipated. Potentially exciting, it lacked the verve and crispness of gesture needed to bring it to life. Frank Augustyn did provide some of the expected spectacle, with the customary display of aerial fireworks, but Karen Kain, though technically precise, seemed curiously lacking in vitality.

Kain's best role, in fact, came earlier, in *Nelligan.* Here she was well matched with Christian Holder and choreographer Ann Ditchburn. None of the three lost touch with the audience throughout a lengthy performance, where the dancers' movements were not only fluid and physically beautiful but communicated a great depth of emotion.

The real show-stopper of the first half was, however, Gary Chryst's solo, *Percussion IV.* A punchy excerpt from Bob Fosse's Broadway show, *Dancin',* this was Chryst's chance to give his all. Even to the admonitory finger wag at misplaced applause, his every motion was snapped out with supreme confidence and a delight shared in full measure by the audience.

Frank Augustyn's solo was much less well received. As an experiment in describing a dancer's feelings while performing, it worked to some extent, but as a contribution to an evening of entertainment it was considerably less successful. Listening to a dancer's own voice describe his emotions as background to a stage performance is irritating. *Personal Essay* gave the peculiar impression of actually being designed for television, a medium in which it might be more effective. With no particular rhythmic relationship between the music and voice, the distraction from the live performer was especially annoying when multiple recording reduced the text to near gibberish. In all, it was unfortunate that this brief exposure showed Augustyn's weaknesses as a narrator rather than his strengths as a dancer.

A much needed awakener towards the end of the program came with Christine Sarry's excerpt from Eliot Feld's *Anatomic Balm.* Impish,

irrepressible, and projecting enormous enjoyment, she is a performer who never fails to hold her audience.

Christian Holder's *The Awakening*, though much less energetic, showed great strength and control in an emotional piece which called for subtle, well-considered use of movement.

But it would be unfair to compare the talents of so varied a group whose appeal, after all, lies at least partly in its very diversity, a fact of which the dancers themselves seem well aware. *Weewis*, a pas de six by Margo Sappington was in essence three pas de deux, with the couples' relationships reflecting the personality and style each pair could best portray: Sarry and Chryst in a witty anything-you-can-do-I-can-do-better; Ann Ditchburn and Darrell Barnett portraying pure sensuality; and the agonized love-hate of Karen Kain and Christian Holder.

As a trial, this whistle-stop tour would seem to be a success. Certainly it allowed Westerners to become acquainted with some lesser known dancers and to see the well-known in a different setting. Whether a repeat without the cachet of Kain and Augustyn would draw the crowds is a different matter. But however any subsequent tour may be designed, the publicity should not be planned on the arrogant assumption that a small advertisement is compensated for by a big name — a 20-minute curtain delay for last-minute ticket sales is hardly an auspicious beginning to any performance.

MURIEL STRINGER

Twyla Tharp Dance Foundation
Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver,
14 - 15 October, 1982.

For its second Vancouver season, the Twyla Tharp Company brought a larger ensemble (the 1980 troupe had but seven dancers), two world premieres, and a considerably more theatrical purpose, compared to the stringent minimalism displayed two years ago. *Eight Jelly Rolls*, created in 1971 to Jelly Roll Morton recordings, has eight women in backless overalls with a white dickie and black tie, pivoting and gyrating on a murky stage. At times the dance is little more than muscles and nerves responding to the pulse of the music with a cool containment. Then tiny Christine Uchida begins to make astounding transitions from a high kick to a full split in a series of inebriated navigations like a windmill in slow motion. And the fun begins when she attempts to hide her condition by becoming part of a regimented group of six women moving with dignity in close unison.

Sue's Leg (1975) and *Assorted Quartets* (1980) demonstrate Tharp's fascination with foursomes. In the earlier piece, which is set to Fats Waller songs, each dancer moves with a different weight, speed and personal style for certain long musical phrases, somehow managing to merge fluidly with the other three on the very last note. While *Sue's Leg* is a zany pas de quatre for dancers of diverse body types, *Assorted Quartets* is a double duet, with matched couples responding both predictably and whimsically to country fiddle tunes. The result suggests a sort of *fête champêtre* set in rural Oklahoma.

Two other dance works shown represent steps in the evolution of Tharp's style which led to the creation of the two premieres. *Baker's Dozen* (1979) is certainly a fore-runner of the *Nine Sinatra Songs* which had its first showing on October 15. In the former six couples in oyster-white satin respond to ballroom-dance tunes by Willie "The Lion" Smith, making frequent hesitant entrances and abrupt departures seeming to require the protection of the wings. Solos finally evolve from the group dances, and some of them are mere fragments. A woman is tossed on stage from high in the wings into her partner's arms for a brief moment, and the man, finding himself suddenly alone, manages to execute an uninhibited shimmy while waiting on his knees for an alternate partner to appear.

Between *Baker's Dozen* and *Sinatra* Tharp found time to devise the dances for the film of *Ragtime* and these, with their distinctive yearning and bittersweet qualities appear as the bridge between the two stage pieces. Of all the works shown on this visit *Sinatra* comes closest to a ballet in structure, mood and concept, with its more rigid progression of Roseland Ballroom displays. The women wear bold gowns of distinctive colours, each establishing a character on sight which remains constant through the piece. Surely this is Tharp's answer to *Liebeslieder Walzer*, and in it her full company of 14 is afforded a rare chance to portray mature adults.

In *Short Stories* (1980) Tharp deals with transactions that are negative and a core of cynicism dominates the work. *Loverboy*, to music by Supertramp, has three couples grabbing at scraps of comfort from a flood of ambivalent impulses. The dancers retreat, reconcile, threaten, reject, warn and repel each other, finding momentarily a brief solace in a change of partners or in the company of their own sex.

An alienated Mary Ann Kellogg is finally parcelled, tossed, manipulated and mauled by three men until she falls senseless to the floor.

Twyla Tharp company members Jennifer Way, Shelley Freydont and Mary Ann Kellogg.

In the second dance, *Jungleland*, to Bruce Springsteen's music two pairs of dancers manage to achieve couplings which remain frantic and convey no exchange of warmth or common concern.

An even greater discord is the issue of *Bad Smells*, the second world première. On a bare stage which has been stripped to the walls seven dancers in scraps of grey rags with chalk-white faces and wild hair writhe, twitch and gesticulate in a kinetic gibberish in a flood of harsh klieg lights to Glenn Branca's almost unbearably bombastic electronic score. Are these members of the cast of *Quest for Fire* or are they the ultimate survivors of a nuclear holocaust? Diligently and dispassionately recording their angst is Tom Rawe in a trim electric-blue jumpsuit, who moves before and among them with a videocamera. The close-range images are cast on a huge screen in the centre of the stage, which invites the audience to participate in the recording of a frenzy as the cameraman varies his angle to reveal the dancers at a tilt or from below. Tharp's experiments in the 1970s of making dances expressly for television has afforded her the means to devise a piece of extraordinary theatre, one in which the brutality of the medium's candidness is displayed. There may indeed be bad smells at Armageddon, and surely there will be a video cameraman there to record humanity's ultimate gasp.

LELAND WINDREICH

Eddy Toussaint Dance Company
Place des Arts, Montreal.
29 September –
1 October, 1982.

Members of the Montreal-based Eddy Toussaint Dance Company are used to getting standing ovations at the end of a show. I witnessed one of these popular demonstrations during the troupe's latest hometown season in Places des Arts' 1,300-seat Théâtre Maisonneuve. Naturally, the place was packed.

Today, eight years after it was founded, the Eddy Toussaint Dance Company is thriving as never before. Apart from the full houses and standing ovations, it has a fat wad of laudatory reviews with which to establish its critical legitimacy. Many of these have been gained during European and Latin American tours.

Finally, after years of grumbling that it was ignored by Ottawa, the company has received $60,000 from the Canada Council — an agreeable complement to its $150,000 Quebec grant.

Strangely, however, the Eddy Toussaint Dance Company has made only brief forays into English-speaking Canada. A large segment of the Canadian dance-loving public has no way of knowing what all the fuss is about.

Well, it can be explained easily enough. Eddy Toussaint, who is his company's principal choreographer, has put together a flashy, light-weight dance show. It has enormous appeal for those who go to the theatre with the intention of putting their minds in neutral. Toussaint offers colour, spectacle, excitement, sensuality — and just enough sexiness to tease but not offend a respectable bourgeois audience. Nothing weighs heavy on the mind; everything is accessible because there's nothing to be got at.

All the items offered during the company's Places des Arts season were choreographed by Toussaint. There really should be a range of words to define the process of putting steps together into a dance. It's confusing to have to use the word 'choreography' in talking of Toussaint's efforts when the same word must be used in other contexts to describe the creative endeavours of, say, Jerome Robbins, Kenneth MacMillan, Antony Tudor, or a number of other established 'choreographers'. Between the two extremes is a great, gaping void.

PHOTO: MELODIE GARRISH

Eddy Toussaint's *Façades*.

Toussaint certainly puts together steps — usually far too many for any given piece of music — but he has no recognizable dance language of his own with which to communicate. He draws his movement eclectically from classical ballet, jazz, Spanish and other assorted dance styles and sticks them together into routines. Any mood or meaning he may then want to create has to be imposed externally. As a result, his dancers too often appear to be posturing rather than dancing. They move, of course, many of them exceedingly well. But how can they look like intelligent, motivated artists dressed in choreographic rags?

Toussaint's is a large company, 25 dancers counting in apprentices and guest artists. That make it the third largest in Canada's, right along side the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. It means Toussaint has the human resources to create sophisticated ensemble pieces yet, when he is choreographing for large numbers, he seems content to work on a simple multiplication theory. If it looks good on one, it's bound to look good on many.

In the case of a work called *Missa Creole*, which Toussaint describes as, 'a simple homage to my origins' (in Haiti), the effect can be momentarily striking but repeated through an evening it becomes tedious.

Toussaint loves melodramatic effects, hyper-charged gestures supposedly intended to bespeak angst or ecstasy, sudden dynamic gear-changes to make the audience sit up and look. The effects are underlined by extraordinarily busy lighting plots. Occasionally it's hard to tell if a dramatic colour change or sudden plunge from brilliance to gloom is actually intended or simply an awkward miscue. These changes often occur right on an accented beat in the music. It's a bit like a disco light-show at times.

Toussaint is at his most truly funny as a choreographer when he is trying to be serious. A pas de trois, *Souvenance*, with a score by Quebec musician, Diane Juster, is almost a self-parody of its genre — a recollected history of torrid, tangled emotions, a struggle between love and desire.

