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Dance in Canada Danse au

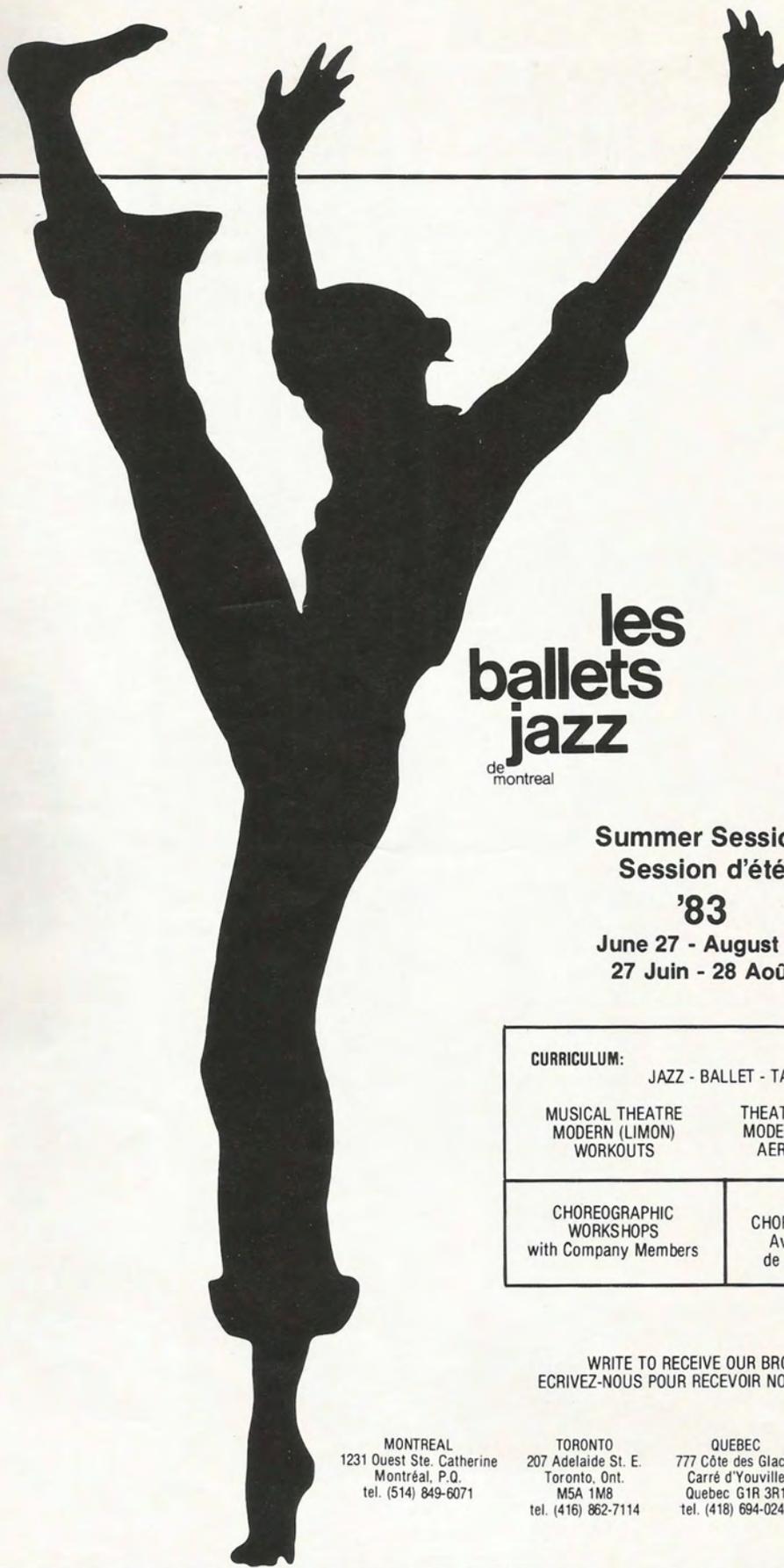
Karen Kain

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Karen Kain in a specially commissioned photograph by Joseph Ciancio

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The Changing Face of Dance in Saskatchewan

Towards a New Unity

By Denise Ball



April Chow and Lorne Matthews of Saskatchewan Theatre Ballet in Ross Brierlton's *Genesis*.

Le choix de Saskatoon comme lieu de rencontre pour le Colloque 1983 de Danse au Canada marque une importante étape historique pour la Saskatchewan. Bien que diverses tentatives de fondation de troupes de danse professionnelles aient échouées par le passé et que les normes d'enseignement de la danse soient des plus variées, de nets signes de renouveau se font à présent sentir. Marie Nychka-Blocka est fondatrice de la compagnie semi-professionnelle Saskatchewan Theatre Ballet et ses efforts ont reçu beaucoup d'encouragement. Les divisions dans le milieu de la danse en Saskatchewan s'effacent petit à petit pour faire place à un climat de coopération fructueuse.

Past efforts to establish professional dance companies in Saskatchewan have often foundered. The province is not, after all, exactly a haven for dance. Of the dozens of private dance schools in the province, only a handful can be considered quality institutions while many are, in the words of one dance teacher, "almost dangerous". Most touring companies from outside Saskatchewan are lucky to fill a large auditorium in Saskatoon or Regina for one performance.

In June, however, Saskatoon will host the 1983 Dance in Canada conference and invite the nation to have a look at the state of dance in the province. While there may be little in the way of high profile activity to attract interest, delegates attending the conference will discover a vast range of educational dance programs in the province, the beginnings of a professional company determined to survive, and a new spirit of co-operation among members of the province's dance community who are committed to bridging the gaps that have kept dance groups isolated and struggling in the past.

"The June conference will be the first time many members of the provincial dance community have got together"

"The conference is being held in Saskatoon because there's never been a national conference in Saskatchewan before", says Sonia Barton, Dance in Canada Association board member, conference co-ordinator and Saskatoon dance teacher. "We believe people are going to find an extremely active regional movement, particularly in education. We've accomplished a lot in the last few years".

Although Dance Saskatchewan, the umbrella body for provincial dance organizations, has been in existence for five years, the June conference will be the first time many members of the provincial dance community have got together to swap ideas.

Until recently, most of the activity has

gone on in isolation. The distances have been maintained partly because of a tendency to protect turf, partly because various segments saw no value in co-operation, and partly because of strong philosophical differences over the direction in which provincial dance activity should go.

By far the largest concentration of dance activity can be found within the province's private schools. The Saskatchewan Dance Teachers Association has 34 accredited members, but there's an even greater number of dance school operators outside the Association. Most offer classes in a variety of areas — ballet, jazz, modern and tap (some throw in baton-twirling for good measure) as well as keep fit classes and yoga. Thousands of students of every age and shape are enrolled in classes offered through private schools and public institutions. The Conservatory of Music in Regina and the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon both offer a variety of courses.

Many schools encourage students to enter the large competitive festivals that take place in several centres each year, the largest being in Moose Jaw. Hundreds, if not thousands, compete for medals and trophies each year. But there's a growing number of teachers who are dissatisfied with the competitive system. One teacher in Yorkton claims these events do little to help develop dancers because they're too large. When they might well be offering useful criticism adjudicators can do no more than hand out marks and trophies for the teacher to use as "artifacts for advertising the schools".

"It often keeps the parents happy, but it's a bit like being at a cattle sale. The kid gets a number and is pushed through the chute".

Yet even in the non-competitive environment of the public school system, there's some controversy over the approach to education. Dance in Saskatchewan public schools is included as part of the physical education curriculum. Few phys-ed teachers have the training or inclination to give much attention to dance. Interest at the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan is only just beginning to develop.

Marianne Livant, a dance educator, dance therapist and co-founder of the now defunct Regina Modern Dance Works, is campaigning for a new approach in the public schools. Livant, who will present a lecture demonstration at the conference involving students from



Young dancers take part in Regina's Annual Ethnic Festival, "Mosaic '82". Here we see a traditional Irish dance.

a pilot project in a Regina school, wants the emphasis to be placed on dance as a performing art, not just another form of physical activity with a "jock mentality" approach.

Livant, like many members of the dance community, is pushing for a greater emphasis on broader forms of public education. Dance therapy programs are now available in Regina and Saskatoon encouraging creative movement for the elderly and the

"We need to make connections, not only within our own dance communities but with the big outside world"

physically and mentally handicapped. The University of Regina is in the midst of developing an aesthetic education program designed to train teachers for work in public institutions such as jails and hospitals as well as schools.

Many of these groups and individuals look to Dance Saskatchewan as a vehicle for promoting dance in the broadest sense of the word on both the professional and "grassroots" levels. While some dancers in the province are not all that interested in getting involved in another organization and the inevitable bureaucratic baggage, it's clear

the mood is beginning to change.

"We need to make connections, not only within our own dance communities but with the big outside world", Barton says. "People are concerned about overcoming the separations. But of course it's a long, slow process because so little has been done in the past."

From the evidence available, some valuable links are being forged. While the ethnic dance groups and the private institutions aren't exactly pals, they're at least on speaking terms.

"The ethnic and ballet groups started for different reasons and started from different roots", says Mari Stewart, president of the Regina Multicultural Council and an active member of the local highland dance association. "But there have been workshops involving students from the multicultural organizations and the ballet schools. I think people are beginning to realize there's strength in togetherness."

Educators, therapists and performers involved in "mainstream" dance activities could reap enormous benefits from joining forces with the ethnic dance groups. In Saskatchewan, multiculturalism is a strong force with well-organized councils active at municipal and provincial levels. Dozens of Ukranian dance groups thrive in small towns and

large cities in the province, partly because of the large Ukrainian population but also because they attract young men who might find other forms of dance too "sissy". Regina's Poltava Dancers, for example, have toured throughout Canada and Europe. The troupe has achieved relatively high standards by holding on to its members after high school graduation.

Even in smaller communities, Polish, Hungarian, Roumanian, Scottish, Chinese, Indian and Filipino performance ensembles can be found with supportive audiences. But once out of high school, these dancers are no more likely to pursue a professional career than most ballet-trained students in the larger cities. The biggest gap in the Saskatchewan dance community remains between education and professional performance activity.

The history of professional dance companies in the province has been fraught with problems. Lucia Pavlychenko, a respected Saskatoon dance teacher, launched an eight-member professional dance company called Saskatchewan Dance Theatre in 1974. The company danced throughout the province and proved to be specially popular in smaller communities. After two years, however, it folded because of financial problems and internal battles.

Regina Modern Dance Works, which was started around the same time, had a longer but no less difficult history. The company's orientation was contemporary, but while some of its earlier work captured an audience, Dance Works gradually lost its following and faced debilitating financial and administrative problems. A year ago,

artistic directors Keith Urban and Maria Formolo moved to Alberta. Although a school still functions under the Dance Works name, the performance company is long gone.

Shortly after the demise of Dance Works, Marie Nychka-Blocka, a Regina dance teacher, announced that she intended to form a new company — Saskatchewan Theatre Ballet. The ensemble is made up of three professional dancers — Nychka-Blocka, Lorne Matthews and April Chow — and

"The history of professional dance companies in the province has been fraught with problems"

five unpaid apprentices. The repertoire is a mixed bag of light classical, jazz, ethnic, and "hard-core classical" works created by local and out-of-province choreographers, most of whom are young and learning.

After one year in operation, Saskatchewan Theatre Ballet has exceeded expectations. The company began the year with a projected budget of \$65,000. It finished the season \$20,000 under budget. It has found enthusiastic audiences throughout the province and is booked on a provincial touring circuit into 1984.

The company's performance standards are understandably mixed. Nychka-Blocka's own choreographies are the strongest in the repertoire, but some of the works by guest choreographers have been insubstantial. Also, while STB attempts to make excerpts from classical works a significant part of the program, several of the student apprentices haven't the clean classical lines or technique

necessary to pull them off.

Still, the company's future looks bright, largely because Nychka-Blocka has made the right political moves. She has gone after, and received, support from all sectors, or factions, of the provincial dance community. She has firm ties with the multicultural community, developed over years of teaching Ukrainian dance, as well as with the private ballet teachers. She has invited Saskatchewan teachers to set works on the company and has received strong support from Dance Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan Theatre Ballet is now seen as a way for young performers to make the leap from amateur to professional status. Nychka-Blocka hopes to increase the size of the company by two next season and applications for apprentice positions are flooding in from young dancers with dreams of establishing careers in the province.

For the next few years, however, most of the ambitious ones will continue to leave for Winnipeg or Toronto to continue their training and to look for jobs. Others, because of a lack of encouragement and exposure to excellence, will give up. Things, nevertheless, are beginning to turn around. And the next time the country's dance community is invited to a dance conference in Saskatchewan, it may not seem like such an unusual idea.

Denise Ball is the arts reporter for the Regina Leader-Post.

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Karen Kain at the Crossroads

A Career in Transition

By Urjo Kareda

Stardom is a two-fold confidence trick. On the most primal level, the star must endow the audience with confidence, with the giddy faith that the impossible will not only be attempted but also triumphantly achieved. Even in the many cases in which danger is built into a star's relationship with the public, it usually provides the edge of tension to an inevitable victory.

As an audience, we yearn to be held, child-like, in the security of a star's ease. On a much more problematic level, however, the star, too, needs to achieve actual confidence, an interior personal assurance, to keep us believing. These two confidence tricks — the ability to persuade us, and the power of self-persuasion — do not necessarily come together. A star can continue for some time with the first without acquiring the second. But if the career is to be sustained beyond the momentary sensation, the two tricks must be folded one within the other. Until they do, there will be a hollowness at the centre of the star's power to command.

"Karen Kain has always had the ability to make us believe that she could do whatever she chose to"

As Canada's most celebrated ballet star, Karen Kain has always had the ability to make us believe that she could do whatever she chose to. From her earliest appearances in leading roles with the National Ballet, she was distinguished by the boldness of her dreaming onstage, by her capacity for imagining big and finding a performance size to sustain it. Even in the early 1970s, dancing *Swan Lake* with Rudolf Nureyev, she seemed so possessed by a will to express herself through dance that she carried us with her. Her physical strength, her dramatic intensity, the erotic charge of her big-boned beauty — all these shaped an atmosphere in which we believed whatever she demanded.

But it has been only relatively recently that Kain has found herself able to



Karen Kain in *Swan Lake*.

Les grands danseurs sont des vedettes aux yeux du public, mais il leur faut ce sentiment intime de confiance en soi pour qu'ils atteignent leur maturité artistique. Karen Kain est la ballerine préférée des Canadiens depuis bientôt 20 ans, mais ce n'est que récemment qu'elle a accepté son image publique. Son ascension vertigineuse depuis 1973, sa carrière internationale aux côtés de Rudolf Nureyev et ses tournées dans le monde entier ont éclipsé son développement personnel. En 1979, elle remettait en question sa vie personnelle et professionnelle, et c'est avec une plus grande assurance qu'elle est sortie de cette crise. Elle a ensuite diversifié sa carrière et a été attirée par la comédie musicale et le théâtre. Elle a également exprimé ouvertement son point de vue sur le Ballet national du Canada dont elle a été membre pendant toute sa carrière professionnelle. Elle a d'ailleurs l'intention d'y rester maintenant qu'Erik Bruhn va succéder à Alexander Grant comme directeur artistique. Le 28 mai, une autre étape importante commence pour Karen Kain qui va épouser l'acteur canadien Ross Petty.

Karen Kain in *Napoli*.

internalize that air of poised self-possession, to make herself believe what she had coerced us into believing a decade ago. It is only now — at the age of 31, approaching the prime years of her career — that she feels that she has earned the right of our confidence. “I love to dance now”, she insists. “I really do. I used to be so frightened of audiences and what they came to expect. Now I am glad that people are coming to see me. I know now that I have a right to be here, onstage.”

This new plane of self-esteem seems a particularly hard-won victory in an artform which features neurotic self-doubt as part of its training process. Self-criticism and self-denial fuel a dancer's career, but the emotional-psychological energy consumed cannot always be replaced. Intriguingly, Karen Kain's recently discovered generosity toward herself coincides with a time when she has placed her own career at a crossroads.

After several brooding and unhappy years, Kain now seems on the verge of a real reintegration into her parent company, the National Ballet. Yet she also continues to make gestures toward other very different forms of performing:

the theatre, television, an ongoing flirtation with film. Karen Kain's status as a media celebrity (and therefore a marketable commodity) continues to expand; having promoted furniture stores and mineral water, she is soon to launch herself onto the secular leotard-and-leg-warmer set with her very own custom-ghostwritten workout book. And, of course, she has committed herself to a marriage.

“I have talent in other areas that I haven't begun to explore”

This is a splintered and multiply refracted range of activity, but it is consistent with the speed and diversity of Kain's career from its beginning. Her connection with an audience is a rare phenomenon: you can almost feel the link being forged as a physical reality. To accommodate, and exploit, that power, Kain's growth was a whirlwind mixture of real achievement, publicity hype and genuine public affection. She became a principal dancer with the National when she was 19. Shrewdly teamed at an early stage with Frank Augustyn, she took medals at the Moscow International Ballet

Competition. American critics capitulated to her performances on tour. Before long, she had honours, both Canadian-staid (an Order of Canada, three honorary doctorates) and American-glossy (an Andy Warhol portrait). She danced with the finest and the most beautiful in ballet companies and discotheques everywhere.

There were those, of course, who insisted, in the peculiarly Canadian way, on trying to ground her achievement, to make her stardom a publicity tour-de-force rather than an artistic one. “No, it wasn't all just PR”, she argues, still (understandably) defensive. “That's a mistake that was made by people who were — and maybe still are — jealous of me. You can't ignore what happened in Moscow, with Nureyev, with the American reviews. But it's easier to think it was all PR. Really, nobody noticed me here in Canada until the stuff started coming in from elsewhere. When I did *Romeo and Juliet* here, I was cut up. After Moscow, people knew they should notice, and it snowballed. I'm a little bitter about all that.”