Mascarade, on the other hand, is not funny at all despite the curious program note intended to excuse it: 'On a devilish music ... and just for this humorous episode, are assembled characters who are rarely seen dancing together'. The characters? An odd grab-bag really. A clown, the devil, tutued Swan Queens (white and black), a sailor-boy and various others. Under a canopy of huge balloons, this curious costume party tries desperately to have a good time but finds it harder and harder as the detestable ballet gropes its way aimlessly towards nothing. The poor dancers (how one blushes for them) do their best to ham things up, but it's all to no avail. The burlesque elements are clichéd and there's nothing else to smile about.

Façades, a new work set to an Astore Piazzola score is much funnier. It is an overly long set of dances that seem to be trying to strip the face from sexual stereotyping and social role playing. There's a sultry female ensemble sequence called 'Cris de femmes' and a saucy, flirtatious solo for Louis Robitaille — 'Le parfait insouciant', as well as other heavy-handed statements about relationships and roleplaying.

Perhaps all this was intended seriously to make us think about ourselves and the games we play. *Façades'* success, however, rests on its extravagant vulgarity. It could almost become a cult ballet.

MICHAEL CRABB

London Contemporary Dance Theatre
Ryerson Theatre, Toronto.
12-16 October, 1982.

About halfway through the first work on London Contemporary Dance Theatre's opening night program, I realized that I was in for a lot of legs and arms. *Stabat Mater* managed to be about more than extremities, as it turned out — indeed several of its images eloquently evoked the sorrowing Virgin of Vivaldi's exquisite lament — but at its heart...legs and arms. Legs and arms used in ways that suggested Art Nouveau and then Art Deco figurines, Egyptian hieroglyphs, knarled trees, splintered crosses, medieval effigies. Appropriate as many of these suggestions now seem to the expressed subject of the dance, it was the versatility, the cleverness, the selfconscious inventiveness of the choreographic design for arms and legs that struck home.

The choreographer of *Stabat Mater* is the company's artistic director, Robert Cohan, who once danced with the Graham company. Although he presented three other works during the Toronto run, *Stabat Mater*, his Marian dance for nine women, is an excellent indication of how his company wants to see itself. Legs and arms are truly its major concern. If this review were about a ballet company, you might justifiably object, 'So what!', as legs and arms are really ballet's raw material. But LCDT bills itself as 'contemporary'; in their program notes, Cohan and company claim to be descended from the great Graham line of Modern Dance. However, Graham technique, which we are led to believe constitutes the basis of LCDT's daily class, has traditionally had little or nothing to do with legs and arms on their own; the torso is the body's true centre, according to Graham. One has only to consider any of Graham's sorrowing Virgins or, closer to home but still holding to the Graham tradition, David Earle's, to see that in the torso lies the source of their powerful and impassioned grief. When not connected to this source, arms and legs become peripheral, decorative — mannered.

Cohan's emphasis on the extremities in his dances is enthusiastically endorsed by his dancers. Their torsos are strong, supple, fluid — but well-nigh invisible, lost amid a flurry of arabesquing and attitudinizing. Something as basic as contracting is indifferently, casually managed and spiralling seems a lost art to these dancers. It might have a lot to do with being English — reserve and all that — but so much of the dancing seemed specifically held back and repressed as though it were trying to match the spirit of the dances. Even when the dancers are moving in a rabble-rousing ABT style as they are in Cohan's choreographic version of daily class (called — euphemistically —*Class*), their pelvises are, metaphorically speaking, locked.

Many of the dancers seem restrained to the point of anonymity and the few who stand out do so mostly on the basis of unusual height, kinky hairstyle or racial background. Tom Jobe, an American from Texas, is different but only in a way that heightens the choreography's mannerisms. His rococo wrist configurations, which more than once reminded me of the standard New York City Ballet ballerina-semaphore, seemed at first to be a parody, but later looked like a source of inspiration to the company's choreographers. Patrick Harding-Irmer is different, too. He's a great dancer and a magnificent presence who all the same looks stifled by his surroundings. Even in *Forest*, Cohan's most evocative and deeply felt work in the Toronto season, his energy is caged — domesticated. Still he's really the only dancer who transcends his fate and shows us what a Graham-trained dancer might really project given the right material.

I wanted to like Anca Francenhauser because she has a graciousness and a lyricism most of the others were only pretending to have. And Kate Harrison, the featured dancer in *Stabat Mater* — I kept hoping she would catch fire. Unfortunately the women have suffered more critically than the men from the reigning company style. Its frequent arthritic twistings and gnashings and jabbings and jarrings which Cohan particularly associates with his women dancers tend to deform rather than enhance or even just support their womanliness. For the first few moments of *Stabat Mater*, for example, one is seduced by the high sheen the style has developed into thinking one is really seeing genuinely tender sorrow and then it becomes glaringly apparent that nothing the dancers are doing is organic to them as physical or spiritual beings. One feels sorry for them as one would the victims of the Victorian corset or Chinese foot-binding — so much distortion for so little *effect!*

LCDT's house choreographers constitute an odd mixture of talents. Their one important connection is that they all love steps, a not unusual infatuation of choreographers who also like lots of arms and legs. Richard Alston's *Rainbow Bandit* which closed the second program is step mad. A neo-Cunningham or maybe just neo-New York carousel of a work danced in bright-hued practice wear(!), it reinforces the company's repressive self-image by distancing it that much further from any heart or — hell — guts. Canadian expatriate Christopher Bannerman gets a little closer with his elusive *Second Turning*. A young man sporting a variation of Eastern European peasant wear (similar to the costumes in Nijinska's *Les Noces* or in the Lubovitch rewriting) imagines — or does he actually experience — a series of strange dream encounters with a band of similarly-attired dancers against a flag-like tapestry which is slowly revealed as the dance progresses. What actually transpires remains a mystery. Too many hints, too many steps clutter the picture while the Ligeti score harasses us with another, more hostile meaning. When the lights fade on the opening tableau reformed, no one is any the wiser. And yet Bannerman does demonstrate by it some willingness to pass over peripheral concerns. That he can't is entirely the result of his ballet training where legs and arms always win out.

For *Free Setting*, Siobhan Davies has chosen an idiom that is bound neither to hothouse memories of gothic Graham nor the New York school of studied casualness emulated in *Rainbow Bandit*. Nevertheless it exudes the characterless elegance of much revisionist post-modernism. Its hovering, clear plastic curtains bearing negative images of dancers and its chic grey and pink highlights in both backcloth and costumes seem reproduced from the pages of *Architectural Digest* or any recent Twyla Tharp souvenir program. Only a smart divan and a vase of white lilies are wanting to complete the picture. I held brief hopes that *Free Setting* might metamorphose into an '80s version of *Les Biches*, but it was too caught up in its own picayune formal considerations to allow for that kind of breath. The

London Contemporary Dancers in Robert Cohan's *Stabat Mater*.

balleticised-modern stamp of so much of its imagery — especially in the series of pregnant (though ultimately stillborn) duets — suffocate what individual traits manage to surface. And so *Free Setting* emerges as another cool dance for 10 satin-panted dancers who come together and move apart...and who cares?

With Robert North's Schubert-prompted *Death and the Maiden* which followed *Free Setting* on LCDT's second program all pretence at modern was dropped entirely. Beginning with a court-like dance for eight dancers and a woman who is both Death and The Maiden, North's dance soon turned into *Giselle*, complete with a lethal Lothario and one of those a-young-girl's-gotta-grow-up-sometime duets for maiden and Mom-like figure. By this point there was no mistaking it: ballet, North's idiom, is the one LCDT is most comfortable dancing. (From the cheers and whistles in the audience, ballet is what Toronto, at any rate, is most comfortable watching LCDT dance.)

For someone as prideful of his Graham heritage as Cohan or at least as keen on advocating the virtues of contemporariness, ballet seems a strange goal. Yet, piece by piece, as the Toronto programs were unveiled, one became increasingly aware that what Cohan meant in his program notes to *Class* by the evolution of the Graham technique at LCDT was really a movement towards ballet. One did not have to sit through Cohan's *Duet from Nymphaeus*, the last of his works shown during the Toronto visit, to realize how striking a defection this is: *Class* itself provided ample evidence. Cohan, North, Bannerman and, in a hipper way, Davies and Alston can add their names to the ranks of ballet-moderne choreographers who flirt — coyly — with modern dance, heads bowed in reverence to the supposed supremacy of classical technique.

Perhaps they're right, though, perhaps ballet is 'where it's at'. Perhaps it is the most contemporary dance idiom and what, for want of a more descriptive term, was once called 'modern' is really only an aberration. That fierce flourish of rebellion in the 1930s spearheaded by Graham, Humphrey, Weidman, Holm, Horton and Tamiris, all of whom rediscovered the torso as the body's real centre, may be brilliant and, yes, useful, but perhaps it is, as these choreographers would have us believe, hopelessly old-fashioned. Perhaps they're right but I suspect that, frightened by the nakedness with which the torso communicates, they have fled to the art of the extremities for refuge, where braininess is their only defence against transcience. There they concoct dazzling geometric teasers out of the basic arms and legs equations ballet has always used. But at the centre of their dances, where the heart used to be, is another equation. An equation of humbling simplicity: Zero equals zero.

GRAHAM JACKSON

Paula Ross Dance Company
Harbourfront, Toronto.
7 - 10 October, 1982.

Paula Ross is one of the most respected artists on the Canadian dance scene. Since turning her back on the world of show business almost two decades ago, she has single-mindedly pursued an artistic vision — to create dances with real, expressive substance.

Paula Ross is no great technical innovator, far from being in the vanguard of new dance she sometimes looks positively old-fashioned. Although there are certain hallmarks in Ross choreography it would be hard to define a distinct style in her work. Each new subject seems to draw forth a particular vocabulary of movement.

It makes Ross hard to categorize — which must please her no end — but always interesting to watch. There's an integrity and simplicity about the way she and her company work. Not everything Ross does is a success. Some of her past efforts have been mystifying, even boring. However, you sense a committed artist at work and are always willing to make an extra effort to see what she's about.

Ross expects this of audiences. She has no time for humbug, for theatrical sugarings of the artistic pill. She's not into prettiness, grace, charm or any of the popularly misconceived prerequisites of dance — unless they happen to serve a definite expressive purpose.

PHOTO: VICTOR DEZSO

Paula Ross Dance Company in *Coming Together*.

The program Ross brought to Toronto to open Harbourfront's current 'Dance Canada Dance' series included a variety of works new and old. It showed the choreographer's breadth of concerns and styles and her qualitative range.

Among the new works was the première of *The Space Platform*. It combines Olivier Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* with the words of Margaret Atwood's children's story *Up in the Tree*. In a program note, Ross explains her motivation in exploring this outwardly improbable matching of words and music as a way, 'to help me express a feeling for Man's eternal spirit'.

The dance began provocatively. Denise Shreve carefully unpacked a plastic milk crate containing various spherical objects, including a crystal ball. As others joined her, they too began mumbling lines from Atwood — generally in favour of tree life. Things changed when Atwood removed the ladder into the tree. The rest of the dance elaborates on the social impact of such a calamity.

The Space Platform is constructed with charming simplicity. Ross develops the idea coolly, without any false angst-ridden notes.

Yet, as a revival of the company's 10-year-old signature piece, *Coming Together*, demonstrated, Paula Ross knows how to work in a different emotional register. Trimmed down to match the resources of her austerity-denuded company, *Coming Together* still delivered its punch.

Repeated exposure to this political dance statement reveals more and more of Paula Ross's craft — the details, nuances and carefully modulated counterpoint of words, music and dance. You get edgy watching *Coming Together*. The claustrophobia of the prison inmates, the occasionally breaking undercurrents of violence and frustration, the ultimate despair — all are experienced as real states.

What a movement contrast exists between the jumping finale of *Coming Together* and the slower, sculpted movement of *Paulatics!* Or, look at the inventive design of *Strathcona Park 1980*, (danced in silence), the cascade of images and curious unsettling presence of the men in masks.

As a choreographer of solos, Ross looks her least individual and personal. *Ballad to a Sad Young Man* and *Cecilia* were not stamped with anything to make them look different from a multitude of other contemporary solo dances. Anne Harvie seemed to find so little connection between Roberta Flack's elegaic lyrics and Ross's steps that she smiled her way through *Ballad!*

Ross is at her best with groups, making dances that set off emotional resonances or express a point of view about life, relationships, injustices, joys and fears.

KEVIN SINGEN

Danse au bénéfice du regroupement pour la surveillance du nucléaire
Expo-Théâtre,
Montréal.
15 September, 1982.

Pendant plus de trois heures sur la scène de l'Expo-Théâtre (Cité du Havre) différents représentants du théâtre et de la danse moderne ont exprimé à leur façon des thèmes communs: l'appréhension de l'an 2000, la dépersonnalisation de l'individu, l'angoisse de vivre etc. Thèmes étroitement liés aux problèmes engendrés par l'ampleur de l'utilisation de l'énergie nucléaire.

Ce spectacle bénéfice visait d'abord la cueuillette de fonds nécessaire au fonctionnement de cet organisme pan-canadien connu sous le sigle RSN (Regroupement pour la surveillance du nucléaire) et existant depuis 1975. Cette soirée avait donc un double objectif: sensibiliser le public aux problèmes du nucléaire et le divertir.

Dans le hall d'entrée on pouvait se procurer toute la documentation concernant le Regroupement, tout en observant les créations textiles de Doris May, sculpteur de l'Environnement. Un duo de musiciens (flûte et guitare) accompagnait le va-et-vient du public.

Grâce à l'initiative de Margie Gillis, il fut possible de rassembler sur scène huit groupes de danseurs oeuvrant dans le milieu québécois. Certains ont choisi d'exprimer leur sentiment de la vie d'une façon plus légère comme les Ballets-Jazz de Montréal dans *Kew Drive*. Joe Lechay a choisi de célébrer la vie sur un air de folklore intitulé *Trois sur Une* alors que Pointépiénu séduisait le public avec une pièce très colorée *So, So, So and So What*.

Le rideau se lève sur un collectif de théâtre écrit et joué par un groupe d'enfants de cinq à dix-huit ans. Pour cette occasion, le groupe *Les Créations des Enfants* soulignait les dangers du nucléaire dans une pièce intitulée *Maintenant*. Le message fut direct et touchant: "Ceux qui déclencheront la fin du monde se succéderont et nous élimineront avec eux sans nous en demander la permission ... I want to change the world before it changes me".

Voilà qui donnera le ton à tout le spectacle. Chacune des pièces présentées ce soir-là nous a fait voir un aspect de l'engagement social que peut éveiller l'art de la danse. *Prémonition*, solo dansé par Margie Gillis, fait écho au message de l'ouverture du groupe des enfants en soulignant l'impossibilité d'agir seul face aux dangers qui nous entourent. Margie Gillis dira: "Les ennemis sont parfois très subtils". Le danger ne vient pas de l'extérieur mais il est à l'intérieur même du système dans lequel nous évoluons. De même les centrales nucléaires doivent se protéger contre leur propre création: la radioactivité.

Daniel Léveillé, Edouard Lock, Paul-André Fortier et Silvy Panet-Raymond, témoignent dans une gestuelle personnelle de l'évolution du courant moderne au Québec. La danse moderne trouve son implication dans le difficile cheminement de l'Homme actuel. Certaines performances dénonçaient violemment les rapports de l'homme avec son environnement.

Dans *Création*, Paul-André Fortier utilise la danse comme un langage concret en lui donnant une portée sociale et psychologique. Il parle du monde dans lequel il vit et met en évidence la relation violente de l'homme face à autrui et face à son destin. La fréquente utilisation d'objets de consommation est frappante chez les modernes. On peut y voir un moyen concret pour dénoncer les valeurs imposées.

Le Sacre du Printemps de Daniel Léveillé décrit bien à son tour un aspect cher aux modernes à savoir la décadence de l'être humain. Le mouvement rotatif individuel de ses interprètes nous fait ressentir le vertige d'une sociéte qui se désagrège. Il a dit lui-même: 'The dancers interpret the colour of the music. I see them as representing craziness that happens at the end of the world. After the bomb is dropped in Europe, the radiation will take two days to get here. What do we do for two days?'

Cette angoisse rejoint certes les préoccupations du débat sur le Nucléaire. Quel avenir réservons-nous à nos enfants et à nos petits-enfants? Partagerons-nous un paradis artificiel comme celui proposé par Lock dans sa pièce *Oranges*? Ce dernier nous transporte dans un monde coloré, sonore et urbain avec un aspect de fragilité qu'il exploite en utilisant des matériaux comme le verre et le papier. On marche sur des bouteilles vides dans un équilibre instable pour nous mener ... nulle part. La fin n'est pas très optimiste.

La performance de Silvy Panet-Raymond et de Michel Lemieux dans *Tilt the World* fait basculer le monde dans un avenir incertain. Les sons et les gestes réduits au minimum représentent un aspect de notre jeunesse contemporaine. Musique répétitive, mouvements simplifiés et rituels, tout cela prend la couleur d'un monde qui se débat dans le plastique et l'électronique. L'apparence semble plus importante que le fond. Elle nous ramène au culte de l'artifice et des paradis artificiels de Lock. Chorégraphie très abstraite mais aussi très personnalisée, *Tilt the World* est à sa façon un mirage de ce qui nous entoure.

Portant la tendresse et l'amour de la vie transparait chez tous ces créateurs. Ils remettent en question la liberté de l'homme pour en arriver à poser les bases d'un nouveau rapport entre ce dernier et la matière.

Un grand besoin d'exprimer la vie a motivé ces danseurs qui ont accepté de participer au Gala bénéfice. Leur implication est une preuve suffisante pour croire non seulement en l'avenir de la danse mais davantage en l'avenir de l'Homme.

CAROLLE BRISSON

Symposium: Classical Dances of India
Université de Québec à Montréal.
24-26 September, 1982.

'Tradition and Experimentation' was the theme of an international symposium on the classical dances of India held last September in Montreal. Yet the question in my mind during the three-day event was not so much concerned with old and new as with East and West. Experts of various Indian classical dances gathered with a sizeable group of eager westerners. Fragments of several traditions were passed on in workshops, discussed in papers and given fuller representation in performances. I sensed the excitement of students trying new movements for the first time and observed the keenness with which the artists imparted their knowledge. The two evening performances offered a collage of dances from different regions of India, ranging from a devotional Odissi, to an exuberant Kuchipudi, to a dramatic Kathakali item. And the audience who packed the theatre for the Saturday evening show was, itself, exemplary of cultures meeting – a balanced mix of western and Indian enthusiasts. The delight in the eclectic program was plainly evident.

The bridge formed between India and Canada was reflected not only in the blend of audience members but also on the organizational level. The prime movers behind the symposium were Mamata Niyogi-Nakra of the Kala Bharati Foundation and Larry Tremblay who is currently teaching Kathakali at the Université de Québec. Yet I couldn't help wondering about the nature of this bridge. Was it pure movement that was exchanged, or perhaps attributes of a specific culture, or maybe even a way of looking at dance? With respect to a multicultural Canada, such questions may have larger implications.

The chief guests for the event were U.S. Krishna Rao and his wife Chandrabhaga Devi, who have done much to bring the dance to a more respected position in modern India. They provided the link with Indian tradition, beginning each session with the customary lighting of an oil lamp before Śiva Nataraja, god of the dance. As keynote speaker, teacher, performer and general M.C., the dance guru took an obvious delight in everything he did – demonstrating a movement he had rediscovered in an ancient text, dancing the role of the amorous god Krishna opposite his wife, or introducing a younger artist. His wife, on the other hand, showed herself to be a master of the ancient Indian art of classification, opening the audience's eyes to 'the 384 types of love'.

The most palpable East-meets-West scenario came from a western perspective, that of American ethnic dancer, Matteo. For nearly 30 years he has been exploring the dance of some 14 different countries, both as director of the EthnoAmerican Dance Theatre and as a teacher, notably at Jacob's Pillow and the New York High School of the Performing Arts.

Choreographically, Matteo appeared content to synchronize movements from classical Indian styles with a western text or piece of music. The Indian gesture language applied to a Shaker hymn or the Lord's prayer seemed incongruous, perhaps because the approach was overly literal, more suited to lecture-demonstrations than to the stage. With pure dance Matteo tried a similar juxtaposition, setting typical Bharata Natyam movements to, in one case, Bach. To one accustomed to watching Indian dance for its own qualities, the lack of rhythmic pulse, normally provided by the drum in Indian music, seemed to deprive the technique of its organic thread, its inner vitality.

In his teaching Matteo advocated a similar direct translation of Indian form into western structure. Imitating a ballet class, he gave each Bharata Natyam movement a counterpart at the barre.

Rina Singha offered another view of dance education; she described her use of dance with non-hearing children. By elaborating on methods initially developed for her deaf daughter, she has been able to extend this work to promote cultural understanding among multi-racial school children in Toronto. Although she is steeped in a classical dance style, she has turned to folk dance traditions for the material to bridge cultural boundaries.