Nevertheless, the public acclaim created a public *persona* with which Kain herself could not identify: “It took me a long time to come to terms with all that, with any of it. I only believed the bad stuff, not the good side. That's part of the training, I suppose — waiting for, *expecting*, criticism.

“Audience expectation just freaked me right out. I used to love it: I was a real ‘Let me out and let me dance’ girl, rather shy and retiring except when I was dancing. But after the stardom, I couldn't deal with the pressure. It terrified me. And the worse you feel, the less you are able to give. It's such a vicious circle. And I guess I wasn't finding a lot of support in the company either. I didn't have any confidence in myself — except when Nureyev gave it to me, by bullying me, by believing in me. No one else was feeding me what I needed, and as I didn't have anyone I adored and worshipped, I just went down.”

She travelled far and wide as a guest artist, but the engagements weren't always the most distinguished. She turned down several invitations on short notice from American Ballet Theatre, fearing that she would dance with a “Forgive me, I'm a replacement” attitude. When she wasn't able to dance with Frank Augustyn, she was haunted by the difficulty of finding partners: Nureyev (“With him, I felt that if I let everything go, I'd be up to his level”)

had to be considered a rare luxury, and other possible partners, like Patrick Bissell ("With him, I felt free with my size for the first time, able to dance full out") came and went, without any continuity.

The most painful part of these years was the search for a sense of herself. "It's one thing to see yourself in the studio or the rehearsal hall", she says, "but you don't know what comes across. You need help. I didn't believe in my own abilities to see".

She went searching for mentors; one of these, Roland Petit, used her in several ballets, both revivals and new creations. "Petit is special for his faith in me, his trust. He gives me the skeleton of a role and then trusts me. I feel much less self-conscious in this kind of process than in the 'On this step, you arch your eyebrow' approach. Not many people give you that chance, not many people with brilliance".

Within the National Ballet, she looks to the ballet-master for classical correctness; and she values the opinions of her colleagues and friends. And what about the opinions of the artistic director Alexander Grant? "Well", she says quietly, "I used to wait".

Karen Kain's crisis came in the fall of 1979, during the National's London engagement. "I just couldn't go onstage any more", she recalls. "I felt that I could not take one step onstage without falling over. I was sick all the time. There was nobody to turn to. Everybody else was looking the other way. I could sense all that. So I knew what I had to do: I promised that I'd return in two-and-a-half months, and I stopped.

"It was good for me. I had to start all over. I went to Europe and tried to disappear for a while. Then I realized I really needed professional help. I knew that I hadn't grown up. I was just a dancer, and you can only get by on that for a couple of years. There was a huge emptiness on the other side that you simply push aside and ignore. And that leaves you with nothing feeding the other part of you, the part that isn't a dancer".

Over two years of therapy, Kain rebuilt herself. She admits that she still has bad days as often as good ones, and understands that the people around her aren't equipped to help. "You have to get it from yourself", she says. "I needed that time off to make my start. Because I had promised to return, I knew I had to. I have a horrible fear of disappointing people. But I feel much better able to cope now — whether it's things I want to do, or don't want to do. I'll still let a

lot of things go because I don't want to make trouble. But I also think I've become less hard on myself. I was a total perfectionist before. Such a pain. I didn't like anything I did. Everything was ugly to me."

She has also acquired a more helpful evaluation of her own talents. "It's strange", she says, "but in Europe, they consider me a dramatic dancer, and in Canada, I'm known as a technician. To me, technique just means not making people worry that you're going to fall over. It's form and line. And tricks. For me, technique means I'm in control. I

"I felt that I could not take one step on stage without falling over"

don't think I have a lot of technique — I really have to concentrate on it — but I give the impression that I do because I'm so strong, and because I'm a natural dancer. I'm best when I can go with the natural flow of things, but I have to do a lot of careful calculation. I'm limited by not having a supple body, but my saving grace is my strength.

"The body's only a part of it, of course. When I was younger, I used to find myself expressing things that I didn't know from life, things I hadn't experienced for myself. I took on roles — Swan Lake — that required more than I could give, so I just imitated. The

Black Swan was terrible: it's hard for me to look like I'm telling lies — I'm too transparent. But with age and maturity, I feel that I have the depth of character to dig something out of myself. I can convince myself.

"You always compare yourself. In our company, I admire Veronica Tennant. I can always watch and learn from her. With the others, I don't. My idol is Makarova: her instrument is stunning, it's unreal. I used to compare myself and felt that I wanted to quit, but I've learned, too, that you don't have to compare yourself unfavorably with others."

Karen Kain's newly discovered ease of self-analysis has also extended to a more provocative inquiry into the National Ballet than has ever been offered publicly by any other dancer. In a now notorious *Globe and Mail* interview with Stephen Godfrey, Kain spoke out against what she felt was unfair treatment and neglect at the hands of Alexander Grant. (The interview has also been widely interpreted as a key factor in the steps which led to the termination of Grant's contract by the National's board). "I spoke out for purely selfish reasons", Kain insists. "I had no idea what the board was cooking up at the time. I like Alexander personally, and I know it looks as if I had done him in. But it wasn't like that. I didn't think



Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn in *Giselle*.

that I could change the National's machinery from within. I was distressed at the way I was being presented, made to look as if I had walked away from the company. For me, it was a conflict between a new ballet in Europe and a performance of the National's *Napoli*. It was as if I were being personally attacked. I don't want to be a big mouth shooting off, and I can be very patient with people and their mistakes. But I had to speak. It was a big step for me: I had never spoken out for myself before. I was being blamed for not being around, when in fact, I wasn't given enough to do when I was here. I want to feel like a productive member of the company. Especially when I'm the one who sells tickets and the company is having box office trouble."

Kain insists that she could have left the National — possibly for American Ballet Theatre, she says — if her problems hadn't been sorted out. And though she now feels committed to staying, because of Erik Bruhn's appointment as artistic director, it is with a clear, not to say, cool-eyed perspective. "There has been a change", she says. "I'm being treated fairly. I'm not being treated better than anyone else. Okay. This is a democracy, and I know I'm not allowed to feel that I'm any better than anyone else. I don't particularly like democracy.

"Basically, I'm staying with the company because I have a lot of roles here that I really love. Even though it's hard to get to them only once or twice a year. With all our ballerinas, for instance, I may not get to dance *Swan Lake* more than once a year. But I do love the company. It's good, though not as good as it should be. I see other companies who have more success, and I think it comes from their spirit. We may have technique and quality here, but we don't have the spirit. I have great hopes for Erik, though. I hope he's now ready to tackle it, to help us the way that Rudolf helped — a strong personality leading the ship, taking us places.

"As a dancer himself, he'll understand my problem with finding partners. Something has to happen. New partners are so important for me. I have to be able to dance with people I'm stimulated by. With Frank, I'm older than he, and more experienced. It's always been good dancing with Frank, but it's not good all the time. And now I can't dance with anyone else, and yet Frank can dance with anyone. It only works now, really, if it's a role he loves to do.

"When Frank wasn't here, I danced with people who didn't complement me.

I know I'm difficult to partner. Most of the time, I'm overpowering in every sense. I don't want to obliterate everyone. I need a partner who can handle me and still look good. When that doesn't happen, I know I'm going to look lousy and people are paying to see me at my best."

One of the side effects of the last decade's boom in ballet popularity in North America is that ballet stars have found that audiences will also pay to see them in other contexts. Judith Jamison made her Broadway debut two years ago with *Sophisticated Ladies*, and Natalia Makarova has had a personal triumph in New York this season with *On Your Toes*. Last Christmas, Karen Kain, too, branched out: she performed in a pantomime, *Aladdin*, in Toronto and Ottawa. It's clear that this is an area she intends to explore further; Walter Learning, of the Vancouver Playhouse, has spoken of his ambition to stage a revival of the Charlottetown musical version of *Johnny Belinda* with Kain starring as the deaf mute.

"I have talent in other areas that I haven't begun to develop yet", she

"New partners are so important for me. I have to be able to dance with people I'm stimulated by"

smiles. "In *Aladdin*, it was an amazing experience for me to deliver lines to two thousand people at a time. Previously, I had spoken in public only at awards shows. It was also nice not to take myself so seriously. I loved working with actors. I loved their spontaneity, their use of the moment. I'm so used to trying to inflict spontaneity on something that's been rehearsed for six months. *Aladdin* wasn't art, no, but there's nothing wrong with entertainment."

It would be gratifying if Canada allowed a wider field of opportunities for her talents. On one hand, the National seems to be serving her poorly these days. She had little to bring to the tedious, over-fussy *Napoli*, and her vivacity could go only so far to redeem the horrible garishness of the new *Don Quixote*. Attempting to showcase her appeal, the National gave a commission to Broadway's Michael Peters, but the result, presented earlier this year was the burnished plastic of *Quartet*. In other media, television has attempted to demonstrate her versatility by teaming her in duets with Douglas Campbell. She had discussed making a film, but the example of Ann Ditchburn's humiliation in *Slow Dancing in the Big City*

cautioned her about dancers attempting a transition to film without any experience at all. And there is, after all, a wide gulf between *Aladdin* and *On Your Toes*.

Karen Kain is at a transitional stage without any clear idea of which transition would be most fruitful. She has not yet danced regularly as a guest with any major company, nor has she had new work created for her by a major choreographer (Petit's pâtisseries don't qualify). The most encouraging factor, however, is that Kain seems to have found the emotional confidence — personally and in her relationship with actor Ross Petty — which provides the basis from which she will be free to choose her own best interests.

"At the moment", she says, "I don't know what I want. I'm getting older, I feel it. I'm the youngest of the principals, and most days, I hurt all over. I know I don't want to be Sugarplum until I drop. I still think I want to act, but I don't want to take the time to study acting and perhaps lose the best — and the last — of my dancing years.

"I know I'm capable of a lot more (I feel I'm using only half my potential), but I don't know how much more I'm willing to sacrifice of my own life and my family's. Some people are willing to lose all that side in order to become the greatest ballerina; and some people, indeed, don't need all that side. But I don't want to give up my own life and I don't want to end up bitter. The more I know about myself, I know that my home-life is important. I used to think that I would sacrifice anything, that I was totally committed to dance. But getting married and settling down are big steps for me. I want children, too, and that's another big step. I know I can't just dance everywhere and fly back. I used to guest everywhere. Japan one week, Korea the next. No more. Now I feel that unless there's a special partner, or a really great fee, it's not worth it.

"Dancing has gotten into perspective. It's not what it used to be. Young dancers will be appalled to hear me say that. But they'll all find out, too. Sooner or later."

Urjo Kareda is the artistic director of Toronto's Tarragon Theatre and a regular contributor to Saturday Night magazine and to CBC-FM's Stereo Morning.

Photo-Gallery: Frank Richards

Pour Frank Richards, la magie de la photographie réside dans son pouvoir d'exprimer la beauté évasive de la vie ordinaire. Agé de 46 ans et originaire de Vancouver, Frank Richards a débuté dans la photo il y a 16 ans, et il s'intéresse à la danse depuis son arrivée à Toronto en 1974. Son penchant artistique est si marqué qu'il oublie souvent toutes considérations matérielles. D'après lui, sur le plan photographique, le danseur a plus d'importance que la chorégraphie. Il préfère travailler avec les danseurs dans son studio et aime particulièrement la danse moderne où le photographe doit faire un effort de concentration pour trouver le moment optimum dans une suite de mouvements par rapport au ballet classique où le point culminant laisse moins de surprises.

Toronto-based photographer Frank Richards will be very happy to see this month's Photo-Gallery — not because he has a big ego (quite the reverse) but because he really wants to communicate through his work. The process is not enough.

Originally from Vancouver, Richards, now in his mid-forties, did not take up photography until he was 30. From early on, Richards says he knew he wanted to be an artist. When he left Vancouver in



Karen Du Plessis



Charles Flanders

1974 his planned destination was New York with its heady ferment of old and new culture. He never made it all the way to the Big Apple and is now happily settled in a "quite Bohemian" downtown Toronto loft, once a busy warehouse.

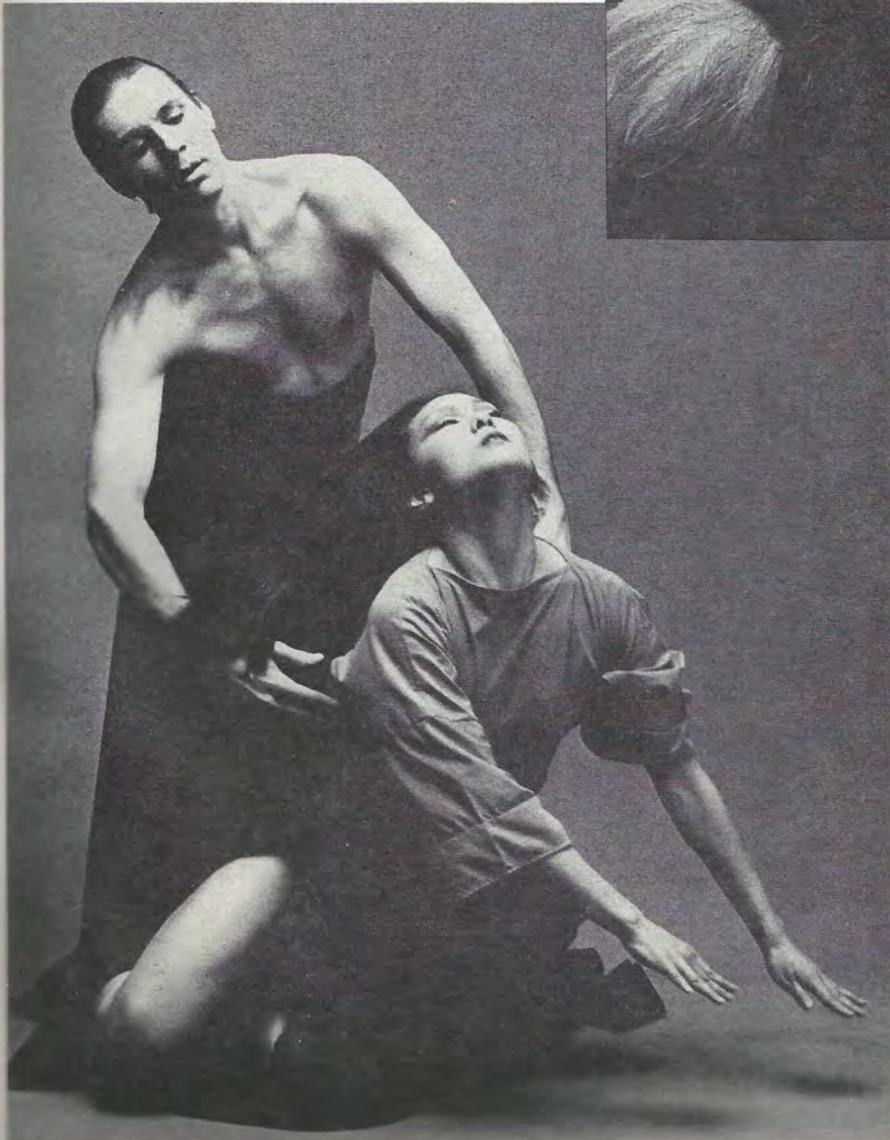
It is here that Richards does much of his work. He prefers a studio environment. It complements his attitudes to dance photography.

"For me", says the quietly spoken Richards, "the dancer is more important than the choreography. When I work in my studio, it isn't a matter of recording something left over from the performance: it is a whole new performance in itself".

Richards tries to relate studio shoots to real roles and characterizations and is almost fanatically preoccupied with getting just the lighting he wants. With its 6-meter high ceilings, Richards' studio



Grace Miyagawa



Charles Flanders and Grace Miyagawa.

permits jumping shots and he is particularly skilled in making these look more than mere stunts.

Richards has photographed many of Canada's best-known modern dancers, a number of them from Toronto Dance Theatre. He sees modern dance photography as a greater challenge than photographing ballet. "In ballet it's often a matter of capturing the climax. In modern it's far more a seamless sequence of movement and a whole different challenge. It requires tremendous concentration".

At the same time, Richards says that he works instinctively. He feels his way to the right shot rather than analysing it.

Richards admires the ability of a photographer to enhance the information available to the human eye and has taught himself a range of darkroom techniques enabling him to accomplish this. He tends not to follow package directions but to find out by experiment what works best to achieve his desired effect.

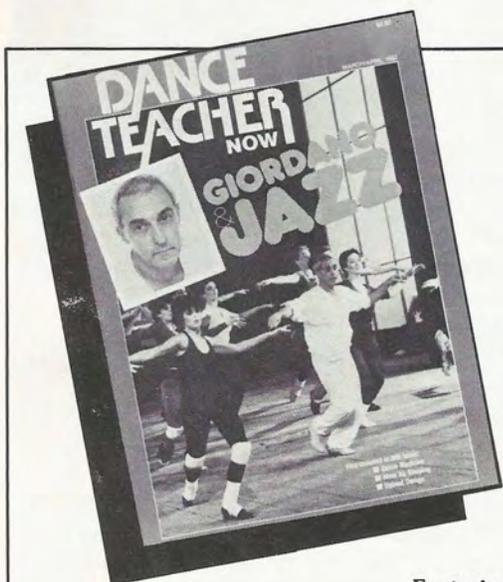
"The magic of photography", he says, "is to comment on the elusive beauty of real life".



Margaret Atkinson and Henri Bois.



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The Great Revival

Vancouver's New Dance is Setting the Pace

By Max Wyman

Anyone who has attended a Dance in Canada Association conference knows that some dreadful excesses can be perpetrated in the name of New Movement Art by individuals who have mistaken Narcissus for the driver of the bandwagon of the choreographic avant-garde.

Vancouver, however, has been spared

much of the eye-glazing worst — though it has also, by the same token, missed much of the best. After the ferment and activity that made Vancouver the most exciting dance city in the country in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Westcoast dance scene went into a lull. And despite the fact that five out of the six established companies in Vancouver are

devoted to various forms of modern dance, the movement toward independent and experimental choreography that developed in the major dance centres of central Canada in the middle and late 1970s was late reaching Canada's Pacific edge.