Canadian Larry Tremblay, who has studied Kathakali at the famous Kerala Kalamandalam in South India, showed another way in which one culture can be enriched by another. In his own words, both his performing and his teaching of Kathakali to theatre students 'involves a kind of personal search'. He observed that western actors generally lack discipline, so that an initiation into the rigors of Kathakali can prove immensely beneficial for concentration and refining the self. By performing without the elaborate make-up and costume so that fine details of movement became apparent, he showed that his interest lies in the process rather than in the finished product.

Though somewhat inaccessible to western audiences because of a slow pace appropriate for an all-night show, Kathakali has had the real impact on western experimental theatre in the area of actor training, especially for Grotowski, Peter Brook and now a group of actors in Quebec. It is interesting that no Indian dance form has exerted a comparable influence on western dance. Perhaps this is because ballet and modern dancers need to be so continually focussed on their own technique, they are less likely to find time to absorb extensive material from another tradition. The Canadians who have become Indian classical dancers, notably Anjali and Madhurika, are exclusively that – interpreters of tradition. But hints of eastern images and sensibility can be found in the work of certain Canadian choreographers. Linda Rabin comes to mind, with her willingness to explore movement qualities belonging to Asian traditions. Or even Christopher Bannerman whose travels to India and Sri Lanka touched something that gently infiltrates his way of making dances.

Dancers moved by the artistic pulse of India can manifest their experience in many different ways and contexts. However the backdrop against which these take shape in Canada remains the Indian tradition itself as carried by the fine dancers who make their homes here, especially Menaka Thakkar and Rina Singha. The symposium in Montreal brought together several strands of concern, giving many western participants their first steps into the richness of this Indian tradition and providing fertile ground for interchange and reflection.

ROSEMARY JEANES

Book Beat

Striking a Balance: Dancers Talk About Dancing, by Barbara Newman. (Thomas Allen, 1982. $15.50, paper.) The subtitle of Barbara Newman's book of interviews describes her goal. Specifically, she set out to get her subjects to discuss in detail particular roles, ones created for them, or with which they became especially associated. Serge Lifar, Lew Christensen and Peter Martins discuss Apollo, Alicia Alonso analyses Giselle, Tanaquil LeClerq talks about the creation of 'Choleric' in *The Four Temperaments*, and Nadia Nerina about the construction of Ashton's *La Fille Mal Gardée* and the part of Lise.

At their best, the interviews go beyond the conventional format in which the dancer is pushed to describe his or her feelings about a role, and give us concrete examples of what we know happens on the stage — performers thinking with their bodies. Talking about his part in *The Four Temperaments*, Jean-Pierre Bonnefous says, 'I don't really know what phlegmatic is — it feels like heaviness almost, in the body ... this ballet feels extraordinary when you are absolutely thin ... like those Giacometti statues'. Lew Christensen recalls *Apollo's* 'demand on your body to respond with accents, full out, full steam'. The dancers' descriptions and recollections also reveal much about the methods of the choreographers with whom they worked. Nerina recalls that the sweeping lifts in *Fille* had their origins in Ashton's demand, 'I want something like smoke'; LeClerq notes how habitual gestures of hers were stylised by Robbins in *Afternoon of a Faun*.

PHOTO: CANDID PRODUCTIONS INC.

Peter Martins is featured in a new book by Barbara Newman.

One thing that makes the book appealing is that it contains interviews with quite a few dancers — Alexander Grant, Toni Lander, Christopher Gable, and Deanne Bergsma among them — who have not been overexposed in the media. Perhaps the most interesting of all is with Moira Shearer, not only because of her observations about *Giselle*, but for her candid discussion of tensions in the Royal Ballet and her forthright admission of distaste for *The Red Shoes* and (and this from a luminous exemplar of English classicism) for the Cecchetti style.

Inevitably, some sections of *Striking a Balance* wander down paths too well-trod in the past, but on the whole the book is an enjoyable, useful, and illuminating read.

Going To the Dance, by Arlene Croce. (Random House, 1982. $11.95, paper.) In an introductory note to this second collection of her criticism (the pieces first appeared in *The New Yorker*), Arlene Croce writes of the sense she has of 'developing a repertory as a critic'. This simile, drawn from the world about which she writes, is a useful one for reviewing her own work. Not only because critics, like dancers and choreographers, deal with recurring themes, and 'perform' on the same subjects and in the same arenas time and again, but because the standards Croce applies to dance can be used to judge her.

She is the most urbane, fluent, witty, and lyrical writer on this subject today. As in the case of George Balanchine's work, where consistent classical values shine through enormously diverse ballets, there is a big picture beneath the felicities — many — of Croce's individual essays. A random selection of quotes would yield a useful and cautionary commonplace book for any ballet-goer: 'dance impetus that comes from nothing more than mood isn't interesting enough to sustain a whole ballet'; 'since the relation of movement to music is inherently an unequal one, intelligent choreography seeks the illusion of an equation, not the fact of one'; 'the Petipa inheritance is a puzzle; somehow, the more we see of it, the less there is'; 'Repertory is destiny'. But these are *not* random aphorisms. They are ideals formulated and articulated in the process of, and growing organically from, a keen observation of individual works, accretions of works, dancers, companies, styles, and trends. Often, in Croce's work, a specific observation will fall into a general truth with the artless precision of Newton's apple, as when she criticises Kyra Nichol's role in Jerome Robbins' *Verdi Variations:* 'It doesn't supply her with the kind of technical challenge which is also an idealized definition of her potential'. This is, of course, precisely what we hope for from every new role.

To make, for a moment, an artificial distinction between Croce as writer and Croce as critic is to discover, again as with the greatest dance works, how completely form and content are one. A small example; in an essay in which she discusses the hazards involved in reviving old works and preserving dance legends, Croce refers to José Limon and 'the company that persists in his name'. The sense of willfullness inherent in the word 'persists' effortlessly conveys her doubts.

Croce's metaphors are beyond apt — they work on us *in the same way* as the pieces she describes. Thus, Balanchine's mordant, feverish cryptic *Davidsbündlertänze:* 'it mirrors the passion of Robert Schumann, his intransigent daemon, his lust for the unknown. Like his music, it wears its heart on its sleeve even when there's no arm inside'. And the final, inexorably grand, moments of *Vienna Waltzes:* 'This is the night the waltz breaks down. Tomorrow the guns of August will open fire'.

Croce has been criticised for her extensive use of technical terminology, but its function in her writing is not one-upmanship, nor is it to give her prose a specious density. Rather, this greater clarity gives her vision an extra dimension, as when, in a review of Merce Cunningham's work, the identification of steps develops into a comparison that penetrates to the heart of the choreographer's style: '(Karole) Armitage's développé is impeccably skewed as it swings into one of Cunningham's favorite positions — neither à la seconde nor quatrième devant. Cunningham loves to skew classical standards, to be oblique where ballet is direct and direct where it's oblique. Seeing legs whip straight back from zigzag fouetté into penchée arabesque is like crossing a divide when the bridge is gone; you feel the full impact of what hasn't happened in between'.

Viewed as a body of work, *Going To the Dance* does reveal a number of consistent themes particularly about the responsible use of music in ballet and the slaughtering of sacred cows ancient and modern. She points a condemning finger at 'the mortal sin of abstract ballet — using the music as a soundtrack for choreographic vagaries', hence her scathing encapsulation of 'the Mahler ballet': 'Someone sings lugubriously from the side of the stage while dancers toil up Angst Hill and down Weltschmerz Dale for hours on end.' She reminds us that 'musicality' does not consist of some system of tidy Dalcrozian correspondences: 'Musical transparency alone is not enough; there must be an independent vision of the dance, which, though it is ordered by the music, does not derive all of its meaning from it'.

As dance professionals and dance audiences proliferate, so do dance mythologies; more and more emperors are going about unclothed. Croce's clear-sighted article on aspects of post-modernism, 'Slowly Then the History of Them Comes Out', aroused a storm of protest from the movement's exponents and their supporters. In the piece, she declares her right not to understand, challenges the belief, cherished by many dancers (and many Americans) that the future is *right*, and — ultimate sin — demands from modern dancers intelligible dance values if they are not already manifest in their words. But she can be as hard on ballet — on the obfuscating reverence for the past that makes many revivals static; on the fashion for naming ballets after original-language musical scores (the logical outcome, she suggests, is that *Swan Lake* will soon appear on programs in Russian); on 'the difference', unperceived by many companies 'between executing steps and dancing them'. The appreciation of repertory is another speciality. No one has a clearer understanding of the way in which dancers change dances, and are changed by them — of the way, in fact that companies are living organisms. 'Repertory is destiny'.

In a piece on the history of Balanchine's *Apollo,* Croce quotes Stravinsky on the subject of the eternal conflict between the Apollonian and Dionysian principles in art: 'The latter assumes ecstacy to be the final goal — that is to say, the losing of oneself — whereas art demands above all the full consciousness of the artist'. Stravinsky saw classical ballet as the fullest expression of the Apollonian principle. It is the principle that informs Croce's writing. In a world increasingly in danger of being overwhelmed by ecstatic ravers, hers is a disciplined, scrupulous — and radiant — vision.

SARAH MONTAGUE

Creating a Ballet: MacMillan's Isadora, by Edwin Thorpe. (Methuen, 1981. $15.95.)
Isadora Speaks, by Isadora Duncan, edited and introduced by Franklin Rosemont. (City Lights Books, 1981. US. $5.95.)

Edwin Thorpe presents a kind of overblown press-book for the ballet based on the life of Isadora Duncan which Kenneth MacMillan staged in 1981 in collaboration with librettist Gillian Freeman (Mrs. Edwin Thorpe), composer Richard Rodney Bennett, and designer Barry Kay. A 20-page capsule Duncan biography is followed by Freeman's scenario, which reads like a film script, with its spoken narrative, convoluted time sequences and 29 changes of scene. The pictures of Kay's decors suggest that they were designed chiefly to support the jittery narrative, which strings together selected crises in Duncan's personal life. Few of the photos of dancers — least of all those of the fleshless and well turned-out Merle Park portraying Duncan — are likely to convince anyone that ballet was the ideal medium for depicting the life of a dancer whose work, ironically, was a dedicated reaction to the rigidity of that form. Excerpts from the reactions of London's major dance critics don't help much; since many of them hated the ballet and few offered total endorsement, it's hard to share Thorpe's belief in the seriousness of this costly theatrical endeavor or to predict for it a long life on the boards.