There are reasons for this.

Vancouver went through nothing like the dramatic social upheavals that hastened the emergence of the Quebec modernists; its choreographic community had no York University dance department to refresh it with a steady stream of new dance thought, no Ontario Arts Council to encourage wayward experiment, no 15 Dance Laboratorium to provide a showcase for

“... a haven of conservatism, immune to influence and unresponsive to change”

the product. By comparison with Toronto or Montreal, Vancouver, far from New York, away beyond the mountains, became a haven of conservatism, immune to influence and unresponsive to change.

I exaggerate. The city has always had quiet, unpublicised pockets of experimental activity, largely centred on the University of British Columbia and the Western Front, Vancouver's parallel gallery. Over the years they brought us people such as Yvonne Rainer, Deborah Hay and Steve Paxton, along with some of the Toronto modernists. And Iris Garland's classes at Simon Fraser University — visited by such U.S. dance luminaries as Phyllis Lamhut, Gladys Balin and Don Redlich — influenced a number of experimenters, notable among them the members of the protean Terminal City Dance Research, one of the city's Big Six and steadfast bearer of the banner of choreographic experiment since its launching in 1975.

But it is not until very recently that Vancouver has had a serious experimental-independent choreographic community to call its own. And it was not until a year ago that the city



Terry Hunter of Terminal City Dance Research in his *Drum House*.

Après la période fertile de la fin des années 60 et du début des années 70, la danse de la côte ouest s'est retranchée dans une phase relativement conservatrice. Contrairement au Québec, aucuns remous sociaux n'ont stimulé la créativité artistique de la Colombie-Britannique, et la province est restée isolée spirituellement et géographiquement par rapport aux importants changements innovateurs qu'a connu le centre du Canada. Un certain nombre de chorégraphes expérimentaux indépendants se sont récemment manifestés à Vancouver, et Terminal City Dance Research est au coeur de ce mouvement. Le rôle d'une artiste aussi active que Jennifer Mascall est également notoire. Les membres de ce groupe avant-gardiste travaillent dans des directions divergentes, mais leurs activités redonnent de la vitalité dans le monde de la danse à Vancouver.

managed to marshall interest to mount its choreographers series Front umbrella).

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be used to explore what it means to be human? In the past they have involved themselves in mutually-supportive investigations of specific areas — music, vocal sound, mask, ritual, energy sources, contact improvisation. More recently, they have been operating a

"The dance that is currently happening outside Vancouver's modern-dance mainstream is providing the city with some of its most exciting movement developments"

series of "performance exchanges", inviting other artists — poets, musicians, dancers — to interchange ideas. Despite its longevity, the ensemble has always had a built-in obsolescence. It was always meant to be what Karen Rimmer calls "an uncomfortable, jostling group", and its three core members show increasing signs of needing more and more time to go their separate ways, while maintaining their "extraordinarily helpful" mutual explorations within a fluid structure responsive to their changing interests and circumstances.

None of these dancer-choreographers has ever become locked into what might seem like comfortable routine. But what is interesting is that they all seem to be moving, in their very different ways, to forms of primal, reduced-to-essences movement theatre. Terry Hunter has become deeply interested in drum structures and the challenges of making dance and music simultaneously. Savannah Walling has been extensively involved with Toronto composer Phillip Werren on a dance-music-theatre work built on the Pandora myth. Karen Rimmer, for her part, has found the need to establish (under the TCDR

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managed to marshal enough activity and interest to mount its *first* independent choreographers series (under the Western Front umbrella).

The new experimental activity has sent a vigorous wave of creative freshness and imaginative force sweeping across the city. Vancouver dance hasn't been this stimulating and exciting, in fact, since the golden days of more than a decade ago, when today's modern-dance "establishment" was for the most part struggling to find its feet. It is a gladdening sight.

At the heart of it all, still, is the Terminal City group — down, these days, to a stalwart core of three, but committed, still, to the exploration of the questions that first brought them together: What is dance? How can dance be used to explore what it means to be human? In the past they have involved themselves in mutually-supportive investigations of specific areas — music, vocal sound, mask, ritual, energy sources, contact improvisation. More recently, they have been operating a

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umbrella) a small company of her own — and she is using it to evolve what promises to be a significant new form of movement expression.

Rimmer talks about expressing elemental concerns. She gets a sense, she says, of being a vehicle or a medium for "what needs to be known right now, or needs to be looked at". More and more, she says, she sees that, "the shaping of choreography comes out of something common to humanity — basic ways of finding meaning in things by shaping them in a certain way". The movement

she is making has this same sense of elementality. The most striking example to date is the solo from *Coming Out of Chaos* (seen at the DICA conference in Ottawa last year) — a driving, driven image giving visible form to the challenge, threat and achievement implicit in the realization of the human individual's potential. The most interesting of the works for her new company pursues this search for a clear, simple and direct manner of expressing abstract ideas in movement — and they synthesize (though not always in the

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programs at the Queen Elizabeth Playhouse for Festival Concert Society, or her full-evening, part-improvised "documentary dance", *All Flames Are Waiting to Kill All Moths*, at the TCDR headquarters).

"A small, almost incestuous community"

She gives us dance without stereotype. There are no boundaries in Mascall dance, and no categories. She doesn't make ballet, with its formal restrictions, nor does she make "classical" modern dance — she makes movement, of the widest-ranging kind. Improvisation interweaves with choreographic planning; she seems to become fascinated by particular aspects of movement — the bits of swanliness that Fokine never bothered with in her now-famous *Swank(colors)*; the problem of being inside an imaginary cube with a number of inflated balloons stuffed inside your costume — so what we tend to get is a series of miniatures, all entirely different, not even stylistically alike.

She isn't interested (it becomes clearer and clearer) in repeating herself from dance to dance (though she does seem to be building a repertoire of short pieces that have worked). She is far more interested, you feel, in testing herself and her body (and, indeed the limits of movement itself) by throwing herself up against a movement challenge and seeing what comes out of the collision, than she is in building any kind of conventional consistency, or even in displaying her command of technique in any safe or conventional way. The flipside of the usual is a continuing concern.

In performance, her own intensely focussed presence is an important factor:



Karen Rimmer in *Red Madonna*.

on other bodies, her dances become entirely different entities, though the fluid style, unconcerned with climax and pose, endures. Groups come together and disintegrate; lines materialize and dematerialize; people throw each other around (around themselves and around the stage); people stumble and fall, roll and swing, sway and turn; people walk and run and jump and trot and jerk and are still; relationships seem rarely to be created, even more rarely to be sustained. There is seldom any recognizable central focus to a group work; the tempo is often fast and frenetic; often, a distanced wit seems to be at play. Improvisation allows her a still wider range; in one such recent piece, Mascall became involved in movement of her own while Peter Ryan became engrossed in keeping afloat, by breath-power, one of those specks of dust that drift down from theatre flies from time to time and float lazily through the light-

beams.

The Vancouver independent-experimental dance community is small, almost incestuous. Ryan, for instance, is a founding member of the new EDAM (Experimental Dance and Music) Performing Arts Society, a new group that aims to provide an umbrella for individual experimenters, somewhat along the lines of Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise. Seven individuals (Mascall is one) are involved, though the group's core is made up of Peter Bingham, Peter Ryan and Jay Hirabayashi; Bingham and Ryan are experienced contact improvisers (part of the Vancouver-based Fulcrum group) and all three were athletes before they turned to dance. They plan to spend the summer working with other performers on investigations of athletic movement and its relationship to dance, attempting to invest dance — where athletic feats are conventionally most admired when

same dance) many of the investigations of the TCDR group over the years.

One dancer involved in an early TCDR exchange and in first-draft performances of *Coming Out of Chaos* was the ubiquitous Jennifer Mascall. She has made Vancouver a base for several seasons (though you'd be hard put to tell that from the amount of cross-Canada and international travelling she has been doing) and she has been involved, in one way or another, with most of the new-dance activity in Vancouver in the past 18 months. She has performed with other groups, and created a prolific number of works for staging under her own auspices, either alone (as in her recent series of seven solos as part of this year's Western Front independents series) or with ad hoc groups (as in two programs at the Queen Elizabeth Playhouse for Festival Concert Society, or her full-evening, part-improvised "documentary dance", *All Flames Are Waiting to Kill All Moths*, at the TCDR headquarters).

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Savannah Walling in *Pandora's Box*.

they seem effortless — with what they call “the element of risk, the all-out, go-for-broke effort with only a thin veneer of control that elicits excitement for the observer in the sports world”.

We were given a sampling of this at an EDAM presentation in March at the Western Front (frequent references to this institution are no accident — it hones the leading edge in all the arts). We've seen dance take its cue from sporting activities often before this, of course, and for many decades. The difference here is that the EDAM people don't want to caricature or imitate athletic achievements, but to generate in dance the aesthetic experience of watching, say, the brute force of two football players colliding, or the instinctive reflexes of the boxer.

On the evidence of the March performance, their investigations are

already bearing rich fruit. The evening carried a sense of explosive energy harnessed to a rich imaginative expressiveness. *Orbits*, a collaborative work by Ryan, Bingham and Hirabayashi, took contact improvisation into the realm of roller-derby collision, the participants slamming each other against walls as they ran and ran around the room; Barbara Bourget's *Curacao/Punchdrunk*, for herself and Hirabayashi, was the embodiment of all-out, go-for-broke risk as they leaped and rolled and dived and (Hirabayashi did, I swear) walked the walls. The evening was a rare reaffirmation of the emotional, non-intellectual excitement of the direct effect of unleashed raw movement (or the observation of it) on the instinctive centre of the human organism.

It is not possible, in limited space, to

give more than a small indication of the spread of current new-dance activity in Vancouver. The community, while small, is diverse, and considerably larger than I have so far indicated — significant contributors to its developments include contact-influenced Helen Clarke (whose *Oeufs: Fragiles* was part of this season's Western Front series); the Simon Fraser group (which has recently included Iris Garland, Santa Aloi, Karen Greenhough and Susan Osberg); established independents C. Lee and Janice LeBlond; and, somewhat distanced from the general group but in certain ways one of the most important precursors of the movement, the peripatetic Judith Marcuse (who has managed to move on to the stage of being an independent choreographer functioning as a one-person company).

The interests of this community, it is also clear, are diverse, and the lines these individuals pursue are often divergent. What is more than ever apparent, however, is that the dance that is currently happening outside Vancouver's modern-dance mainstream is providing the city with some of its most exciting movement developments.

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Learning to Live with your Body

How to Adjust to Natural Imperfections

By Victor Celeste

La technique du ballet classique commet des erreurs dans ses suppositions sur la nature du corps humain qui posent souvent des problèmes aux danseurs. Par exemple, en ballet, on suppose que le corps est symétrique, ce qui en réalité n'existe pas. Chaque danseur a une anatomie particulière et il ne peut faire qu'un certain nombre d'ajustements pour rapprocher son corps d'une forme idéale. Les différences dans la structure du corps d'un danseur lui donnent souvent des mouvements caractéristiques qu'il peut tourner à son avantage. Il ne sert à rien pour un danseur de faire des efforts pour corriger par exemple une plus grande tension d'un côté du corps. Il doit apprendre à danser avec le corps qu'il a.

It is obvious that Mother Nature has never read the US Bill of Rights, or, for that matter Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In physical terms all men, and all women, are *not* created equal. For instance, its not exactly equitable that one woman is given a body like Natalia Makarova's and another that of Ethel Merman. On the surface it might almost appear that nature is intentionally wicked. As it happens, she is just plain indifferent. It is Mother's capricious nature to be fascinated by variety and she seems to revel in creating the imperfect as well as the perfect.

As humans we differ on the inside as much as we do on the outside. Beyond the superficial similarities, each of us is as unique as snowflakes. Even so called

identical twins are not *identical* through and through. Careful examination of their x-rays will for example, reveal variations in bone architecture. This is the rule not the exception. These architectural variations explain why we often encounter dancers who outwardly look very much alike but who move differently. It is any wonder that the artistic director or ballet master of any large dance company finds it so difficult to assemble a corps that looks *and* moves as one?

Theoretically, a company of *clones* would be ideal. Each dancer would look and move like the next, with equal potential for learning and performing. Besides being incredibly boring, this would of course be impossible. Even clones would present differences in



Artists of the National Ballet striving for uniformity in the "Cygnets" variation from *Swan Lake*.

neurological programming, the result of having different teachers. Thankfully this is all hypothetical anyway. Although current research in genetic engineering is promising, there won't be any clones of the perfect dancer appearing in the near future.

Ballet technique exists independently of the dancer. It assumes your body is perfectly symmetrical, like split halves of an apple. However, we all differ structurally within ourselves from side to side and even the best placed dancer is asymmetrical.

If you find this hard to believe you can test it for yourself as follows. First, you can reveal asymmetry in your body structure with the help of two ordinary bathroom scales. You stand naturally with one foot on each scale and have a friend read off the weights. Surprised? They're not the same! Well, don't worry. It's not at all uncommon and just shows the unevenness of your weight distribution caused by an asymmetrical body structure.

Here's another easy test. Pretend you've been standing too long in a bus line-up. You're legs are tired so you slump out one of your hips and rest all your weight on one leg. Unwittingly, in most cases, you'll have chosen to take

the weight off your longer leg — the one that was bearing an unfair share of the load.

If you still need convincing, there's a third easy test you can try. Stand with one foot planted on a book which is an inch thick. Keep your knees locked and the other foot flat on the ground. Close your eyes and concentrate on what this stance actually feels like in your hips. Change feet and compare the feeling on the other hip. The experience will differ in each case. This simply demonstrates differences in leg length or in the mechanics of your sacro-iliac joints in the pelvis.

"Ballet technique assumes your body is perfectly symmetrical"

Variations in leg length, in the depth of your hip sockets and in the proportions of each side of the rib-cage — all are typical examples of asymmetry in the human body.

They can give you problems as a dancer in class when you try to close in fifth position, to achieve equal turnout from each hip, to bend over as far on one side as the other. It doesn't mean that because you have an asymmetrical body you can't work with ballet technique to build a good, functioning dancer's body.

If you start your training early, repeated exercises actually help mould bone structure. This happens deep in the skeleton where patterns of bone shape go beyond heredity to accommodate the uses we chose to put our body to. The vocabulary of ballet movement is therefore superimposed on your bones which gradually change in shape and size in response to unusual, repeated stress.

"Women have certain advantages over men"

But even in early training you still have to bear in mind the limits to change. When young and just a beginner it's acceptable to compensate for what seems to be unequal looseness on each side of the body by stretching exercises. If, however, you've been doing this for years without significant improvement stop trying to force it. You'll only injure the tight side by over-stretching the ligaments. What you have to do is bring your loose side into conformity with the tighter side. Accept a restricted range of movement. It's the loose side that gets injured most often because it is unstable and susceptible to strain.

Women have certain advantages over

men in terms of body looseness. Before puberty the pelvis in both sexes is of matching shape and size. After puberty, the female pelvis begins to flare. For the dancer this translates into better turnout (and wider hips). Some mature male dancers do seem to rival their female colleagues in hip flexibility but this is usually the result of super-loose ligaments and is not related to pelvic shape. Both sexes have to be aware of the fairly rapid changes that occur in body shape during puberty. They may temporarily throw you off balance but things will stabilize later.

One thing is certain, once you are a trained dancer you'll never be able to disguise the fact, even after death! Putting aside the unlikely thought that, following the example of the ancient pharaohs, you decide to be buried with a supply of point shoes, tutus and leotards, an expert examining your remains many years hence could tell your profession from skeletal clues.

The changes effected on the body by ballet training in particular can even be therapeutic to a point. Let's take the example of a physical condition that would seem to preclude dancing as a career — a curvature of the spine, which can vary in seriousness, called scoliosis.

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This condition is actually found in a surprising number of professional dancers.

Orthopedists will often recommend dance training to strengthen back muscles when the onset of this disease is discovered in adolescence. Ballet is particularly beneficial because of the emphasis on erect placement and alignment of the spine. The dancer works on elongating the spine and decreases the advancement and severity of the spinal curvature. The scoliotic dancer also learns how to hide what curvature remains by compensating body alignment to level uneven shoulders and hips. Ballet movements will also help to combat the loss of flexibility that comes with spinal curvature. The end result is that even though x-rays of the dancer will reveal an abnormal degree of spinal curve, this deformity remains difficult if not impossible to detect with the untrained naked eye.

"You don't just inherit a dancer's body, you create it"

It should be apparent by now that to equate good health and the ability to function well as a dancer with having a straight spine, is to ignore the biological facts. Even physical imperfections as potentially debilitating as scoliosis need not prevent you from realizing your potential as a dancer.

Now, of course, once your full potential has been realized you may still not be of prima ballerina calibre, even corps de ballet for that matter. There are many other qualities you must possess to create the professional dancer besides the ideal body type. Indeed, in every major dance company in the world can be found dancers with physical imperfections such as scoliosis, flat feet and hyper-extended knees. Fortunately

these same dancers possess enough of those other qualities that contribute to making a dancer and these outweigh the significance of any physical defects. So don't run home to slash your pointe shoes quite yet.

Having an imperfect or unique body type is not necessarily a disadvantage, and in many cases it represents a built-in advantage. For example, I know several great dancers who found the ensemble work of the corps to be sheer agony because they just didn't fit in. They never enjoyed looking "funny" and tried their best to hide their nonconforming quality of movement. They stood out in the corps, not because they were egomaniacs dancing and humming "I'll do it my way", but because on the contrary, they could do it no other way.

As living examples of the biological principle, "structure governs function", their unusual anatomy created unusual patterns of movement. Distinguished by these unique movement patterns, these are the dancers most often chosen to be soloists. One soloist I know shared her first rule of survival: "Never attempt to hide your physical weakness, just concentrate on showing your other strengths". For some strange reason, non-dancers call this, "putting your best foot forward".