So much for Isadora the irresponsible; for Isadora the inspirational, a splendid collection of her essays, letters to the press, journal articles, public utterances and fragments from both published and unfinished manuscripts has been issued in her home town of San Francisco by Franklin Rosemont. 'If I were only a dancer', she remarks, 'I would not speak. But I am a teacher with a mission.' In her airings of such issues as aesthetics, education, the emancipation of women, marriage, health, and morality she demonstrates a shrewd economy in her use of words. A series of short statements made in person to reporters and theatre audiences is included, and these are particularly timeless: 'My motto: *sans limites*', and 'Art is greater than governments' convey the strength of her convictions, while her practicality is revealed in 'When in doubt, always go to the best hotel'. The range of the writings chronologically covers most of her life,

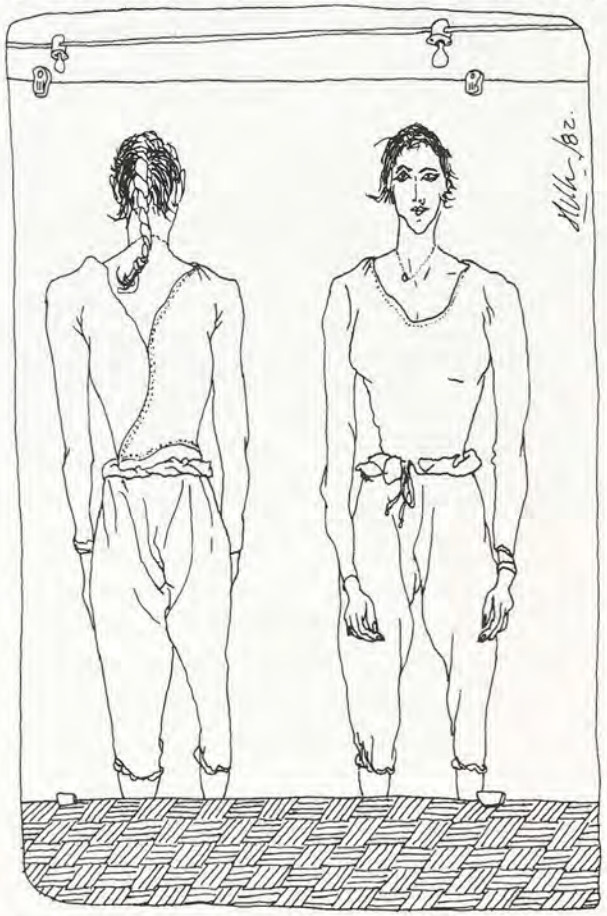
including memories of a deprived childhood and concluding with her bitter farewell to America at the end of her last tour in 1923.

Pas de Deux, by Sarah Montague. (Universe Books, 1981. $11.50.)
Ballet Life Behind the Scenes, by Wendy Neale. (Crown Publishers, 1982. $15.95.)
Winter Season, by Toni Bentley. (Random House, 1982. $15.50.)
Two young Englishwomen and an Australian offer fresh insights into ballet lore. Sarah Montague explores the alchemy that produces great ballet partnerships, discusses 17 of these beginning with Pavlova and Mordkin and taking us up to the work of Kain and Augustyn in Canada, Baryshnikov and Kirkland in the United States and Maximova and Vasiliev in Russia. Her prose bubbles with enthusiasm, and she has consulted reliable sources for her documentation. She fares best, however, in dealing with those partnerships which she has actually observed. The odd distortion of recorded fact will upset the historian, as will her occasional lapse into fancy, as exemplified in her description of the robust, Nordic blond Frederic Franklin as 'dark, lean and eager ... like Sean Connery'. Photos, assembled from a variety of sources, are uneven in quality but serve the modest paperback format.

Wendy Neale establishes her depth and stays within it for an account of how dancers conduct their lives — at home, on stage and elsewhere. Her many interviews with popular ballet dancers offered the substance for her prose, and she has liberally filled the book with anecdotes and quotes: 'Peter Martins values his privacy highly', or 'Starr Danais believes she looks her best at 92 pounds and Patricia McBride is 95 pounds'. Stellar dancers were obviously delighted to share the nitty-gritty with her as well as their highest aspirations. Steven Caras has supplied a sprightly collection of his photographs of some of ballet's most admired practitioners on stage, in rehearsal and in repose.

A graduate of the School of American Ballet and a dancer with George Balanchine's New York City Ballet, Perth-born Toni Bentley decided to keep a journal of the company's 1980/1981 season and to take stock of her investments as a performer. This was a year which found her at age 22 without a positive direction in her career and one in which, incidentally but significantly, the company faced its first labour dispute with its benign but despotic management over salaries. Bentley conveys with power the ambivalence that dancers experience in a competitive livelihood, revealing also the contradictions which face those whose careers have been shaped from scratch by a single omnipotent genius. This is a remarkable 'commonplace book', offering fascinating assessments of a ballet performer's compulsive involvements.

Dolin: Friends and Memories, compiled by Andrew Wheatcroft. (Oxford University Press, 1982. $51.95.)
Ballet's irrepressible rogue, Anton Dolin, who achieved knighthood in 1980 and turned 78 this year, allowed Andrew Wheatcroft to poke through his memorabilia and select those items worthy of perpetuity in this lovely and expensive iconography of the dancer's career. There are charming photos of young 'Pat' in pantomime and as a strapping lad in the Diaghilev Ballet (Leon Bakst called him 'the little boy with the big brown eyes'). We see him as the mature danseur noble with his celebrated partner, Alicia Markova, in the various English, Franco-Russian and American companies which they graced. There are also recent portraits: as Herod in Lindsay Kemp's *Salomé* and as Enrico Cecchetti in the Herbert Ross film, *Nijinsky*. Interspersed are candid and professional portraits of all the gorgeous women and beautiful young men he attracted over the years and of the many great theatrical artists with whom he collaborated. Dolin has provided his own captions, and some are quite naughty. Wheatcroft did a fair job of achieving order but ran into trouble with the various casts in Dolin's *Pas de Quatre*,



mistaking Janet Reed for Annabelle Lyon in a 1945 presentation and failing to identify Alicia Alonso, Carla Fracci and associates in a more recent one. Also, readers may find it difficult to believe that Dolin and Irina Baronova wore the same outfits for American Ballet Theatre galas staged in 1975 and five years later in 1980!

American Alternative Theater, by Theodore Shank. (Grove Press, 1982. $9.95.)
Shank discusses the work of several post-modern choreographers in the context of an autonomous theatre which has emerged in the United States in recent years. The motivation of the Judson Church practitioners becomes clearer when viewed as part of a broad revolution in the theatre arts. A chapter on environmental theatre offers foundations for contemplating the early works of Trisha Brown, Meredith Monk and Twyla Tharp, while another on the controversial opera *Einstein on the Beach* explains the preoccupations of Lucinda Childs and collaborators as representatives of a 'new formalism'.

LELAND WINDREICH

Noticeboard

GENERAL

Joanne Ashe, dancer, teacher, and associate director of the Classical Ballet School in Ottawa, died on September 4, 1982. Trained entirely by Nesta Toumine in Ottawa, she was one of the finest dancers Canada has produced. British-American dance critic, P.W. Manchester, observing her at ballet festivals said, 'I don't know whether you Canadians realize just how good she is'.

Ashe was invited to become a charter member of the National Ballet when Celia Franca was recruiting in the early 1950s, but refused out of loyalty to Nesta Toumine and the Ottawa school. She took part in several Canadian ballet festivals in the 1950s and was instrumental in making the Classical Ballet Company a charter member of the Northeastern Regional Ballet Festival, an American organization modelled on the Canadian festivals.

The Ottawa company, Classical Ballet, was host to both the Canadian and American festivals. Joanne created several roles in ballets by Nesta Toumine. Among these were Maria Chapdelaine, Gadette and Cinderella. She also performed in *Swan Lake, Don Quixote* and *The Seasons*.

A memorial concert of music and dance, celebrating the life and work of **Diana Brown** was held on October 20 at the St. Lawrence Centre in Toronto. This gala performance featured many of Canada's leading music and dance artists who donated their talents to establish the Diana Brown Scholarship Fund of the National Ballet School. The program, directed by Brian Macdonald and narrated by Harry Mannis included performances by the Orford Quartet, Camerata, artists of the National Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and the Toronto Dance Theatre, students of the National Ballet School, James Campbell, Elyakin Taussig, Mary Morrison, Patricia Rideout and Carol Birtch.

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, The Royal Winnipeg Ballet and the modern troupe **Dancemakers** each made important appearances in London, England during the late summer and fall.

Les Grands Ballets appeared in the cavernous Royal Festival Hall from August 17 to 28 and, despite wired reports from London which emphasised negative critical response, made a generally favourable impression on the city's fastidious ballet audiences and media reviewers.

Although the critics were often cool towards Les Grands' choice of repertoire, including some of its newest original works, the dancers themselves were well received. "The company is looking very good", wrote Craig Dodd in *The Guardian*. "Exuberant personality", wrote Stephanie Jordan of *The New Statesman*, "is one of the company's most endearing qualities". Nicholas Dromgoole of *The Sunday Telegraph* commented on what he observed to be a distinctly Canadian accent to Les Grand Ballets' style of dancing, "slightly more athletic, more aggressive, more clear-out", than the English style. Like many other critics, Dromgoole had particular praise for the quality of music provided by Britain's renowned Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Les Grands' conductor, **Vladimir Jelinek,** "one of those rare conductors who understand about dance".

PHOTO: MICHAEL CRABB

Dancemakers on tour – London, England.

A number of reviewers also singled out the sensitive lighting designs of Les Grands' **Nicholas Cernovitch** for special praise.

Appearing at the historic Sadler's Wells Theatre, the **Royal Winnipeg Ballet's** dancers had to adjust to a small raked stage for their two-week London season, October 19 to 31. Nevertheless, they danced their way effectively into the hearts of London audiences. Les Grands Ballets and the Winnipegers did about the same business at the box office although the latter had the advantage of playing in a smaller house where fewer seats were left unfilled.

Again, the London critics had faults to find with the RWB's repertoire but became increasingly enthusiastic about the company's dancers as the season progressed. The London appearance coincided with Arnold Spohr's 25th anniversary season as artistic director. "To him", wrote Peter Williams in *The Observer*, "must go the credit for such an immaculate dance instrument".

Although the RWB had

cleverly and ambitiously assembled five different programs for its two weeks in London, the critics still considered the choreography taken as a whole to be unworthy of the dancing talents performing it. Vicente Nebrada's *The Firebird*, and John Neumeier's (revived) *Rondo* and Norbert Vesak's *Ecstasy of Rita Joe* were treated with particular harshness by almost all the reviewers. Nebrada's *Our Waltzes* fared better and the company's performances of Balanchine's *Allegro Brillante* and Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo* evoked considerable praise.

Most gratifying for the RWB's dancers was the warmth of the audience's response. The echoes of "bravo" from the closing London show helped carry them on their way to a five-day West German tour where the company was again warmly received and then on to Cairo and Belfast.

Success overseas was not restricted to ballet companies. **Margie Gillis,** appearing at New York's Riverside Dance Festival in early October, drew a strong review from Anna Kisselgoff of *The New York Times* who described Gillis as, "one of the most exciting dancers to appear on the scene".

Toronto's modern dance troupe **Dancemakers** had a tougher time with the press when they made their debut London appearance at The Place, home of the London Contemporary Dance Theatre, October 28 to 30. It came as part of a United Kingdom tour which included a second London engagement as the Laban Centre.

Dancemakers appeared as part of the city's Dance Umbrella. Their London program included Karen Rimmer's *Walking the Line*, Anna Blewchamp's *Arrival of All Time* and *a.k.a.*, Robert Cohan's *When Evening Spreads Itself Against the Sky* and the reconstruction of Doris Humphrey's *Two Ecstatic Themes*. Organizers of Dance Umbrella considered Dancemakers' appearance worthwhile despite the largely negative response from the few critics who wrote about the troupe. London's dance reviewers with a few exceptions are notoriously unsupportive and conservative in their approach to new dance.

The Jean A. Chalmers Choreographic Archives is a collection of videotapes of works by Canadian choreographers. The first dance collection of its kind in Canada, it contains more than 60 videotapes and is now permanently housed at the Scott Library, York University, where it will be accessible to researchers and scholars. Since 1981, the Ontario Arts Council has donated the tapes, which are sent to the OAC by applicants to the Jean A. Chalmers Award in Choreography, to the Dance in Canada Association. A new selection of videotapes will be added to the collection each year following the annual Chalmers Award competition.

The Society for Dance Research was founded at an inaugural conference in London, England in June, 1982. Anyone interested in dance research is invited to become a member. Contact Michael Huxley, The Society for Dance Research, Overdale, 17 Hampole Balk Lane, Skellow, Doncaster DN6 8LF, South Yorkshire, England.

When Ron Reagan dances, the Secret Service calls the tune. Though mackintoshes and slouch hats have given way to blue blazers, our local spy in Montreal spotted a conspicuous number of clean shaven G-men among the hirsute TV types in Radio Canada's cavernous Studio 42 last August. Ron Reagan Jr., Patrick Bissel and Joffrey star, Ann Marie de Angelo, had been assembled by Emmy award-winning TV director, Pierre Morin, for a star-studded *Tribute to Anna Pavlova*. The Who's Who of ballet also included Frank Augustyn, Valentine Kozlova, Moscow gold medalist Amanda McKerrow and Marianna Tcherkassky, who replaced an indisposed Gelsey Kirkland.

PHOTO: JEAN-PIERRE KARSENTY

Pierre Beguin, Johan Bager, Ann Marie de Angelo and Ron Reagan Jr. in the *Christmas* segment of the Pavlova T.V. Special

The tribute had begun at the 1980 Pendleton (Indiana) Summer Festival whose artistic director, George Daugherty, eventually developed it into a million dollar TV special. Co-produced by Radio Canada and Premiere Performance Corporation of New York, the 90-minute dance spectacular links a dozen ballets associated with Pavlova painstakingly rescued from oblivion by de Angelo and ex-Royal Ballet principal dancer, Hilary Cartwright.

With dance sequences in the can, actress, writer and former dancer, Leslie Caron arrived in Montreal in early October to provide bilingual narration. Since the producers are still negotiating, *Pavlova* is unlikely to be telecast before spring.

The First International Summer School in Benesh Movement Notation was held at the University of Waterloo (July 26-August 13). Twelve students from across Canada and the US received training in both the theory of Benesh as a tool to document dance movement, and the art of reconstructing dances already written down. Rhonda Ryman, the assistant dance professor responsible for the course, hopes that the summer school will ultimately produce certified graduates and so eliminate the need for fledgling notators to take their advanced training in England. This first year, devoted only to beginners, was taught by Monica Parker, choreologist for the Royal Ballet, and Wendy Walker, ballet mistress with American Ballet Theatre.

In conjunction with the course, Baldev Singh, a computer graphics post-graduate student, designed a program for recording Benesh notation.

Although all the kinks have not yet been worked out, Parker and Walker were delighted with the progress. As Parker explains: 'It takes two hours to rehearse a minute of choreography; it then takes a further six hours to write up that one minute in notation'. Computerized

notation, besides speeding up the documentation process, will eliminate dependence on oral tradition, the traditional way of transmitting dance. There are also future plans for a program that will translate Benesh into Laban and vice versa.

'Trying to learn a dance from a video,' says Ryman, 'is like trying to learn a symphony from a record. Also, the oral tradition has led to constant changes, especially in the classics. Notation is more reliable.'

Next year's summer school will be held from July 25 to August 12 and will offer a more varied program. In the beginner's course, the professional dancers will be separated from the students because Ryman found that they picked up Benesh more quickly being more familiar with dance technique and vocabulary. As well, an advanced program will be offered along with a class for those interested solely in contemporary dance.

The next big hurdle for notation in this country is to conquer the resistance of choreographers who fear their works will never be remounted in the spirit of the original and the ballet masters and mistresses who refuse to part with the oral tradition. Nonetheless, with a base for advanced Benesh in this country, dance notation has taken a giant step forward.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Anna Wyman Dance Theatre will present its home season at the North Vancouver Centennial Theatre (Dec. 10, 11). The company spent the early fall on an extensive tour of western Canada which included numerous first-time appearances in the smaller western towns. Marion Malone (formerly Kerr) has joined the company this season.

Vancouver independent choreographers have recently joined forces to form an umbrella organization (EDAM) to produce new dance works and sponsor workshops. Members are Peter Bingham, Barbara Bourget, Ahmed Hassan, Jay Hirabayashi, Lola MacLaughlin, Jennifer Mascall and Peter Ryan. Classes are currently in session at the Western Front Lodge. EDAM will provide a flexible structure to support and promote both individual and group projects free of the restrictions of the conventional company organization.

Barbara Bourget, Vancouver dancer/choreographer will present a program of new work at the Firehall Theatre (Dec. 3, 4). Bourget is originally from Vancouver, trained with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and has performed with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Mountain Dance Theatre, Evelyn Roth Moving Sculpture, the Paula Ross Dance Company and independents Judith Marcuse, Karen Rimmer, Lola MacLaughlin and Jennifer Mascall.

Ross McKim gave his first Canadian performance since resettling in Vancouver, at the Burnaby Arts Centre in October. The program featured guest artist Vivienne Rochester and included an afternoon children's program called *Dances From Dracula* and an evening program of McKim dances including *The Thrill is Gone, Visions and Revisions* and *Nosferatu.*

In January 1983 the **Ross McKim Chamber Dance Theatre** will begin work at the Prism Dance Centre. Two new productions are planned; a full-length *Dracula* and a dance based on west coast Indian legend. McKim and Rochester also perform in churches and will be appearing at the North Shore Unitarian Church (Dec. 24) and the University Unitarian Church of Seattle (Dec. 26.)

Judith Marcuse, Vancouver choreographer and dancer and Sacha Bélinsky of Montreal's Pointépiénu premiered a new concert program at the World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee in September. The program of solos and duets includes excerpts from Marcuse's full-length works *Mirrors, Masks and Transformations* and *Playgrounds* as well as a number of new pieces.

In October the Judith Marcuse Dance Projects Society presented its new children's program *We Can Dance!* choreographed and performed by Marcuse with former Grands Ballets and Paula Ross dancer Barbara Bourget and musician Salvador Ferreras. The choreographers's last project – *Couples* – is now in the planning stages for a television production in 1983. It will then be reworked as a full-length dance-theatre piece for the stage and a national tour in 1984. Marcuse's new ballet for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, entitled *Seascapes*, will premiere in Montreal in March, 1983.

Pacific Ballet Theatre is currently on a five-week tour of B.C. and Alberta. The tour marks its first appearance outside B.C. The touring repertoire included artistic director Renald Rabu's *Pierrot 1980, Score 2-2, A Time From Youth, Pas Sur Pas, Nutcracker Pas de Deux* and *Forever Judy* as well as New York choreographer Margo Sappington's *Weewis.*

ALBERTA

The Alberta Ballet company began its 1982/83 performing season under the threatening clouds of a financial crisis, (see Dance in Canada, number 33). While it was announced that the Canada Council had decided to double the company's current project grant to $60,000, newspaper reports suggested that the Alberta culture ministry might review its grant to the troupe if the 1982/83 season did not show an operating profit.

Despite these gloomy tidings, the Alberta Ballet has launched itself into a busy season following the success of its summer involvement with the new **Banff Centre** professional dance program. The company has already been invited to return in 1983.

From October 13 to 16 the Alberta Ballet presented its **"Stravinsky Celebration"** program in its twin homes of Edmonton and Calgary.

Resident choreographer, **Lambros Lambrou,** whose new work *L'Histoire du Soldat* was part of the Stravinsky program, will set his *Sundances* on dancers of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet for its March, 1983 season. Before that, Lambrou set a new work, *Night in the Tropics* on the North Carolina Dance Theatre, to be premiered early in 1983. It will also be given by the Alberta Ballet in its February season. In January, Lambrou leaves for Australia to stage his version of *The Firebird* and reset his *Motif* for the West Australia Ballet Company in Perth.

Lesley Forsyth, after eight years with the Alberta Ballet's administration is also off to Australia to work for the Adelaide Festival. Her post as company manager has been filled by **Anastasie Chiriaeff,** an accomplished linguist, dance teacher and administrator – and, incidentally, daughter of Les Grandes Ballets Canadiens' founder, Ludmilla Chiriaeff.

As usual, artistic director Brydon Paige's version of *The Nutcracker* will be performed at Christmas, in Edmonton (December 26 and 27) and in Calgary (December 29 and 30).

Ruth Carse was one of six women honoured with an award by the Edmonton Y.W.C.A. in its first "Tribute to Women" on the occasion of its 75th anniversary. The award was in recognition of her great contribution to the arts in Edmonton, which includes founding the Alberta Ballet Company and affiliated school. The presentation was made by Alberta's minister of culture, Mary Le Messurier, and a short film was shown that highlighted some of the past events and personalities in Ruth Carse's life.

The Calgary Dance Series, sponsored by Dancers' Studio West opened November 18 at the University Theatre with the Toronto Dance Theatre. Calgary's own Dancer's Studio West is next on the series, (December 3 and 4), with a full-evening work of dance and new wave music and a special guest appearance by Susan Cash of Toronto. The work, *Revolving Doors*, is directed/ choreographed by Elaine Bowman. The Eddy Toussaint Company follows (January 17) and Louis Falco's company (March 7 and 8).