You have to be aware of deficiencies without letting them inhibit you. Certainly never broadcast them or they will become a reality — like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

If you're short, don't allow yourself to be nicknamed "Shorty" or "Midget". And remember too, others are not necessarily as aware of your physical problems as you are. If, for example, you're fixated on the idea that you've got a great arch in the air but a very poor one on the floor, forget it. The audience can't see what it looks like on

the floor.

When you're still in the classroom, there's a common temptation to stand in front of the mirror and destroy yourself by picking fault with all the things you hate about your body. Bear in mind that on stage you've entered the business of creating the illusion of perfection and all kinds of other factors — costumes, lighting, the distance of the audience, your own artistic skill — take over.

"Never attempt to hide your physical weakness, just concentrate on showing off your strengths"

So, you don't just inherit a dancer's body, you create it. Ten years of training is about the time it takes to mould a young growing body into that unique structure instantly recognized as a dancer. If after that much time physical imperfections remain, or if you came to dance late in life, it helps to keep in mind that Anna Pavlova had poor turnout, Makarova has knock knees, and Nijinski was too short. However, what they all had or have in abundance is the clearly evident soul of a dancer, and that's what an audience responds to.

NB: My discussion regarding scoliosis and ballet is in no way meant to minimize the severity of that condition. This disease varies in intensity and can often be quite severe and debilitating. Also, I am in no way suggesting that ballet training is a cure for this disease, especially in its more severe forms. However, I have seen a number of professional dancers with substantial spinal curvatures and ballet training has helped to retain spinal flexibility and reduce poor posture. V.C.

Dr. Celeste is a practising chiropractor in Toronto. Material in this article is drawn from a book of his, in preparation, with Dr. David Drum.

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In Review

New Quebec Dance
Harbourfront
Toronto
January to April, 1983.

The promotional material for Harbourfront's New Quebec Dance series promised an explosion of New Wave dance. What we got was, in a way, more interesting, work by six (I only saw five of them) different choreographers, those whom I saw all on their way to doing truly original work — but not yet set in their styles or statements.

We saw the most about them in their least sure moments — their vulnerability and willingness to try something without knowing how it will go. The work was revealing because it is still progressing and developing, trying some ideas that we've already seen and others that were surprisingly fresh and new.

The series opened with the work of Daniel Léviellé. His *The Rite of Spring* weighed itself down with the famous Stravinsky score. It was not unlike an image Paul-André Fortier uses in his choreography: a heavy boulder tied to the dancers heads. The piece had a New Wave look to it, as four androgenous dancers in long black gloves moved, each very much alone, through the angst of waiting for the end of the world. Sometimes the poses contrasted or heightened the music. More often the music dragged the whole piece slowly along. In his *Jeu* two men engaged in a game of one-upmanship that culminated in both stripping naked. Before anything could happen, the piece ended.

Finally, *But, I Love You* was a duet in which Ginette Laurin and William James danced, talked and sang their way through lover's spats and



Paul-André Fortier (foreground) with his company in *Pow!*

reunions. They had us right with them as she babbled in Italian or he hesitated on the phone, but lost us with the over-repeated movement.

Jo Lechay is one of those choreographers whose personal movement qualities are hard to pass on to dancers: not that her seven energetic dancers aren't interesting to watch: they're athletic and each very much an individual on stage. Lechay shows us a master at work.

Ice, a piece Lechay has been working on and adding to since 1974, is inspired by photographs of athletes in action. The dancers all have their moments. Their easy presence and uncomplicated focus on the activity of dancing lets their varied personalities, like their different body types, show. These dancers have learned the attack of contact improvisation and the tension of the frozen moments made us hold our breath. They all kicked up their heels in a folk dance. Lechay and Michel Kodin tumbled through a contact-like duet. The men

and women were equal in strength and vigor.

For Now is an odd, new Lechay piece in which the choreographer explores decadence and contemporary despair. The natural style and simple presence that are the company's strong points don't fit in here. Under stark lights the dancers grope and writhe in revealing but awkward evening dresses while Lechay herself dances a detached solo. The pessimistic tone of the work contrasted sharply against the strong physicality and exuberance of the evening's other work.

It was Lechay's solos that made the evening. In one, she played with gravity as she slowly raised herself from a prone position. In *Trois Sur Une* her unique shapes and rhythms worked in and around Quebec folk songs. At the beginning of *Freefall* a ripple of tension ran through the audience as Lechay entered, naked, and began dancing in silence. Her presence was calm and assured, her face quietly reflecting the moods that passed through her. Her

sureness soon won over the crowd. She was not holding back and neither could they.

Marie Chouinard's *Marie Chien Noir* was a solo performance piece, not simply dance. Its range of possible activities was therefore much broader. Chouinard explored a whole iconography of simple images, deftly layered upon each other. The piece was about being human, about our relationship to nature and to the wild side of our own personalities.

The piece was built around contrasts. The first image we saw was a skeleton in an eerie red light and Chouinard in a yellow one, washing herself in a tub. We heard the water and watched the light play on it. Sometimes she looked like a Degas drawing, then she was an animal, a bird opening its throat, guzzling down her own hand. She sang a song and masturbated. Suddenly, she plunged her long hair into the water-tub, pulling it out and letting a waterfall splash into the tub before she dunked her head again. She slapped the wet hair against the floor to dry it.

Chouinard carried out these tasks with a matter-of-factness that I wanted to see broken down. She pulled a deranged face — eyes crossed and tongue out. Would her face get stuck? It never did. She is a shaman, exorcizing her devils before us, but maintaining a degree of distance always. The boundaries of her performance were so broad (she could choose to tie in any activity) that I felt she didn't ever challenge herself enough within them. I wanted her to do something really difficult, a taxing dance or a song she had to belt out, to see her vulnerability uncontrolled. Instead, she donned a giant black dog mask with flashing red eyes and took the piece

onto another level in a mysterious, aggressive dance of gestures and military marches.

Chouinard constantly kept us surprised with her ability to completely transform herself and the space. Wearing a swimcap and black trunks, she greased herself down like a swimmer preparing to cross the English Channel. Then, pouring oil on the floor, she slid across it. Her body twisted and turned in the red and blue blinking light. She looked like an embryo.

The raw setting of the piece, and constant return to simple tasks made us watch it and feel it in a new way. Chouinard's assured resolve, as the images poured out of her, taught us how to watch her.

Paul-André Fortier's *Lavabos*, which opened his concert, was dance commenting on itself. An odd, balding man with a paunch, an aging Buddy Holly, entered from the side door. He was as surprised to see us as he was to see the four dancers — cold, detached, dressed in 50's underwear — who entered and began splashing themselves awake at oversized sinks. He was drawn into their games with a perverse curiosity about their detached manner and physicality. His outsider's perspective always let us, too, see the dancers differently, and laugh at the abstractness of their focus and the emptiness of their implied relationships. This clown, played by Fortier himself, shed revealing light on the piece.

Creation brought out the androgenous qualities of its four dancers. Two men and two women all dressed in low cut, empire line dresses with black tape over their exposed nipples, moved through conception, labour and delivery, giving birth to rocks. Fortier's dancers executed his choreography forcefully. *Fin* was a similar piece in both its



Michel Lemieux and Edouard Lock (right) in *Businessman in the Process of Becoming an Angel*.

choice of movement and its use of rocks. Now the rocks seemed to be symbolic of the performers' brains, tied to their heads. Their beautiful leaps, trying to free themselves, made the prop's restriction a kind of liberation.

Fortier's newest Toronto offering, *Non Coupable* was a solo for the guest artist Susan Macpherson. The rocks reappeared, Macpherson mothering and nursing them, but the tone of the piece was of much greater intensity than the others. She seemed completely exposed before us, each movement deeply felt.

Finally, *Pow! . . .* was full of visual humor. A group of runners equipped with Walkmans were getting fit but becoming more and more alienated from each other. Randomly they gunned each other down, "Pow!", then got up and kept running. Inspired solos popped up throughout the piece. The exhausting running went on too long.

Fortier clearly has his own strongly developed vocabulary but his concert at Harbourfront tried to cover too much and ended up repeating itself. The strongest work was the detached, ironic *Lavabos* and the completely

involved solo for Susan Macpherson.

The dancing in Edouard Lock's *Businessman in the Process of Becoming of Angel* was loose and flowing on the outside and controlled from the centre, lending it a casual, improvised look. The choreographed contact-like lifts and weight shifts lent an athletic tone and let the girls show their strength. The repeated ballroom dance moves, dips and sways, were smooth and the dancers looked as if they were having a good time.

Around this, Michel Lemieux and unoccupied dancers were singing and playing a string of original songs on synthesizers and accordians. The set, with its 45 wooden dogs, was added to and re-arranged.

The duets, trios and quartets had less to do with businessmen than with human relationships — triangles that won't work and couples getting together. The dancers were varied — a girlish, quick mover, small and close to her centre, a more glamorous but punky blond with long limbs, and a Roger Dawltry type working on Fred Astaire imitations. They tumbled over each other and jumped

around themselves in back attitude. Their dancing was breezy and spiced with ballroom and salsa affectations.

Meanwhile the decor was changing from pink and pale blue to red and bright blue. Sometimes Lock joined in the dancing, but more often he directed things from the side, changing the decor or singing into the microphone. He became distracting. There was suddenly too much going on: too many songs. The endless combinations of twos and threes weren't enough to keep our attention. The piece had its bright moments but left us, in the end, lost.

The company I was unavoidably forced to miss was Dianne Carrière and Ninoska Gomez' group, Amarelle. Reliable friends described the two's work as heavily oriented towards humour — although they did not find it all funny!

The New Quebec Dance series showed more about its choreographers than it meant to. We saw their strengths and weaknesses exposed and weighed. We also saw, in flashes, the living, breathing people behind the dancing.

MARY REID

Choreographer's Showcase
 Rebecca Cohn Auditorium
 Dalhousie Arts Centre
 Halifax
 8-9 April, 1983.

Last year's Choreographers' Showcase was a sell-out with 300 people turned away from the door of Halifax's largest concert hall, the 1,041-seat Rebecca Cohn Auditorium. This year, driving rains the opening night, and a publicity campaign that never got off the ground, resulted in disappointingly smaller audiences: 500 the first night, 500 the next.

The evening of premiers offered the promise of recognition to professional independent choreographers living and working in the Halifax area. The Showcase, presented by Dalhousie Cultural Activities, and financially backed by the Nova Scotia Department of Culture, Recreation and Fitness, the Canada Council, Dance Nova Scotia, and private donors, was warmly received by its audiences.

It was a handsomely produced show with actor-director David Renton fulfilling the role of artistic director. He managed to wrest pace and unity from the work of nine choreographers whose styles spanned classical ballet, jazz, mime, and modern.

The Showcase, and other dance performances I have seen in Halifax, all have a wholesome ambience about them. Even the worst human relationships, and the most frightening world conditions, are presented in a humane, optimistic framework rather than a bitter one. Is it the



Louise Hoyt, Beth Windeler, Gwen Noah and Sheila Hunt in Jeanne Robinson's *Hey Rhythm*.

friendly feel of a small city like Halifax, the lack of big city, cut-throat competition and paranoia, that accounts for the relatively cheery subject matter?

Jeanne Robinson's, *Hey Rhythm*, is part of the historical evolution of modern dance which includes big-city styled suffering, but chooses

to cut through it to something else. In this dance, Robinson continues her exploration of the mundane and the spiritual and the perceptual bridge between them. Eight women pound out rhythms with their feet as the piece unfolds through primitive and ritualistic forms. Sometimes the dancers' arms are angled

overhead in a way which reminds one of North American Indian dances. *Hey Rhythm* is intelligently and lucidly crafted. It is beautiful to watch it change texture as the percussive, angular movements shift smoothly into lyric leaps, and the dancers rush toward and through each other like streams of water. It was almost transporting — the way the rhythms and repetitions in a Laura Dean piece are. Maybe what held the piece back was that while the gull-like throaty wails of Meredith Monk's music, *Travelling*, were building, the dynamics of *Hey Rhythm* remained the same.

The dance ended suddenly as the dancers grouped downstage centre, their arms out-stretched under a single spotlight. This dramatic grouping, (similar to a famous moment in Alvin Ailey's *Revelations* and repeated in other dances one has seen), sprang unaccountably onto the dance rather than developing from it in a way which renewed its impact. It thus failed to become the human choir of hope one assumes the choreographer intended.

When the curtain went down on Angela Holt's *Coherent Projections*, I heard the person sitting next to me exclaim, "Brilliant". The setting is a darkened museum. On the "cyc" a color slide of Edvard Munch's, *The Scream*, quickly fades and we notice a statue-like dancer standing next to a sculpture. Both are covered in a clear plastic shroud. A museum guard announces, "It's late", and he



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directs a red laser beam to Holt's chest. It looks like an exposed heart. Holt rushes from under her covering, and in a sophisticated solo (employing fast direction and balance changes, and rapid isolations) presents a frustrating and futile attempt to escape. At one point the guard directs the laser into her mouth. It opens like a cavern of flames. Eventually Holt realizes she is not at the mercy of the beam, which the program tells us represents technology. She dances for joy and the guard says, "I didn't think it would end like this". The work is deeply felt and vividly realized. Even so, the slick, hard-edged set, expressionistic slide, casually theatrical guide, and solo offered an uneasy mixture of aesthetics and expectations. The man versus technology theme was, perhaps, at times too literally interpreted.

Though its scope was narrower than *Hey Rhythm's*, or *Coherent Projections'*,

Diane Moore's *Squad* was flawlessly realized. Occasionally poking fun at authoritarian relationships, Moore's dancers displayed a most charming male athletic exuberance. Tight craftsmanship, precise comic timing, wit, and surprise resulted in a small, entertaining gem.

For the rest, Sherry Lee Hunter's, *Moon*, was a finely crafted mime piece. Francine Boucher's comic romp with balloons was a good idea which needed a lot more invention to flesh it out. Penny Evan's *Images* used familiar jazz vocabulary to familiar jazz music, and the audience enjoyed its accessible pizzazz. Pat Richards' *Labyrinths* was competently crafted.

The choreographers here are earnestly exploring their talents and the audiences are eager and receptive. Halifax has become fertile dance ground.

ALICE FROST



Olesia Cyncar (left) and Lynn Sheppard of Les Ballets Jazz in Daryl Gray's *Jailhouse Jam*.

Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal
Place des Arts
Montreal
12-16 April, 1983.

Les Ballets Jazz' 10th anniversary gala provided an eloquent answer to the vexing, often-asked and purely semantic question: is jazz dancing merely light-weight fun or a valid form of contemporary dance art? Owing to jazz' generic link to musical theatre, the dimension of entertainment is important, but that does not exclude it from also being art.

Despite the company's chronic financial problems Les Ballets Jazz does not allow austerity to obtrude onto the stage. With a generous emphasis on the traditional interplay of light, colour, music and movement, its work offers a flamboyant, satisfying theatrical spectacle. Choreographically, the repertoire's scope extends from pure, unburdened dance, via abstract imagery, toward self-contained narrative.

Judith Marcuse's *Hors d'oeuvre* is just what its title suggests — an exquisite opening chord that establishes

a tone for the jazz-imbued atmosphere of the whole evening. Set to James Johnson's music, the movement stems directly from the score's basic rhythmic impulses. The almost literal correlation between music and choreography might become overly obvious in a larger work, but looks trim and appropriate in this succinct miniature — too compact for any kinetic procrastination.

Marcuse's *On Castle Rock* is more complex. The colour contrasts between its three parts mark the flow of passing time, from the shimmering pastels of daybreak to the intense blues of the night. The salmon pink of the costumes, deep-hued lighting and the overall contemplative quality of the piece suggest a kind of pan-Oriental atmosphere whose outward serenity is thwarted by explosive structural tensions.

Although, in a strictly programmatic sense, *Castle Rock* seems devoid of narrative content, the formal organization of the work is such that there is always an illusion to conflict between a

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group and a solitary figure. *Castle Rock* has five dancers — all women. The choice of an odd number of performers seems deliberate since it gives Marcuse an opportunity to experiment with the work's structural patterning, in search of architectonic balance. The interrelation between the beings on stage is, by design, realized in aesthetic, rather than existential terms.

In terms of dynamics *On Castle Rock* offers an expressive juxtaposition of purely balletic cantilena phrasing and strong staccato jazz — an excellent chance for the company to demonstrate its technical and stylistic versatility.

Another premiere on Les Ballets Jazz' birthday program — *La Faim*, by the company-trained Benoit Lachambre — was not ready for the first night and, because of an injury to one of the dancers, had to be considerably restructured for later performances. It clearly needs additional work, but has a promise of becoming one more strong entry in Les Ballets Jazz' repertoire — something to be expected of the creator of *J'Freak Assez* (1981), a frenetic, wildly-paced extravaganza that sent waves of utterly unexplained and, no doubt, very personal, but contagious, energy through the mesmerized audience.

Daryl Gray's *La Machine*, was a welcome revival whose well-tuned and oiled parts produced a firework display of non-stop motion. Some of Gray's acrobatic routines almost look (contact) improvisational. The piece is

full of rich, thematically imaginative choreographic action and works absolutely without a hitch.

The highlight of Les Ballets Jazz' Place des Arts celebration was the uplifting finale of Gray's new work *Jailhouse Jam*, to a commissioned Oscar Peterson score. Originally titled *City Lights*, the music, in Gray's treatment, has undergone a total thematic revamping. Ironically, all of the elements characterizing the freedom and anonymity to be found in a big city — despair and joy, loneliness and hope — found their perfectly logical way into Gray's *Jailhouse*.

The decor is simple, yet functional and effective: several mobile iron-bar panels that are shifted around the stage becoming integral parts of the choreography. Both the title of the piece and some of the decorative ideas seem inspired by Elvis Presley's *Jailhouse Rock*, yet Gray's *Jam* is an original and wittily articulated story, complete with a central intrigue and subplots, major characters and memorable minor dramatic presences.