The Brian Webb Dance Company will give a choreographic workshop during the first week of December featuring performances by the company apprentices. Choreography is by company members Andrea Rabinovitch, Barbara Bonner and Deborah Shantz. In the new year the company will tour Alberta appearing in Jasper (Jan. 10), Red Deer (Jan. 27), Edmonton (Jan. 20-22) and throughout northern Alberta (Feb. 1-22).

MANITOBA

Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers' second program of the season – A Tribute to John Lennon – opens December 8 for a four-day run at the Warehouse Theatre. The central work is choreographed by Lynne Taylor-Corbett in memory and celebration of Lennon's life and music. Also on this program is a new work by Stephanie Ballard entitled *Winter Gardens* with music composed by Tedd Robinson. The company will also present a revival of Cliff Keuter's *The Murder of George Keuter.*

The highlight of the company's spring season (May 4-7) will be the company premier of José Limon's *The Exiles*, a lyrical work depicting the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. In April Contemporary Dancers will tour southern Ontario appearing at Toronto's Harbourfront and the National Arts Centre in Ottawa as well as numerous smaller communities. Under the auspices of the Manitoba Department of Cultural Affairs, company members Gail Petursson-Hiley and Robert Jayne represented WCD at the Commonwealth Games which were held in Australia in October. The two toured Australia for 10 days on behalf of the company.

Tedd Robinson has been appointed resident choreographer.

ONTARIO

The National Tap Dance Company presented an evening of new works at the Toronto Dance Theatre on November 16. The following week the company travelled to Rochester, New York to perform *The Tin Soldier* and other works. NTDC will also perform *The Tin Soldier* at the Oakville Children's Centre (Dec. 11, 12) and *Oliver Button is a Sissy* in Chatham (Dec. 3), Waterloo (Dec. 4) and in Toronto at the MacMillan Theatre (Dec. 22-31). In the new year the company will tour to London, Ontario; Philadelphia and Cleveland.

The National Ballet's three-week fall season, opened November 10 with the première of Nicolas Beriozoff's full-length production of the turn-of-the-century Russian ballet *Don Quixote* with music by Ludwig Minkus. The second week of performance featured a diverse program of one act ballets including Gerald Arpino's *Kettentanz*, Susana's *The Seven Daggers*, Kenneth MacMillan's *Elite Syncopations*, Brian Macdonald's *Newcomers*, Constantin Patsalas' *Rite of Spring* and a selection of pas de deux ranging from Luk de Layress' *Three Easy Tangos* to Michel Fokine's *Spectre de la rose*. The final week was devoted to the National's lavish production of *The Sleeping Beauty* choreographed by Rudolf Nureyev. Former prima ballerina Lois Smith appeared as guest artist in the role of the Queen Mother.

The company spent the early part of the fall touring in the Maritime provinces performing in Fredericton, Charlottetown, Sackville, Halifax and St. John's. They presented one full-length ballet – *Giselle* – as well as a mixed program. Artistic director Alexander Grant has appointed **Magdalena Popa** as guest ballet mistress for the 1982/83 season. Popa is Prima Ballerina of the Roumanian Opera in Bucharest, and among the many awards she

has received throughout her career is the prestigious Etoile d'Or presented at the International Dance Festival in Paris in 1956. More recently Popa has been a member of the jury at international ballet competitions in Varna, Moscow, Tokyo and Jackson, Mississippi. American dancer **Yoko Ichino** has joined the company as first soloist. Ichino was soloist with the American Ballet Theatre from 1977 to 1980 and has also performed with the Joffrey Ballet and the Stuttgart Ballet.

The Toronto Dance Theatre's 1982-83 season began at the St. Lawrence Centre Town Hall, November 5. The Toronto season featured a new work by resident choreographer Christopher House, a revival of David Earle's *Legend*, originally premiered 11 years ago at the St. Lawrence Centre, and four dances from the last two seasons: Peter Randazzo's *Tango*; *So!* and *Enter the Dawn*, House's *Boulevard* and Patricia Beatty's *Mas'harai*. These works were also part of TDT's program for a western tour which began in Winnipeg on November 15 and included engagements in Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton. Following the trend set by last year's Peter Randazzo Retrospective, the company will present an evening of works by Christopher House at the TDT Studios (Dec. 9-11). The program will be drawn from the five works House has choreographed for the company plus another new work. December also promises a new Christmas co-production combining the resources of both the company and the School (Dec. 26-31).

The new year starts off with an Ontario tour to Queen's University, Kingston (Jan. 19); University of Waterloo (Jan. 20); Brock University, St. Catharines (Jan. 21); University of Western Ontario, London (Jan. 4, 5). The highlight of the tour will be TDT's New York début at the Joyce Theatre, home of the Feld Ballet (Jan. 26-30).

PHOTO: VID INGELEVICS

Sallie Lyons and Allan Risdill of T.I.D.E.

Choreographics is a series on **Rogers Cable TV** in Toronto which started last January and over the year has aired many dance tapes. This summer Rogers videotaped the Dance in Canada Conference performances and seminars. The result is an impressive 20-part series which premiered October 6 and will run twice weekly (Wednesdays at 10:30 p.m. and Sundays at 7:30 p.m.) until February 13. The series concept originated with Robin Wall and was produced and directed by Steve Henry of Rogers Cable.

Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise returns to Theatre Passe-Muraille for its fall homeseason (Dec. 1-5) presenting a new full-evening collaboration – *Set in Motion* – directed by Denise Fujiwara. Paula Ravitz has also choreographed a new work for Dancemakers this fall.

In the new year T.I.D.E. will spend six weeks in residence at the York University Dance Department teaching-contact and improvisational dance (Jan. 4-Feb. 10). Then the company embarks on an Ontario and Quebec tour which includes week-long residencies at Waterloo University and in Montreal (Mar. 13-19). The tour repertoire will include *Second Wind* and a new work directed by Allan Risdill and designed by Scott Parkinson which combines puppets with dance.

The Robert Desrosiers Dance Theatre Company premiers two new works at the Castle Frank Auditorium in Toronto (Dec. 18, 19). The program includes *Fable of the Fool's Table* and *Mille Millions de Tonneure* (or *Bad Weather*) as well as a revised version of Desrosiers' 1981 work, *Brass Fountain*. The performing company includes Desrosiers and dancers Claudia Moore, Nancy Ferguson, David Wood, Daniel Tremblay, Andre Bedard, Nadia Szilvassy, Tom Brouillette, Eric Tessier-Lavigne, poet Albert Gedraitis and musicians Sarah Dalton-Philips and Gordon Phillips who is the company's musical director.

The Musicdance Orchestra premiered two new works in November in Danceworks' season opener. *Series* is a duet for Michael J. Baker and Holly Small choreographed by Peggy Baker of the Lar Lubovitch Company. *The Something Likes, II* is a collaboration by Holly Small and composer Miguel Frasconi. MDO directors Small, Baker and Robert W. Stevenson also made a guest appearance on the opening program of ARRAYMUSIC, Toronto's leading new music ensemble. The group performed its dance/theatre version of New York composer Jacob Druckman's *Animus III*, choreographed by Small with solo clarinet by Stevenson. In the spring MDO plans a tour to London, Ontario; Montreal; Quebec City, as well as smaller centres in Quebec to give music/dance workshops and performances.

The City of Ottawa hosted a celebration of the arts in October, which offered a broad look at what's happening on the Ottawa art scene. There were over 40 events offered in the fields of

dance, music, theatre, visual and literary art. Dance performances were presented by Le Groupe de la Place Royale, the School of Dance, the Ottawa Dance Theatre, Theatre Ballet of Canada, Ballet Shayda and the Zagreb Institute.

Dancemakers has appointed Ruth Hotchkiss as the new general manager. Hotchkiss has an extensive background in media relations and promotion and for the past three years has been information officer of UNICEF Canada, a $12 million fundraising organization. She succeeds Kenneth Peirson who, after three years with the company, has joined Vancouver's Green Thumb Theatre for Young People as Managing Director.

Dancemakers has two new dancers as well. They are Sioux Hartle from Vancouver's Mountain Dance Theatre and Ken Gould from the Brian Webb Dance Company in Edmonton.

Danceworks opened its 1982/83 season in November with Danceworks 28 at Harbourfront. The program was devoted to music/dance collaboration and featured works by Ahmed Hassan and Lola MacLaughlin from Vancouver, Julie West from New York and from Toronto Ricardo Abreut with Susan McNaughton and Eric Cadesky, as well as the Musicdance Orchestra with works by Peggy Smith Baker, Michael J. Baker, Holly Small and Miguel Frasconi.

Danceworks 29 will feature new works by Lawrence Adams, Joan Phillips, Jennifer Mascall, Maxine Heppner and William Douglas at the Theatre Passe Muraille (Dec. 16-19).

Pavlychenko Studio, Toronto's alternative modern dance centre, has undergone some administrative changes. Kathryn Brown continues as artistic director, Susan Cash is the new studio co-ordinator, rental agent and director of Dancegraphs, and Gail Benn is in charge of school administration and publicity. Pavlychenko will sponsor numerous performance events in the new year beginning with an engagement at Toronto's Harbourfront (Feb. 23-26). Featured choreographers for this show are Gail Benn, Kathryn Brown, Susan Cash, Claudia Moore, Holly Small and guest choreographer Elaine Bowman from Calgary's Dancers' Studio West. The Pavlychenko group will also be performing at Solar Stage and will again sponsor Dancegraphs – an open forum for new choreography (Mar. 1, May 1, May 29).