A masterly blend of sleek, chorus-line numbers and evocative individual characterization, *Jailhouse Jam* is bound to become another company blockbuster. Although hardly a definitive turning point in Les Ballets Jazz choreographic evolution, it is, nonetheless, a confident step on its way towards producing a full-length jazz work.

BORIS NADAN

National Ballet of Canada
O'Keefe Centre
Toronto
9-27 February, 1983.

With three new ballets and a dozen or so debuts by its dancers in both major and minor roles, the National Ballet was certainly dancing at full stretch during its Toronto spring season.

Hedda, loosely based on Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's 1890 melodrama *Hedda Gabler*, is the latest of James Kudelka's ballets to probe the female psyche. In previous works, *Washington Square* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, the woman under choreographic scrutiny was young and innocent. Catherine and Lucrece were glosses on Odette, and things happened to them. Catherine got jilted by her lover, and Lucrece was sexually assaulted. This time, however, the woman, danced by the forceful Gizella Witkowsky, is a dangerous mixture of cruelty, ambition, and self-deceit — our Odette.

At odds with her barren surroundings and her conception of herself — "a

fine lady; she's beautiful", intone the taped voices — Hedda yearns for approval, yet also longs to smash the chains of convention that restrict her. She cannot decide whether to be free or to submit. Hedda's tragedy is that she probably wants both. Not only does she torment the harmless Thea — the Catherine figure in the ballet — Hedda deceives her worthy, if self-effacing, husband, destroys her idealized lover, and, in a final act of freedom or desperation, blows her own head off.

This last moment is strikingly staged. Hedda comes downstage and looks out. Then she cups her face with her hands. Her right hand becomes a gun, which she brings to her temple. There is no sound, but Hedda's feet turn in sharply and she falls slowly to the floor. Hedda arches her back and then is still, her mortal conflict resolved.

Kudelka has a talent for such vivid images. *Washington Square's* Catherine screamed, rather like Lady Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet* — a deep

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concentration towards the audience; then blackout. What Kudelka additionally displays in *Hedda* is a greater interest in the use of the upper body. The staccato quality of his earlier choreography has diminished, and with it, strangely enough, has come brevity.

Hedda runs a mere 25 minutes. It ignores many of the nuances of Ibsen's play, and at first viewing does not reveal all the complexities of the characters. But Witkowsky carries it grandly, and the ballet is, on repeated viewings, an effective theatre-piece that will probably look better on stages smaller than that of Toronto's O'Keefe Centre where it was doomed to receive its first performances.

Norma Beecroft has written an effective and theatrical score for *Hedda* that identifies the various characters either with an electronic tape or with standard instruments. The flutterings of the flute, for example, accompany the dances for Thea, ("the one with the irritating hair", as a program note reminds us). Both Veronica Tennant and Cynthia Lucas established Thea's ineffectualness, though Lucas with her pale complexion was better suited to Thea's diaphanous mauve-grey costume. The good and reliable Jacques Gorrissen danced Tesman, (as did Albert Forister at one performance), Hazaros Surmeyan was an earthy Lövborg and Charles Kirby the ambivalent Brack. But the commanding performance, as it should be, was Witkowsky's. Surely she has earned a crack at *Odette*.

Jack King's costumes for *Hedda* are simple, suggesting clothes of the Victorian era. There is no big, cumbersome set as there was for *Washington Square*; only two backdrops modelled on lithographs by Edvard Munch.

The second new ballet, *Canciones*, by Constantin

Patsalas, is a suite of dances for two couples, set to contemporary Spanish songs. Veronica Tennant danced with Kevin Pugh and Sabina Allemann with David Nixon. The setting is bare: a piano and four chairs. It might be a provincial café after all the customers have left. Just a few dancers, a singer (Janice Taylor), and a pianist (Gary Arbour) stay behind. At first there is no dancing. Patsalas often opens his ballets with a long musical introduction. Here the dancers are seated, listening to the music. One by one they respond, at first in small movements at their chairs. During the first song the dancers move to the centre of the stage. The dance becomes a double pas de deux; most of the songs accompany duets.

In *Nataraja* and *The Rite of Spring* Patsalas was after a mass effect. In *Canciones*, the dances are more varied in mood, gentle, passionate, seductive, and humorous. For greater intimacy, and for more impact on his audience, Patsalas has tried to exploit the emotional content of the pas de deux.

One responds to *Canciones* slowly. Too many of the details are annoying. The women's dresses, designed by the choreographer, are startling shades of red, and the material looks cheap and synthetic. The sounds of both singer and pianist were badly amplified and Taylor's enunciation was imprecise. So, relaxing into *Canciones* can be difficult.

For a long time nothing much happens. The

choreography, especially that for the men, is conventional classical or conventional Spanish. There is no sense of energy. But in the fifth song, the ballet comes to life in a vivid and dramatic solo for Tennant, filled with flashing footwork and rapid arm movements. Nixon suddenly looks more alert and Allemann becomes attractive and witty. In the seventh song Tennant and Pugh relax to a lullaby, then go on to an exhilarating foot-stomping contest in the ninth song. Just as *Canciones* begins to make an impact, it is over, and one is left feeling dissatisfied.

Quartet, Michael Peters' homage to Karen Kain, is supposed to be sexy. Kain wears pink tights, and her three escorts — Peter Ottmann, Serge Lavoie, and Anthony Randazzo — wear blue ones. A scrim, in place when the dancing starts, persuades the audience that it is watching a peep show. The lights are dim, and the three men are grouped suggestively around Kain. Just in case the audience needs another nudge, the music, by Claus Ogerman, is heavily rhythmical and the lights flash on and off a lot like neon signs: the audience howled with delight!

Michael Peters was co-choreographer of the Broadway smash *Dreamgirls* and *Quartet* is very much a Broadway show. The choreography mixes classical bits with modern stuff, and because it is so simple-minded, *Quartet* is easy to watch. So are the dancers. Peter Ottmann has never looked more in command, and his two junior colleagues are impressive too — strong, relaxed, and well rehearsed. They seemed to enjoy the force of their solos and the complex lifts. All in all, bravura performances.

Presumably *Quartet* was intended to show off Karen Kain. She has some fabulous bourées and runs around the stage a lot, but she looks bulky in her pink tights, not



Gizella Witkowsky in the title role of James Kudelka's *Hedda*. Veronica Tennant (right) portrays Thea.

sleak and seductive. As well, she appeared slightly embarrassed about all the heaving and the jiggling, but went along with it because *Quartet* makes the guys look so good. Besides, Kain knows, even if Michael Peters does not, that she looks better — more human and more sexy — in *Swan Lake* or *The Sleeping Beauty*, so she can step aside and let the men be fancy free. Or perhaps she realizes what *Quartet* is all about — dancercise.

If James Kudelka is feeling his way to something other than narrative ballet, and Constantin Patsalas is reaching for an intimacy with his audience, Michael Peters has no doubts about what dance is. It's showbiz. A lunge here, double time there, a pelvic thrust somewhere else — these grab an audience. The O'Keefe crowd responded with wolf whistles and bravos because it thought it was seeing sexy dance; not only that, but easy, undemanding dance. The problem, however, is deeper. *Quartet* is for people who go to ballet but don't really like it. Because it panders, *Quartet* is offensive.

Surrounding these new works were some standards: *The Dream*, *Giselle*, and *Coppélia*. This last was remarkable for a Dr. Coppelius from Jacques Gorrisen so human that Franz and Swanilda looked like selfish punkers. *The Dream* was memorable for the debuts of Kevin Pugh and Yoko Ichino as Oberon and Titania. But the performance to treasure was Evelyn Hart's *Giselle*. With their guest from the Royal Winnipeg, the company, led by Frank Augustyn, rose to a level of artistry it too seldom achieves.

LAWRENCE HASKETT



Claudia Moore in her Pavlychenko Studio work, *Steal Threads*.

Pavlychenko Studio
Harbourfront
Toronto
24-26 February, 1983.

Toronto's Pavlychenko Studio, under artistic director Kathryn Brown, is a favourite place for the city's professional modern dancers and independent choreographers to maintain their training. Last year the studio mounted a marathon of 10 new works over two days utilizing the human resources at its disposal. This year's "Brake Up" took the form of a cabaret performance with the Brigantine Room at Harbourfront, Toronto's waterside culture and recreation complex, transformed into a nightclub.

Punctuating the program's main works were "The Girls", three dancers cutely called by their first names and dressed as Las Vegas chorines, who

performed brief satires on conventional dance forms choreographed by Lawrence Adams to music arranged in tongue-in-cheek fashion by Miguel Frascioni. The idea, one suspects, was to juxtapose what the uninitiated think of as dance with the more esoteric contemporary pieces on the program. Although "The Girls" and their forays into tap, ballet and so forth were amusing, unfortunately, the relaxed cabaret atmosphere was not the best context in which to present the more serious works. The promise of cabaret may have seduced larger than normal crowds who, for the most part, were attentive. However, the casual surroundings actually had the effect of distancing the audience from the dances. Cabarets do not lend themselves to serious concentration.

For example, Kathryn

Brown's *Just Because I Am A Woman?* would have been better served in a theatre free of environmental distractions. Subtitled "a collage of emotional moments", this intensely personal statement, danced by Brown herself, showed the four sides of a woman's personality which ultimately affect her relationship with the man in her life (René Highway). Each of the couple's duets becomes subtly different, changed because of what we have just learned about the woman herself as danced by the four personae. The personae also counterpoint each other. Thus a trio comprised of "Heathen Women" (Elaine Bowman and Susan Cash) makes a delightful statement on the contradictions in the woman's personality. The girl in love with love (Nancy Kishita) weaves in and out of the other two, reduced to their basic animal instincts. The cast also included Alison Windecker and Susan McNaughton as "The Wounded Young Girl" and "The Vain Insecure Lady" respectively.

Although Brown sometimes had difficulty in moulding all the threads together, nonetheless it was an ambitious piece and her sure grasp of the particulars, especially her rendering of each distinctive personality trait, made up for any fault in the whole. This work, the most noteworthy on the program, was further enhanced by the dancing of Brown and Highway and served to remind the audience just how beautiful movement rooted in strong technique can be.

The remaining four works provided the broad mix that one usually finds in experimental dance programs.

The theatrical aspects of Claudia Moore's *Steal Threads* showed the influence of the choreographer's long professional association with her offstage husband Robert Desrosiers. The first part, comprised of Moore's angst-

filled walking back and forth, finally culminated in the theft of jewellery from a casket at the front of the stage. This was followed by Albert Gedraitis' recitation of his poem about the dangers of petty theft, with the moral reminder that large thefts happen on Bay Street every day. The last part had Moore as a strange creature emerging from the black backdrop which opened up into a fairyland of glowing balloons and twinkling lights, a dream world, one gathers, which symbolizes her desire for the jewellery, her nirvana of rich and plenty. If the work was more drama than dance, it was, nonetheless, an interesting experiment in expressing a message with movement.

Holly Small's *The Something Likes III* was a reworking of an earlier piece for solo dancer and musical accompaniment. As performed at a Danceworks presentation last year, the whimsical dialogue between dancer (Small) and musician (Miguel Frascioni) was a charming interplay of movement and sound. Frascioni is ingenious in finding ways of playing a piano and percussion instruments and, with a single dancer, one could concentrate on the relationship between the movement and the music. For four dancers, however, the focus became muddled. The work turned into a group of unrelated and not terribly

interesting solos, burying the effect of the music altogether — a classic example of more not being necessarily better.

The remaining works dealt with fairly common themes. *A Kind of Killing* by Elaine Bowman offered the choreographer and Susan Cash impersonating two insects, one ultimately killing and devouring the other. Touched with humour, this piece also had some wonderful images capturing the world of nature.

Urban Out was Susan Cash's statement about self-centred city life. Five dancers moved to different pieces of music (on Walkmans) which dictated their distinctive movements and rhythms. Although the audience was told on the program what motivated the dancers, what was heard was a frenetic collage of street noises to which the dancers, immersed in their own headsets, were oblivious. Clever contrast was also provided by Nancy Kishita dressed as a drum major who acted as a parade marshal to the uncaring individuals around her. Yet, even though both dances contained points of interest, they could not escape the derivativeness of their subjects.

PAULA CITRON

Theatre Ballet of Canada
National Arts Centre
Ottawa
12-13 April, 1983.

Theatre Ballet of Canada came into existence just over three years ago as the result of the amalgamation in Ottawa of Toronto's Ballet Ys and Montreal's Entre-Six dance companies. TBC is not therefore, in the strictest sense, a company without a history.

Lawrence Gradus, Theatre Ballet's artistic director, was already an experienced choreographer when he carried some of Entre-Six' artistic remnants to Ottawa. In addition — at least, according to the barrage of hype aimed at the media when TBC was formed — the new company was to enjoy all the administrative acumen of the defunct Ballet Ys!

Theatre Ballet has been quite generously funded, has a determined army of Ottawa volunteer ladies to promote its activities and has benefitted from Celia Franca's association as a member of the board of directors and as an artistic resource.

It surely then would not be overly presumptuous to expect to find TBC in its final hometown performances of the 1982/83 season looking like the well-trained, self-assured and artistically accomplished ensemble that its well-oiled publicity machine would persuade us to believe it is.

Perhaps TBC's closing night before a small 250-member audience in Ottawa's NAC Theatre was just one of those "off" evenings. Whatever the explanation, the company certainly did not live up to its billing.

Three new pieces were presented, opening with Gradus's *Side By Side*, set to excerpts from Mozart's *Symphony No. 29 in A Major* and *Divertimento No. 7 in D major*. A quotation serves as the work's only thematic explanation: "So light am I the clouds are trampolines to bounce upon". The backdrop had lovely billowing clouds on it as an added visual reminder.

Composed of short segments featuring couples executing light and fluttering steps, *Side By Side* never really made a point. It left a feeling that the observer missed out on some essential fragment or thought. Repeated skips and promenades conveyed no meaning and the initial hint of floating softness became weighted down by this repetitive structure.

Carolyn McCready danced with an easy animation but she was partnered by an ineffectual Zdzislaw Zielinski. His face maintained a somewhat forced smile and there was very little expression in his movement. To be fair, Zielinski is one of TBC's newest members, joining in November, 1982, and he may not yet have acquired the

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rhythmic pulse that Gradus tries to bring out of his dancers.

Zielinski and Roderick Johnson resembled medieval court jesters in their sequined outfits, (complete with tiny pom-poms), and this only exacerbated the overall disjointedness of Gradus's blend of modern dance and ballet.

Scenes and Dances represents Margery Lambert's first choreographic effort and it was a positive one. Lambert's theatrical tastes appear to be dramatic, using sharp imagery to highlight the emotional intensity of the characters. Deborah Washington portrays a young girl, abused by cruel parents, attempting to sort out her own confused feelings, away from a troubled homelife. Dramatically, *Scenes and Dances* is always interesting but was technically unchallenging.

Lambert's choreographic

debut displayed her keen sense of how to capture and hold an audience, combined with insight into character development but suffered choreographically because of its undemanding movement.

Although the company's dancers proved they could live up to the "theatre" in Theatre Ballet, a curiously chosen revival of Antony Tudor's *Fandango* (new to TBC, of course) indicated there is much room for improvement technically. This dance for five women was lackluster in energy and the dancers timing was amiss. Padre Antonio Soper's music has a Spanish flavour to it but the flamboyant, fiery choreography was never convincing despite the elegant Spanish jackets and headwear the women wore to evoke the spirit Tudor wanted. Pointe shoes emphatically tapped on the ground made only dull thuds, and five sets of fingers snapping were only slightly

audible above the music.

Fandango is filled with exhausting footwork and it soon became too much for the dancers whose fatigue became evident in a slower, cautious approach to the choreography forcing out any signs of vigor and replacing it with concentration.

Tribute, created for Theatre Ballet's 1981 NAC debut, remains a vital part of the company's repertoire, a tribute to movement and music, set to a Bach concerto for violin, oboe and strings.

The rich golden hues of the costumes add warmth to the piece and the dancers were obviously more comfortable with a familiar composition. This, however, does not say much for the progress of Theatre Ballet during the past two years.

All the wonderful fast-paced leaps and skips were there amid the complex pattern of the choreography, but the mood projected by the

company was more one of relief than of celebration. Consequently, what should have appeared as sweeping movement, mixed with acrobatic playfulness, became a hurried effort to complete the evening's performance. The clean, fluid lines and the soft circling imagery stood out all too briefly before the blur that comprised the allegro section.

Theatre Ballet still has its faults to contend with and will have to probe deeper to find that uniformity and texture which has been developing but which needs to be displayed more consistently.

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Toronto Dance Theatre
Studio Theatre and
St. Lawrence Centre
Toronto
February and March, 1983.

While watching the Toronto Dance Theatre's 12 very fine dancers during the company's spring season, I could not rid myself of a nagging image: a vision of shipboard tourists blithely playing shuffleboard in the sunlight while below, unheard and unseen, a tired and grimy crew plugs leak after leak, sees to faltering engines, and generally battles desperately to prevent the ship from sinking. Of course, the passengers know of the terrors lurking below their feet. But panic will do them no good. Artfully — and despite energetic reminders emanating from the press, watching from the safety of shore — they feign ignorance.

Besides, they've grown accustomed to it. Turbulent waters have become a normal state of affairs at TDT. In the last few years, the players above deck and below have survived cutbacks and layoffs in attempts to jettison a much-publicized financial deficit.

Heads are a little further above waterline these days

and, early this year came word of dramatic developments on the bridge, a change of command.

Patricia Beatty, Peter Randazzo, and David Earle, the artistic directors and founders of the 15-year-old company, declared that they had had enough of strapping themselves to the helm in troubled seas. The logbook showed in no uncertain terms that topnotch choreographers do not necessarily administrative wonders make. The triumvirate was wearied by the burden of their own administrative clumsiness, and by a no-win balancing act of colliding duties. In March they made it known that they would relinquish their roles as artistic directors.

'Profiles of Dance', which ran from February 16 to March 5, was a firm and obvious statement to that effect. Each artistic director gave a week of his/her works, past and present. The three opening nights echoed like distinctive shouts in the wilderness to reclaim singular artistic identities thought lost in the soup of the mixed program format. To see the spring season was to be reintroduced to old acquaintances I had always



Patricia Beatty in her *Lessons in Another Language*.

thought I had known much more intimately.

At the same time this greater intimacy runs risks. One-man choreographic shows expose private obsessions in all their badgering glory. A novel way of moving in one piece is viewed as a one-note song by program end. Inner demons take on the concrete dimensions of crutches and limitations and actively begin harassing the spectator.

Beatty and Randazzo, in baring all to us, often speak harshly about the lot of man in garbled phrases and unfinished explanations, which is as clear an indication as any of the inner being in turmoil.

If David Earle emerged as the superior, it isn't because he's a better choreographer; it's because his demons are a nicer bunch — perhaps not as

realistic, but a great deal easier for audiences to befriend.

Earle speaks to us of an essential heroism in man, of a fundamental purity. The innocent Indian youth imitating forest creatures in 1971's too-sentimental *Legend*; the majestically bereaved couple in 1980's *Frost Watch*; the four tormented figures in 1976's *Quartet* gravely and aggressively battling their spiritual bonds to a chopping axe-blade of a Michael Conway Baker score; the entire company plus apprentices all decked out in melodious good manners and pastel elegance to Vivaldi and friends in *Baroque Suite*: these beings have enormous dignity and no grubby, sickly, weirdly-shaped malignancies in their souls.

Pain and suffering would only enoble them; death



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would send them on to a higher plane. Also — and perhaps most basic to his appeal — Earle speaks with immense compassion of the communal spirit of mankind. As if to affirm this optimistic outlook, Earle has a gift for moving large hordes immaculately about the stage as no other Canadian choreographer can.

Randazzo and Beatty design for smaller numbers; a belief in the brotherhood of man does not figure.

If one wished to introduce one's suburban aunt to modern dance, you would travel the accessible route, via Earle. He constructs his pieces with tender musicality, restraint, utter sanity and directness in meaning.

He suffers an atypical brief loss of marbles for his supremely silly *Bugs*, from 1974. It's nice and accessible, but it has nothing to do with musicality, sanity, or restraint.

In the "Loverbug" section, Julian Littleford's gleefully malicious worker ant (in crash helmet) repeatedly pushes over crawling sowbug Karen du Plessis, each time pausing to smile proudly out at the audience. Enter alternate suitor Christopher House (in goggles) who draws him into a benign "Bugfight". The three then scramble off to join the rest of the company in a "Picnic" that looks like feeding time in Bedlam.

I am a latecomer to *Bugs* and a slapstick Earle. I had previously seen photographs of his human insects and felt safe in assuming them party to a Peter Randazzo concoction. But Randazzo's is a squirrelier sense of humour, sometimes tantalizing, sometimes brutal — much like his sense of drama, for that matter — and at its best it possesses a black-hearted surrealistic quality more apt to encourage nervous smiles than plain bellylaughs.

Curiously, this season moved Randazzo the Strange into the backseat. Outside of that kitchen-sink commercial

break called *A Simple Melody*, which is all plump mobscene bellylaughs, the program laid emphasis on moody dramatics with choreographic craziness nowhere in sight.

Sara Pettitt is a bit too reserved to draw the guts out of the woman-alone solo *Enter the Dawn* choreographed for her by Randazzo in 1982. Even buried inside a sack, Karen du Plessis finds more emotion in *Untitled Solo*, circa 1970.

As a foetus/chrysalid made entirely anonymous in a wine-coloured cocoon designed by Susan MacPherson, du Plessis struggles to escape, twisting, wrenching, flowing nonstop through powerfully expressive sculptured movement. The piece craftily makes heartless beasts of its observers without their knowing it; we forget head, arms, legs, forget entirely the feverishly battling creature hidden beneath the fabric and only revel in the outer beauty.

The choreographer is by no means as succinct in 1973's *A Flight of Spiral Stairs*, a work about isolation, unanswered signals and unresolved relationships among four characters. A confused young man in a bowtie is treated with a fair degree of apathy by three distinct female "types" — earth mother, tomboy sister, aloof object-of-desire.

There is much to admire here: the hoppy, tilty movement which continually stops short before it reaches decisions, the spacey chess-board design, and Randazzo's witty loyalty to the Daphnis-and-Chloë-like score of Milton Barnes. But the goings-on were not compelling enough to arouse my sympathy or suggestive enough to tease me into looking for clues to meaning. I've always had a difficult time getting onto Randazzo's wavelength. Even so, it seems to me that *Spiral Stairs* is not so much a work about underdeveloped relationships as simply an underdeveloped



Members of Toronto Dance Theatre in David Earle's *Exit, Nightfall*.

work.

David Earle's figures are generally engrossed in others and in the outside world. Very often Randazzo's don't seem particularly engrossed in anything. Patricia Beatty's tend to be entirely engrossed in themselves.

The sin of self-obsession? Perhaps; but I found Beatty's the richest of the three programs — a single theatrical whole of thought and style.

The evening was spent in the company of sparse solos, duets, trios, and among statuesque women in long gowns who were at once sturdy and sensitive as they drifted about in subdued lighting. The music was prickling dramatic whines and

sharp jabs created by Norman Symons, Sharon Smith, and Charles Ives. At the visual core was Beatty herself, returning to perform after a three-year absence. She claimed the spotlight with a majestic presence that has no rival in a company known for its fine women dancers.

Her concerns have not altered greatly over the years. To see the 1983 solo *Rite for Future Time* is, in effect, to see the 1970 solo *First Music*, Part Two. Her pieces are not dancey; they're built of long solid pacings, broody suspended pauses and ponderings that erupt into jagged aching poses. She never over-embroiders, never wastes a gesture. Yet a minimum of physical fuss,

(without such traditional devices as stuttering limbs and quick stares), there materializes a gnawing sense of inner lives spent quietly enduring private disappointments, tragedies and uncertainties. Her women labour quietly under that awful and beautiful weight.

Although her dances are blatantly sexual, amusingly enough, men in the flesh carry far less dramatic vitality than her giant phallic symbols — those great metallic spaghetti strands that reach for the ceiling in *First Music* and the needles that bluntly stab the air in *Rite* like an overgrown lawn.

Three of her pieces sported Miguel (formerly Michael) Moore. He muddled complacently around the outskirts of *Rhapsody in the Late Afternoon* as a subdued lover and appeared as a subdued handyman in *Lessons in Another Language*. The latter, a duet from 1980, is very much self-satire, with

blasting chord changes accompanying Beatty as she throws herself about in self-dramatizing angst atop a stereo crate.

Moore has the cynical insomniac slickness of a dark Richard Gere, a quality which waited for the closing duet, the shattering *Against Sleep* from 1968, to assert itself.

"Against sleep" translates as "against suicide". Beatty acts upon the hypnotic and close ties of death and sexuality and depicts suicide as a clearly sexual struggle between a man and a woman who are connected by a winding sheet of scarlet, the colour of passion. Beatty's embodiment of suicide is a demon lover; Moore with a red serpentine streak coiling up one leg. Confrontation revolves around two raised platforms shaped like beds and arranged centrestage like limbs from a tree; the upper platform is a throne for the ruler, the lower is a deathbed.

Moore descends from his higher pedestal to hover about the tormented Grace Miyagawa, a twisting, writhing shadow.

The season's success was handsomely aided and abetted by Ron Snippe's densely textured lighting and dressed mostly by Denis Joffre in brilliant costumes fit for both the purpose and the fashion runaway.

Joffre was again on hand, March 24-26, at the unflattering St. Lawrence Town Hall, where his distractingly wonderful designer-ethnic outfits were the only really successful ingredient in the debut of Earle's *Realm*.

Realm needs work. A sort of Story of Religious Man in tableau form, it stresses intellectuality at the expense of innards. Rather than building, it travels one flat plain, with scenes of ancient middle-eastern, South American, and African types peering into the sky, reflecting and recreating The Last Supper.

The lack of emotion at this stage might be connected to the unconcealed discomfort and insecurity of the dancers. The tiny Town Hall stage was a torn hamstring to the action: it limited the lighting design to a choice of two effects, off and on, and its absence of wings defanged Earle's near-epic *Exit, Nightfall; five dreams after death*, which formed the second half of the *Realm* program. Each time the tormented souls whipped across the stage in the Hell scene, they had to stop short in full view of the audience and calmly await their next stormy entrance.

The theatre is entirely inappropriate to dance and the two pieces should not reside together. Placed end to end they become one long drone — evidence enough that TDT is in need of a fresh and authoritative directorial voice in a position to prevent such errors. Kenny Pearl, who is a

personal choice of Beatty, Randazzo, and Earle, has officially assumed the post of artistic director. The three will join Christopher House as resident choreographers.

Pearl's association with the Toronto Dance Theatre goes far back. He has passed through its doors as student, teacher, sometime rehearsal director, and he has taught at and danced with the Martha Graham Company in New York. As actor, cabaret performer, choreographer and director, his interest and experience has been roundly nurtured both onstage and behind the scenes.

He sees TDT's recovery in terms of fundraising, audience development, and off-season projects that will extend the dancers' employment beyond the seasonal contract dates. "Creative financing" is his aim, rather than the decidedly uncreative approach of wide-scale layoffs and cutbacks.

It all sounds very encouraging, although no one would be foolish enough to predict the miracle of utterly calm waters and smooth sailing. These days, the Toronto Dance Theatre would probably be relieved just to have a decently repaired hull.

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Book Beat

Anna Pavlova: Her Life and Art, by Keith Money.
(Random House of Canada, 1982. \$75.00)

The 600 or so photographs in Keith Money's new book on Anna Pavlova reveal more about the author's subject than all the words in his painstakingly researched text. It took six years to produce this book and he has adorned it abundantly with endlessly varied Pavlova imagery. The dancer is shown in a spectrum of roles, from juvenile bits in forgotten Petipa party trifles in St. Petersburg to the Krishna and Radha experiments with Uday Shankar in the 1920s. Posed studio portraits and stills from her single endeavour as a film star show the Russian ballerina as the adorable subject of the camera artist, while candid shots taken by amateurs on board ship, at beaches, in exotic terrains, and in the commonplace settings typical of the hundreds of whistle-stops where she performed, offer insights into Pavlova the trouper, the animal-lover, the mother hen, the clown and the missionary. Captured in repose, Pavlova seems always on the verge of animation, and even the most casual snapshot fails to reveal a temporary inertia or a dull facet. Other pictures showing her modelling the elegant clothing and endorsing the beauty products of her times reveal the power of the ego and the need to keep it well nourished.

Money's text chronicles a career spanning 40 years and a pilgrimage which covered 400,000 miles, offering fresh and vital material about her early Russian period, using the translations by Celia Pinnell of the Tsar's Yearbooks, the New Times, and other Russian publica-



Anna Pavlova

tions of pre-Revolutionary days. Documentation of her years in transit is drawn from many printed sources and from personal discussions with survivors of her companies and those whose lives were changed through contact with her art.

In dealing with the scope of Pavlova's contribution, Money tends to let evidence speak for itself. In 1914 the dancer, already deemed old-fashioned by critics who favoured the total-theatre endeavors of the Diaghilev Ballets, embarked on a nine-month North American tour. A copy of the itinerary offers clear insights into her fanatical commitment to perform: 134 cities, all but a score offering only one-night stands, with performances every night save eight in which the distance between engagements allowed no break for another show en route. Ten years later and at age 42 Pavlova took on another exhausting journey, her "farewell tour" to North

America, with 238 booked performances in 77 communities!

"She had unnatural amounts of nervous energy to burn up", Money notes, "and only the stage could produce the adrenalin charge that seemed to fire her metabolism to its peak. She lived on the stage; everything beyond it was merely a mirror land". But when she finally left America behind her, she had smitten a people with her personal magic, making not the slightest dent, however, in its resistance to an alien art form. "It was Pavlova they wanted, rather than the product she graced", the author concludes, "and each time she attempted to introduce change and development, the audience became suspicious".

Pavlova's regimented existence left her no time for a fascinating personal life, and her ego kept her from participation in those loftier artistic efforts which occupied her fellow expatriates in

Diaghilev's circle. Her exclusiveness thus denied her all the fascinating contacts and interactions which enliven the memoirs and biographies of most of her ballet contemporaries. An artist known only as "Madame" to her associates is doomed to alienation. Money realizes this and grasps for anecdotes: there's one about an ancient newspaper clipping which she carried for years showing a mother with 13 children. Motherhood on such an ambitious scale filled her with awe and envy. She relished sharing these feelings, particularly with a gullible press, maintaining firmly, however, that marriage and a dancer's life were incompatible. This ambivalence gives a faint spark to the platitudinous nature of most of her interviews. In the tradition of the true superstar, Anna Pavlova was infinitely more credible seen than heard.

Motion Arrested: Dance Reviews of H.T. Parker, edited by Olive Holmes. (Wesleyan University Press, 1982. U.S. \$29.95)

Henry Taylor Parker was drama and music critic for the *Boston Evening Transcript* for 29 years, and when the Danish ballerina Adeline Genée arrived to dance in 1908 in a tacky musical called *The Soul Kiss*, Parker saw the need to lambast the dreary vehicle and appraise her dancing for its intrinsic splendour. In doing so he took on dance as the third of his journalistic interests, and for three decades he saw, promoted and assessed a glorious range of visitors to Boston, from the soloists and companies which represented Russian Ballet through the German expressionists, the great exponents of ethnic

dance, and all the American pioneers from Isadora Duncan to Martha Graham.

This book is a treasure for several good reasons. First of all, it offers vivid eye-witness accounts of historical performances by most of the great dancers of Parker's era, revealing in the process some of the unfortunate conditions dancers faced on alien soil and in uncharitable times. In 1910 Pavlova's debut was in a performance of *Coppélia* given at 11 p.m. after the curtain had fallen on the Boston Opera's production of Massenet's *Werther!* For Tamara Karsavina's recital performance, the cold walls of the inappropriate Symphony Hall were perfunctorily hung with drapes, while Martha Graham's debut took place in the half-filled remotely placed Jordan Hill.

Next, the book makes one fully aware of the powers invested in the newspaper critic of that era and of the seriousness taken both by writer and publisher when dealing with the theatre arts. Some of Parker's appraisals take up to 10 pages of the book, the equivalent of a half page of standard newspaper type. As a dance critic, he carries clout even in his earliest writings. These reflect his own basically sound aesthetics, bolstered with the rich experience of his urgently pursued scholarship and the frequent trips he took to observe new trends in the theatre abroad. So when the Diaghilev company arrived in 1916, Parker had already seen it perform many times. This offered a sound basis for comparison with what was ultimately shown in Boston. The critic's experience served to educate his readers in what they would be paying to see.

Parker never compromised his standards, but his writings show a tactful fairness. In sizing up Pavlova's 1924 production of a truncated and reduced *Don Quixote*, he deplores the ingredients of a

shoddy work, noting that "a journeyman named Minkus clothed it in a paltry, petty, pindling music almost beyond belief", but he concludes that, "Mme. Pavlova prefers to be a transcendent and unique dancer rather than mistress of the production in the theatre". He chides Karsavina, knowing the great scope of her powers as an interpreter, for catering to the American taste for "pretty things, sweet things with a dash of humor", and he marvels during Ted Shawn's then revolutionary display of an all-male dance troupe that from the audience "neither in demeanor nor in comment casually overheard was there any hint of surprise, boredom or distaste".

Parker excelled in vivid word-pictures, and his report shows total attention to the stage and an essential consciousness of the music for its inherent worth and for the quality of performances. His description of dance movement is considerably less analytic than what we expect of today's writers, who watch performance with more refined values, reflecting as it were an historically different expectation from an evening at the theatre. This fascinating compilation is destined to become a classic in the literature of dance criticism and will serve the historian as well for its brilliant documentation of a golden age in American dance.

IN BRIEF

In *Modern Dance, an Adult Beginner's Guide* (Prentice-Hall Canada, 1982: \$11.95) author Natalie Willman Duffy offers a succinct introduction to modern dance history and to the mechanics of performance, designed for the reader who can gain appreciation through participation. Good photos and diagrams make the process seem both challenging and fun, and Duffy's gentle encouragement should make a transition from studio to stage

generally painless for the amateur who may wish to perform.

A brilliant exhibit of the dialogue between art and the dance was organized late last year for a winter showing at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston and a spring run at the Toledo Museum of Art. **Art & Dance**, the catalog which the Boston sponsor published (and from whom it is available) is a handsome, informative volume containing essays on the interplay of the two forms, including David Vaughan's discussion of Merce Cunningham's work, Deborah Jowitt on Martha Graham and her decor, and Iris Fanger on the changing space of the theatre. A checklist of exhibit items includes splendid lists of films on dance which were shown at both centres.

Cobbett Steinberg has authored **San Francisco Ballet: The First Fifty Years** for the recent anniversary of America's oldest ballet troupe. A lavishly illustrated document of the company's legacy, the book is available for U.S. \$35.00 from the SFB offices at 378 18th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94121.

LELAND WINDREICH

The Dancer's Audition Book, by Martin David. (Oak Tree Press, 1982. \$19.95 or \$11.95 softcover)

When I consider how blindly I used to go into auditions, and how futile this uninformed approach was, I have a retroactive appreciation for *The Dancer's Audition Book*. The author, Martin David, has participated in the dance world from a number of vantage points, and his experience stands him in good stead. He has written a practical, positive, serious-yet-humorous guide to the oft-dreaded audition process. We are reminded that the trial is not just for those being auditioned, either.

David's premise is that an audition is a two-way process, "a meeting between possible

co-workers". From there, he goes on to discuss the mechanics, logistics, problems and advantages of auditions in general and specific situations.