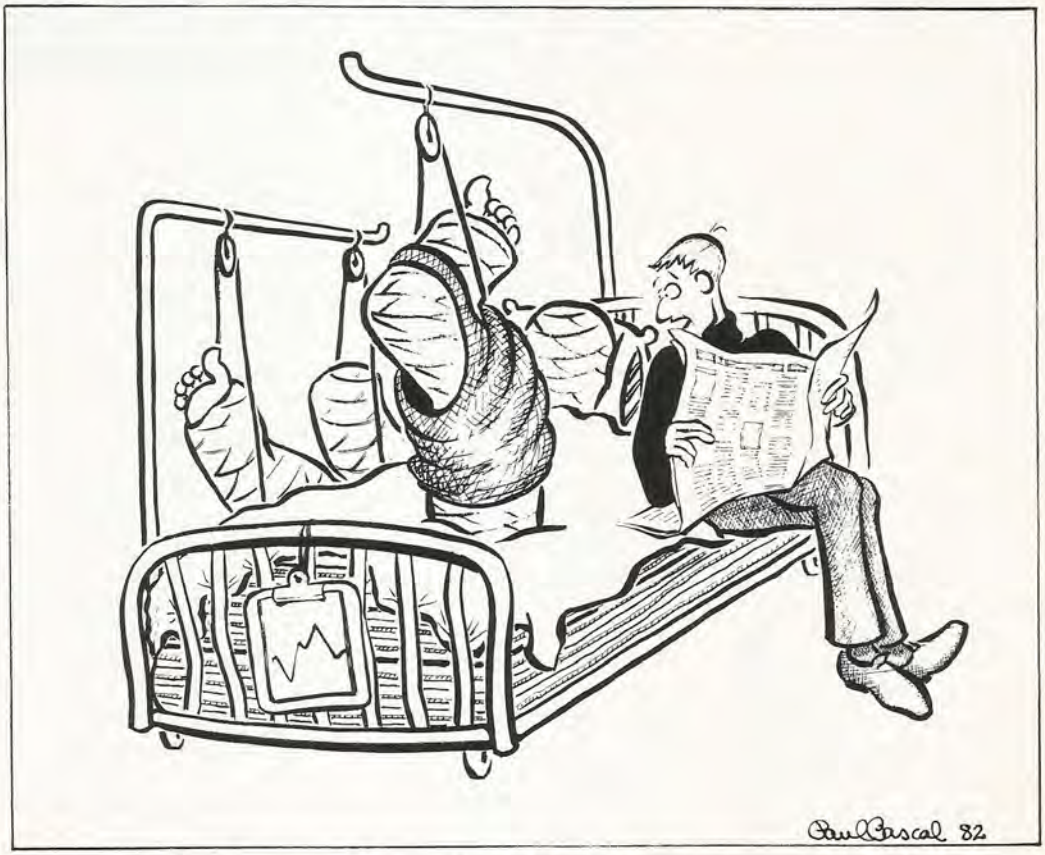
QUEBEC

Tangente presented a festival of choreography by six visual artists on three consecutive weekends in November. The artists – Raphael Bendahen, Denis Farley, Louise Guay, Tanya Rosenberg and Susanne Valotaire – work in a wide variety of mediums from film and photography to graphics and sculpture. The performances and accompanying exhibitions offered a new way of looking at the art of dance. In December Judy Ragir from Chicago presents her dance work *Bone: Portrait of an Object* (Dec. 3, 4) and Louis Guillemette and Dena Davida present a program of their own works, as well as works by Silvy Panet-Raymond, Raphael Bendahen and Paula Ravitz (Dec. 10,11).

NOVA SCOTIA

The Halifax Dance Association is now one of the largest dance schools in the country, boasting a student enrollment in the region of 2,000 ballet, modern, jazz and dancercize enthusiasts. Toronto's City Ballet founder/director Marijan Bayer is now concurrently artistic director of HDA and has given it an effective dose of professionalism. City Ballet dancers Moira Stott and Howard Crabtree taught at the summer dance course and performed along with HDA dancers in the HDA production 'On Stage' at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium. The performance included Crabtree's *A Ballet for Rodney*, Francine Boucher's *Dances from the Marshland* and *Ballet Suite* by Marijan Bayer.

Nova Dance Theatre will hold its first performances of 1983 at the Dalhousie Arts Centre on two consecutive weekends (Jan 14, 15, 17, 18). There will be two separate programs both featuring new works by artistic director Jeanne Robinson and other company members.



"The Times says it was the greatest leap since Nijinsky, but the Gazette has panned you. Next time try not to land on their critic."

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Letters

Vancouver
I have often heard that, "a bad review is better than no review at all". This statement is questionable in my mind, especially after reading Mr. Graham Jackson's article on Kinesis Dance's concert, *Players Please*, in Toronto last May, (*Dance in Canada*, Number 33).

Dance in Canada magazine can be credited with promoting and supporting so many areas of dance activity all across the country. In this case, however, Mr. Jackson's review neither encouraged nor gave a hint of positive recognition to one of Canada's active and developing artists. As a reader, I expect your writers to offer an objective personal account of Canadian talent. Mr. Jackson, however, found no talent in Paras Terezakis' choreographic abilities so his overwhelmingly negative opinion, his "anger", "embarrassment" and "pity" would have been better left unsaid.

I only hope such a vindictive review will give Mr. Terezakis more determination to further develop his talents and continue his creative expression with Mr. Jackson's professed "urgency".
Denis Blais

London, England
Michael Crabb's bland references to 'the controversial Brinson Report (1975/76)' quotes Grant Strate's opinion that my report was commissioned 'to give credence to a predetermined plan of action which took the form of a massive increase in the National Ballet School's Council subsidy'. This is defamatory, untrue and an attack on my personal integrity. Nothing in my brief nor in my discussions with the Council ever mentioned such a plan. The conclusions and recommendations were my own influenced only by what I saw and by the terms of reference.

My regret, expressed at the time, was that the brief confined my study to classical ballet when it should have embraced the whole developing dance scene in Canada — as has been the case with studies I have undertaken since in Britain, Hong Kong and New Zealand. Nor did I argue that a centre of excellence in Toronto implied no support for developing excellence in Winnipeg and Montreal. Quite the contrary, as subsequent events in all three centres have shown, thus justifying my recommendations.

A last point. The assumption that if increased subsidy had not been given to the National Ballet School it would have been available for other dance purposes is quite erroneous and betrays an ignorance of the principles and methods of public funding.
Peter Brinson

Halifax
Much as I enjoyed Paula Citron's informative article *Dance to the Dollar* in your Fall '82 issue, I feel compelled to offer two small — but to us, very significant — corrections.

Speaking in her next-to-last paragraph of Mr. Eric Perth, Ms. Citron says that, 'in the smaller 200-seat theatre at the Dalhousie Arts Centre, he sponsored a March choreographic workshop of local amateur and professional talent. Three hundred people were turned away! That should be some comfort'.

First of all, the event sponsored by Mr. Perth (and brilliantly directed by Mr. Michael Ardenne) was *not* a workshop. It was a showcase — the First Annual Atlantic Choreographers Showcase — a performance anthology featuring original choreography by nine *professional* Atlantic choreographers, performed by dancers *some* of whom were non-professional.

Second, the event was *more* comfort than Ms. Citron apparently suspects — for it was NOT from the 200-seat Sir James Dunn Theatre, but from its big sister, the mighty 1000-seat Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, that 300 people were turned away in March.

In other words, there is *five times* more dance interest in Halifax than even an extremely knowledgeable and well-informed reviewer would have guessed!

Equally important, the thousand people who were able to gain admission to the Cohn made their excitement and appreciation unmistakably clear; a similar crowd is expected at the Second Annual Showcase this April 8-9.
Spider Robinson
Chairman of the Board Nova Dance Theatre

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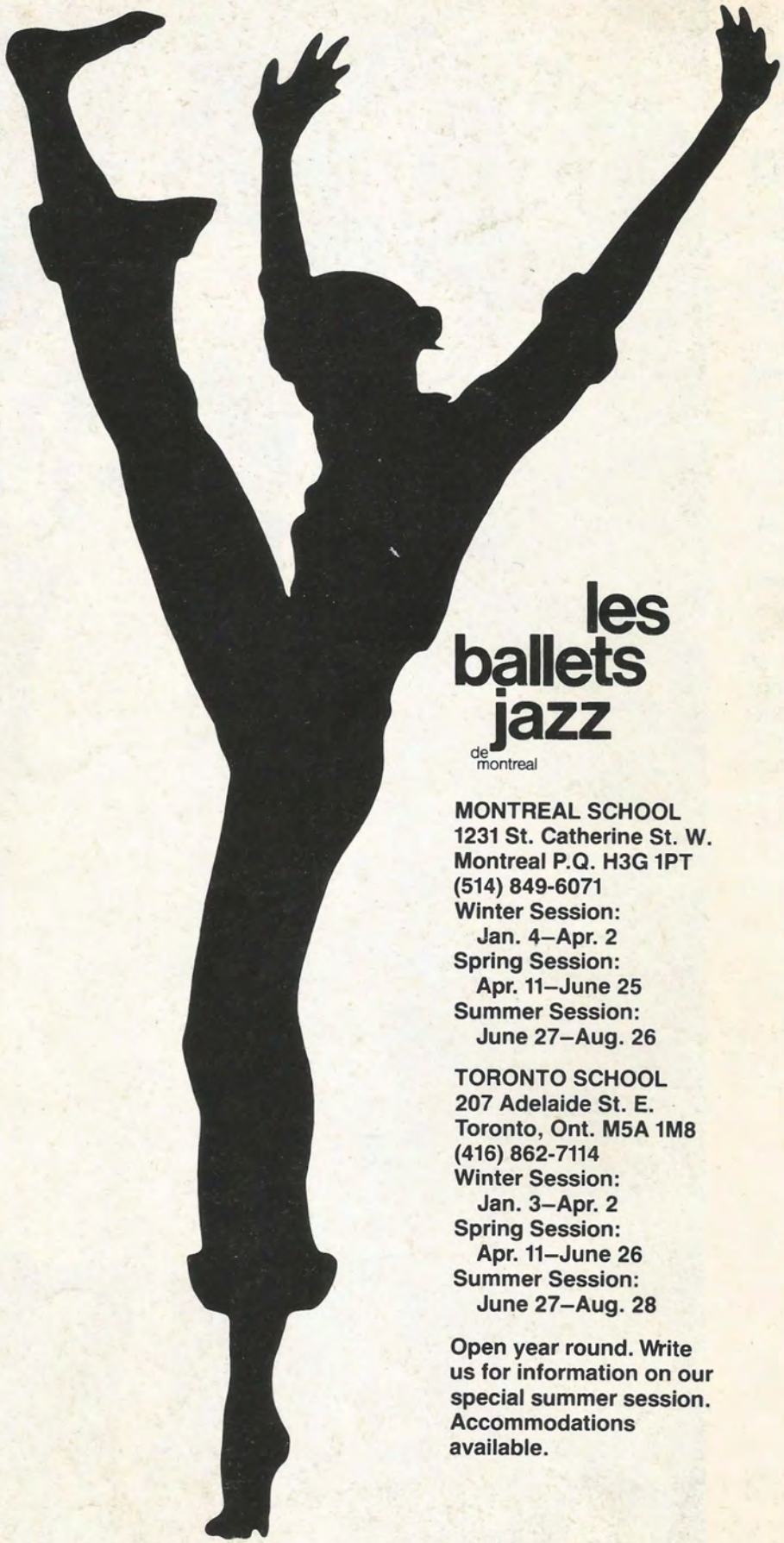

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