The field is covered well. There are references to, and examples of, everything from various types of dance companies through commercial road shows. There is information about where to find out about auditions, how to prepare for them and how to present oneself. It highlights the necessity of gathering as much background information about a specific audition as one can, and tells what to bring along in the way of personal documentation.

Personal appearance is dealt with a bit sketchily. David's general advice is to observe modes of dress seen at various types of auditions. Dancers are warned against appearing in "security blanket" practice clothing, those comfortable, raggedy old sweat pants, for example, which are so warm, familiar, and body-concealing. He stresses basic neatness, cleanliness, and dance gear that allows for freedom of movement and a view of the body within.

Descriptions of two real-life auditions are given in detail; these provide valuable insights into variations of the process. One is for a touring company of *A Chorus Line*, the other, a small modern dance company located in Los Angeles.

Also useful are the recommendations included from professionals in the field — choreographers and artistic directors in ballet, modern and jazz dance. The reader gets glimpses of the dance philosophy and modus operandi of such notables as Twyla Tharp, Alwin Nikolais, Benjamin Harkavy, David L. Walker, Laura Dean, José Greco, and others. These kinds of insights are as valuable to the veteran auditioner as to the novice.

TERRILL MAGUIRE

Noticeboard

The Canada Council's program of support to presenters of independent dancers and choreographers, initiated as a pilot project in 1981-82, was continued during 1982-83. The amount awarded for each program was increased from \$5,000 to \$7,000. Presenters grants were awarded from coast to coast. Recipients included Dance Nova Scotia and Eye Level Gallery in Halifax, Montage Dance Theatre in Charlottetown, Tangente Danse Actuelle in Montreal, Danceworks and Pavlychenko Studio in Toronto, Forest City Gallery in London, Dance One Sixty in Winnipeg, Dancers Studio West in Calgary and Western Front Dance in Vancouver. An extension of the program for the 1983-84 season is under consideration.

The Council approved a start-up grant of up to \$52,000 to **Dancevision**, a newly formed non-profit organization which will act as executive producer for Canadian dance programming to be shown on television.

Martin Epoque of Montreal is the winner of the 1983 Clifford E. Lee Award in Choreography. Epoque received the \$5,000 award for *Constellation I, Improvisation from Outer Space*, to be set to music by Micheline Coulombe Saint-Marcoux. Founding Artistic Director of Groupe Nouvelle Aire for more than 10 years, Epoque now has her own company in Montreal, Danse Actuelle Martine Epoque. The award includes a period in residence at the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts this summer where Epoque will set her new work on students of the Professional Program under the general direction of the summer school's head, Brian Macdonald.

Simply Dance: Inside Canadian Professional Dance, is a report commissioned by the Department of Communications in co-operation with the Canadian Association of Professional Dance Organizations (CAPDO). Available free in French or English, the study describes the world of dance for the lay person, business or government professional concerned with dance. To request a copy of *Simply Dance* contact Iris Bradley, Research and Statistics Directorate, Arts and Culture Sector, Department of Communications, Ottawa, Ontario. K1A 0C8. (613) 593-4451. Specify whether you want the market report on classical dance or the one on modern dance.

Peggy MacLeod, the Dance in Canada Association's executive director, has been elected to the Board of Governors of the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA). As a member of the CCA board, MacLeod will be able to bring concerns of the dance community before this national forum of over 600 organizations and more than 500 individual members.

Arts Playbill is a publication informing Pay-TV C Channel's viewers about upcoming events in their communities. For free listings in Arts Playbill send information six weeks in advance of program date to Arts Playbill, C Channel, 365 Bloor Street East, Suite 1900, Toronto, Ontario. M4W 3L4.

Merce Cunningham, one of America's most influential modern dance figures, packed the Vancouver East Cultural Centre last April 7. The choreographer gave a half-hour lecture, showed



Martine Epoque — winner of the 1983 Clifford E. Lee Award in Choreography.

Channel/Inserts, the latest in his series of films created in collaboration with film-maker Charles Atlas. He then spent a full hour in discussion with the audience on such topics as

film-making for dance and his own company and choreography. This event was co-sponsored by the Simon Fraser University Centre For The Arts, the Regional Office

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of the Dance In Canada Association, The Vancouver East Cultural Centre, The University of British Columbia Dance Department and the Vancouver Ballet Society.

Mime Journal, which published eight issues between 1974 and 1979 has been revived and will be published annually by Pomona College Theatre Department for the Claremont Colleges, California, 91711, U.S.A. The latest edition is devoted to mime in North America. The next, in December 1983, will look at mime in Europe.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The **Anna Wyman Dance Company** toured India from March 21 to April 14 performing in New Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Chandigarh. As the first Canadian modern dance company to tour India, the troupe met with enthusiastic audiences and near riots in some cities to get tickets, souvenir programs and buttons. Wyman's *Dancers' Circus* was a particular audience favourite.

On returning to Vancouver, the company gave performances at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre in May celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the company as well as the centre. In fact it was the Anna Wyman Dance Company that officially opened the VECC 10 years ago.

In July and August the company will be presenting a series of free concerts throughout Vancouver. In the fall they will embark on a European tour (Oct. 1-Dec. 19) which will include performances in Belgium, Switzerland and France.

The **Paula Ross Dance Company** will sponsor two intensive performing workshops this summer, (July 11 to 30, and August 8 to 20). The workshops conducted by

Paula Ross, will culminate in evening performances at the company studios featuring advanced students and apprentices in several new works by Ross.

Karen Rimmer will present a solo concert at the Firehall Theatre in Vancouver (June 17, 18). The award-winning Vancouver choreographer will perform solos she has created over the past few years including the solo from *Coming Out of Chaos*, as well as several new works.

EDAM, Vancouver's experimental dance and music group has presented a full series of performances this spring at the Western Front and the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. The group, comprised of Peter Ryan, Peter Bingham, Jay Hirabayashi, Barbara Bourget and Jennifer Mascall, gave its final performance of the season at the Western Front (May 30-June 4).

Work Work Work is a new music/dance/theatre collaboration currently in rehearsal in Vancouver. Dance artists Savannah Walling, and Terry Hunter, composer Henry Kucharzyk and director Suzy Payne are currently at work on a new full-evening music/dance/theatre collaboration which will open in Vancouver for a three-week run in July.

ALBERTA

March was **Dance Month in Calgary**, officially proclaimed by Mayor Ralph Klein. The Alberta Ballet Company and Dancers' Studio West sponsored Dance Month, organizing performances, classes and demonstrations which featured guest appearances by Toronto's Pavlychenko Studio, Vancouver's Jennifer Mascall and Barbara Bourget, and New York's Louis Falco Dance Company.



Svea Eklof in the title role of Brydon's Paige's production of *Cinderella* for the Alberta Ballet.

Formolo and Urban Dance, the Edmonton-based company, celebrated its first anniversary with a six-week tour of New Zealand through April and May. The duo gave performances, workshops and seminars in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and other cities. They worked with two New Zealand modern dance companies — Footnotes and Limbs and participated in the New Zealand National Ballet Seminar at the National School of Ballet in May. The tour was sponsored by the New Zealand Dance Federation and by the Alberta Foundation for the Performing Arts and the Western Canada Lottery.

The **Alberta Ballet** presented its new full-length ballet, *Cinderella*, last April in both Calgary and Edmonton. Choreographed by artistic

director Brydon Paige to music of Prokofiev. Sets are by Stencil Campbell and costumes by Jennifer Craig. *Cinderella* has a cast of 55 including 20 local ballet students. ABC principal Svea Eklof and guest artist Christian Addams are featured in the lead roles. Addams began his dance training in Calgary and went on to perform with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Ballet Rambert, London Festival Ballet, New London Ballet and PACT Ballet in Johannesburg. This is his first guest appearance with ABC.

The **Brian Webb Dance Company** held a spring workshop throughout May and June. Company members as well as 15 students took daily class and rehearsed a new work by Webb to Olivier Messiaen's *Quartet For The End*

of Time. The workshop will conclude with the premiere of this new work June 16 and 17.

Margaret Perry Flynn and **Jacqueline Ogg** were presented with Cultural Achievement Awards from the city of Edmonton this spring. Flynn was honoured for her work with the Alberta Ballet School which she founded in 1968. Ogg was honoured as a modern dance choreographer and director who has contributed greatly to the city's dance culture. She founded the former Alberta Contemporary Dance Theatre in 1972.

ONTARIO

The Premiere Dance Theatre is the name, chosen from 1,500 suggestions submitted in a public competition, of Harbourfront's new dance theatre. The Premiere Dance Theatre opened in May for a summer-long run of *Snoopy* and will formally open September 24 with a gala evening of dance followed by a week-long Canadian dance festival featuring a new specially commissioned work each night. Two seven-week dance series are planned for the new theatre with another series of six weeks to be divided between the existing Studio Theatre and Brigantine Room.

Ottawa Dance Theatre toured Northern Ontario this spring and returned in April for its home season in the company's Sussex Street studios, which featured a new work by Nikki Cole.

The National Ballet's spring season (May 4-22) included the Canadian premier of *Sphinx* by Glen Tetley, featuring guest artist Elisabetta Terabust. *Sphinx* is a one-act ballet originally created in 1977. It is set to music by Bohuslav Martinu and centres on an elaborate sculptural ramp designed by

Rouben Ter-Arutunian. The ballet is an abstract tale based on Jean Cocteau's play *La Machine infernale* and involves only three characters — the Sphinx, Oedipus and Anubis. Also on the mixed program were *Collective Symphony* by Dutch choreographers Rudi van Dantzig, Hans van Manen and Toer van Schayk, *Nataraja* by resident choreographer Constantin Patsalas and John Neumeier's *Don Juan* featuring guest artist Anthony Dowell of The Royal Ballet in his debut in the role of the famous lover.

The season opened with Erik Bruhn's *Swan Lake* with guest artist Patrick Bissell in the role of the prince. It closed with Peter Schaufuss' production of the Bournonville classic *Napoli*.

The National Ballet School's annual performance last April at the MacMillan Theatre featured three ballets danced by the school's senior students. The school presented the Toronto premiere of August Bournonville's ballet *Conservatoire*, a 1941 setting of the original created in 1849. The program also included two revivals of works first performed by the school in 1977 — George Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco* and Spanish choreographer Susana's *Ronda De Toros*.

Dancemakers spring season in April at the Toronto Dance Theatre featured two premieres — *Windhover* by company co-director Carol Anderson with music by Michael J. Baker and a new work by Paula Ravitz to the music of James Tenney. Dancemakers opening gala performance and reception were hosted by National Ballet star Veronica Tennant.

Gina Lori Riley Dance Enterprises of Windsor presented its spring season in May at the Faculty of Education. The program included the premiere of *The Daze of Our Love* by company

director Gina Lori Riley and her *Scream Quietly*, with original vocal score by Cathie Sabocan. The company included dancers Cheryl Bouzide, Cathy Legrand, choreographer Riley and guest performers Richard Diemer and Peter Kosaka.

The Centro Del Baile Espanol, the new home of the Paula Moreno Spanish Dance Company at 121 Avenue Road in Toronto, officially opened on March 11. The new centre will accommodate regular performances, workshops, Spanish film evenings, fund raising events and a gallery for Spanish art.

The company's spring season at Hart House included two premieres, a new solo by Paula Moreno based on the traditional flamenco rhythm entitled *Soledad* and *Anda Jaleo*, a suite of folk songs collected and arranged by Federica Garcia Lorca, danced by the full company with singer Elia

Rico accompanied by guitarist David Phillips.

The Koffler Centre School of Dance has applied to the Ontario Ministry of Education as a private credit-granting school. The new accredited program will begin this summer, running from July 4 to August 12. It offers a broad range of study including ballet, modern and jazz dance technique as well as audition procedure, music photography, theatre arts, make-up and voice. Among the guest teachers at the Koffler centre will be Victoria Bertram of the National Ballet, George Randolph Jr. formerly of the Alvin Ailey and Les Ballets Jazz companies and Dance in Canada editor Michael Crabb.

Kathryn Brown, one of Toronto's foremost modern dance teachers, travelled to Europe this spring as a guest teacher in Copenhagen, Denmark and Avignon, France.

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Mercer Union, one of the parallel galleries in Toronto, hosted a three-week series of performances by artists, choreographers, musicians and film-makers last April. Performers from Montreal, Toronto and New York included Johanna Householder, Frances Leeming, Dena Davida, Silvy Panet Raymond, Paula Ravitz and The Glass Orchestra.

Le Groupe de la Place Royale presented two programs of new works by company members this April. The first program featured Michael Montanaro's *A Matter of Seconds* and Janet Oxley's *On The Edge Of Orth*. The second featured William James' *Cables to the Ace* and two pieces by Tassy Teekman — *don't call it at all* and a solo for Davida Monk, an independent dancer who teaches in the company school. Artistic director Peter Boneham is currently working

on a new production, *Dr. Faustus Lights the Lights*, based on Gertrude Stein's play. *Faustus* will receive its first performances in Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal this fall.

The Alain Bauguil Theatre Company from Firminy, France visited Le Groupe's studio for the first two weeks of May as part of a cultural exchange sponsored by Bell-Northern Research and Northern Telecom, the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture and the French Ministry of Culture. On June 3 Le Groupe will travel to Firminy to work and perform for a month.

The company has two new dancers who have both been trained at the company school. Sandra Lapierre, who has studied with Le Groupe for six years and Marc Boivin who has studied there for only two years, made their company debut last February at Montreal's Place des Arts.

Pavlychenko Studio concludes its performance series at Toronto's Rivoli with a music/dance performance directed by choreographer Susan Cash and featuring members of L'Etranger, a popular Toronto rock group (June 30).

Kenny Pearl, the Toronto-born dancer, actor, stage director and teacher was appointed artistic director of the Toronto Dance Theatre on April 21. Pearl succeeds TDT's three co-founding directors, Patricia Beatty, David Earle and Peter Randazzo who will remain members of the company's board of directors and join dancer Christopher House as resident choreographers.

Pearl, 37, who once studied with Beatty and Earle, spent most of his performing career in the United States with such renowned companies as those of Martha Graham and Alvin Ailey. His varied theatre background includes work in cabaret and theatre (both acting and directing).

Pearl, who has been a frequent visiting guest teacher with TDT during the past 12 years, directed the company during its most recent Western Canada tour. He also co-directed with Earle the 1982 Stratford Summer Music production of *Dido and Aeneas*.

Beatty, Earle and Randazzo, in a joint statement released the day of Pearl's appointment, made it clear the new artistic director has their full support.

At the same time, TDT's board named assistant general manager **Ellen Busby** to succeed **Ed Oscape** in the company's top administrative post. Oscape will complete a two-year contract with TDT in September. During his term, he has significantly helped TDT reduce its crippling deficit of approximately \$280,000 down to \$100,000.

British-born TDT member Julian Littleford has left to



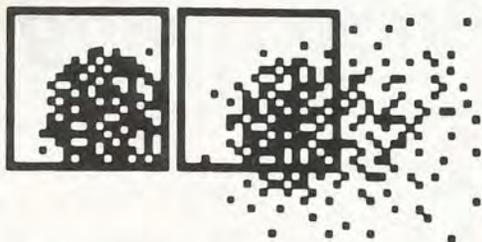
Kenny Pearl, the new artistic director of Toronto Dance Theatre.

join the Martha Graham Company and Sherry Lanier has left TDT to study in New York.

Dance For The Electronic Age is a 12-day workshop to be held in Toronto and designed to increase the quality and quantity of Canadian dance on television. The workshop, which will be held at the studios of the Toronto Dance Theatre (June 20-July 2) will be conducted by Pierre Morin and Edward Villella. Morin has been a TV director with Radio-Canada since 1956 and has won numerous awards for such dance programs as *Loves* and *The Miraculous Mandarin* with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and a program about Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal. He has also worked with international choreographers such as George Balanchine, Maurice Béjart and members of the Pilobolus Dance Theatre. Celebrated ballet dancer Edward Villella has produced and choreographed several television specials and has recently directed the PBS series *Dance in America*.

Six choreographers and six directors will work together over the two-week period to learn about each other's art and craft and meet the challenge of translating choreography to television. At the end of the workshop each choreographer/director team will have produced a finished

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dance piece on tape. The six directors are as yet unannounced but the six choreographers are well known in the Canadian dance community: Anna Blewchamp, Paul-André Fortier, Lawrence Gradus, Christopher House, James Kudelka and Karen Rimmer.

QUEBEC

Tangente Danse Actuelle summer dance events include Silvy Panet Raymond (June 2-5), Pacific Motion Dance Company from Vancouver (June 10, 11), Ellen Webb from New York (June 17, 18), Wallflower Order (June 24-26) and Le Groupe Seize M.D. (Aug. 11).

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens celebrated its **25th anniversary** in high style with a special retrospective program at Montréal's Place des Arts, March 10 to 12. Owing to an injury incurred by one dancer and a personal bereavement which caused the absence of another, the planned program of 14 items, drawn from the complete historic gamut of the Les GBC's repertoire, had to be rearranged at the last moment. Even with these changes the show that ended up on stage was still a marvelous opportunity for the dancers and their audience to celebrate the company's past and present.

The program opened with a special tribute to Les GBC's founder and artistic director from 1958-74, Ludmilla Chiriaeff. It was prepared by John N. Smith of the National Film Board — a slide/film/sound collage that recalled Madame Chiriaeff's early struggles and later triumphs.

Excerpts from the repertoire included, among others, Chiriaeff's own *Jeu d'arlequins* (1956), Fernand Nault's very popular works, *Carmina Burana* (1966) and *Tommy* (1970), and several examples of Brian Macdonald's prolific



The scene on stage at Places des Arts as Ludmilla Chiriaeff, founder of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens acknowledges an ovation from dancers, artistic associates and former members of the company: March 11, 1983.

contribution to the repertoire: *Romeo and Juliet* (1973), *Etapas* (1982) and *Tam Ti Delam* (1974).

As a final and spectacular conclusion to the program, Fernand Nault had choreographed a "Defile" during which the stage slowly filled with GBC students, company dancers and a host of former dancers, staff and artistic associates. Finally — and at a perfectly timed moment in Tchaikovsky's *Polanaisa* from *Eugene Onegin* — Madame Chiriaeff appeared among her friends and colleagues to receive a standing ovation. As she stood receiving the applause and as flowers were presented, a colourful shower of petals was released from above the stage.

Les Grands Ballets continued its 25th anniversary celebrations with performances of Sir Anton Dolin's production of *Giselle*, March 24 to 26, which included Karyn Tessmer's debut in the title role.

Les GBC, after a short US tour then returned to Montreal to present an ambitious program of new works by James Kudelka, Judith Marcuse, Brian Macdonald and Brydon Paige.

The company then went into intensive rehearsal for a return visit in late May to New York's City Center 55th Street Theatre.

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens have been invited to make a three-week tour of Japan in June 1984. The tour, which will include Tokyo, Osaka

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and several other major cities, will be the first extensive visit to Japan by a major Canadian arts organization. The tour is under the auspices of the Min'On Concert Association of Tokyo and is supported by the Department of External Affairs of Canada, and will also include performances in the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong and the Philippines. The company is currently negotiating with an independent producer, Mundovision and with the National Film Board of Canada to make a documentary film of the eastern tour.

Dansepartout presented director Chantal Bellehumeur's recent work *Rivière* in May at the opening festivities celebrating the 375th Anniversary of Quebec City. The company also participated in the International Festival for Children's Theatre at Man and His World in Montreal (May 21-29), giving 14 performances of its family program which includes *Baleines* by Maria Formolo, *Loufoqueries* by Fernand Nault, *Siamoises* by Bellehumeur and *Surprises* by Bellehumeur and Helene Vezina.

Nina Watt of the José Limon company will join the teaching staff of the Dansepartout school in August.

Quebec Eté Danse in Lennoxville will this year not only offer its usual roster of dance classes, films, lectures and performances but also an intensive choreographic workshop (June 20-July 30) featuring three choreographers — Robert Desrosiers of Toronto, Daniel Lèveillé of Montreal and Gilles Maheu of Montreal's Carbone 14 mime company. Three composers will participate — Gordon Phillips and Sarah Dalton Phillips of Toronto and Vincent Dionne of

Montreal, as well as six dancers — Claudia Moore, Greg Parks, Daniel Soulières, Luc Amyôt, Danielle Tardiff and Ginette Laurin and actor Jacques Lussier. The workshop will conclude with a weekend of performances of new work (July 28-30).

An exhibition of **19th century ballet lithographs and prints** will tour Canada this summer and fall. The exhibition, assembled by **Yves Cousineau**, director of Quebec Eté Danse and dance historian **Pierre Guilmette** represents work from the 17th to the 19th century and is drawn from private collections from across Canada. The exhibition opens at the Dance in Canada Conference in Saskatoon (June 8-12) and will be on display in Lennoxville at Quebec Eté Danse (which has sponsored the show) throughout July. In September and October the exhibition will be part of the opening festivities of Toronto's new Premiere Dance Theatre at Harbourfront. From Toronto the exhibit will travel to Place des Arts in Montreal for six weeks. Shows in Ottawa, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Waterloo are also being negotiated. A 40-page catalogue with text by Pierre Guilmette as well as a series of slides of the lithographs and prints are available to the public.

NOVA SCOTIA

The **Atlantic Ballet Company of Canada** was officially launched in March under the artistic direction of Marijan Bayer. The company will share studios and office space with the Halifax Dance Association.

Bayer, formerly the founding director of City Ballet of Toronto, has imported some of his dancers to form the core of the Atlantic Ballet. The new company will make use of the

touring circuit, sets and costumes passed on to it by the defunct Toronto company. The new company will begin the 1983/84 season with 12 dancers drawn from Halifax and elsewhere.

A tour of the Maritimes is planned for October, followed by a week of performances in Bermuda, and a two-week residency in Chicago. A Christmas production of *The Nutcracker* will be presented in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Halifax. Performances are also planned for the new Premiere Dance Theatre in Toronto.

April was **Dance Month in Nova Scotia**, officially proclaimed by Premier John Buchanan. The province bubbled with dance activities ranging from ballroom and folk dance competitions to modern and experimental dance performances. The month-long celebrations ended with the second annual Dance Nova Scotia Convention held at Dalhousie University. The convention featured workshops and

demonstrations of more than 16 different types of dance as well as the presentation of the DANCE Awards.

NEWFOUNDLAND

The **First Canadian Sound Symposium** will be held in St. John's Newfoundland (July 7-14). The symposium is a collaborative project co-directed by R. Murray Schafer, Michael Snow, Robin MacKenzie and dancer/choreographer Terrill Maguire.

In October Terrill Maguire will present a concert of her most recent work at the Toronto Dance Theatre.

The **Newfoundland Dance Theatre** made its debut last February on the main stage of the Arts and Culture Centre in St. John's. The troupe of young dancers directed by Gail Innes and Linda Ramsay presented a program of new works by Innes, Ramsay and Sandra Blackmore with music by Paul Steffler, Alice Story and Don Wherry.



Letters to the Editor

Montreal

In order to help your writer Paula Citron to prepare her article about my work with Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal (issue number 35), I was happy to invite her to visit my home for a weekend so that we could have a full and proper interview.

In our conversation, we covered many different topics and, because Miss Citron seemed particularly interested in the subject, we discussed, among all the other things, my problems to give Les Ballets Jazz the kind of solid financial foundation it must have to grow artistically. This, however, was only a part of our discussions. I was, therefore, very unhappy to find that Miss Citron had made this aspect the main subject of her article.

Canada Council's policy of not yet funding jazz dance is no big secret. This is old news! I told Miss Citron it is past history and everybody is fed up to hear about it. Miss Citron makes me sound like an old moaner with a complex. We have no time at Les Ballets Jazz to become blinded by such things. We are looking to the future. That is why I am disappointed Miss Citron for some reason wanted to stir up an old controversy.

Also I wonder why Miss Citron says we have not enough money for a repetiteur. It is true that we cannot afford all the staff we need but we do have an excellent, hard working rehearsal director, Lorne Toumine, to whom Miss Citron spoke during her visit. Perhaps she forgot.

I would have liked your readers to hear how excited I am about the new Canadian works we are presenting in our 10th anniversary season. At Les Ballets Jazz we are

proud to be able to give opportunities to young choreographers such as Benoît Lachambre and to have someone as well-known as Judith Marcuse to work with us. We are also proud to remember all those young people who have told us they came to know about the joy of dance because of Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal.

Geneviève Salbaing
Artistic Director
Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal

Paula Citron replies:
Mme. Salbaing's letter comes as a surprise particularly since, in an unsolicited phone call to me, the lady said that she had liked the article, although to be fair, she did express reservations about the emphasis on the Canada Council. Obviously, in the intervening time between the call and the letter, circumstances unknown to this writer have made her regret "speaking out". As for the quote about the repetiteur, it comes directly from Madame and the frustrations of the dancers teaching themselves were stressed by Odette Lalonde and Benoît Lachambre whom I interviewed in the lady's presence.

Ottawa

I read the *Dance in Canada* story "Les Ballets' Jazz: A Tough Decade" (Spring 1983) with concern: indeed there are a number of egregious errors, which might have been avoided had the author of the article checked her facts with the Canada Council's Dance Section, but I must clear up at least two points, one on policy and the other on procedure, for you and your readership.

The first point is that while the 1957 Canada Council Act says that the Council shall "foster and develop . . . the

arts", how this is to be done is left up to the 21-member Board of the Council, which sets policy. In February 1978, the Board announced its policy on dance priorities. It said that classical and modern, and "experimental", dance would continue to receive Council funding, but that while "dance forms such as jazz, ice-dancing, folk dancing . . . , tap dancing" and so on may be candidates for Canada Council grants, for the time being there simply was no money to fund organizations devoted to them. And that remains the policy: Council has never said, as your story claims, that "jazz dancing . . . ice-dancing, tap and ethnic dancing" are not "artistic forms" and so somehow unworthy of consideration. Indeed, we do provide grants through our Awards Service for individuals working in these forms.

The second point concerns what Mme Salbaing, the group's artistic director, in your story views as Les Ballets Jazz's history of Council grant refusals. Perhaps a bit of background on Council procedure would help put her comments in focus.

The Council uses the jury system to judge the applications it receives. Juries consist of the applicant's peers, which, in the case of an application from a dance group, are dance professionals — dancers, choreographers, artistic directors, and so on. Since the 1978 Council statement on priorities, Les Ballets Jazz argued convincingly that it was not a "jazz ballet but a contemporary dance group using jazz as its music". Council accepted this argument, made in 1981, and received two applications from Les Ballets Jazz for

funding as a contemporary dance group, in 1981 and 1982. Mme Salbaing is made to say, in the story, "Why doesn't the Council look at our repertory now?" The Council's juries have done so on numerous occasions up to and including the most recent season, just as they did during the '70s. (The statements Mme Salbaing attributes to the Council's dance section are in fact from the jury's assessment).

Contrary to what your story suggests, therefore, Les Ballets Jazz is eligible for funding and has been assessed regularly since it first began to request Council grants. The Council's rejection of the 1981 and 1982 applications were directly related to the assessments carried out in the immediately preceding years.

Certainly there is little comfort in any rejection, even if — or perhaps especially — by one's peers. However, Les Ballets Jazz, as all applicants to the Council, are judged as fairly as possible, by a system which is reviewed continually. And Les Ballets Jazz, like all other unsuccessful applicants, are invited to try again in the year ahead.

Monique Michaud
Head
Dance Section
Canada Council

Vancouver

It was interesting to read Lawrence Haskett's review of *Don Quixote* in the last issue of your magazine. He is quite right in saying that the famous third act *pas de deux* has been performed (too?) many times but is incorrect in stating that the full length ballet has never been seen in Toronto.

In August, 1967, shortly after arriving in Toronto, I saw the Bolshoi Ballet at Maple Leaf Gardens,

performing *Giselle*, a mixed program including *Prince Igor* as well as the full-length *Don Quixote* — danced, I think, by Ekaterina Maximova and Vladimir Vassiliev. Another production of *Don Quixote* was presented by the Australian Ballet in the early seventies and particularly stands out in the memory for an incident on opening night.

The company was on an extensive North American tour and had brought along a linoleum dance floor. The tour had Rudolf Nureyev as it's headline attraction: he had also staged the ballet. Arriving at the O'Keefe Centre, Nureyev saw that it had an apparently good wooden floor and did not allow the linoleum to be laid. What he didn't know was that the stage was very slippery from oil deposits left by an exhibit of cars the week before the company arrived.

During the first two acts, several of the dancers slipped

but it was in the final act that fate (or something) struck. Nureyev came out for his variation, took two steps and went crashing to the floor! The audience gasped, the orchestra stopped and Nureyev, looking decidedly unhappy, walked off for some more rosin. Needless to say, the linoleum was laid the very next day.

Hard to forget!

Kenneth Peirson
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Toronto

Before Alexander Grant passes his responsibilities as Artistic Director of the National Ballet of Canada over to Erik Bruhn, perhaps you would find space to record one audience member's gratitude to him.

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uncharted ways to excellence. Grant is a quiet professional, immensely skilled in theatre matters, but he isn't given, even as an unforgettable dancer, to seeking the limelight or the media's fickle favours.

He has not sought and has had little personal publicity since he came to Canada, a star in the world of dance. He has directed all that towards the Company, its principal dancers and its ensembles. He hasn't engaged in public controversy either, letting the performances, the steadily growing audiences and the Company's international repute be their own witnesses.

But anyone who has watched Celia Franca's dream of a generation ago come true has often seen the National at its very best in these past years. There are now extraordinary young dancers in principal roles, many of them beautifully trained at the National Ballet School, and there are others moving forward with confidence in the Company's demanding repertoire. This repertoire itself displays an astonishing range of entertainments and it appeals to several different audiences.

An artistic director's job is not only to be something of a lion tamer, social worker, boardman, lawyer and accountant but nowadays he must also manage to be, above all, a crowd pleaser and a dreamer. Grant, obviously, has done the job, and above all he has pleased and dreamed.

Each one of us will have his own favourite memories of these seven years. My own would include the premiere of *La Fille Mal Gardée* and its climax, as Sir Frederick Ashton himself bowed to the dancers in return for a great standing ovation. That evening compared with the unforgettable 1964 premiere of John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet* with which Celia Franca launched the company into its huge new home, the O'Keefe



Alexander Grant (right) seen here with his successor as artistic director of the National Ballet. The two appeared together in a gala performance of *Napoli* in 1981 marking the company's 30th anniversary.

Centre, and the night in 1965 when, at the very last moment, Rudolf Nureyev stepped in as a surprise to star with Celia Franca and Veronica Tennant in Erik Bruhn's new production of *La Sylphide*.

Grant has worked a great deal of magic with this company: the production of Ashton's *The Dream*, particularly with the role of Oberon danced by its creator Anthony Dowell; Bruhn's *Coppélia* and his performance in it; *Napoli* — cheerful, colourful, entertaining — with Bruhn, Grant, Franca and Neils Bjørn Larsen the great Danish dancer on stage to set off the Company's own principals. Add to these the witty sophistication of *Elite Syncopations* and the skill and bravura of *Etudes* — all 'classics' that are the Company's own now, to set it

alongside the other great ballet companies on the international scene. When John Cranko's *Eugene Onegin* is also added to the repertoire in 1984, Grant's record will be even more splendid.

There have been daring innovations too. Nobody could guarantee an audience ahead of time for some of the new Canadian works Grant presented: Patsalas' *Sacre du printemps*, Kudelka's *Washington Square*, Ditchburn's *Mad Shadows* or Macdonald's *Newcomers* for instance. These were big works and expensive, requiring faith and courage in the front office and a lot of skill backstage. They have added immeasurably to the Company's worth.

Shrewdly calculating risks and counting every penny as he had to do, Grant has consistently aimed high and

always encouraged our rising expectations. He hasn't condescended or sold us short.

Now he leaves a company that can display a great range of skills. It is ready to be called on by choreographers and producers. And he leaves loyal audiences, experienced and admiring. So he has done us honour as important artists do, not only with his own unforgettable performances of his new productions, but with his unfailing trust that we would have faith in what the Company can do. How shall we now in turn give him honour and our thanks?

Vincent Tovell
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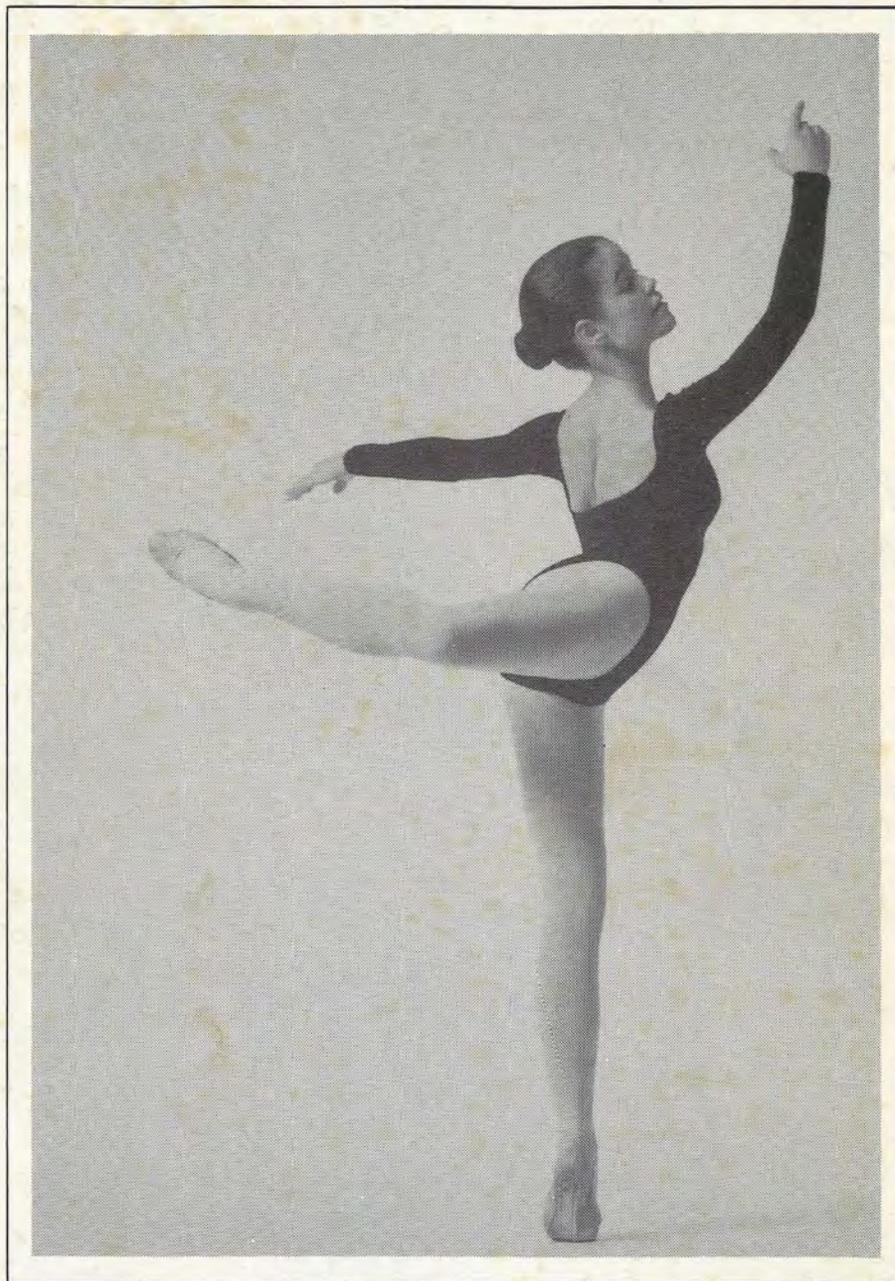


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